



Grafton Mayor Mike Morrow Provides Community Update

by Mike Morrow

November 2 2021 4:57 PM





Grafton Mayor Mike Morrow provides this update on happenings in his community below.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCshEE3_fjQNe9JoQPclGBjg

The regular City Council meeting, held the third Tuesday of every month, is now being livestreamed on You Tube! You can now watch the city meetings as they take place from the comfort of your home. You can also watch previous meetings since they are all recorded and stored on YouTube. We are also livestreaming sealed bid openings and other important activities. The regular City Council meetings start at 7:00 p.m. You can view the meetings at the link above. You can find this link on the city webpage under 'Government' and in the 'Agenda' folder or you can find it on the GTEC Homepage under the button 'Local Businesses'.

GRAFTON MARINA LEASE: The Grafton City Council voted unanimously to approve the Grafton Harbor Marina Lease at the regular city hall meeting on 19 October 2021. I want to take this opportunity to thank our City Attorney, Mr. Will Miller, CEO of Miller King Law Firm for all his dedicated and diligent work negotiating this lease. I also want to thank the City Council for their due diligence in reviewing the lease for clarification and providing history and input along the way towards a final resolution. We are pleased that Joe and Jan DeSherlia will continue to provide the excellent service that the public has come to expect as the cornerstone of the Grafton Harbor Marina. Lastly, I want to thank the citizens of Grafton and the boaters at the Marina for their patience, support, and encouragement throughout this long, strenuous process. Now we can focus our attention and energies on other pressing issues.

THE GRAFTON FERRY: On 9 September we briefed IDOT via Zoom from the Port District on our desire to extend the Grafton ferry operations to 7 days a week. The briefing was well received. On 15 October, Stephen Travia, IDOT Director of Highways and Programing and Holly Bienemann, IDOT Director of Planning came to Grafton and met with us to see firsthand the Grafton Ferry operations. We rode the ferry and the Calhoun Ferry Company briefed them on their procedures. We visited the Brussels Ferry and received a briefing by their Director of Operations. We moved to Aeries for a working lunch, presentation, and discussion on extending the Grafton Ferry to a seven-day-a-week, with potential financial assistance from IDOT. Several grants were

discussed, and we determined our next step was to form a small working group to lay out a strategy and pursue those grants. This working group met at the Port District on 25 October and started the process to move forward.

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL MAYOR'S DINNER: The Grafton Oyster Bar hosted the Southwest Illinois Regional Mayor's Dinner on Thursday, 28 October. Brad Hagen and his staff put on an excellent dinner and the visiting mayors and other elected officials enjoyed the evening and the Grafton hospitality. This monthly get-together is rotated among the different cities in the Southwest region. Thank you to all who made this a showcase event for Grafton.

GRAFTON FOOD PANTRY: The Loading Dock is partnering with the Grafton Food Pantry to provide prepared meals for everyone in need this year of Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. Mychele Hutchinson, the Volunteer Director of the Food Pantry, said she received a call from Betsy Allen telling her that the Loading Dock will provide the prepared meals for all Grafton residents in need this year for the two holidays. She also said the Loading Dock will stock the food shelves weekly with needed items if Mychele will send her a list. Thank you, Betsy, and the Loading Dock, for helping our Food Pantry to continue their most important work of caring for our citizens in need. The Food Pantry is open on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month.

DINKY PROJECT: The Dinky has been moved from the parking lot behind the Visitor's Center to its final home - the train shed next to the front of the Visitor's Center. The axels, suspension and tires have been removed and the train front and rear wheels installed. The body is being repaired and all the holes and missing panels will be enclosed. Windows made from plywood will be installed as a base for the reproduction windows which will have a wrap on an aluminum base with images of riders. The front end, hood, grill, and lights will be installed, and a cow catcher, like the original home-made cow catcher, will be fabricated and installed. Once the body work is finished, the bus will be painted school bus yellow. Our goal is to have the Dinky ready for a grand celebration and dedication this coming spring.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT: The Nature Conservancy and Volkert Inc. have teamed up at my request to prepare a proposal for the city that will evaluate ways of managing our storm and rainwater runoff with a combination of natural and manmade solutions. The project will be funded through grants that the two companies will seek out. The goals of the project would include reducing city mowing and poison spraying by turning our drainage ditches into riparian waterways, installing manmade eagle trees along the waterfront, planning for and planting long term hardwood eagle trees, designating pollinator areas for bees and butterflies, installing informational and educational signage, creating sustainable eco-maintenance programs, enlisting the assistance of volunteers and organizations, and creating a venue for increased eco-

tourism in Grafton. If you are interested in helping with this project, please contact Nick or me at city hall.

VETERANS' COMMITTEE: The Veteran's Committee is supporting our American Legion Post #648 at their annual Veteran's Day dinner on 14 November at 2:00 pm.

Keep in touch. If you are a Veteran, we would like to add your contact information to our Veteran's contact list. Please call Chairman Terry Day at 618-786-2827.

PUBLIC SAFETY: Congratulations to Officer Dave Womack who was promoted to Sergeant. We want to thank everyone for their continued support of our police department. If you are going to be away for an extended period, stop by City Hall and fill out a Patrol Request Form to have the police keep an eye on your property while you are away, and we have a means to contact you in the event of an issue.

PLANNING & ZONING COMMITTEE: The planning and zoning committee has been working on several items over the summer. First, to complete the verbal descriptions that accompany the Zoning Map that was approved and published in October 2017. Second, to look at the upswing in Air B&B rentals and similar overnight venues that are occurring in residential areas and identify options for the city. As a part of this process the Committee will be holding a public hearing on 30 November 2021, 7:00 pm at City Hall. Third, the committee has identified a subcommittee that is working to review and update our zoning ordinances.

PARKS COMMITTEE: The Parks Committee will be holding a series of public hearings over the next several months to gather input and ideas from our citizens and visitors to identify current and future needs and develop a strategic plan for our parks that includes potential funding sources. Watch for dates and times to be announced.

PUBLIC WORKS: The city held a Sealed Bid, As-Is Equipment Sale on Saturday, September 25th at the Grafton Maintenance yard. We sold all our items and made \$10,700. The city yard and shop areas are cleaned up and ready for winter. All three city dump trucks and the large Kubota tractor have been repaired and are operational. We will use the proceeds to buy a large brush hog for the large city Kubota tractor and needed items for the winter. A big thank you to Nick and the maintenance crew for getting everything ready for the sale and cleaning up the yard. Thank you, Peggy O'Neil, and Elaine Baumgartner, for organizing and running the sale.

The annual road Oil and Chip program started on 17 August and ended on 19 October. We were able to finish many streets in town that have been forgotten - some for as long as 20 years. We oiled and chipped the boat launch area by the flag and the ferry roads.

We have surveyed all the cracked and broken concrete curbs in Grafton Hills and the sections of roads that have severe damage. We are working on getting bids to repair these sections. We will be replacing sidewalks starting next year. The sidewalks have little to no subbase which is why they have not held up. We will be addressing the subbase issues when we replace the sidewalks. This will be a big project and we will be driven by our budget. We will make a schedule and start replacing the worst sections first. We will also be looking at innovative ways to fund more replacements, such as a city / citizen partnership for sections that are not in need of replacing, but it would be prudent to replace, thus leaving no old sections in place. More information coming in the spring.

Grafton has a new building inspector for the city. His name is Kyle Mueller, and he is a highly qualified professional builder. He will be working as a consultant for the city to handle all the city inspections. With the boom in building in Grafton Hills and throughout the city we found it necessary to hire additional help. Nick Hutchens is our Director of Public Works. He organizes all our city projects, including repairs and maintenance and supervises our workforce. He also handles all the paperwork required to issue building permits and then hands off the inspections to Kyle. This relationship allows us to accomplish more in the most efficient manner, thus keeping up with builders' schedules and city maintenance.

Winter is on its way, and we never know how severe it will be. The city is preparing. This year we will mount snowplows on two of our dump trucks and we have a stockpile of salt mix. We also have money set aside in our Motor Fuel Account for contractor plowing and salt mix spreading. We will be using a combination of city and contractor resources depending on how severe the winter becomes.

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING: The City of Grafton invites you and your family to join us for the annual lighting of The Grove Memorial Park Christmas lights and tree on Friday, 26 November 2021. Come at 5:30 pm and enjoy a cup of Hot Chocolate and Christmas music, tree lighting at 6:00 pm. We will have a box by the tree if you would like to drop off a toy for the Marine Corps annual Toys for Tots. We hope to see you there!

CITY CHRISTMAS DINNER: Please join us for the Grafton Christmas Dinner on Tuesday, 7 December 2021 at the Grafton Winery & Brewhaus, 300 W. Main St., Grafton. The dinner is open to the public and tickets are \$30 per person. To make your reservation, visit the Chamber website at www.graftonilchamber.com

COOKIE EXCHANGE: You are invited to a city Christmas Cookie Exchange Open House at City Hall on 22 December 2021 from 9:00 am till 3:00 pm. Come in and bring some cookies to exchange and enjoy some free coffee, hot chocolate, and fellowship. We will hold the regular Senior Luncheon the same day. Hope to see you there!

CITY HALL HOLIDAY CLOSURES: City Hall will be closed on Thursday, 25 November and Friday, 26 November for Thanksgiving as well Thursday, 23 December from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm for the city employee Christmas lunch with the mayor and Friday, 24 December for Christmas Eve.

THANK YOU TO:

- Will Miller CEO of Miller King Law who gave \$3,000 towards the City Christmas lights.
- The anonymous donor who gave \$4,000 to The Grove Memorial Park playground set fund.
- The anonymous donors who gave \$4,000 to our Police Department.
- The Loading Dock for providing prepared dinners to needy citizens for Thanksgiving & Christmas.
- The Loading Dock for supporting the Grafton Food Pantry with monthly groceries.
- Dave Roth for supplying the rock and hauling for the Springfield Street project.
- George Behring for professionally adjusting the microphones at city hall.
- Trebe Bradfish (Chairwoman), Jennifer Floyd, Deseret Hardwick, Jessica Hayes, Christine Brame, Christine Spanton and Freddy Hatfill for planning, organizing, and executing the best Witches on the Water event!
- Wayne Draper for providing the Party Bus for transportation during Witches on the Water.
- GTEC for their continued support of the live broadcasting for city hall meetings on YouTube.

If you know someone who needs to be thanked, please let Peggy know at City Hall.