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Simple update on the City Council agenda for Tuesday, February 22.  
Plus, a word about the budget.



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Dear Neighbors

I'm rather tired of winter, although I know we have several more weeks of this to face. While I fully expect today's April-like weather forecast (wet snow followed by ice) to become something else, I want to remind you anyway that the City staff will be out clearing the major roads and spreading sand-and-salt mix. They won't get to local streets (your neighborhood and mine) by tomorrow morning, perhaps, so please use caution if you have to go to work in the morning.

That quarter-inch of ice the forecast calls for can bring down limbs and may cut power to some of our homes. If you lose tree limbs -- but the downed limbs don't block the street -- clearing those limbs is your responsibility. If the limbs fall in the street and you can't move them, please call the City (or me) for help.

The City will have crews that will help with downed limbs and trees that block travel and make things more unsafe.

If you lose power, or see a downed power line, please call DTE at **800-477-4747**.

The City won't be picking up any limbs until April. (They also won't pick up your cut-up Christmas tree until April.) If you have questions about how to cut up the limbs into the size the City will accept, or what to do about bigger pieces that are much too big for regular compost pick-up, please feel free to call me.

I believe the weather will improve.

## On the Agenda

Members of Council are human, too. That's why four members planned to take short vacations during school break -- to spend

some time with their children. Unfortunately, school break falls during a week when the Council meets. At most, there will be 7 members of Council at the meeting on Tuesday, February 22. A quorum is 6 members. The agenda this week is light, and may become lighter if more important items are postponed.

## Medical Marijuana

An ordinance to license Medical Marijuana dispensaries and cultivation facilities is once again on the agenda for Tuesday. This item may be postponed, as the number of Council members present for discussion will be so limited.

I've taken a more prominent role in this discussion than I anticipated. I want this legislation to be clear, easy to follow, and as patient-friendly as possible. As there aren't many models in Michigan for the Council to follow, I also would like the Ann Arbor ordinance to serve as a model. I'm willing to give this as much attention at Council as it needs, but not drag it out forever.

## Human Services Funding

The Council will hold a public hearing on the Housing and Human Services Needs for the 2011-2012 Washtenaw Urban County Annual Action Plan. The Council will not be taking action on Tuesday, but will give the public this opportunity to speak.

At this time, I don't have any documents to share about the Annual Action Plan. When I get them, I'll let you know.

## Golf

You may not have noticed this, but the City decided not to pursue the RFP for Huron Hills. At a recent budget working session, several members of Council spoke clearly in favor of leaving the golf program as it is for this (2012) budget cycle. That doesn't mean without changes, of course; it just means that the City may not be considering closing Huron Hills.

On the agenda on Tuesday are two (2) items related to golf in Ann Arbor:

A resolution to renew the mandate and appoint members to the Golf Advisory Task Force, and

A resolution to modify the fee structure and increase the 'senior citizen' qualifying age for golf. There will be a public hearing

on this last item.

The resolution reads, in part:

A fee increase is proposed for power golf cart rentals to place Leslie and Huron in line with other area golf courses. Currently the fee is \$7 for 9 holes or \$13 for 18 holes. The proposed fee is \$8 for 9 holes and \$14 for 18 holes. Staff estimates this will generate \$25,000 in additional revenue per season.

Other fee increases include raising the weekend 9 and 18 holes rates at Leslie Park Golf Course by \$2 and \$1, respectively. The twilight fee at Leslie Park is proposed to be \$16, up from \$15.

These rates, after performing a comparative fee analysis, are deemed to be appropriate for the market. Staff estimates this will generate an additional \$12,500 in revenue per season.

Lastly, in its December, 2007 report the City's golf consultant, Golf Convergence, Inc., recommended increasing the senior citizen qualification age to 56 for 2008 and to increase the threshold by one year each year thereafter until the age to qualify for senior rates is established at 62. It is therefore recommended that the senior citizen qualification age be established as 59 for the 2011 season.

If you have questions or comments about any issue on the agenda, please let me know.



## What's up with the Budget?

The Council is meeting every two weeks to learn about the City

Staff's current thoughts on how they will meet the budget targets. The presentations are made to Council and the public



## New mail format

I'm trying out this new mail format, to see if it works better for you and me. This is a test.

You should be able to opt-in or opt-out easily. You should also be able to forward this mail to others. That's my goal. It's all a learning

(these are open and televised meetings) but don't necessarily indicate the final numbers or the final budget.

Right now the City Council members and the City staff are closely watching the recommendations for the State's budget, wondering what changes will be approved. The City's budget starts in July; the State's budget starts in October. If the City doesn't accurately anticipate any funds available in the State's budget, it means the City's budget is out of balance -- and the City cannot legally have any budget out of balance.

Everyone is a little tense. Union negotiations -- about benefits, overtime, hours -- are also ongoing, I'm told. Members of Council are not involved in negotiations, and I'm no more privy to such talk than anyone else.

I would like to see benefits come more into line with what the City can afford.

Dedicated millage dollars, of course, aren't as affected by the economic downturn as is the General Fund. The General Fund covers the salaries and benefits for the police and fire

experience for me, though, so if I'd made a mistake or you have problems, please let me know.

My goal is to get information you want (or need) out to you quickly and cleanly, so you don't have to hunt for it.

fighters, though. And it's those dollars (General Fund) that will be affected by many of the State-wide budget cuts I keep reading about in the paper. It's a curse to live in interesting times.

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