



CITY OF COLUMBUS

105 N. DICKASON BOULEVARD COLUMBUS, WISCONSIN 53925-1565
920.623.5900 FAX 920.623.5901 www.cityofcolumbuswi.com

Column #30 – New Year, New Optimism for Columbus

“Under the Clock Tower”

I think the staff at the *Columbus Journal* did a very nice job of re-capping the top local stories of 2015 in their editions of recent weeks. Last year had its ups and downs, like any other – but after the next 12 months, when the community “re-cap” articles about 2016 appear, what will they say? This is an informational column, not a horoscope, so I’m not going to make any predictions. What I can do is provide you with a summary of what the City has planned for the coming year.

The City Council approved the 2016 City Budget in early December. Highlights in the budget include the first major local road project in several years. Specifically, the following roads are set to be reconstructed in 2016 – Mill St (from Lewis St to Ludington Ave); two areas of Charles St (Dix St to Richmond St; then ½ block of Selden to a ½ block of Fountain to connect work already done there in recent years); W. Prairie St (from Ludington St to Dickason Blvd); W. Church St (N. Dickason Blvd to Ludington St) and N. Birdsey (James St to Mill St). The design and planning of this project is underway. For those affected and interested in this project, there is a public information meeting that will provide details on the schedule, the work involved and other important issue. That meeting is set for **4:30 – 7 pm on Wednesday, January 13th** at the Columbus Senior Center.

Another key provision in the approved budget is a project that will develop a GIS map/database for the City. This will allow for the City to better plan for projects, review city activities and address a multitude of issues from emergency response to zoning matters. Even better news relative to this project is that half of the cost is provided through a state grant that the City was awarded late last year. Eventually the map will be available on the city’s website and will be a resource for residents to learn a plethora of information. When it is ready to go, I foresee another column to tell you more.

2016 will also bring forward a few other visible, and exciting changes for the community. Thanks to the continued generosity of private donations from many in the community and the hard work of the Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission (HLPC), the much-anticipated Firemen’s Park Pavilion upgrades will be underway. The project includes the addition of an ADA-compliant elevator and second floor bathrooms. It will be great to see that project underway and complete for the Pavilion’s 100th Birthday!

The new City website is also on tap for the very early part of the new year. The current design is long overdue and the City is working with a company on a new design with new features that will be user friendly. A shiny new web-presence will be great to showcase Columbus to those near and far. Further information on the launch of the new site will be provided to you all.

Finally, Columbus saw some real positive momentum relative to business development in 2015, and we expect that to continue. From the new tax incremental financing (TIF) district, to a healthy housing construction season, there isn’t any reason to believe this can’t continue in Columbus.

I'd like to assign a phrase that will drive my approach to the City in 2016: positive progress. The things I've described in this column all point to positive progress, and that's the approach I try to instill in everyone who works on the City team. If you have any thoughts, questions or ideas as to help further positive progress in Columbus for 2016 (and beyond), I'm always open to discuss them with you.

As I close, I personally extend my best wishes to you all for a safe, healthy and happy New Year.

If you have any questions on this or any other issue before city government, please contact me down at City Hall at 623-5900 or via email at pvandersanden@columbuswi.us.

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