

The Melcher-Dallas Miner

Housing improvement funds available

Habitat for Humanity of Marion County, Inc. (HFHMCI) recently notified the city that there are some limited funds immediately available at a very low cost for critical home repairs for qualifying individuals. HFHMCI is an organization that aids low-income families in achieving their dreams of owning a home. The organization not only funds and supports construction of new homes but also provides funding for repairs of existing homes for low to very low-income families.

One condition for applying for funds is that the applicant must own the home. Rental properties and homes owned by someone other than the occupant are not eligible to apply. Funds could be used for such projects as windows, siding, and other necessary repairs.

Applicants must meet HUD income limits, which are calculated based on the number of people in the family. A single member household with an income of \$26,750 per year would be very low income, while the same household with an income of \$16,050 per year would meet the qualifications as an extremely low income household. HFHMCI is encouraging applications from low-income seniors and veterans.

The application process includes forms that must be filled out, as well as proof of income and assets. Interested applicants should begin gathering the following:

- ◆ Three months of paycheck stubs or an annual Social Security letter
- ◆ Three most recent monthly bank statements for all accounts
- ◆ Most recent tax return and W2s
- ◆ Proof of child support or alimony (if received)

Interested residents should contact City Hall immediately to receive a copy of HUD income guidelines and the required application forms. If you miss this round of funding, the city will have additional funds for housing improvements from the housing trust fund later this summer. The information listed above will also be required for applying for these funds. Please contact City Hall at 641-947-6501 for an application.



Important Dates

May 12

Regular council meeting at City Hall @ 6 p.m.

May 27

Memorial Day—City Hall Closed

June 9

Regular council meeting at City Hall @ 6 p.m.

June 30

End of City's Fiscal Year

Mayor

Barbara VanWyk

City Council

Mark Moon

Seth Williams

Chris Heaton

Mark Herold

Terry Fisher (Mayor Pro-Tem)

The new playground equipment is here!

Thanks to a grant from the Marion County Foundation and funds from the Local Option Sales Tax, the city recently purchased new playground equipment. The pieces were delivered on April 23rd and are currently in storage. One is for the small children's playground and the other for the older kids' playground on the south side of the park. The city is looking forward to assembling these new pieces as soon as the park has been reopened. Just a reminder that the park is closed for gatherings but open for foot traffic if you need to walk through.



Interested in Building a House?

The M-D City Council approved sale of city-owned properties with an open-ended resolution that allows for the consideration of any bid that comes in. A public hearing would be scheduled if the bid is one the council feels would be good for the city.

If you are interested in building a house but did not offer a bid, you can still do so. The council is considering only bids that include the construction of a home on the lot. Bidders must sign an agreement to have a house completed within 18 months to two years of accepting the deed to the property.

Another great benefit to snagging one of these lots is the city's five-year tax abatement on new homes. If you could get a lot for a song with an agreement to build a house and then take advantage of the five-year tax abatement, that would surely be an attractive proposition, wouldn't it?

As a reminder, the following lots are still available for sale:

115 SE Fourth (lot cleared)
109 NW 2nd (lot cleared)

The City is also interested in commercial development ideas for 119 Main. Residents have voiced interest in a coffee shop and a fitness center. Do you have the drive and desire to start your own business?

If you have an interest in offering a bid on any of the residential or commercial city-owned properties, please call City Hall at 641-947-6401.

What in the world are we flushing?

City sewer and water overseers, Gary Comer and Mike McCarty, recently provided a laundry list of items they sure would like to see residents stop flushing. There is a screen system to prevent items from getting into the waste water treatment plant, and Gary and Mike have to manually remove items from the screen on a daily basis. Imagine you start your day by pulling up a sewer-soaked screen and have to pick off some of these nasty coated items:

- Towels and rags
- Cell phones
- Toys
- Cleaning wipes
- Feminine hygiene products

Gary would like residents to know that there really aren't any flushable wipes. Even if they are described as flushable on the package, they do not biodegrade before getting to the wastewater treatment plant and have to be picked off the screens. Cleaning and personal care disposable wipes should be placed in the garbage rather than flushed down the toilet, as well as all feminine hygiene products, of course.

"Another item that is problematic that people probably don't think about is

cooking grease that gets dumped down the sink," said Gary. As the grease travels down the sewer pipes, it clumps together into a hard ball and will not go through the screens. Gary advises that cooking grease be placed in a disposable container or carton and thrown into the garbage can.

Your city crew also has to pick off an occasional dead squirrel from the screens. Squirrels end up the sewer system when people have an illegal connection into the sewer system from their downspout or sump pump. If your downspouts and sump pump are hooked into the city's sewer system, you could be subject to a fine by the DNR.

Gary joked that they don't mind seeing the occasional pet goldfish "buried at sea," but he asks that people dispose of the items discussed above in their garbage can, rather than flushing them into the city's sewer system.

Before you flush an item down the toilet, ask yourself, "Would it bother me to pick this item off a sewer-soaked screen at the wastewater treatment plant?" Give Mike and Gary a break and avoid flushing the above-mentioned items.

Water shut-offs temporarily suspended

The city clerk's office is responsible for collecting fees for water and sewer services. The clerk does not have council permission, nor is it allowed by ordinance, to negotiate extensions for payments with individual customers. However, in light of the Covid 19 pandemic, some temporary changes were enacted in April.

The city council recognizes that the Covid-19 pandemic has presented challenges for families. At a council meeting held on April 14, 2020, the council agreed to suspend both penalties for late payment and water shut-offs until at least July 1. The Council will consider options at that time, depending on the Covid 19 situation.

It should be noted that the council has only delayed shut-offs. Residents will continue to have fees added to their water bill, and fees will eventually be due to the city. It is imperative that even residents who are struggling pay at least some portion of their bill to avoid a situation where they have a bill that is hundreds of dollars and end up having water shut-off later. The council may consider some short-term payment plans on a case-by-case basis when things return to normal. All residents whose finances have not been affected by Covid 19 are encouraged to continue to pay their full water and sewer bills to avoid a future shut-off.



Cameron’s happy day shared with Mom, Maddy Mann, and brother Chris.

Lori enjoys living on Main Street. Be sure and honk and wave if you catch her in the front yard people watching.



Life as a “Lifer”

You can’t live on Main Street for 28 years without having an interest in people watching, and Lori Dhabalt-Davis fits the people watcher description perfectly. Lori is the daughter of Herold Dhabalt and Virginia (Dhabalt) Schnieder.

After Lori’s larger-than-life father, Herold, passed away, Lori lived with her mom and brother, Jay, in Melcher until Virginia married Larry Schneider. Lori became a farm girl at the age of 12 when she moved to the Schneider farm. She also gained a new sister and two brothers, Teresa, Tom and Marty Schneider. She lost her brother, Jay Dhabalt, to a tragic accident in 2005. Lori also has two older half brothers, Kelly and Marty Sutherland, sons of her father, Herold. If you were a Melcher-Dallas teenaged girl in the late 70s, you probably knew when Kelly and Marty were in town 😊.

Lori has two sons. Cameron is 19 and Chris is 23. Chris recently married Maddy Mann. Lori is hoping to soon be able to share pictures of the small (thanks to Covid 19) wedding ceremony recently held at Larry & Virginia’s home. Chris and Maddy will make their home in Cedar Rapids, and Cameron is living at home and serves on the M-D Fire and Rescue squad.

When asked about nieces and nephews, Lori offered one of her famous Dhabalt hardy laughs. Between all her siblings, there are 16 nieces and nephews, as well as some great nieces and nephews. Lori enjoys talking about her “colorful” family and is crazy about all of them.

Lori has been the city’s librarian for ten years, a position to which she is perfectly suited. She loves interacting with residents and knows everyone in town. When asked what she likes about living in Melcher-Dallas, Lori says she loves the block she lives on. They are like family, and everyone looks out for others.

Thank you for sharing your story with us, Lori. Your hard work and dedication to creating a bigger and better city library is greatly appreciated. People with your love of family and devotion to community are an integral part of what makes Melcher-Dallas a friendly, welcoming place to live.

Your City Employees

Gary Comer—Sewer & Water Director

Mike McCarty—Streets/Sewer/Water

Jacob Hoch—Chief of Police

Dylan Forkner—Police Officer

Zachary Kalvig—Reserve Officer

Stephanie Ripperger — Deputy Clerk

Jenny Knust—Clerk/Treasurer

Lori Davis—Library Director

Fran Smith—Library Assistant

Bill Cooper & Janet McBride— Recycling

Curt Seddon—Fire Chief

Council Spotlight

Terry Fisher



Here’s a guy who needs no introduction. Terry Fisher has served as a member of M-D Fire & Rescue squad since 1968. He has been a certified EMT since 1976.

Terry has served on the city council twice. This is his seventh year as a councilman. He is also serving as Mayor Pro-Tem.

Terry and his wife, Charlene, live in town and have a total of seven grandkids. Terry proudly announced the recent birth of their first great grandchild, a baby girl born just a few days earlier.

Terry is semi-retired from C.L. Carroll. His professional expertise is a huge asset to the city. Thank you, Terry, for your long and outstanding service to Melcher-Dallas!

What's up with the library, Lori?

I have missed you!!! Here is the temporary plan to keep us all safe and healthy. The library will resume curbside pickup on May 4th. Please call and leave a message with your name, selections, and phone number and I will let you know when your order is ready for pick up. It's always better to e-mail me (m-dpl-1@hotmail.com) so I can just email you back when your order is ready for pickup.

I will be gathering and placing orders outside from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesdays and 12 to 4 p.m. on Thursdays. If you have found an author you love and want to share, please go to our Facebook page to tell us about them. And as always, <http://bridges.lib.overdrive.com> is still available for free use. Check out the new book list and give me a call. Fran and I would like to thank you for your patience and understanding during this crazy time.

Lori Dhabalt-Davis

NEW BOOKS THIS MONTH

Winter's Ghost, Mary Stone
Hannah's Courage, Molly Jebber
Blindside, James Patterson
The Gift, Elizabeth Smith
Mountains of Grace, Kelly Irvin
Can't Let You Go, Jenny B Jones
The Soldier's Email Order Bride, Cora Seton
The Boy From the Woods, Harlan Coben
A Long Bridge Home, Kelly Irvin
The Marine's Email Order Bride, Cora Seton
The Navy Seal's Email Order Bride, Cora Seton
Funny, You Don't Look Autistic, Michael McCreary

NEW MOVIES THIS MONTH

Richard Jewell ❖ 1917

Ever consider automatic withdrawal?

Approximately 100 customers in Melcher-Dallas have their water and sewer payments taken out of their bank accounts automatically. This is an easy way to ensure your utility bill is paid in a timely manner and helps avoid penalties and shut-offs. Signing up for ACH is an easy process. There is only one form to fill out and return to City Hall. Withdrawals will come out on the 15th of the month, unless the 15th falls on a weekend, in which case withdrawals will be made on the following Monday. ACH has been a great benefit during the Covid-19 crisis, as it has minimized the amount of paper that City Hall and postal employees have had to handle. If you would like to sign up for ACH, please call City Hall at 641-947-6501.

A Trip Down Memory Lane

Do you remember:

- When the oil truck would come through every spring on the Dallas side of town, and you would spend the next few weeks flipping the oil on your bike fenders and the backs of your legs? (But your Mom sure was happy that she didn't have to dust every day.)
- When laundry was done in a wringer washer. Did you ever run your hand through the wringer accidentally? Yeow!
- When you could walk up to Flanagan's store to get some bulk big bologna or P&P loaf for your summer lunch?
- When high school sports uniforms were maroon with gold trim? And how about those 1970's gold and maroon plaid high school girls' basketball uniforms 😊?

(If you have special memories of growing up in Melcher-Dallas, please e-mail them to mcityhall@windstream.net.)

Do You Know Your City Ordinances?

1. I can pile my garbage behind my house if I want. It's my property.
2. When this Covid-19 thing is over, I'm going to get together with my neighbors and we're going to shoot our rifles in the air off my deck to celebrate. No harm in that, right?
3. I'm allowed to wrap my house in plastic until I can afford new siding.
4. When I'm coming out of an alley on my bike, I have to watch for pedestrians.
5. If the city has notified me I have a water leak in the pipe leading to my house, they can shut my water off if I don't repair the leak within 48 hours of notification.

1. False. City ordinance #105 prohibits the storage of personal garbage. 2. False. Ordinance #41 prohibits the discharging of rifles in the city limits without the permission of the council. 3. False. Ordinance #50 prohibits the use of plastic wrap as a siding material. All exterior surfaces must be of like finish and may not be patched with dissimilar materials. 4. True: Ordinance #76 requires bikers riding in the alley to yield to pedestrians on sidewalks. 5. True. Ordinance #91 allows the city to shut off water until satisfactory repairs are made.