

# Gem Lake News

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## Special Interest Articles:

- White Bear Provides Policing
- Land Ordinance Approved
- City News Page 4
- 2018 Budget Approved

## Upcoming Recycling Dates:

- December 6
- December 20
- *Tip: put out your bin the night before for 7 a.m. pick-up.*

## City of White Bear Takes on Gem Lake Policing Duties, as of January 1, 2018

As of the first of the new year, the City of White Bear will take over responsibility for providing police services to the City of Gem Lake. This arrangement replaces services that were formerly provided by Ramsey County. The City Council of Gem Lake approved the change at its February council meeting and approved the contract covering this matter at the November 21 City Council Meeting.

The decision to switch was based on cost and proximity of resources. The projected costs of police services through Ramsey County have experienced a combined increase of 18% in the past two years. Both Ramsey County Sheriff's Department and the White Bear Lake Police Department are ranked in the top five in the State of Minnesota.

*(continued on page 3)*

## Gem Lake Budget Approved for 2018

Months of number crunching and careful budgeting have combined to allow the City of Gem Lake to reduce its General Fund Budget from the preliminary \$479,597 to the final budget number of \$423,247, and its property tax levy from a preliminary number of \$514,021 to a final number of \$453,651. The Gem Lake City Council voted to approve the final budget at the council meeting on November 21.

The 2018 final tax levy consists of debt levy of \$84,399 (an increase from the 2017 preliminary debt levy of \$75,987), and a general operating levy of \$369,252.

The preliminary budget numbers, which are required by state law to be sent to counties in September, are the figures on which proposed tax statements are based, that most residents received recently.

*(continued on page 2)*



## Gem Lake Budget Approved for 2018 (continued from page 1)

The law also states that budget numbers can go down but not up from preliminary figures. This means that preliminary tax estimates are usually higher than the end result, due to cities needed to allow for variation in budget figures. They represent “worst case scenarios” for most cities. As a result of the budget decrease between preliminary and final figures, most residents in Gem Lake should see a decrease in their actual property tax figure when bills come out next Spring.

Between September and November, most Minnesota cities refine their budget estimates so they can arrive at their final budget. For Gem Lake, the reduced final budget was based primarily on contract amounts, such as police services, legal services, etc.

The General Fund budget accounts for the operations of the city and the major source of revenue is property taxes. The total budget of \$423,247 is broken into the following parts:

1. General Government Operations: \$270,197
2. Public Works: \$36,300
3. Public Safety: \$96,750
4. Operating Transfers: \$20,000

This year’s general fund budget has increased \$3,271 over the 2017 final budget. Highlights of the changes are as follows:

1. There is no contingency budget, as sufficient reserves exist.
2. There is a 43% decrease in the law enforcement budget
3. There is a 3.4% increase in the fire protection budget
4. \$50,000 was budgeted to complete the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, required every ten years by the Met Council
5. \$10,000 was budgeted for MS-4 Reporting Requirements (see more information on page 4).
6. The budget was balanced without using reserves.
7. \$20,000 was budgeted as transfers to other funds for future improvements.

The entire budget is available for viewing at Heritage Hall or by asking a copy to be emailed to you.



### Deer Hunt Wrap Up

Two residents of Gem Lake obtained a permit to conduct a deer hunt on their property in October. Tony Scornavacco and Mike Garrett hosted a private deer hunt by licensed bow hunters on their property starting October 14 and concluding on October 30.

The hunt resulted in the taking of five bucks over the course of the three weekends involved. Sponsors of the hunt reported no issues or problems, but did have several suggestions for streamlining the process of holding a private hunt.

The steps involved in obtaining a permit are extensive, with a priority on safety. All neighbors surrounding a hunt agreed in writing to allow the hunt to take place. The bow hunters were identified in advance and provided copies of their credentials, such as their hunting permits to the city. Deer stand locations were approved in advance, to insure that neighbors know where the hunting will take place.

### Gem Lake Volunteers Sought

Opening are anticipated on the Gem Lake City Council next year. If you are interested in serving your city, please contact Gloria Tessier at Heritage Hall at 651-747-2792. Positions on the city council and the planning commission are generally volunteer positions. Council members receive a stipend of \$100 per month to cover expenses.

## White Bear to Provide Policing Services as of 1-1-2018

*(Continued from page 1)*

According to Gem Lake Mayor Bob Uzpen, the decision was simply based on common sense. "We are getting the same type of quality services for a lower cost."

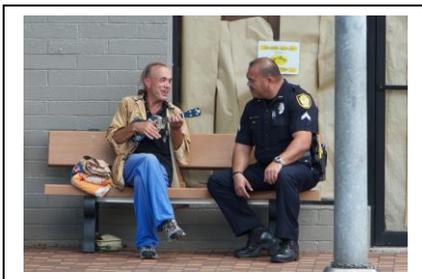
The White Bear Police Department is led by Chief Julie Swanson and includes 28 officers and a total staff of 38.

The staff also includes investigators, dispatch, and other support personnel.

The White Bear Lake Police Department has been serving the community since 1881 and has a proud history. According to their website and public information they are "committed to improving the quality of life in our community." They are also committed to community oriented policing, with two core components: community partnerships and problem solving.

The department divides its service boundaries into four quadrants and positions officers throughout their service areas, making resources potentially available in a timely manner throughout the two cities. (Gem Lake and White Bear Lake.)

During an information session at the January Gem Lake City Council meeting, Chief Swanson discussed how officers are assigned to general areas for patrolling purposes, as well as providing the council with more information on department philosophies and goals.



She discussed upcoming projects, such as the fact that White Bear Lake police officers will be using body cameras in the years ahead.

All parties have already agreed that it would be a good idea for Gem Lake to also allow Ramsey County to maintain the Sheriff's substation at our Heritage Hall. According to Mayor Uzpen, this is another great way to locate resources in our midst.

## City's Consolidated Land Use Ordinance Approved

Gem Lake's proposed Consolidated Land Use Ordinance, now referred to as Ordinance #131, was officially approved at the City Council meeting on November 21. The two-year project to update Gem Lake's land related ordinances, focused on consistency and consolidation, rather than drastic alteration. The New Land Use Ordinance consolidates all related documents into a single source for all zoning questions and brings a consistent format to these documents. It also better positions the city for the new 2018 Comprehensive Plan, required by the Metropolitan Council.

This consolidation meant that the following ordinances are retired: 43K Zoning Ordinance; 58C Subdivisions; 66 Tree Preservation; 92 Environmental Review; 100 Landscaping; 107B Gem Lake Gateway District Development Code and 109 Sign Regulations.

According to Ben Johnson, Chairman of the Planning Commission, the initial goal of the project was to put the city in a good position to develop the next 10-year Comprehensive Plan. The larger idea of consolidation grew out of a desire to address inconsistencies within Gem Lake land use ordinances, between those ordinances and the existing Comprehensive Plan, and hopefully, to simplify the manner in which residents and business owners pursue development opportunities in the City of Gem Lake.

## City News Page

### **MS-4 Report Completed, Public Hearing Held**

A state mandated report on storm water management, called the MS-4 Report, has been completed for 2016 reporting year by engineer Ron Leaf from SEH, (Short Elliot Hendrickson) the company that acts as Gem Lake's City Engineer. The report was the subject of a public hearing on November 21 during the city council meeting, as required by law.

The report details the city's efforts to educate citizens on the subject of storm water runoff. It also documents inflows and outflows of storm water in the city, as part of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan.

In past years, City Council Member Jim Lindner volunteered to do the leg work, walking around the city to document and inspect the storm water facilities.

This year, SEH played the lead role, due to complexities in the new reporting requirements. The city also had to detail in the MS-4 report things like its post construction storm water management procedures, pollution prevention efforts, illicit discharge detection and elimination and efforts to involve the public in the process of storm water management.

Procedures for completing and filing the annual MS-4 report have become more complicated in the past year, necessitating the use of expert engineering services to get the job done. The report shows that the city has met its MS-4 requirements, including doing the inspections need and completing all suggested community education and outreach required on the subject of storm water management.

The report summarized efforts by the City to properly manage storm water run-off. Accordingly, it showed that the city has completed the required inspections and that no illicit discharges were discovered. In addition, there were no enforcement actions taken and no construction sites involving over one acre of disturbed land in 2016. Five of five outfalls were inspected and deemed appropriate. No projects or plans were reviewed in 2016.

A copy of the MS-4 report is on file and available at Heritage Hall for anyone who would like to read it.

### **New Guidelines for Meetings**

The Gem Lake City Council adopted guidelines for public comment at all future city meetings, after discussing the matter at the its July meeting.

The guidelines govern courtesy at meetings, how public comment is conducted and what types of behavior will not be tolerated (such as abusive language, shouting, speaking out of order, disruptive behavior, etc.).

The guidelines are copied from several cities in the Twin Cities area. Research showed that almost all cities in Minnesota have some kind of reasonable guidelines for public meeting, also known as "codes of conduct." The guidelines were reviewed by Gem Lake's legal counsel to insure the need for a set of rules won't conflict with the need for open public forums on issues discussed at meetings.

The guidelines will be available near the entryway at public meetings, and are also available through the Gem Lake web-site.

### **Ramsey County Sheriff's Report on Traffic Stops for First Three Quarters of 2017**

For the first nine months of 2017, the Sheriff's office issued 42 traffic citations in Gem Lake, most of them for speeding (26). Gem Lake comprised 3% of all traffic stops in the County. The largest number of traffic stops and citations happened in Shoreview, which accounted for 28%.

## Scheuneman Road Repair Study Approved

The results of a feasibility study regarding the reconstruction of Scheuneman Road between County Road E and Highway 61 were recently presented and accepted by the Gem Lake City Council at their November 21 meeting. The study was developed by the city's engineers at SEH (Short Elliot Hendrickson Inc.). As directed by the council, the study covered not only street and storm sewer improvements, but also the extension of sanitary sewer and the water main to bring municipal water to this area.

In 2016, the City of Gem Lake extended municipal water to a portion of the business district via a connection to the City of White Bear and new water main along County Road E and north into the beginning of Scheuneman Road.

In addition to the 2016 water main extension into the south end of Scheuneman Road, in 2009 the south 500 feet of Scheuneman Road was reconstructed. That project included the installation of storm sewer and the lining of the existing sanitary sewer main in Scheuneman Road. This new project would begin where the water extension ended in 2016.

The existing roadway is a bituminous, rural section roadway with some storm sewer at its south end. According to the study, the existing pavement is showing signs of distress due to age and traffic and is in need of replacement, according to the study findings. This pavement would be replaced as part of the improvements. Existing ditches would be removed, providing for sufficient street width to accommodate on street parking.

SEH concluded that the proposed improvements are necessary to provide adjacent parcels with potable water and flows capable for fire protection and with sanitary sewer service.

They also concluded that the proposed street and drainage improvements are necessary to maintain the City's infrastructure. The project is feasible and cost effective from an engineering standpoint.

The total estimated cost of the improvements is \$850,070. The total City share of the costs is estimated at \$193,739, with \$653,331 assessed to benefitting properties.

It is estimated that the project could begin in the Spring/Summer timeframe in 2018 and would take several months to finish.

After accepting the report, the council voted to hold a Public Improvement Hearing on December 19.

## Comments Received from Met Council on 2018 Comprehensive Plan Draft

The Metropolitan Council requires that all cities within the Twin Cities Metropolitan area submit a detailed comprehensive plan every ten years. This plan covers everything from land use and transportation to parks and storm water run-off. The plans typically take multiple years and significant engineering expertise to complete. This year, the City of Gem Lake is enlisting the help of two outside agencies to complete this monumental task. They are the engineering firm of SEH, which acts as Gem Lake's engineering representative, and the consulting firm of Northwest Associated Consultants, which specializes in helping cities with this type of plan. Preliminary drafts of major sections of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan for Gem Lake have been completed and are now being reviewed by outside experts.

Chapters on Land Use, Housing, Resilience and Economic Competitiveness have been submitted to the Metropolitan Council comments. Those comments are now being incorporated into the latest draft plan. We are on target to complete the project on time.



## The City of Gem Lake

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This newsletter is also posted on the city's web-site under the "Documents" section and the "News and Updates" section.

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We're on the Web!

See us at:  
[www.gemlakemn.org](http://www.gemlakemn.org)

## Meetings: December, 2017

The following Gem Lake Meetings will be held at Heritage Hall in October and November.

### December 5, 2017

Planning Commission Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

### December 11, 2017

City Council Workshop is cancelled.

### December 19, 2017

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

### December 19, 2017

Public Improvement Hearing at 7:00 p.m. on road improvements. See story page 3)

## Your Gem Lake City Council

### Bob Uzpen-Mayor

Phone: 651-492-5083

### City Council Members:

#### Gretchen Artig-Swomley

Phone: 651-260-9742

#### Faith Kuny

Phone: 612-718-4316

#### Jim Lindner

Phone: 651-429-7597

For more information on meetings, city ordinances, recent events, permit procedures, etc. please consult the Gem Lake web-site. The address is [www.gemlakemn.org](http://www.gemlakemn.org)

Each Gem Lake Newsletter is also posted on the web-site under the "Documents" and "News and Updates" section.

Please email your ideas, comments and suggestions. See box at left for detailed contact information.

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