

Gem Lake News

Gretchen Artig-Swomley, Newsletter Editor

Special Interest Articles:

- Assessment Hearing for Water Project
- Bids Accepted for Water Project
- City News Page 4
- 2016 Budget to be Finalized

Upcoming Recycling Dates:

- November 25
- December 9
- December 23

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

Assessment Hearing November 19

There will be an assessment hearing on November 19 at 7:00 p.m. at Heritage Hall to discuss the municipal water project for the Hoffman's Corner Business District.

All affected businesses and property owners are encouraged to attend. The meeting is open to the public and may be of interest to all residents of Gem Lake. At this meeting the results of a appraisal study of the area will be discussed, primarily focusing on how much increased value this project would bring to each property owner.

The total cost of this two part project will be approximately \$510,000. This includes \$387,838 for construction costs (see below) and \$122,162 for engineering and other costs. Part One would bring water from White Bear under the railroad tracks near White Bear Floral and then across to the area of Waldoch Mfg. and the strip mall on Scheuneman Road.

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Bids Accepted, Contractor Chosen for Water Project

On October 20th, the City Council voted to direct the city engineer to draft final plans and specifications for a two part water project, and to request bids for the construction end of the project from appropriate vendors. At the November 17th City Council Meeting, the bids were reviewed and discussed. The bids for the construction costs ranged from \$387,838 to \$629,700.

There were eight bidders to the Water Main Extension Project, which is designed for the extension of a water main along County Road E between Hoffman Road East in White Bear Lake and Scheuneman Road in Gem Lake by the City of Gem Lake. All were deemed to be qualified bidders in terms of expertise and experience. After review by the city engineers (which is done through Short, Elliot and Hendrickson, or SEH), the contract was awarded to the lowest bidder, which was Dave Perkins Contracting, Inc. The construction will commence in the Spring of 2016.



Assessment Hearing is Next Step in Water Project

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Part Two would bring the water across County Road E to the area near Vera Auto Sales and then up Scheuneman Road towards Barnett Chrysler.

It is projected that the cost of the project would be assessed at around \$8,600 per acre for Part 1, and around \$10,000 per acre for Part 2.

For Part 1, all parcels in the business district would be subject to the first assessment. For Part 2, only those parcels that would directly benefit by being able to hook up to water as a result of the extension would be subject to the second assessment. There are currently about six businesses that would be affected by the second assessment at this time.

Assessment amounts would take into account the percentage of the serviced area that each property owner has, and independent appraisals done by a third party as to how much the improvement would add to the value of that property. At the assessment hearing, affected properties in the business district would learn the projected assessment for their property, and be able to vocalize their opinion on the cost versus benefit equation, as it pertains to their situation.

If all is still a go, construction would start and would probably happen in the Spring of 2016. There are numerous steps involved in bringing additional municipal services to property owners, many of these steps are required by state law. Your input will be vital.

False Alarms Can Get Expensive

City of Gem Lake Ordinance No. 48 which has been in effect since 1987, regulates the use of alarm systems, establishes user fees and provides penalties for false alarms. The purpose of this ordinance is to encourage alarm users to adequately maintain and utilize their alarm systems, thereby allowing the City of Gem Lake's public safety services to be available for appropriate public safety needs.

In section 3 of the ordinance – definition – the City of Gem Lake defines a false alarm as follows: A false alarm is an alarm signal that elicits a response by personnel of the Public Safety Department when a situation requiring a responses does not, in fact, exist and which is caused by the activation of the alarm system through mechanical failure, pet movement, alarm malfunction, improper installation, or the inadvertence of the owner or lessee of an alarm system or his/her employees or agents. False alarms do not include alarms caused by climatic conditions such as tornadoes, thunderstorms, utility line mishaps, violent conditions of nature, or any other conditions which are clearly beyond the control of the alarm manufacturer, installer or owner.

Under the user fee section, here is what the ordinance states: An alarm user owning an alarm system which precipitates or reports more than three (3) false alarms in a calendar year shall be subject to a penalty of \$50.00 per false alarm in excess of three (3) false alarms in a calendar year.

If your system creates more than three false alarms after January 1, 2016 you will be sent a bill for each one in excess of the limit.

Have You Ever Heard of 'Wish-Cycling'?

'Wish-cycling' is when you put something into your recycling cart that is not recyclable, like a plastic bag, and hope it will get recycled. But doing that does more harm than good. These materials can get stuck in, or damage, the sorting equipment and they can lower the value of other recyclables collected.

This summer a sample waste sort was completed to look at the recyclables collected in Vadnais Heights. There were some interesting things found!!

The things found included lots of plastic bags, garden hoses, Styrofoam with motor oil in it, small appliances, a suitcase, metal and plastic hangers, PVC pipe for a sink, carpet scraps, diapers, disposable gloves, a razor, dryer lint sheets, wrapping paper, mineral spirits, a biohazard bag, black plastic, paper plates, planting pots, food covered trays, newspapers and magazines inside plastic bags, eyeglasses, tissue paper, furnace filters, a ceramic cup, power cords, crock pots, a sandal, a door handle, a disc player, and CDs. All these things are considered garbage, and should be thrown in your trash container.

Machines and people try to sort your recyclables but it is hard for them when things coming into the recycling facility that cannot be recycled.

Please stick to the list below before depositing things into your single sort containers:

Food containers (metal, plastic, glass):
Cans, bottles, jars, tubs, clam shells

Food boxes:
Things from the pantry, cupboard and refrigerator (not the freezer), and pizza delivery boxes (no grease please).

Food cartons:
Milk, juice, soup cartons, etc.

Paper:
Mail, cards, newspapers, magazines, catalogs, phonebooks, packaging, school.



papers, office papers, shredded paper (in closed paper bag, labeled), and toilet and paper towel tubes

Boxes:
Cardboard boxes. shoe boxes, packaging, and tissue boxes.

Other containers:
Soap, detergent, shampoo bottles, etc.

You can bring plastic shopping bags to recycling drop off points, which can sometimes be found in the entry areas of grocery stores. For a list of participating retailers near you, go to PlasticFilmRecycling.org.

You can bring non-recyclable paper (food stained boxes, freezer boxes, tissues, paper towels, etc.) and food scraps to an organics recycling drop off site. Find locations and hours at RamseyRecycles.com. (Click on Organic Waste.

Take note that you should never bag your recyclable (except shredded paper). Place all items loose in the recycling bin. It is considered too dangerous to open unidentified bags, so the items all go in the trash dump.

If you have any recycling questions, call 651-633-EASY (3279). This number is answered 24/7; or you can go to RamseyRecycles.com. (Click on A to Z recycling guide.)

City News Page

Deer Hunt Concluded

The Gem Lake City Council approved a permit for a bow hunting deer hunt on private property on the south side of Gem Lake. The approval took place at the City Council meeting on September 15.

The hunt took place on property owned by Tony Scornavacco on three separate weekends. (September 19-21; October 9-11; and October 31-November 2.) A report on the hunt will be published in the next newsletter.

Newtrax and PAI Hold Open House

An open house was held on November 11 at the new location of the Newtrax and PAI headquarters in Gem Lake. This new facility took over space previously occupied by part of the Barnett Chrysler car dealership. Newtrax remodeled the facility to accommodate the fleet of buses the organizations use to provide transportation services to individuals facing physical and intellectual challenges.

New Rental Property Requirements

Effective January 1, 2016, the City of Gem Lake will begin licensing all rental property in the City. Persons with rental property will be required to obtain a rental license for their rental units. Licenses will be for a two year period. The licensing fee is \$100.00 for a single family unit and for a two family unit \$50.00 per unit. All units will be subject to an annual inspection. Contact Gloria Tessier at 651-747-2790.

Winter Parking Rules in Effect in Gem Lake

On-street parking is not allowed in Gem Lake after a snowfall of two inches or more, until after streets have been plowed, according to City Ordinance Number 86. (Section 6.4.2)

If cars are parked on city streets after a snowfall, the plows could have to make an extra trip back in the hopes that the cars would be gone.

"We want to be responsible with your money, so please get your car moved off the streets when we get a snowfall," says Mayor Bob Uzpen.

Final Budget Numbers for 2016 to be Voted On

A final draft 2016 General Fund Budget for Gem Lake of \$353,870 will be presented to the Gem Lake City Council for a final vote on November 17 at the City Council Meeting. This includes a Final Property Tax Levy of \$295,026, which can be broken down into a General Tax Levy of \$225,026, and a Debt Tax Levy of \$70,000.

This compares to draft budget numbers from August, when the initial number for the General Fund Budget was \$397,820. The initial budget number was later able to be reduced, due to better budget projections that came in over the past several months.

State law requires cities to submit preliminary budgets to their county well before the end of the year, so preliminary notices can be sent to residents, outlining what their property taxes might be for the year ahead. Because the final budgets cannot, by state law, go any higher than the preliminary budget submitted, most cities have to plan in a little "wiggle room" as they finalize figures for the year ahead. It is common for preliminary budget numbers to vary from final budget numbers.

It is also not uncommon, especially in Gem Lake, for the complete final budget to be smaller than the preliminary one. (This happened both last year and the year before for the budget years of 2014 and 2015.)

For the last eight years, it has been the norm in Gem Lake to create a tentative budget in June for the upcoming year, based on projections available at the time, and then create a refined budget in November, when better figures are available for various budget line items.

Sometimes at this point in the year, the council has also elected to apply some of the available surplus in the current budget to do a buy down of the following year tax levy.

The 2016 preliminary budget includes increases in the areas of planning and zoning, police and fire protection and other contingencies. The Gem Lake tax levy will account for approximately one third of a typical property tax bill, the other two thirds coming from school and county taxes.

The City Council Meeting will take place at 7:00 p.m. at Heritage Hall and the residents are encouraged to attend.



The City of Gem Lake

PHONE:
(651) 747-2790

FAX:
(651) 747-2795
City Hall Address:
4200 Otter Lake Road
Gem Lake, MN 55110

GENERAL E-MAIL:
City@gemlakemn.org

Newsletter e-mail:
gretchenas@comcast.net

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

We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.gemlakemn.org

Meetings: November and December, 2015

The following Gem Lake Meetings will be held at Heritage Hall for the next few months.

November 17, 2015

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

December 1, 2015

Planning Commission Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

December 14, 2015

City Council Workshop at 7:00 p.m. THIS MEETING IS CANCELLED.

December 15, 2015

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Your Gem Lake City Council

Bob Uzpen-Mayor

Phone: 651-492-5083

City Council Members:

Gretchen Artig-Swomley

Phone: 651-260-9742

Rick Bosak

651-426-9695

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

Each Gem Lake Newsletter is also posted on the web-site under the

news section.

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

CITY OF GEM LAKE
4200 Otter Lake Road
Gem Lake, MN
55110

