

Gem Lake News

Gretchen Artig-Swomley, Newsletter Editor

Special Interest Articles:

- *Water Project Begins in the Spring*
- *Sanibel Dance Company Opens*
- *City News Page 4*
- *“Trash to Treasure” Event*

Upcoming Recycling Dates:

- *March 2*
- *March 16*
- *March 30*

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

Gem Lake’s Planning Commission-Plays a Crucial Role in City Development

One of the most significant leadership roles in our city is to be a part of the Gem Lake Planning Commission. The group of five individuals play a crucial role in long term development of our city. Among its many duties, the group develops new ordinances, when needed, and updates older ordinances to bring them up to date with the city’s comprehensive plan.



It also acts on development application and zoning and rezoning request. The Planning Commission chairman is Ben Johnson, who has served on the committee for several years. The city of Gem Lake also gratefully acknowledges the hard work of those who have served on the commission in the past. Currently, there is an opening on the commission for any resident who is interested. Contact Gloria Tessier at Heritage Hall for more information. (651-747-2792)

Gem Lake was Formed in 1959 over a Water Project

In the Spring, Gem Lake will begin a significant project to bring municipal water from the City of White Bear to the business district of Gem Lake. What very few people know is that this is the culmination of a long journey that harkens back to our city’s founding. Here is an article written by Council Member **Jim Linder** that puts this move in perspective. (See below)

Gem Lake Council Takes Historic Vote

At its special city council meeting on Thursday, November 19, the Gem Lake City Council took a historic vote. For the first time in its fifty-six years as a city, Gem Lake will have city water available in the business district. Much has already been published on the city’s water project and its scope, but following a public hearing on November 19, the council voted unanimously approving resolutions 2015-26 and 2015-27, thereby authorizing the project to commence.

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Gem Lake's Water Project Really Started in 1959

(continued from page 1)

Mayor Robert Uzpen opened the meeting on November 19 and following introductory comments by city engineer Justin Gese, and brief discussion by the council, he opened the public hearing.

Two property owners from the business district addressed the council. The council and the city staff answered the questions to the satisfaction of the property owners, and with no further public comment, Mayor Uzpen closed the public hearing.

The council then authorized Phase I of the project with resolution 2015-26, which involves running new water pipes from White Bear Lake underneath the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe railroad tracks into Gem Lake at its easternmost point.

Next, the council introduced resolution 2015-27, which extends the water pipes westward along County Road E and northward up Scheuneman Road to the southeast corner of Barnett Kia property.

Gem Lake was founded in 1959, in part because the residents of the time resisted annexation attempts that would have brought the introduction of city water from White Bear.

At this point, the City of Gem Lake has grown for well over a half a century without municipal water. The November 19 vote reflected how much things have come full circle since 1959. Modern cities across the Twin Cities area have almost all come to embrace city water and the positive impact it has on development.

Available city water also permits buildings to have automatic sprinkler fire suppression systems, which reduces insurance costs. City water has become a minimum standard for both development and public health. Gem Lake will contract with the City of White Bear for its water and will begin its own water billing program.

Water bills will help cover the costs of operating and maintaining the piping network, and future city budgets will reflect the new enterprise revenue fund. The water project is funded 100% by assessment to affected property owners. Construction begins in several months.

First Annual Gem Lake "Trash to Treasure" Day is April 30

Gem Lake is going to be joining in a popular event held annually by White Bear Township, when it holds its own "Trash to Treasure" Day on Saturday, April 30. This fun event is the ultimate in recycling. Residents put out items on the curb that they are trying to pass on to someone else (also known as getting rid of), with a sign that says "free." You can download a free sign from the Gem Lake City website. (GemLakemn.org.)

Then the fun begins, with people picking up treasures all day. Our only rule for the "Trash to Treasure" event is that if no one picks up your items, you need to remove them at the end of the day. White Bear Township and surrounding communities have been holding the popular event for years, with great success. Many folks wait for the annual treasure hunt and then have fun driving around with a trailer, looking for items they might want to own themselves. Items should be clearly marked as free, just so there is no confusion about those lawn ornaments that you do want to keep!



Sanibel Dance Studio is Gem Lake's Newest Business

Whether you want to learn ballet, tap, jazz or Zumba, you can now spend your money right here in Gem Lake to get the instruction you want!

Sanibel Dance Company recently opened their doors for business at 3591 Hoffman Road in Gem Lake, across from the Country Lounge and White Bear Floral.

The studio offers classes for both children and adults in an impressive list of specialties. Their dance class offerings include ballroom, competitive ballroom, competition line, Pre-K dance, combo tap and ballet for ages 5-8, jazz, hip hop, musical theatre, pom/cheer, adult tap, barre, Zumba and other offerings.

The company has three dance instructors with backgrounds in ballet, cheerleading, ballroom dance and other area of specialty.

You can find out more about Sanibel by consulting their web-site at sanibeldancers.com or calling them at 651-308-7748.



The New Sanibel Dance Company in Gem Lake.

Gem Lake Scholarship Fund Deadline is April 1

The Gem Lake Scholarship Program was started in 2010 to provide funds to graduation high school seniors for their post-secondary education. In its six-year existence, the program has awarded \$500 to a variety of students, and in a couple of years, multiple candidates received the award. The funds can be used for any type of post-secondary education, such as college or technical school. This year's deadline is April 1. Applicants must be in their senior year of high school and must be residents of Gem Lake.

In 2010, the first scholarship recipient was Jamie Lynn Nadeau. The following year, the scholarship was awarded to four students, including Sima Bazooband, Sam Bosak, Adam Holman and Jeffrey Strommer. In 2012, the scholarship went to Rachel Andert. There were two recipients in 2013. They were Holly Lorenz and Adam Lindner. There were no applicants in 2014 and 2015, due to a declining number of senior.

Any Gem Lake resident who is a high school senior this year is eligible to apply. Consult your school counselor or contact Gloria Tessier at Heritage Hall. Please note that the application forms for the scholarship can be found on the city web-site.

City News Page

Food Shelf Donation

The Gem Lake City Council voted at its meeting on February 16 to make a \$750 donation to the White Bear Area Emergency Food Shelf.

Funds for the donation come from charitable gambling receipts during the past few months. Throughout a typical year, pull-tab sales from the County Lounge go to fund several charitable enterprises on behalf of the city. Other recipients have been the Union Gospel Mission and the Willow Lane Elementary School.

Huffman to Attend March Council Meeting

Blake Huffman, Ramsey County Commissioner, District 1, will attend the next Gem Lake City Council Meeting, scheduled for March 15.

Huffman attends council meetings periodically around the county in order to bring citizens up to date on county programs, trends, initiatives, etc. The meeting will start at 7:00 p.m. at Heritage Hall.

More Options for Paint Recycling

Looking to get rid of some cans of paint or stains? There are more options to recycle them. Go to Paintcare.org to find a free drop-off location near you. Looking for paint or stains to use? Check out the Ramsey County Reuse Center at 5 Empire Drive in Saint Paul. It's free! For hours and directions go to RamseyRecycles.com and click on Household Hazardous Waste.

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 651-747-2792.

August Meeting Date Changed

The Gem Lake City Council meeting for August of 2016 has been changed to August 23, which is the fourth Tuesday of the month. Normally, council meetings are held on the third Tuesday. The change was made due to a scheduling conflict.

Let Us Fix Your Broken Stuff

Do you have a lamp that won't light, an iron that won't steam, or jeans that are ripped? Bring them all to a Ramsey County Fix-it Clinic. Work with a volunteer to repair them for free. To find a clinic near you, go to RamseyRecycles.com and click on Fix-it Clinics at the top, or call 651-633-3279.

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.

Why is the Business District Called “Hoffman’s Corner”

Although some of us drive by “Hoffman’s Corner” daily, few of us many know much about the origins of the name or the history of the area. Henry Hoffman, who would later become Gem Lake’s first mayor, was a real person. His father, Charles Hoffman originally founded the business area of Gem Lake that bears the Hoffman name, but it was his son Henry who grew it into a large commercial center in the 1930’s and 1940’s.

Charles was born in 1867 in Luxembourg. He immigrated to Minnesota and bought 20 acres of land at the intersection of two major thoroughfares in the White Bear area in the 1890’s. One of these roads, later to be referred to as Highway 61, just happened to be the bustling route of the train traffic between St. Paul and the City of White Bear. Charles Hoffman saw the enormous commercial potential for supplying White Bear, already a prosperous resort community, with fresh produce. He started a farm and sold his crops near the intersection road, now known as County Road E. This county road was also near a train stop on the route to downtown White Bear Lake. Hence, the name “Hoffman’s Corner: was born.

Gem Lake resident Dick Arcand, Henry Hoffman’s son-in-law, remembers Charles Hoffman as a “smart little man, who taught himself English from books and worked very hard.”

However, it wasn’t until the next generation, under the guidance of Charles’s son Henry Hoffman, and some of Henry’s nine siblings, that the Corners area really took off. At its peak, the commercial center boasted a large grocery store, produce stands, a drive-in hamburger restaurant, a service station, several taverns, a floral shop, a dance hall and assorted smaller establishments. In the days before the supermarket or the discount store, if you needed it or even wanted it—you found it at Hoffman’s Corner. Everyone stopped there, everyone shopped there.

After the heyday of train travel between White Bear and St. Paul had passed, literally every car travelling between the two cities had to pass by

An explosion of business travel happened under Henry Hoffman’s leadership. In the summertime, Hoffman’s Corner businesses served 500 ice cream cones a day, fried up the best hamburgers in the Twin Cities, pumped gas into your vehicle, supplied heating oil for your house, and even provided you with banquet rooms for the special events.

Hoffman’s Corner was home to such businesses as Bob’s Drive-In, Hoffman’s Corners Oil, Hoffman’s Market, Bloomer’s Ice Cream, the Dutch Mill, Lindorfer’s Bakery, Scheuneman’s Market and many others. Although not every business was owned by Henry, usually the building and the land it was sitting on was, according to Dick Arcand.

Henry was born in 1898 in St. Paul. Although he was generous to a fault, he was also a shrewd businessman. Initially, he worked his father’s farm and sold produce. Later, he was a wine merchant. Eventually, he built a large business center on the site of his father’s farm. The development of Hoffman’s Corner was very much a family affair. Almost the entire family worked there in some capacity and many of them also lived there also, in homes built for or by family members. Henry started Hoffman’s Market, a large grocery store that once stood across the street to the west of the current site of White Bear Floral. The store sold everything from vinegar to canned goods, and was built in the 1920’s. Outside its doors stood a large produce stand, where you could buy local cherries, applies, and even grapefruits from the family’s citrus farm in Mission, Texas. Henry ran the market with his wife Anyrine Nadeau, a beautiful girl of French descent, who he married in 1923.

“I can tell you that Henry Hoffman was a really good guy,” says Dick. “I learned a lot from him. He helped out anyone and loaned a lot of people money. I remember a few times bums would wander through, wanting a hand-out, and he would always give them something. “

With the coming of the freeways, Highway 61 diminished in importance as a route between St. Paul and White Bear. Gradually, business began to taper off, also influenced by the emergence of the “supermarket.” Henry Hoffman was well known in the area when Gem Lake incorporated in 1959.

The City of Gem Lake

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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: March and April 2016

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

March 1, 2016

Planning Commission
Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

March 14, 2016

City Council Workshop at
7:00 p.m. **CANCELLED**

March 15, 2016

City Council Meeting at
7:00 p.m.

April 4, 2016

Planning Commission
Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

April 11, 2016

City Council Workshop at
7:00 p.m.

April 19, 2016

City Council Meeting at
7:00 p.m.

Your Gem Lake City Council

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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.

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