

Gem Lake News

Gretchen Artig-Swomley, Newsletter Editor

Special Interest Articles:

- Final Approval for Gem Lake Villas Project
- Scheuneman Road Project is a Go
- City News Page 4
- Profile on Our New City Clerk

Upcoming Recycling Dates:

- *June 6*
- *June 20*
- *July 5*
- *Tip: put out your bin the night before for 7 a.m. pick-up.*

Final Plat Approval on Gem Lake Villas

A proposed development project in Gem Lake received final plat approval at the Gem Lake City Council Meeting on May 15. The project involves the construction of 30 villa style homes on land formerly owned by Tom Hansen on County Road E. The project has been named the "Villas of Gem Lake," and will be undertaken by Landmark of Gem Lake LLC.

The final approval follows over a year of discussion, meetings, public hearings and neighborhood gatherings. It also means that ground breaking can begin on the project, as is now evident to Gem Lake residents who travel down County Road E. The homes will be basically one level villa style structures with price points in the \$450-\$600k range. There will be a main entry point for the project at the intersection of English Street and County Road E. (continued on page 2)



Major Scheuneman Road Project Approved

An assessment hearing was held on May 15 at Heritage Hall to cover a road repair and water project planned for the Scheuneman Road business district in Gem Lake. The project includes extensive road reconstruction between Highway 61 and County Road E, and extension of sanitary sewer and a water main to the area.

An initial public hearing on the project was held in January, at which affected businesses in the area were able to attend and ask questions. This followed the presentation of a feasibility study on the project last November. After the January public hearing, the bidding process was authorized by the Gem Lake City Council and was conducted by Short Elliot Hendrickson (SEH), which acts as Gem Lake's city engineer. Bidding was opened on March 26 and closed on April 17.

At the May 15 public hearing, actual costs were presented and a winning bid was announced. A total of eight bids were received for the Scheuneman Road (continued on page 3)



Gem Lake Villas Project Approved (continued from page 1)

The project will feature municipal water and sewer. A service agreement to obtain water was negotiated with the City of Vadnais Heights. Grading is now underway and construction is expected to start sometime this summer if all goes as planned.

The Villas at Gem Lake will feature predominately one level living, although there will be some walk out models. Care will be taken to feature garages that are turned to one side, so the garage door doesn't dominate the street view of the home.

The road into the development will curve gently around to a cul-de-sac on the northwestern side of the 18.09 acre property. There will be several acres near the cul-de-sac that will be donated to the city as open space. This open space, which is already quite a wet area on the property, will contain one of the large drainage ponds.

The project planning happened over the course of many meetings and involved a variety of ideas on how the development would look. In the end, the private drive that runs to the east of the project, called Daniels Farm Road, will be left as is. Also, one of the historic horse jumps from Gem Lake's equestrian past will be preserved.

Also approved at the May 15 City Council meeting was the Developer's Agreement, which lays out expectations between the project developer and the city on such things as landscaping, irrigation, lighting and other subjects. A Homeowners Association document is in the process of being finalized.

Gem Lake Comprehensive Plan Nearly Completed

Gem Lake's 2018 Comprehensive Plan is nearing completion as of May, with a complete draft anticipated for review at the end of the summer. 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. To get the job done, the City of Gem Lake enlisted 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. SEH is also working on a city water plan, which will be presented in draft form soon. When a complete draft is ready for review, the public will be asked to participate with their feedback. Watch your newsletter and the website for more information.

Gem Lake Volunteers Sought

Two spots on the Gem Lake City Council will be up for election this fall. They are currently filled by Gretchen Artig-Swomley (completing her third term) and Len Cacioppo, who was appointed as an interim council member filling the spot vacated by Rick Bosak. To run for these positions, you must be a Gem Lake resident, be at least 18 years old and pay a \$2 filing fee with your application form. You can obtain the form and pay the fee at Heritage Hall. You can file for election for city council member between July 31 and August 14. The forms are also available online at the Ramsey County website.

VLAWMO Watershed Activity Report for 2018

2018 is an exciting year for our watershed – the Vadnais Lakes Area Watershed Management Organization (VLAWMO), because it's one year into our 10 year plan. At this one year mark, we now have a mixture of big dreams and some results to show. In addition to projects, we are making it easier for residents and community groups to be involved with watershed stewardship. Here is a summary of what to watch for the Spring and Summer:

1. The Whitaker Treatment Wetlands project is complete in White Bear Township. Located in the back of Columbia Park on Highway 96, this project is both an experiment and a water treatment tool. With three wetland cells, we're working with the University of Minnesota to test different materials for water filtration. As we conduct the tests through the cells, polluted stormwater runoff going into Whitaker Pond gets filtered and put back into ground water and Lambert Creek.
2. The Sucker Channel restoration at Vadnais/Sucker Lake Park, also right off Highway 96, is now complete and freshly planted. This project was a partnership between VLAWMO, St. Paul Regional Water Services and Ramsey County Parks.
3. Resident who have nearby storm drains can 'adopt-a-drain' to promote local water quality. This convenient, practical volunteer opportunity prevents excess nutrients, trash, and all sorts of other debris from entering our lakes and wetlands. Find out more on our website under "get involved—service opportunities."
4. Community groups and organizations can now rent educational tools and displays from VLAWMO. These tools are easy ways for anyone to be a water quality educator—just set up the display and let people interact with the content! Visit vlawmo.org under "get involved."

5. Do you have a raingarden and need a refresher course on maintenance? Curious about raingardens and want to know what they entail? VLAWMO is hosting a raingarden maintenance workshop on June 13 at 7:00 p.m. at the Vadnais Heights Fire Department, located at 3595 Arcade Street North. The workshop covers raingarden maintenance basics and includes stories and tips from residents who are actively involved in enjoying their own gardens.

A long-time favorite is the VLAWMO cost-sharing program, which is open to residents, businesses and community groups. These grants help cover costs for raingardens, native plantings, rain barrels and other water management best practices. Contact VLAWMO at 651-201-6070 or visit www.vlawmo.org for more information.

Scheunenman Road Project Approved (continued from page 1)

Project, ranging from \$509,039.15 to \$559,153. The engineer's estimate for the project was \$550,000, meaning assessed costs would potentially come in lower than the original estimates.

Several businesses in the area were able to attend the meeting and ask questions, as well as provide feedback. There were some concerns about the cost of the project, which will be assessed over a 15 year period.

After further discussion and evaluation, the Gem Lake City Council awarded the project to the lowest bidder—T.A. Schifsky & Sons, Inc.

Depending upon the weather, the project will begin around the 4th of July and will conclude around the end of August. Care will be taken to minimize disruption for affected businesses. Each business will also have some input on where the water main will intersect their property line.

City News Page

NewTrax is Hiring

Newtrax, Inc., your local nonprofit transportation provider is currently looking for full and part-time drivers, as well as full-time mechanics. If you are interested, please contact Patti at 651-846-9303 or visit www.newtrax.org.

Big Donation to White Bear Food Shelf

Proceeds from charitable gambling in Gem Lake have been donated in the amount of \$1,500 to the White Bear Lake Area Emergency Food Shelf to fund their children's summer food program. This program supplements nutritional needs during months when school lunches are not available. The decision was made by the City Council at the May 15 City Council meeting.

New Hours for Heritage Hall

Due to a lack of foot traffic during current business hours, the city council voted in February to streamline the hours and days that Heritage Hall will be open to the public. New hours will be Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The council will reevaluate later in the year to see if change is needed.

Selling Your Home?

If you are selling your home, be aware that you need to have a septic inspection. This applies to everyone. Whenever a property transfer occurs in Gem Lake and that property has a septic system, city ordinance 67D, page 20, requires that there be a septic inspection. If you have any questions about this policy, call Gloria Tessier at the number listed on page 6 of this newsletter.

Vintage Photos Sought

City Secretary Gloria Tessier and Council Member Gretchen Artig-Swomley are launching a project to build a historic photo database of Gem Lake pictures. Historic photos are being sought of the city and surrounding area. Long time residents are asked to look through those old photo albums for pictures of the Gem Lake of long ago. Your photos will be gently scanned and returned to you promptly. Please call Gloria or Gretchen at the numbers listed on the back page if you are the owner of any of these photo treasures.



New Guidelines for Meetings

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

Gem Lake's New City Clerk: Meet Tori Leonhardt

As of January of this year, Gem Lake has a new city clerk. Tori Leonhardt who has 20 years of government experience, replaces Bill Short, who acted as our city clerk for over ten years.

Both Tori and Bill are employees of White Bear Township and act in similar roles for the township. (Gem Lake contracts through White Bear Township for professional services, such as financial, building inspector, planning and administrative duties.)

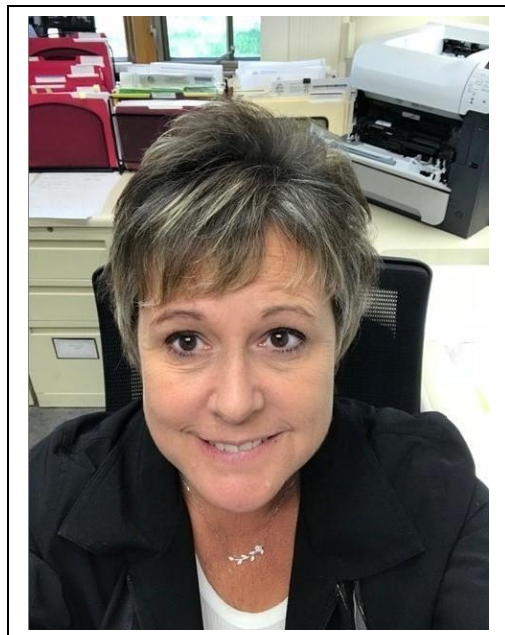
Tori has been a city clerk since 2012 and received her official certifications in 2015. The road to certification is not an easy one and involves many steps and a lot of specialized training. For instance, applicants must be a member of the International Institute of Municipal Clerks organization for a minimum of three years. You must also go through the organization's education/training program for three years at the University of St. Cloud and have an association's degree or educational credits to become a Certified Municipal Clerk. Tori received both these certifications in 2015.

During the past 20 years, Tori has worked on such projects as utility billing, building permits, zoning applications, accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll and administrative city clerk duties.

"Through the years, I found that I wanted to learn more and do more to understand the functions of municipal government."

Typical duties of a city clerk include things such as preparing agendas for meetings, taking minutes, signing official city documents and acting as the official keeper of public records.

Tori lives in St. Michael Minnesota with her husband of 30 years. She has two grown children; Jake, 26, works full time and is going to school for Cyber Security, and Jessie, 23, who is a commercial interior designer.



Tori and her husband are also the loving caretaker of a 15 year old dachshund and an 8 year old black lab. Tori loves to garden, decorate and shop for antiques.

"I have one goal for the City of Gem Lake. My goal is to apply my experience and knowledge to benefit the city and its residents. I strive to develop a deep understanding of the history and vision of the communities I work with."

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 and the "News and Updates" section.

We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.gemlakemn.org

Meetings: June and July of 2018

The following Gem Lake Meetings will be held at Heritage Hall in April and May of 2018:

June 5, 2018

Planning Commission Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

June 11, 2018

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

June 19, 2018

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

July 3, 2018

Planning Commission Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

July 9, 2018

City Council Workshop at 7:00 p.m.

July 10, 2018

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m. Please note that this date has changed from the previous schedule.

Your Gem Lake City Council

Bob Uzpen-Mayor

Phone: 651-492-5083

City Council Members:

Gretchen Artig-Swomley

Phone: 651-260-9742

Len Cacioppo

Phone: 651-796-3222

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

"Documents" and "News and Updates" 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

