

Gem Lake News

Gretchen Artig-Swomley, Newsletter Editor

Special Interest Articles:

- Deer Hunt Concluded
- Cadillac Dealership Coming
- City News Page 4
- New Golf Cart Ordinance

Upcoming Recycling Dates:

- December 4
- December 18
- *Tip: put out your bin the night before for 7 a.m. pick-up.*

Fire and Police Chiefs Give Updates

Both White Bear Lake Police Chief Julie Swanson and White Bear Lake Fire Department Chief Greg Peterson were on hand to give updates at the October 15 Gem Lake City Council Meeting.

Chief Swanson discussed recent efforts to bring attention to pedestrian safety. Several operations were mounted at various intersections to monitor cross walks and give citations, when needed.

She also discussed the use of body cameras by the department, as well as plans for some staff expansion and equipment upgrades.

Chief Peterson outlined his efforts to reorganize staff since taking on his job last September. These efforts included moving to more full-time EMT and paramedic staff, versus on-call employees, to improve service delivery. Also, he detailed plans to add a new ladder truck and other equipment in the year ahead.



Golf Cart Ordinance Approved for City Streets

An ordinance allowing for limited use of golf carts on several streets in Gem Lake was approved by the City Council at the October 15 Council Meeting,

The ordinance was developed by the Planning Commission over the course of the past several months, in response to increasing use of golf carts within city limits. Golf carts are generally not allowed on city streets anywhere, unless a city approves their use and spells out conditions under which they are permitted.

For instance, several cities around Gem Lake allow for very limited use of golf carts on one or two streets within their cities, typically where there is a golf course, or where there is a disabled person with mobility issues. A survey of over a dozen nearby cities was done by Gem Lake's city clerk in preparation for this effort.

There will be a variety of conditions on golf cart use.
(Continued on page 2)



Talking Trash: Increases in Fees Coming in 2020

Did you know that the average household produces about one ton of trash per year? Everything that you put in your trash cart is delivered to the Recycling & Energy Center (R&E Center) in Newport, MN, where it is processed to recover metals for recycling and make a renewable fuel used to generate electricity. By processing trash at the R&E Center, and through recycling, yard waste, food waste, and household hazardous waste collection programs, over 90% of waste in Ramsey and Washington counties is diverted from landfills.



In 2020, the R&E Center will be ending a subsidy and adjusting its rates. **For the average household, this may equate to an increase of about \$1.00-1.25 per month on your garbage bill.** The disposal cost (the fee haulers pay to deliver trash to the R&E Center) is approximately 1/3 of the total cost of garbage service (other costs include insurance, labor, fuel, trucks, etc.). If your bill is increasing by more than \$1.25 per month, this is likely due to other business factors for your hauler.

The fees paid by haulers to drop off garbage at a processing center are called “tipping” fees. In 2019, this fee was \$79 per ton at the R&E Center. This fee will rise to \$82 per ton in 2020 and \$84 per ton in 2021. Haulers are allowed to pass these increased costs onto customers. Previously, haulers could go to private landfills. Now all garbage in Washington and Ramsey Counties, must go the R&E Center.

Funds that previously subsidized waste management will be used to help residents, businesses, and the county better manage

waste, providing quality public service and protecting health and environment for current and future generations.

More Information

Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy
www.morevaluelesstrash.com/tipfees-rebates

Golf Cart Ordinance

(continued from page 1)

Gem Lake’s new ordinance allows for use of golf carts only on Scheueneman Road, Haven and Tessier (all city roads) by a licensed driver, who has obtained a city permit to operate the golf cart. There are other conditions placed on their use, such as the fact that the cart must have lights, turn signals, and must be operated in safe driving conditions for a golf cart. For more information contact Gloria Tessier at Heritage Hall.



2020 Fee Schedule Approved

Next year’s City of Gem Lake Fee Schedule was approved at the November 19 City Council Meeting. This schedule covers permits and other fees collected by the city for things like signage, roofing and other types of construction. The 2020 schedule includes only minor changes from the year before. For instance, a \$30 fee was added for the use of golf carts. Also, the contractor licensing term was changed from a calendar year license to one that covers a rolling 12-month period. Lastly, the roofing permit schedule was changed to a flat fee of \$125, rather than one based on job cost. A copy of the fee schedule is available at Heritage Hall.

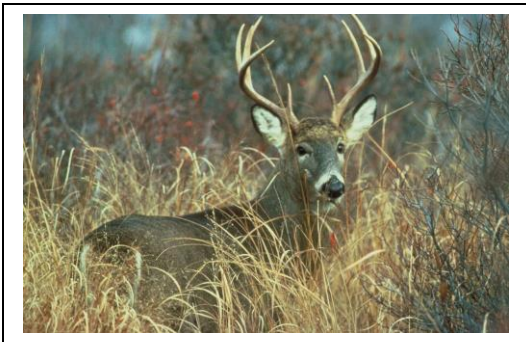
Gem Lake Deer Hunt Concluded Safely

The Gem Lake City Council approved an archery deer hunt permit at the October 15 City Council Meeting. The permit covered a hunt to be conducted during several weekends in late October and early November on private property on the south end of Gem Lake.

To obtain the permit, the property owner applicant, Anthony Scornavacco, was required to go through an extensive application process and obtain written permission to conduct the hunt from all adjoining property owners.

The hunt itself was conducted by trained and licensed bow hunters. Deer stands had to be diagramed in advance and all hunters were pre-identified.

According to the property owner, the hunt was safely concluded. A total of seven deer were eliminated, including four bucks and three does.



Snow Plowing Contract Finalized

A proposal for snow plowing services has been accepted by the Gem Lake City Council for the 2019-2020 snow season. The work will be contracted to T.A. Schifsky & Sons, Inc., which directs them to use the equipment necessary to take care of "snow events." Projected costs will be about the same as last year, depending upon snow totals. This season, plowing will be based on a 1" snowfall trigger. The contract covers city streets only (not Goose Lake Road), and was approved on November 19 at the council meeting.



Gem Lake Villas Project Nears Completion

The Gem Lake Villas Project on County Road E is nearing the full build out stage, according to Jim Moe of Coldwell Banker Burnet, which is handling property sales.

The project involves 30 villa style homes and was launched last year on land once owned by the Hansen family. There was one sale in September and two in October. "This leaves us with two remaining open lots and five spec homes under construction and for sale," said Moe.

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There are Rules About Where Your Snow Can Get Dumped

It is not permissible in Minnesota to plow your snow onto your neighbor's side of the street or into the roadway or ditches in general. This was the subject of several complaints last winter. Due to the heavy snowfall that occurred in 2018-2019, there were complaints of what we will call "unfair snow rearrangement." Last winter, some snow plowing ended up blocking several culverts. This prevented proper drainage and may have caused some flooding in yards and basements.

Intentionally plowing or blowing snow onto a public roadway or culvert which results in any dangerous condition is a violation of Minnesota Statute #169.42 and Gem Lake Ordinance 86.

School Board Referendum Certified

Voters in the White Bear Lake school system approved a \$326 Million referendum, the largest in Minnesota history, to cover the costs of building construction, renovations and upgrades in the years ahead. The election took place on November 5. The referendum passed by a margin of 57.40%. It is noteworthy that 42.60% of voters said no. The results come from the State of Minnesota, Secretary of State web-site. The referendum was requested by the Superintendent of School Wayne Kazmierczak to prepare for an expected surge in enrollment in coming years. The funds will cover the building of a new elementary school, security upgrades and other renovations to almost all existing schools, and the creation of a mega-school at the current north campus, that would server both junior and senior high grades.

Cadillac Project Set to Start in Spring

Some property clearing has begun on the south end of Gem Lake's business district in anticipation of the beginning of construction for a new Cadillac dealership.

Luther Cadillac is anticipated to begin major construction tasks next Spring or summer. The new dealership will be constructed on a parcel of land that spans two cities. The dealership sales and service building will be on Vadnais Heights land, while much of the north end of the parking lot will be on Gem Lake land.

Gem Lake's Third Quarter Recycling for 2019

A total of 91.37% of Gem Lake households participated in city wide recycling in the first three quarters of 2019. This is a significant percentage of the 290 possible pick up sites within the city, all remembering to put out their recycling containers every two weeks.

The results of our recycling efforts were impressive, according to a recent report by Waste Management. A total of 23.6 tons of materials were collected between January and September. This broke down into the following categories:

- *13.8 tons of newspaper
- *3.0 tons of glass
- *0.9 tons of aluminum and steel cans
- *3.3tons of cardboard and mixed paper
- *0.8 tons of plastic
- *0.2 tons of scrap steel
- *1.4 tons of residue

Residue refers to material that was put in the recycling container, but was not able to be recycled. (Remember, plastic bags don't belong in the recycling container and can cause a real problem at the recycling facility.) Watch your newsletter or the Gem Lake website for recycling dates.



Chloride: The Next Big Problem?

By Jim Lindner, City Council Member

On October 24, the 19th Annual Road Salt Symposium was held at Jimmy's Event Center in Vadnais Heights. The Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization (VLAWMO) sponsored the event and approximately 400 "Road Salt Professionals" (aka snowplow drivers) attended. Gem Lake council member Jim Lindner attended in his role as chair of the VLAWMO Board of Directors.

The focus of the event was to find creative ways to reduce road salt usage on winter roads yet maintain safe roads for all. Chloride is a contaminant that few people understand. At concentrated levels chloride poses dangers to fish and amphibians and thus poses a threat to the wildlife that feeds on aquatic life. Unlike other impairments to waters, chloride is a permanent threat. There is no natural way to remove chloride once it is in a water body. Chloride also accumulates in ground water, which represents a concern for wells, both public and private.

Road salt is not the only identified source of chloride. Agricultural run off and even water softeners release chloride into the environment. Chloride that enters storm sewers is discharged directly into rivers, which are often the source for municipal drinking water from Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico.

Statistics are staggering. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) has around 800 plow trucks with salt spreaders on Minnesota roads during any given snowstorm. Add county and municipal trucks and there are well over 1000 trucks spreading salt every time it snows. Even with reduction efforts in place, MNDOT alone used 246,000 tons of salt in the winter of 2018-19, a number that was down by 4900 tons of salt used the previous winter. All that salt is still in the environment accumulating in our lakes and rivers.

Thus the focus of the Road Salt Symposium. How can MNDOT and county/city public works departments reduce their dependency on salt? The presentations included efforts from MNDOT, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), the State of Wisconsin, and even the Mayo Clinic,

for private companies are also major consumers of road salt, all showing efforts to reduce salt consumptions. The University of Minnesota is conducting studies on possible alternative compounds, though these often are more costly and studies can take several years to achieve conclusive results.

In the meantime, organizations like VLAWMO and other public agencies will stress the importance of awareness level education on salt's environmental impacts. Even salting our back steps and driveways releases chloride. No one is suggesting we be unsafe; salt will always be needed to assure our travel routes are safe. But knowing that chloride does affect the health of the environment is a good starting point.

For more information, please visit <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/>.



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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.

We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.gemlakemn.org

Meetings: December 2019

The following Gem Lake Meetings will be held at Heritage Hall in December of this year.

December 3, 2019

Planning Commission Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

December 9, 2019

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

December 17, 2019

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

"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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