

Gem Lake News

Gretchen Artig-Swomley, Newsletter Editor

Special Interest Articles:

- Study Results Emerge
- Development Moratorium Extended
- City News Page 4
- County Commissioner Visits Gem Lake

Upcoming Recycling Dates:

- April 30
- May 14
- May 28

Development Study of Hoffman's Corner Area: Results Begin to Emerge

The City Council extended the temporary moratorium on the issuance of building permits for development in part of Gem Lake's Business District, to June 30, as initial results of a land use study begin to come in.

The original moratorium temporarily suspend development for four months, starting last December, to allow time for a professional city planning firm to study land use dynamics, comparable properties, and other subjects that would help make Gem Lake a more attractive option for developers.

Marc Putman of Putman Planning and Design was hired to conduct the study, and is focusing on the area east of Highway 61 and north and south of County Road E. **(Continued page 2)**



County Commissioner Huffington Attends Meeting

Ramsey County Commissioner Blake Huffman attended the Gem Lake City Council meeting on March 18 in order to bring citizens up to date on county initiatives.

Huffman gave a presentation on his five major priorities for the year ahead. These five areas included:

- Maintaining public safety
- Taking care of those in need
- Supporting private sector business growth
- Controlling spending, and
- Maintaining infrastructure

Regarding public safety initiatives, Huffman talked about recent work within the Sheriff's Office to reorganize departments, establish industry leading training standards and rebuild relationships in the community. In addition, the County Attorney's office has been focusing on **(Continued page 3)**



Development Study Results—Moratorium Extended to June 30

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The overall goal of the study is to enhance Gem Lake's ability to be more supportive of, and attractive to, investment, development, building and tenant-owner businesses.

Initial data put together by Putman was discussed at the City Council workshop on April 14 at Heritage Hall. His research included current local and area competitive land value information, traffic volumes for the area, and demographic information for people living within one, five and fifteen miles of Gem Lake's business district. One of the goals is to eventually present all relevant data in a "realtor-developer-broker friendly" format.

Although the process has just started, there were some initial conclusions discussed at the workshop.

They include:

- There are multiple areas in the vicinity of the business district that have impressive traffic volumes each day.
- There are several underserved consumer needs in the area that could possibly be served by businesses in the Hoffman's Corner area.
- The median home prices in the vicinity range around the \$250-275K mark
- The population is aging and may be looking for a range of housing, lifestyle options in the coming decade

The end result of all these efforts will be to find ways to make the Gem Lake business area more competitively attractive, when compared to other sites and cities, competing for a much reduced level of commercial development.

An important next step is to collect and analyze data obtained through a survey of residents and business owners within the city, which is now underway.



Marc Putman of Putman Planning and Design

Important Survey Coming Your Way

By now you have probably received an important survey from Marc Putman of Putman Planning and Design. Your input is very key, so please take a few minutes to fill it out and return it to him in the self addressed, postage paid envelope that was provided.

This survey seeks input for the development study Gem Lake is now conducting to help us grow the business district in ways that make sense for the community, and fit into the overall vision that citizens have for the city and its future.

If you have any questions, or didn't receive the survey, please contact Kiki Sonnen at Heritage Hall at 651-747-2790.

County Commissioner Lays Out Priorities

(Continued from page 1)

stopping sex trafficking and establishing veteran's court.

Taking care of those in need is a huge priority for the county. Huffman reported that nearly \$150,000 was provided last year to the White Bear Lake Area Emergency Food Shelf for remodeling and expansion purposes. The improvements allow the food shelf to better serve their growing client base.

A thriving business community is key to a healthy tax base, according to the commissioner. Efforts to redevelop the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP) are a great example of the county's focus on private sector business growth. Preliminary master plans call for about 170 acres of the site to be zoned commercial, creating about 4,000 quality jobs. The finished plan will also include a mix of housing options, as well as commercial and retail portions.

A fourth priority is to control spending on the county level. The key to this is to address the drivers of poverty, a leading expense in the county's annual budget.

At this time of year, maintaining infrastructure is always on everyone's minds and is one of Huffman's primary priorities. The county has a special hotline set up for reporting pot holes. That number is 651-266-7100. The past winter was especially tough on county roads and there are one or two pot holes that need fixing...

Also, there are just a couple (hahahhah) road construction projects planned for the northern suburbs. Here is a partial list of roads that will get some TLC:

- Lexington Avenue, between I-694 and County Road F
- Buffalo Street, between Highway 61 and Portland Avenue
- Centerville Road, between County H2 and County J
- County Road J, between Centerville Road and Otter Lake Road
- Hamline Avenue, between County Road F and Highway 96

- Hodgson Road, between County I and County J, and
- LaBore Road, between 1-694 and County Road E.

Blake Huffman plans to visit the Gem Lake City Council meetings several times a year. You are urged to get in touch with him anytime with your comments and suggestions. You can reach him at 651-266-8362.

Wine License Approved for Black Sea Restaurant



The Black Sea Restaurant, located on County Road E, is now able to sell wine as part of their menu. The popular Turkish restaurant open its second branch in our city last year.

The restaurant serves authentic Turkish food such as falafel, kebabs, hummus and other Mediterranean fare.

The Gem Lake approved their application for a wine license at its City Council Meeting on March 18. The application then went to the state for processing.

City News Page

Free and Low Cost Seminars: Landscaping, Shoreline Restoration and Raingardens

Two local organizations are sponsoring free or low cost seminars on ways to improve your yard and the quality of the ground water around you. Sessions on shoreline restoration, design and installation of a raingarden and other topics are open to the public, and will be held over the course of the next 6 weeks. Pre-registration is required. Here is a look at local sessions, along with contact information:

April 30—Shoreline Restoration—6:30-8:30

Do you live on a lake, pond or stream and want to create a shoreline that is not only gorgeous but will help protect the health of that water? If so, join us for a fun class and learn about how we have altered our shorelines over the years and what you can do to protect your land from eroding away. Have a beautiful mix of flowers and grasses to look at from your yard and from your boat, AND help keep geese from hanging out in your yard. The cost for this session is \$10. Held at Vadnais Heights Fire Station next to city hall. For more information contact Kristine Jensen at Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization (VLAWMO) at 651-204-6074 (Kristine.jenson@vlawmo.org)

May 8—Raingarden Site Assessment: Drainage and Soil—6:00-8:00 p.m.

Learn how to analyze your site, test for soil infiltration and determine your drainage area. Follow up this class by doing this assessment in your own yard and then bring the results to the next session, held May 20. The results will help with the design of your own raingarden. Taught by conservation designer specialist Joe Lochner, Ramsey County Conservation District. The May 8 session will be held at a private residence in Roseville. Directions can be obtained upon registration. Sponsored by the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District. For more on this free session contact Shelly Melser at 651-792-7965 or email to shelly.melser@rwmwd.org.

May 14—Design and Installation of Raingardens—6:30-8:30 p.m.

You've already learned the benefits of raingardens but now want to know HOW to actually install one on your property. Join VLAWMO at the Vadnais Heights Fire Station for the low down on how to get

started. You will get your hands dirty as you begin design work for a raingarden on your property. If you preregister and live within the VLAWMO area, your registration will include an aerial photo of your property, ready to use at the class. This will help determine where to put the raingarden in your yard, how to determine the types of soil you have and how to design and install the project. The cost is \$10 for the session. It is free if you attended an earlier session called Intro to Raingardens. To register contact Kristine Jensen at 651-204-6074. See email address at left.

May 20—Raingarden Design Workshop: Garden Layout and Plant Design—6:30-8:30

This session is sponsored by the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District as a companion seminar to the session held on May 8. (See left) This seminar is free but the first session is a pre-requisite. In this session you will use the information you gathered in your personal site assessment to design your own raingarden. Figure out how to resolve drainage issues and get the assistance of master gardeners and instructors. The class will be taught by conservation designer specialist Joe Lochner. Contact Shelly Melser for more information at 651-792-7965. See email address at left.

May 21—Maintenance of Raingardens and Shoreline Restorations—6:30-8:30 p.m.

Join VLAWMO at the Vadnais Heights Fire Station for a look at maintaining your landscaping projects. Once you've installed your raingarden or completed your shoreline restoration, there are things that must be done to make sure it looks beautiful and lasts for years to come. The session will be fun and interactive and will stress the basics you need to know to take care of your projects. You will learn about common weeds and how to identify them, as well as other general maintenance activities that will keep your yard looking beautiful for years to come. The cost of the session is \$5. Contact Kristine Jensen at 651-204-6074. Her email address is listed at left.

Some Types of Crime on the Rise in the Area

Despite our tranquil surroundings, we do have crime incidents in Gem Lake, and some types are on the increase. Our car dealerships experience some break-ins and other types of incidents.

Also, there have been several garage and car break-ins, or attempted break-ins, including one April 11.

Remember to keep your garage, house and car locked whenever you are not in immediate attendance. One recent attempted break-in happened when the homeowners were actually home!

Another reminder: be sure your house number is visible from the street. Seconds count in any emergency response.



Ramsey County Traffic Safety Initiatives

The Ramsey County Sheriff's Department hosted a Distracted Driving enforcement detail on Friday, April 11 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Ten officers focused their attention on Highway 35W in both directions from Highway 36 to County Road J, while two officers rode a full size 77 passenger school bus calling out violations to squads in the area. A photo journalist from KARE11 also rode on the bus for a portion of the shift.

The event netted the following results:

- 81 traffic stops
- 4 speeding citations
- 32 seatbelt violations
- 8 texting while driving citations
- 3 drivers cited for Driving After Revocation or Suspension
- 74 total citations issued

The City of Gem Lake

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Kiki Sonnen:
651-747-2790, or
Kiki.Sonnen@CO.RAMSEY.MN.US

We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.gemlakemn.org

Meetings: May and June 2014

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

May 6, 2014

Planning Commission at 7:00 p.m.

May 12, 2014

City Council Workshop at 7:00 p.m.

May 20, 2014

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

June 3, 2014

Planning Commission Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

June 9, 2014

City Council Workshop at 7:00 p.m.

June 17, 2014

City Council Workshop 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.

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