

Gem Lake News

Gretchen Artig-Swomley, Newsletter Editor

Special Interest Articles:

- *Water Project On Track*
- *Assisted Living Opens Near-by*
- *City News Page 4*
- *Mayor Sets Goals for 2016*

Upcoming Recycling Dates:

- *February 3*
- *February 17*
- *March 2*

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

Mayor Reflects on 2015, Looks Ahead

By Mayor Bob Uzpen

2015 was a good year for the City of Gem Lake and its council. Let's talk about money first. The budget came in with a surplus. This was due to a lot of cost saving measures and a special arrangement we made with the Presbyterian Homes. They used the city's line of credit for 2015, without the city going into debt, and they paid us a nice fee for it.

We used half of the budget surplus to pay down the tax levy and the other half to add to our reserve fund. We also saved the city over \$50,000 by refinancing the bond on the Heritage Hall debt. This savings will be realized in future years.

The largest project that we worked on in 2015 was to provide city water for the business district of Gem Lake.

(continued on page 2)



Water Project Moves Ahead-Construction in Spring

After numerous meetings, plans, specification reviews and contract negotiations, the City of Gem Lake voted to go ahead with its municipal water project for the city's business district.

Plans are now underway to begin construction in April of this year. Last fall, the Gem Lake City Council reviewed bids from several companies for the construction costs. Bids ranged from \$387,838 to \$629,700. The project was awarded to Dave Peterson Contracting, Inc., which constituted the lowest bid.

Part One of the project will bring water from White Bear under the railroad tracks near White Bear Floral and then across to the area around Waldoch Manufacturing and the nearby strip mall. Part Two of the project will bring water across County Road E to the area near Vera Auto Sales and then up Scheuneman Road towards Barnett Chrysler.



Mayor Reflects on Accomplishments for 2015, Looks Ahead to 2016 (continued from page 1)

While we were working with our City Engineers from the firm of SEH, we were also negotiating with White Bear Lake to buy water.

There were several designs for the water systems that the city council reviewed, which included running pipe under the railroad tracks. We moved ahead with the design, while working on the water contract. Both were completed in September.

Construction should start in April of this year. This is a great opportunity for land owners in the business district, and for the city. If land owners wish to sell their property at any time, they can now say they have city water and sewer, which developers want and will add to land values. This is a win/win situation.

The accounting firm of CliftonLarsonAllen audited the financial condition of the city in 2015 for the previous year. The city received a satisfactory rating, stating that Gem Lake is in a strong financial position, with adequate reserves.

Looking Ahead to 2016

Here are some goals for this year:

- *Complete the installation of water in the business district and create a billing system for it.
- *Help seek developers for those owners who want to sell their land and are compliant with our ordinances.
- *Clean up the Hunting Ordinance.
- *Possibly explore discussions with Vadnais Heights for water.
- *Close gaps within our ordinances.
- *Birkland property annexation to Gem Lake from Vadnais Heights.
- *Explore the issue of the social club on a property in the business district to determine if a zoning violation exists.

2016 Fee Schedule Approved

Gem Lake reviews and approves its schedule of fees each year and did so this January at the city council meeting on January 19.

There were several changes to the fee list, including revised septic/sewer charges, the elimination of fees for nonprofit agencies who file for a sign permit, and several other minor changes.

A complete fee schedule for 2016 can be obtained at Heritage Hall.

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.

Two Near-by Assisted Living Facilities to Open in 2016

Gem Lake residents considering assisted living options for themselves or family members will have two new options on their doorstep in 2016.

Gable Pines will open in Spring of 2016 and is located at 1260 County Road E East in Vadnais Heights, directly across the street from Gem Lake's southern border.

Gable Pines is being built as a "hospitality focused retirement living facility that will bring new dimension to senior living in the White Bear area." They are offering three levels of care, independent living, assisted living and memory care. Features include multiple dining options, a professional chef, a fitness studio, a salon and spa, and raised flower and vegetable planting beds.

According to their web-site, apartments will be available in eight different floor plans, from one to two bedrooms. All apartments are designed to include full kitchens, (except in memory care) washer/dryers, and many other options.

The entire facility has been designed for comfort, safety and convenience, right down to the heated indoor parking.

For more information, contact **Gable Pines** at 651-829-3171. Their e-mail address is info@gablepines.com.

The Waters of White Bear Lake will open sometime in 2016 and is located at 3820 Hoffman Road in White Bear, near the eastern border of Gem Lake.

This facility will be one of seven in the region under the same ownership. Various "Waters" senior living facilities are located in Edina, Oakdale, Plymouth, Rochester and Highland Park.

White Bear's building will be the company's newest. It will have feature "destination dining" with two on-site restaurants and an executive chef.

The Waters on-site spa and salon will give residents easy access to salon luxuries with a



full menu of services, including massage, skin treatments, hair and barber services, etc. Wellness support is also a part of the program at the spa, including reflexology and aromatherapy.

The motto at the Waters is "Where residents and their families are inspired to thrive." According to their web-site, they have elevated the industry standard for on-site care, with registered nurses available 24/7, if needed, and a nurse to resident ratio that outshines the national average. They bill themselves as a people centered approach that redefines the experience of senior living.

The facility will have three levels of care. Their hospitality care includes things like more thorough housekeeping, laundry and linen service and guest meals and accommodations. Their next level of care is home health care, which includes things like care coordination, diabetes management, incidental health care assistance, etc. Their memory care area will focus on warmth, wellbeing and security.

The Waters of White Bear Lake has worked hard to come up with a design that is reminiscent of a grand hotel, rather than an institution. For more information, contact Lia Hamilton at 651-600-8897.

City News Page

Coffee with a Cop

Continuing the community engagement experience of “Night to Unite,” the Sheriff’s Office, Patrol Division, held three “Coffee with a Cop” events in August, October and December. The goal of these events is to bring neighbors and deputies together in an informal, neutral space to chat.

The next “Coffee with a Cop” event is scheduled for Tuesday, February 16, from 9-10:30 a.m. at McDonald’s, 2260 Rice Street, Little Canada. (Just north of Highway 36.)

The December event in Arden Hills was featured in a news story on local cable CTV-15 program North Suburban Beat, December 7, 2015 edition: <https://vimeo.com/150921352>. “Coffee with a Cop” is a national initiative, supported by the United States Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Similar events are being held across the country to advance the practice of community policing, through improving relationships between law enforcement and community members, one cup of coffee at a time.

Crime Data Available On-Line

Ramsey County Crime data in contract cities can be found online in the near future, according to the Sheriff’s Office. Residents will be able to see crime data through an easy to use on-line crime map and analytics dashboard. The product, RAIDS (Regional Analysis and Information Data Sharing) Online, is free for the public to use. Access the tool at: <http://www.raidsonline.com/>.

At present, several police departments in the metro area are participating in this service, and the Sheriff’s office is scheduled to start using the tool in the first quarter of 2016.

It’s a Scam—Don’t Fall for it

The Minnesota Sheriff’s Association has informed the Ramsey County Sheriff’s Office that a scam using the company name of United Partners Outreach is calling citizens asking for donations on behalf of Sheriffs throughout Minnesota. Please get the word out that the Minnesota Sheriffs’

Association DOES NOT CALL ANYONE ASKING FOR DONATIONS AND DOES NOT AUTHORIZE ANY COMPANY TO CALL AND SOLICIT FUNDS. Please do not fall victim to this scam, or others like it.

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.

Flushable Wipes Might Not Be

Although thinking about your septic system might not be your favorite subject, making the right decisions can save you money. Many personal hygiene wipes and cleaning products that are being marketed as flushable, really aren’t. No matter what a label says, the only items you should flush are human waste and toilet paper. Just because something disappears down your toilet doesn’t mean it won’t cause a problem in your sewer pipes or your septic system. Items labeled as “flushable” or “disposable” (even the bio-degradable ones) can get caught on roots in the sewer pipes and contribute to blockages, back-ups and overflows. Do yourself a favor and put these items in the trash. Enough said.

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.

Gem Lake Liquor /Charitable Gambling/Tobacco Licenses Approved

Applications for Liquor and Charitable Gambling and Tobacco licenses were reviewed and approved at the Gem Lake City Council Meeting on January 19.

Prior to the meeting, all applicants had submitted certificates of insurance, paid the appropriate fees, passed business license inspections and background checks conducted by the Ramsey County Sheriff's Department. As a result, the following licenses were approved for the 2016 calendar year:

Country Lounge was approved for on sale and off sale liquor licenses, Sunday liquor sales, 2:00 closing for liquor sales, charitable gambling (pull-tab sales) and tobacco sales.

The Gem Lake Hills Golf Course was approved for on sale and Sunday liquor sales.

Black Sea Restaurant was approved for an on sale liquor license (wine and beer).

Café Cravings was approved for an on sale liquor license (wine only).

Appointment List Approved

As required by state statute, the City of Gem Lake formally appointed individuals and organizations to various city positions for 2016 at the January City Council Meeting. This included things like appointing a back-up mayor, so meetings could be conducted in the mayor's absence. Some appointments are required by law, such as the city clerk, the city treasurer, the back-up mayor, and believe or not, a weed inspector.

Other positions or appointments are usual and customary to assign to someone to once a year in January. This would include things like naming an auditor, a sewer inspector, a building inspector, etc. With the exception of services the City contracts for, such as fire, law enforcement, zoning administration, animal control, city clerk, etc. most positions are what you call honorary, meaning there is no pay what so ever...



Some highlights of the appointments include the following:

City Clerk: William Short of White Bear Township

City Treasurer: Thomas Kelly of White Bear Township

City Engineers: Short Elliot Henderson (SEH)

City Attorney: Kelly & Lemmons, P.A.

Zoning Administrator: Robert Uzpen

City Code Enforcement Officer: Michael Johnson of White Bear Township

Representative to the Ramsey County

Sheriff's Department: Faith Kuny

City Emergency Services Director: Jim Lindner

Ramsey County League of Local

Government Representative: Faith Kuny

Back up Mayor: Gretchen Artig-Swomley

Assistant Weed Inspector: Jim Lindner

A complete list of city appointments can be obtained at Heritage Hall.

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: February and March 2016

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

CANCELLED

7:00 p.m.

February 16, 2016

City Council Meeting at
7:00 p.m.

March 15, 2016

City Council Meeting at
7:00 p.m.

February 2, 2016

Planning Commission
Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

March 1, 2016

Planning Commission
Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

February 8, 2016

City Council Workshop at
7:00 p.m. MEETING

March 14, 2016

City Council Workshop at

Your Gem Lake City Council

Bob Uzpen-Mayor

Phone: 651-492-5083

Jim Lindner

Phone: 651-429-7597

news section.

City Council Members:

Gretchen Artig-Swomley

Phone: 651-260-9742

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

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

Rick Bosak

Phone: 651-426-9695

Faith Kuny

Phone: 612-718-4316

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

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

