

Gem Lake News

Gretchen Artig-Swomley, Newsletter Editor

Special Interest Articles:

- Villa Development Progress
- New Council Member
- City News Page 4
- Gloss Gallery has Grand Opening

Upcoming Recycling Dates:

- *March 28*
- *April 11*
- *April 25*
- *May 9*
- *Tip: put out your bin the night before for 7 a.m. pick-up.*

Gem Lake Villas Project Gains Plat Approval

A proposed development project in Gem Lake received preliminary plat approval at a special meeting of the Gem Lake City Council on March 7. 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 preliminary approval follows over a year of discussion, meetings, public hearings and neighborhood gatherings. 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)



Interim City Council Member Appointed

Gem Lake resident Len Cacioppo has been appointed to the position of Interim City Council Member, effective with the March City Council Meeting. Len will be filling the remainder of the term of Rick Bosak, who resigned a number of months ago. He will be officially sworn in on March 20 and will serve out the remainder of the term, which is up for election on November 6.

Len moved to Gem Lake in February of 2015 and served for a short time on the Gem Lake Planning Commission. He has a background in Information Technology and Commercial Real Estate. "As a commercial appraiser, I had to establish the highest and best use of a property. I had a license on the line, and it depended a lot on how I interpreted parts of various zoning codes. I feel I am good at that kind of work." Len looks forward to playing a role in helping the city move forward as various parcels begin to be developed. He feels his past experiences will help him take a global view of how each project fits, or doesn't fit into the future Gem Lake. Welcome to Len!



Gem Lake Villas Project Approved (continued from page 1)

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.

Various other ideas were considered, such as a park, but were nixed. A trail through the open space was considered also, but that idea is on hold for now.

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



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.

Recycling Efforts in Gem Lake are Impressive

A total of 31.5 tons of recycling materials were picked up in Gem Lake in 2017, according to an annual report by Waste Management of Minnesota.

The majority of material collected was newspaper, At 19.7 tons. This was followed by 4.3 tons of glass, 1.3 tons of aluminum and steel cans, 4.7 tons of mixed paper, 1.2 tons of plastic and .3 tons of scrap metal and other.

Gem Lake residents have a 92.2% participation rate in the single sort recycling program.

Gloss Gallery Has Gem Lake Grand Opening

The Gloss Gallery, Gem Lake's newest business, had its grand opening and ribbon cutting on March 7. The art gallery is located at 1581 County Road E, next to the Black Sea Restaurant.

The gallery and gift shop features a variety of local artists, as well as art and jewelry from the Republic of Georgia, where gallery manager Giorgi Gochitashvilli is originally from.

Featured in the gallery are paintings, textiles, home décor, jewelry, gifts and other splendid items.

Gochitashvilli currently runs nearby Vera Auto Sales, which is several doors down from the gallery. Stop by and give it a look!



Photo above shows Gochitashvilli (at right) receiving a certificate of welcome White Bear Lake Chamber of Commerce.

Trash to Treasure Day— April 28

Gem Lake will once again be joining in a popular event held annually in White Bear Township, when it holds its own "Trash to Treasure" Day on Saturday, April 28.

This fun event is the ultimate in recycling. Residents put out items on the curb or at the end of their driveway that they are trying to pass on to someone else (also known as getting rid of), with a sign on it that says "FREE."

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 this 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 attractive lawn ornaments that you do want to keep.

Gem Lake Scholarship Program

The Gem Lake Scholarship Program was started in 2010 to provide funds to graduating high school seniors for their post-secondary education. In its eight year existence, the program has awarded between \$500-\$1000 to a variety of Gem Lake students. 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. Graduating seniors obtain information and application forms through their guidance counselors at school.

If, and when the City receives any applications they are reviewed by the City Council, with awards being announced in May. The program is funded through charitable gambling receipts. Applicants must be in their senior year and residents of Gem Lake.

City News Page

New City Clerk Appointed

A new city clerk was appointed by the Gem Lake City Council at their meeting on February 20. Tori Leonhardt will serve as City Clerk as of March 1, replacing Bill Short, who acted in the role for many years. Both Leonhardt and Short work for White Bear Township, through which the city of Gem Lake contracts for professional services such as these. The new city clerk will be sworn in on March 20 at Heritage Hall, as part of the next City Council Meeting. At that time, Short will also be formally acknowledged for his many years of working with the City.

Contribution Made to Willow Lane Elementary

Proceeds from charitable gambling in Gem Lake have been donated in the amount of \$3,200 to the Willow Lane Elementary School. This decision was made on February 20 by the Gem Lake City Council. The council has instructed the school to give \$200 to each teacher to be used for school supplies.

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.

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 web-site.

Liquor License and Tobacco Sale Approvals

Annual licenses for liquor and tobacco sales were approved for several Gem Lake businesses at the January 16 City Council meeting. Black Sea Restaurant was approved for a liquor license renewal, as was Gem Lake Hills Golf Course. The Country Lounge was approved for a liquor license, as well as licenses for charitable gambling and tobacco sale.

Vintage Photos Sought

City Secretary Gloria Tessier and Council Member Gretchen Artig-Swomley are launching a project to build a historic photo database on Gem Lake. 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.

Calls for Service to Date from White Bear Police

During the first two months of the year, the White Bear Lake Police Department was very active in providing general patrolling all through Gem Lake, according to detailed reports produced monthly for the Mayor.



The majority of their calls for service or logged incidents were traffic stops, eight false alarm calls, some medical assistance, three car accidents and two DWI citations.

During the two month period, there was also one reported burglary, one incident of theft from a trailer, one reported auto theft and one incident of vandalism. Other calls for service included six reports of suspicious activity and one animal control call.

Pothole Problems?

If you see a pothole in Ramsey County that needs some attention, you can take advantage of the pothole reporting feature on the Ramsey County Web-site. Go to www.ramseycounty.us and put the word pothole in the search line. It will bring you directly to a screen entitled "Report a Problem." Then you select an issue and give the location. One person in our community who took advantage of this easy reporting tool saw the crew repairing the pothole the very next day.

Scheuneman Road Repair Project Update

The bidding process has been authorized by the Gem Lake's City council for a road reconstruction project on Scheuneman Road between County Road E and Highway 61. The project also includes the strategic extension of sanitary sewer and a water main to this area. The bidding process will be conducted by Short Elliot Hendrickson (SEH), which acts as Gem Lake's city engineer. Bidding will be open on March 26 and will close with the selection of a bidder on or around April 17.

There was a public hearing on the project on January 16 in which several of the affected businesses were able to attend. This followed a presentation of a feasibility study on the project, which occurred in November of 2017.

The next step in the process will be to conduct an Assessment Hearing, which is scheduled for April 17. At this meeting, it is anticipated that true costs for property owner will be able to be presented and reviewed.

If approved, the project will take about three months to complete, with a proposed start date of early summer.



The City of Gem Lake

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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: April and May of 2018

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

April 3, 2018

Planning Commission Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

April 9, 2018

City Council Workshop at 7:00 p.m.

April 17, 2018

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

May 1, 2018

Planning Commission Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

May 14, 2018

City Council Workshop at 7:00 p.m.

May 15, 2018

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Your Gem Lake City Council

Bob Uzen-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.

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