



Ben Younan and his daughter Sofia enjoy an evening out on the ice carousel before it froze back up.

MAGIC ON THE ICE

Lake Nokomis ice carousel brings neighbors together

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

In the darkest time of the year, an ice carousel brought magic to Lake Nokomis.

Fashioned by Ben Younan with help from others, the ice carousel was located just beyond the Little Free Ice Rink on the east side of the lake near 54th and Woodlawn, south of the rocky point.

"The atmosphere was magical!" said Younan. "We had people from all over come out to see what was going on and say hello. Passersby, old friends, new neighbors, and anyone else interested."

He added, "There was a guy who came to help who had relocated to Minnesota during the pandemic and hadn't found any good opportunities to meet people. He ended up coming out for most of the days we were out, joining in broomball, set-up and clean up, and now we've become friends."

Younan, who is a local real estate agent with his own boutique agency, ToFT Realty, posted a couple of photos on social media, and it spread from there as many others posted images, too. There were actually two carousels, one on Jan. 15 and the other, larger one, on Jan. 28-31.

"The whole spirit of the project was to make people smile. Everyone was welcome, everyone was happy."

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People's Petition would change policing

Yes 4 Minneapolis works to get 12,000 signatures to put question on ballot

By JILL BOOGREN

There are a lot of ways to spend a day when windchills are blowing in the subzero digits. Standing on a sidewalk gathering signatures isn't likely to make anybody's Top 5 list. Yet on Feb. 13 and 14, 2021, people – those holding the clipboards and those who came to sign – spent the coldest afternoons of the winter doing exactly that.

Taking place outside in front of Moon Palace Books and the Midtown Farmers Market on Minnehaha Ave., the petition drive was the launch of Yes 4 Minneapolis, a people's petition to place a charter amendment on the November ballot that would replace the Minneapolis Police Department with a new Department of Public Safety. And people arrived by car, on foot and even by bike to sign.

"I'm here 'cause I wanna see some reform, more than reform. I want to completely change the Minneapolis Police Department 'cause I think we definitely need it," said Ellen Wiederhoeft after signing the petition.

PEOPLE'S PETITION >> 5

RELATED Nine months in: Where is the city on police reform? >> 3



Community Activist Julia Johnson holds a sign for visibility during Yes 4 Minneapolis outdoor event on Feb. 13 and 14, 2021 to sign the people's petition. "This is a historic moment where the community is able to decide the future of Minneapolis community safety systems. I'm really excited for the wonderful ideas that we're gonna bring forward as we develop these new public safety measures." (Photo by Jill Boogren)

Lake St. businesses discuss what to do in uncertain times, ask if they will be on their own

Is Round Two coming?

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

Should Longfellow businesses board their windows and doors again prior to the start of the Derek Chauvin trial?

Should they plan to stay overnight at their business?

How will the city balance the right to protest with protecting local buildings from fire and looting?

What is the city doing to keep people informed? What platforms are being used for communication?

Will the Longfellow area, and particularly the space around the Third Precinct, be a place protestors return to?

Various meetings in February gave business owners a chance to ask questions, connect and plan ahead before the March 8 jury selection begins in the trial of former police officer Derek Chauvin, who is charged with murdering George Floyd in front of the Cup Foods at

38th and Chicago.

The Longfellow Business Association Board met on Feb. 10, 2021, discussed how to prepare for this uncertain time, and followed it up with emails.

"Many of you had businesses damaged or were sleeping there overnight. Many of you have trauma. Whether there's unrest again, feeling a sense of security and knowing you've done what you can to prepare will help," observed Kim Jakus of the Longfellow Business Association (LBA).

As of that meeting, no one from the city had reached out to the LBA and its member businesses in an area hit hardest by fire and property damage last summer. Business owners expressed their surprise and disappointment about that, and questioned whether they would be on their own again.

ROUND TWO? >> 13

What to expect:

- A combination force of police officers and National Guard members will be stationed at various area. Locally, these may include E. Lake St. and Hiawatha, and E. Lake St and Chicago.
- A curfew may be ordered.
- Roads may be blocked off and closed.
- Fencing will go up and down in parts of downtown Minneapolis and other locations.
- The Government Center downtown will not be handling any other business but the trial starting on March 8. Use alternative sites if you need to get tabs, record deeds or other business.
- Sixth St. S. will be closed to pedestrians and vehicles near the Hennepin County Courthouse beginning March 1.

Dates to remember:

- March 8: Jury selection begins
- March 29: Trial starts
- End April: Trial will likely end

MPD prepares for Derek Chauvin trial

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

What can South Minneapolis expect from the police department and city when the Derek Chauvin trial begins?

MPD Chief Medaria Arradondo other members of his staff connected with people during a meeting organized by the Lake Street Council on Thursday, Feb. 18, 2021.

"You all have been the soul of Lake Street. This year has been an incredible test," Lake Street Council Executive Director Allison Sharkey remarked to the 155 people who attended the Zoom meeting. "I can't tell you how thankful I am that you all have continued to be here."

"We are working to move the police department forward in creating a new MPD," said Chief Arradondo as he began the update.

MPD PREPARES >> 13



Doors open at Black Table Arts, a new co-op for the arts along Minnehaha

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Buying and selling a home in the time of COVID-19

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DOORS OPEN AT BLACK TABLE ARTS

Coop gives Black artists a place to come together and share what is theirs

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Black Table Arts (BTA) is a new cooperative for Black artists in the heart of south Minneapolis.

The shared, creative workspace, performance space, community gathering area, and book store is, in the words of founder and executive director Keno Evol, "unapologetically Black."

Evol is a lifelong south Minneapolis resident. He has spent years advocating for arts literacy as a poet, writing instructor, and spoken word artist. He said, "I've been working toward opening BTA as a physical space since 2015. It's a continuation of the work I've done for years around political engagement, the creative arts, and Black joy."

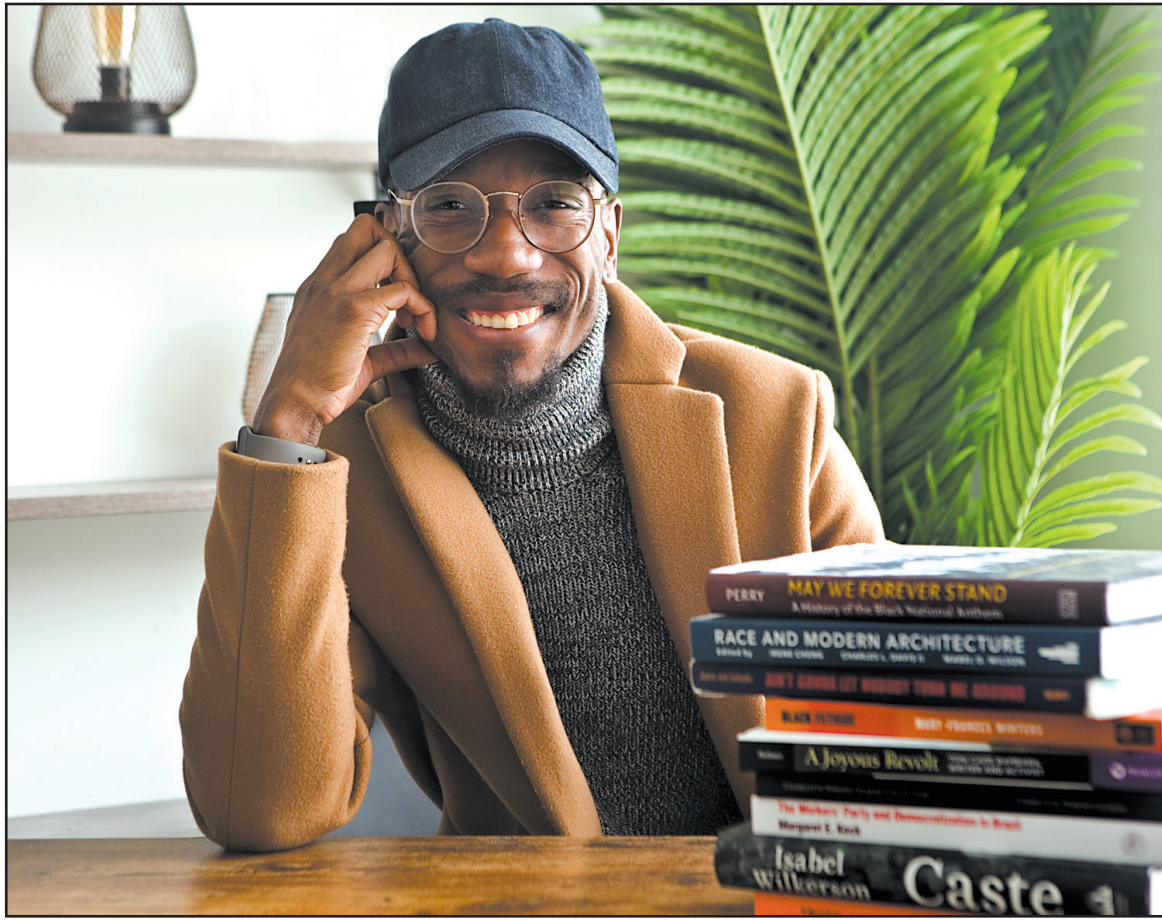
In this time of racial reckoning across America, Evol said, "There aren't nearly enough Black artist spaces. Black people need safe places where we can gather to laugh out loud – while working steadfastly to create the world we want to live in."

Black abundance

The name Black Table Arts was chosen because it speaks to a value and a history of Black culture: of coming together around a table to share what is there.

Evol explained, "We chose the cooperative economic model for BTA because we know we are stronger together. Historically, co-ops have been a way for people to respond to an economic need through mutual aid – not just to survive, but to thrive."

He continued, "We are excited to welcome Black artists into our membership family. For community members who want to support our work who aren't Black, consider sponsoring a Black artist for membership who couldn't otherwise afford it. We anticipate many events post-COVID-19 that will be open to



Founder and executive director Keno Evol said, "We recognize at Black Table Arts that art is fun, art is joyful, and it keeps our imaginations alive in the work of community organizing." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

the public, and our book store will be a community resource for all to enjoy."

Benefits of membership

Individual members have access to the 1,800-square-foot co-working space, podcast recording studio, community gathering area, performance space, and outdoor patio. Amenities include free wifi and IT support, use of MacBook desktop computer and iPads, noise canceling headphones while working, free color printing and copying, book

store discount, office supplies, and more.

The model is Pay-What-You-Can, with a suggested minimum donation of \$10 a month (both for members and for sponsoring members).

Membership for local businesses starts at a flat rate of \$150 a month, with scholarships available. Staff will help coordinate use of BTA book store, private offices, and conference room for product display, events, and social networking opportunities as needed.

Location with purpose

It's no accident that BTA is located just seven blocks from the Third Precinct Police Station. Evol explained, "In the aftermath of George Floyd's murder, we got a lot of relational and financial support. As artists, we bring imagination and empathy to all of the community organizing work that we do. We believe it is vitally important to have artists, and especially poets, in close proximity to where things go very wrong in the world."

He continued, "Art and art-

ists keep the enthusiasm of protest alive. Art makes people want to stick around. It motivates people to ask more questions, and links the heart to the mind. It gets you to think about power relationships, and to ask yourself, 'How can I be part of making sure people are treated fairly?'"

The BTA team looked at three different properties for their brick and mortar location, and ended up choosing the building at 3737 Minnehaha Ave. It was the last property they saw, and was in the roughest shape. Evol said, "There were no floors and no ceilings, but the landlord was very interested in having us. We could see it happening here."

A more equitable world

A core belief at BTA is that art makes organizing possible. Without creativity, organizing doesn't have the breath to sustain itself, according to Evol. BTA is bringing Black artists and community members together to organize for better Black futures. Evol said, "It's the artists who keep their eyes on the ball. We can't get distracted by the circus of politicians. With abundant thinking, cooperation, and solidarity, we are organizing toward a more equitable world. If we believe that 'We got us,' then we're good."

Beginning March 1, member hours will be 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day. Email blacktablearts@gmail with questions, and visit www.blacktablearts.com. The book store will be open to the public with the same hours. Inventory will include Black writers, Black history, and cultural/artistic production across different media.

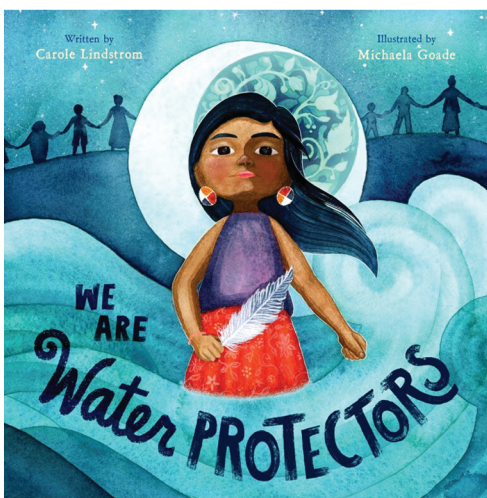
BTA is hosting an extended grand opening celebration Thursday, Feb. 25 through Sunday, Feb. 28. COVID-safe protocols will be in place.

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Nine months in: where's the city on police reform?

By JILL BOOGREN

In June 2020, two weeks after George Floyd was killed by Minneapolis police sparking a global uprising, nine city council members stood on a stage above huge, bold letters that spelled "DEFUND POLICE" and pledged to a crowd of thousands at Powderhorn Park a year-long commitment to reimagine public safety. The next day, Mayor Jacob Frey called "for massive, structural and transformational reform of a police department that has failed Black and Brown people for generations."

Change was coming.

Now nine months later and mere weeks before Derek Chauvin's trial begins, what, if anything, has changed?

"Nothing has changed that would change the conditions that led to Derek Chauvin putting his knee on George Floyd's neck," said Michelle Gross, co-founder of Communities United Against Police Brutality (CUAPB). "We were the epicenter of police protests for this country and our city has not managed to change one single thing that would prevent another George Floyd."

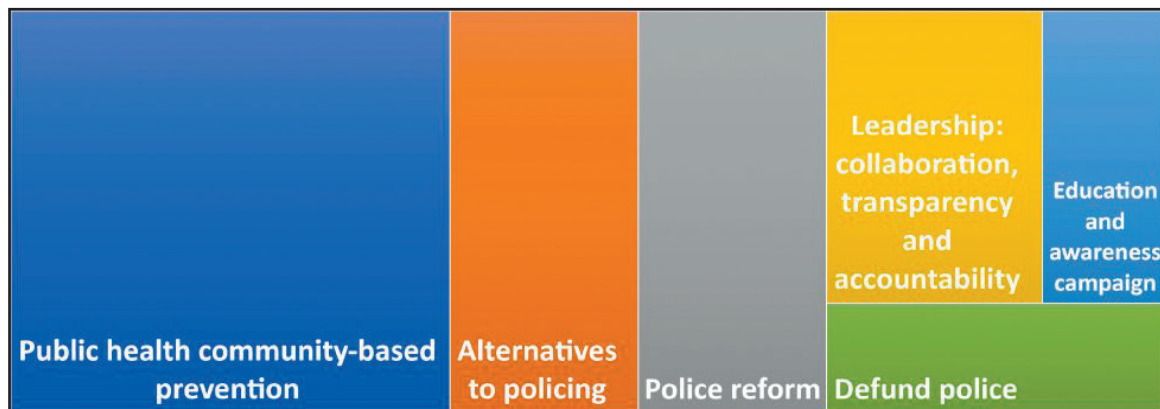
With two decades of research and advocacy work in police brutality and police accountability, Gross knows a lot about best practices and steps that can be taken to move in a better direction. First and foremost is to change the culture within the department.

"It's job one of the top leaders of any organization in managing the culture of that organization to outline what they expect," said Gross. "You have to address the conduct that you don't want to see, and you have to reward the conduct you do want to see."

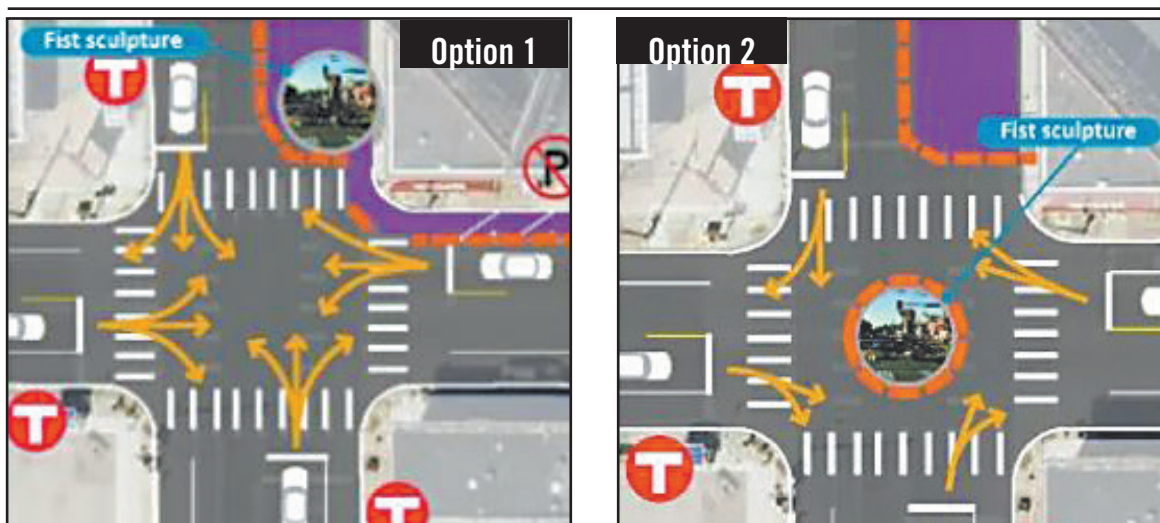
This means the police chief has to be serious about discipline, and sergeants and lieutenants – the others in charge – need to be trained to be good managers, according to Gross. Better practices also need to be in place so that when something goes into arbitration, discipline sticks. The vast majority of disciplines don't stick, which, as Gross pointed out, is often due to poor documentation, failure to engage in "progressive discipline" (clarifying each next step if an employee fails to correct a problem) and inconsistency. To ensure discipline is upheld, Gross calls for implementing a "disciplinary reset," in which the chief effectively says, "From here on out, this is the way things are going to be."

After George Floyd was killed, CUAPB published a set of actions, including the above, that could be immediately taken by the mayor and city council to improve policing and hold officers accountable. One recommendation is to downsize MPD and redirect the funds to more appropriate responders. This is in keeping with preliminary findings from the city's Community Safety survey, in which respondents believed by the highest percentages that someone other than the police should respond to people experiencing homelessness (85%) and mental health crises (79%).

Another is to implement an early intervention system to



The figure at top shows themes identified by stakeholders as priority solutions for transforming community safety. Below are city of Minneapolis design options for the intersection at 38th St. and Chicago Ave. Option 1 relocates the fist north on Chicago. Option 2 creates a roundabout around the sculpture. Each option preserves as public space the site where George Floyd took his last breath.



address problem officers early. "Such a system would have flagged Derek Chauvin long before he had the chance to kill George Floyd and would have prevented the department from using him as a training officer," reads the document.

Bystander intervention training could also be implemented to enable officers to step in and prevent their partner – even when it's a supervisor or senior officer – from doing something "harmful or career ending."

And new civilian oversight could be created that would replace the current Office of Police Conduct Review. According to data collected by CUAPB, of 3,133 community complaints over an eight-year period, just 13 were disciplined – a rate of less than one half of one percent, much, much lower than the national average of 7-8%.

These are just a few of the actions CUAPB recommends the city take. CUAPB also published a detailed document, endorsed by nine local coalition partners, outlining 44 reforms the city and state could take to end police violence. These documents are posted on their website at cupab.org.

Another coalition, Yes 4 Minneapolis, just started a petition to amend the City Charter to replace the police department with a public safety department (see people's petition article on page 1).

"Here's the deal. There are a lot of different groups working on police accountability issues. We don't necessarily all agree on how to get things done. The bottom line is something has got to get done," said Gross. "We cannot continue to operate the way we have been. It's just not tenable."

Engaging community

Many months after their declarations of transformational

change, the city has now begun its process of engaging community.

The first attempt at citywide outreach began in November, with the aforementioned online Community Safety survey and a requested turnaround time of just a few weeks. Due to low participation, especially among Black, Indigenous and People of Color respondents, survey availability has been extended through the end of March.

Interviews are also being held with stakeholders and focus groups. According to Jennifer White, community and inter-agency engagement manager in the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP), about 200 participants have been engaged during the first phase of this outreach. Some priority solutions were identified in these interviews, with the top three being public health community-based prevention, alternatives to policing, and police reform.

Though not part of the city's community engagement process, CUAPB held five outdoor, socially-distanced public meetings of their own (the city now has a meeting-in-a-box option for groups to conduct their own sessions and submit results) and are still soliciting community feedback through their People's Floyd Commission Testimony (available on their website).

The OVP Transforming Community Safety process will continue their outreach and then make suggestions available to the public for feedback in May. This will in turn inform recommendations that will go to city council members in July. According to OVP Director Sasha Cotton, these will not be specific policy recommendations.

"We're going to give them information to inform their policy decisions, but we're not going to tell them what the policies

should be," she said.

An online informational meeting will be held March 2 at 6 p.m. (details are on the city calendar). Cotton encourages people to get involved: check the website (www.minneapolismn.gov/community-safety/), take the survey, and use the meeting-in-a-box toolkit to conduct a meeting.

"We really want as wide an array of opinions as possible," said Cotton. She expects conversations to continue after recommendations are published this summer. "This has to be an ongoing conversation. This is the biggest, most important thing the city is doing right now. It can't be shrunk down."

As part of this process, the city is also researching measures that have been implemented elsewhere in the country.

Some cities are taking bold actions. USA Today reported that the city of Denver, Colo., sent mental health professionals instead of police officers to hundreds of calls during the last half of 2020, a program they plan to expand for 2021. The Austin City Council in Texas voted on Feb. 4 to use funds from the police budget to purchase a hotel that will provide permanent supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness. And just over the river, the St. Paul City Council passed a resolution in January to create a reparations commission to help address equity and wealth disparities faced by Black residents.

Not going back to normal

Meanwhile in Minneapolis, as the world watches for sweeping change, Mayor Frey and city leaders turned their attention to a single intersection. They called a press conference on Feb. 12 to announce plans to reopen the intersection at 38th and Chicago after the Derek Chauvin trial. They are issuing another survey,

this one to residents and businesses in the immediate neighborhood to find out which of two design options they prefer – each one keeping the iconic fist sculpture.

"We are not going back to normal at that intersection," said Mayor Frey, stating that it should remain a center for racial healing and justice. City leaders promised a \$10 million investment in the neighborhood and referenced a workforce center focused on youth, although no specifics were given.

The mayor repeatedly promised "enhanced" or "robust" city services but offered no specifics as to what would be improved, nor examples of access having been impeded. In terms of emergency response, Police Chief Medaria Arradondo said that "it's obviously better to have an intersection that's widely open," but he did not suggest that access to the intersection has been prevented. In fact, a widely shared video from Feb. 1 shows three squad cars speeding around the fist sculpture in pursuit of a vehicle. Another shows a dozen squad cars that had entered the Square in December, allegedly in pursuit of a person on foot.

Interim Public Works Director Brette Hjelle said public works has been providing services since last spring, including traffic signs and barricades, while preserving emergency and service vehicle access.

"We have been providing regular solid waste services to the memorial area and to the homes in the area, and we've also been providing snow and ice control this winter," said Hjelle. "Services will continue."

"All they can talk about is taking down the barricades at George Floyd Square," said Gross, in a conversation prior to this press conference. "Not address community concerns that caused the barricades to be put there."

Community members at George Floyd Square, meantime, continue to Meet on the Street twice daily, at 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. On Feb. 21, they held an event commemorating Malcolm X along with a "GFS Liberation Loppet" in honor of Arctic explorer Matthew Henson. A Global Day of Prayers for Justice for George Floyd and Black Liberation will be held on March 8, the day the Chauvin trial begins.



People are invited to show support for George Floyd Square and the 24 demands for justice outlined in Resolution 001 with a "No Justice No Streets" yard sign. Featuring artwork by Kenneth Caldwell, signs can be reserved at bit.ly/GFS_Yard-Signs and will be available the first week of March.

WARD 11 CANDIDATES DISCUSS PUBLIC SAFETY IN MINNEAPOLIS

A brief overview

On Jan. 28, Ward 11 Council member Jeremy Schroeder, along with Ward 4 Council member Phillipe Cunningham and Ward 3 Council member Steve Fletcher formally introduced language for their Transforming Community Safety Charter Amendment, which would empower voters to decide on the future of public safety system in Minneapolis on

this November's ballot.

The Transforming Public Safety Charter Amendment would establish in the City Charter a new Department of Public Safety, mirroring the structure of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. This new city department would oversee and lead a continuum of public safety efforts that prevent, intervene in, and reduce crime and violence to create safer

communities for everyone in Minneapolis. The amendment would remove the Police Department as a charter department, and establish in its place a Division of Law Enforcement within the Department of Public Safety made up of sworn peace officers (police) responsible for the core functions of law enforcement.

According to authors, the Transforming Public Safety

Charter Amendment reflects wide-ranging feedback from community members citywide over the past year. This proposal clarifies that the city would retain traditional law enforcement (which is required by state law). At the same time, it provides the flexibility and freedom to coordinate and improve outcomes by integrating other public safety functions under one department. This

measure builds on the resolution adopted unanimously by the city council last year, and signed by the mayor, that commits to transforming the public safety system and making sure it keeps everyone safe. Additionally, the resolution committed city council members to seek input from community members.

We need reform - and tools, training and support for police

I believe we need a 21st century approach to public safety – one that is mindful and respectful of everyone involved. Let me start out by saying I do not believe defunding or abolishing the police will solve the challenges we face as a community. I have spent the last five months listening to the concerns of residents of Ward 11 and all throughout Minneapolis. A common theme I've heard in almost every conversation is concern regarding crime and feeling unsafe in our neighborhoods. The message is clear – we need comprehensive police reform, and we need to provide

tools, training and support to our police department to continue tackling the violent crime that is plaguing our city. Everyone deserves the right to feel safe and protected in our communities.

I do support certain elements of the Transforming Public Safety Charter Amendment, including, the expansion of the Office of Violence Prevention, investments in expanding mental health response capabilities as well as the components that expand our overall public safety approach as a city. Preventing violence and increasing support systems and resources for mental

Guest column

By **DILLON GHERNA**,
Ward 11 council candidate



health are crucial steps we must take to reduce crime.

However, I cannot support the overall Transforming Public Safety Charter Amendment be-

cause it undermines critical police infrastructure that supports overall community safety. While the charter amendment outlines steps forward for comprehensive police reform, it removes critical elements of public safety support in our growing city. By reducing the number of officers or allowing for a reduction in officers, we remove critical community building functions like homeless outreach and community engagement efforts, and changes to the reporting structure for the chief of police increase opportunities for political interference.

The charter amendment re-

moves the requirement for a resident-to-police-officer ratio, leaving it up to the Minneapolis City Council to choose to fill roles, when our police department is already functioning with limited capacity. Last week, I joined the Minneapolis Police Department for a ride-along. During this shift, I experienced first-hand the demand that our officers are facing on every shift, including calls pending for long periods of time waiting for service and limited resources to support Minneapolis residents. For our department to adequately serve our communi-

Gherna >> 5

It's time for the people to decide future of public safety

The people of Minneapolis have made it clear: our existing public safety system is not working, and it's time to stop pointing fingers and make change. We're fortunate to have a shared vision across our community for something better, and this November, it should be up to voters to decide whether it is finally time to make long-overdue improvements or stick with a costly status quo.

In response to these widespread calls for change, I co-authored the Transforming Public Safety Charter Amendment to update our city charter (which we can think of as our local constitu-

tion) so that we can broaden our public safety system and eliminate barriers to oversight and accountability. The proposed amendment – to come before voters in this fall's election – would create a new Department of Public Safety that would include a Division of Law Enforcement and incorporate critical complementary strategies like violence prevention and intervention. State law requires us to keep police officers on our payroll, and we will need them to respond to violent and extreme situations, but it's time we focus as much on preventing crime and avoiding harm as we do on

Guest column

By **JEREMY SCHROEDER**,
Ward 11 council member, candidate



responding after harm is done. We've begun to invest in specialized mental health response for folks experiencing mental health crisis, a proven model that keeps

everyone safer, as well as targeted efforts to interrupt cycles of violence including through direct street outreach. This approach allows us to better meet our community's needs while reducing the burden on police officers, a win-win.

As we move toward a more specialized and dynamic public safety system, it is essential to put in place safeguards that ensure police treat everyone in Minneapolis with dignity and respect. To get there, we must overcome a key barrier to change in the current charter. The Minneapolis Police Department is the only city

department for which the charter assigns "complete power" to the mayor. In practice, this means city council members – the elected officials inherently most responsive to and embedded in their communities – face enormous limitations in making the changes community members expect in the wake of George Floyd's killing, even amid an ongoing investigation by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights into the MPD's history of racist practices.

The Transforming Public Safety Charter Amendment offers a good government fix by shar-

Schroeder >> 5

We must do better - but amendment isn't the action we need

Public safety is a basic human right. Every person, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, orientation, or economic status has the right to feel safe in their homes and in our community. Our community has been very clear - we have demanded that our leadership prioritizes making our communities safe and addresses the structural, systemic injustices and inequalities in our public safety system. This is not an either/or situation; we must have both.

The city of Minneapolis is at a crossroads. We must take action now to reform our public safety

system.

This will be hard work - possibly the hardest work the city will undertake in the next decade. And we owe it to all of our community members - our kids, our seniors, those who have been victims of police brutality, those who fear for their safety - to do it right.

We need partnerships, strategic problem solving, and a solution that doesn't come at the expense of anyone in our community. It's time we bring all voices to the table - members of our community, public safety officials, our leadership, and public

Guest column

By **EMILY KOSKI**,
Ward 11 council candidate



safety experts - to work together and rebuild. In order to accomplish this, we need new representation on our city council that is focused on building bridges, not

burning them.

We need to take steps to get rid of the bad police officers that exist within our public safety system. As your city council member, I will re-evaluate our recruitment standards to cultivate a workforce that reflects our population, meets higher standards, and shares our values. I will work with our government affairs staff and state legislators to pass laws that keep bad police officers off the job. I will incentivize progress by tying improvements in public safety outcomes to job performance. I will work to completely upend the off-duty hiring

process to ensure police are utilized properly and representing the city in all the work they do.

We need to take steps to support the good police officers, and create a public safety system that is anti-racist, accountable to the community, equitable, and smart about how it approaches difficult problems throughout our city. As your city council member I will support professional development, increase mental health support, and seek to create a path for police officers to have better access to well-being resources. I will ensure that there are equitable

Koski >> 5

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Ghera >> From 4

ty and face the many challenges that lie ahead, our police department needs to be effectively equipped with resources and violence prevention, but also with staff and manpower.

The charter amendment language also proposes that the Minneapolis City Council has more oversight of the police department. This oversight would include a change of management for the police chief from the mayor to the entire council and mayor, 14 individuals each with different political agendas that, as we've seen in some cases, carries over into policy and approach as elected officials.

Public safety is more than policing; policing is merely the reactionary component of public safety. As a public safety professional in a community-facing role, I've witnessed many of the challenges that the community is facing and have worked to create initiatives to address some of these challenges across Hennepin County, supporting more than 1.2 million residents. We must be willing to work together to identify a path forward that includes investments in violence prevention, youth-focused engagement, mental health support, officer training and wellness support, expansion of community engagement, community service officer training and expansion, recruitment processes and community involvement in hiring, accountability for officers, and support for the redirection of non-emergency calls.

I am also committed to being deliberate in the effort to include all voices at the decision-making table to truly ensure all communities are represented and heard. As an openly gay man, I know the feeling of not having a seat at the table when decisions are made on my behalf that directly impact my life.

Police reform and public safety innovation is not an easy task that we have before us. True leaders must embrace the challenge and bring forth balanced ideas to ensure both the dismantling of structural racism within our governmental departments and a continued commitment to protecting residents in our city, which is fundamentally our core responsibility.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my stance on this important issue in our community, though it is difficult to sum up in 600-800 words. I invite community members who are interested in learning more to reach out to me to discuss this topic at greater length. Contact informa-

What do you think about this issue?

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Schroeder >> From 4

ing oversight of the new Department of Public Safety between the mayor and city council, with a department head guiding day-to-day operations. This sounds like common sense because it is. In fact, it's the norm in Minneapolis. Other city departments, including those that handle emergency response like the fire department and public works, operate this way. There is no reason for the police to face less accountability, especially in light of repeated instances of serious officer misconduct. The current structure has made it harder for me as a council member, and by extension my constituents, to get information from MPD – a struggle I don't face with other city departments. It's made it harder to understand what progress is being made on officer discipline, training standards, and more. These gaps are unacceptable, and we need to do better.

It's time for this good government solution that improves transparency and outcomes rather than settling for a status quo we already know doesn't work. Plus, inaction has a steep cost: violence in our communities, broken trust in our systems, and multimillion-dollar settlements taxpayers routinely pay victims of police misconduct.

The Transforming Public Safety Charter Amendment offers us a better path forward. Under this proposal, Minneapolis voters are empowered to chart our course on public safety, upholding the unanimous commitment made by the city council last summer to engage all willing community members in this process. There is no better way to ensure all voices are heard than through our democratic process, in this year's election. It's time to listen to the community, and seize this opportunity to work together, to build a better future. The Transforming Public Safety Charter Amendment is a common-sense provision that lays a solid foundation for this challenging but necessary work.

Koski >> From 4

table professional development and advancement opportunities for women, LGBTQ, and BIPOC police officers. I will increase officer training requirements so they're better equipped to safely intervene on calls and held accountable to higher standards. I will support the expansion of de-escalation training.

We must seek dramatic improvements in race-based public safety inequity. As your city council member I will work to implement Crisis Intervention Team Programs to respond to mental health crisis calls. I will partner with local organizations to fund programs that support those in mental health crisis in a compassionate way. I will evaluate the Office of Police Conduct Review and recommend a way to better hold police accountable that includes a disciplinary mechanism, if necessary. I will eliminate the enforcement of misdemeanor drug possession for cannabis.

Lastly, we must rebuild the trust of Ward 11 residents in our police department. As your city council member I will hold bi-monthly public safety forums to bring the voices of the community, our leadership, public safety officials, and public safety experts together to discuss our shared priorities. I will make police department leadership more accessible to the communities they serve by opening precincts and holding in-person community meetings. I will work to ensure our public safety officials adequately, quickly, and thoroughly respond to public records requests by community members.

The Public Safety Charter Amendment proposed by three city council members, including our city council member for Ward 11, does not answer the demands that our community has made. The proposed amendment does not take action towards making our communities safe, nor does it take action towards addressing the structural, systemic injustices and inequalities that exist in our public safety system.

We can - and we must - do better. That starts with leadership that ensures our community is seen and heard. Everyone deserves to feel safe in our communities, in their neighborhood. It is fundamental to a strong, vibrant and growing city. Together, with the community, members of our public safety system, experts, and leadership city wide, I know we can get it done.

Representation matters - put 'We are Water Protectors' in hands of Indigenous kids

In an effort to get further outside the confines of my limited perspective as a white woman in South Minneapolis, I started following the Facebook pages of a number of Indigenous tribes in Minnesota this summer. With all of its flaws, Facebook offers this unique opportunity to know what's happening in quiet and often forgotten communities. By following those communities and sharing the news they post, we have the opportunity to amplify those forgotten voices and bring just a little more justice and equity to the world.

One of the pages I follow is Native News Online, where I read about the FIRST Indigenous winners of the Caldecott Medal, an award given for the most distinguished American picture book published the previous year. "We Are Water Protectors," illustrated by Michaela Goade, written by Carole Lindstrom won this year's medal.

My family immediately wanted to find a way to support the book. My daughter and I started tossing around ideas. Our nieces have birthdays coming up. We could purchase the book for them. But then we started thinking about the kids in our community. We live less than a block from Little Earth of United Tribes. These are the kids represented in "We Are Water Protectors," and we started wondering how we could get this book into their hands. People with resources (mostly white) won't have any trouble getting this book. They should most certainly read it, too, but kids who see themselves represented in this book are way less likely to have the means to get a copy.

And representation matters so much. I realized that when I found myself crying at Kamala Harris' speech after the election. (Or years earlier when I found myself ridiculously tearing up over Wonder Woman in the theater.) I have heard story after story of children who saw the Obamas in the White House and commented on seeing someone with their own skin color.

Not only does representation matter but art and stories have the power to move us in ways that ordinary speeches and the news do not. My cousin-in-law commented after the inauguration that what moved the nation most that day was not the oath of office but the music and the poetry. What moved me most following the uprising this summer was the way that artwork poured out everywhere. Art and stories have the

Have
a little
grace

By AMY PASS



power to change us, to challenge us, and to heal us.

For these reasons, we decided to reach out to our neighbors at Little Earth and ask if it was a good idea to set up a way for people to sponsor a copy of We Are Water Protectors to give to the children at Little Earth and other Indigenous families in the community. We wanted to be respectful of that fact that there are so many other needs, and we weren't sure that this was where we should focus our attention. But our friends gave us a big nod of approval and agreed to help distribute books when they came.

And so, this project was born. We are asking all of you to consider sponsoring a book (or several). The sponsorship page is on my daughter, Aurora's, website. She's a high school senior taking classes at the Institute for Production and Recording through the High School Advantage program, and building a website is a course project this semester. As has frequently been the case for her, Aurora decided to take a school assignment and turn it into an opportunity to work toward equity and justice for our community. She got straight to work learning the platform to put a shop on her website, and within a few days she had a page ready to go. And it's ready for you!

Our hope is to raise enough funds to get a book into the hands of every child at Little Earth. Additional books will be distributed through organizations that serve Indigenous families in Minneapolis. This means that we would like to see at least 300 books sponsored. Books will be purchased through Birchbark Books, an Indigenous-owned, local, independent bookstore.

We are grateful for the partnership of the Longfellow Nokomis Messenger in sponsoring this project! YOU can help by sponsoring a book here: bit.ly/bookspon

Amy Pass earned her master's degree in marriage and family therapy from Bethel Theological Seminary. But perhaps her greatest lessons have come from raising two children and maintaining a 21-year marriage.

People's Petition would change policing

>> From 1

Also signing was Andy Harris, who said, "I'm here because I work with incarcerated people and I know the system tends to destroy more than it protects, and we need to change that."

Campaign manager Corenia Smith called it an opportunity to lead and restructure what safety looks like in Minneapolis, moving away from a police-only

model to one that's integrated, with a holistic public health approach.

"It's beyond policing. It includes housing, it includes people being able to have economic justice, and it addresses some of the underlying conditions that the current model and system is not addressing," said Smith.

If approved by voters in November, the amendment would

remove the section of the City Charter (Section 7.3) that requires the city of Minneapolis to rely on a police-only model of public safety and establish a new Department of Public Safety that would integrate public safety into a comprehensive public health approach, including licensed peace officers as necessary. It would not eliminate all police officers or get rid of 911 or 311 for emergency responses.

A similar charter amendment led by the Minneapolis City

Council last year was blocked by the Charter Commission, and a renewed effort is underway again this year. As a "people's petition," however, Yes 4 Minneapolis wants to take this to voters on their timeline. Needed are 12,000 signatures from registered Minneapolis voters to ensure the question will be on the ballot this year.

Yes 4 Minneapolis is a coalition of more than a dozen organizations, including ACLU, Coalition of Asian American Lead-

ers, Minnesota Youth Collective, Reclaim the Block, Showing Up for Racial Justice Twin Cities and others. More information is at yes4minneapolis.org.

"The people of Minneapolis, people everywhere, deserve to feel safe. They deserve to have a public safety system in place that people can trust and that they can call on when they need them, and the current system is not that," said Smith. "Minneapolis folks feel like the time is now to reshape it."



Got an opinion?

We want your letters to the editor and guest columns.

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FROM SOCIAL WORKER TO AUTO TECH

Cathy Heying's mid-life transition is still focused on helping people

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

How does a social worker and pastor end up running an auto garage?

The path between the two isn't as far apart as one might think, according to Cathy Heying.

"When I was working at St. Stephen's Catholic Church and Human Services I just kept encountering people for whom a car repair was a linchpin and without a working car their lives either became a spiral downward into deeper poverty or they were trapped from moving out of poverty because they couldn't reliably get to jobs, health care appointments and so much more," she observed.

And so, at age 38, Heying enrolled in the Dunwoody auto technician program – a middle-aged lesbian in a room full of 18-year-old boys.

From small town to Minneapolis

Heying grew up in the small Iowa town of Ossian, one of about 800 people. She earned her bachelor of arts in social work from Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa, and followed that up with her master's in arts in pastoral ministry from St. Mary's University in Winona, Minn.

She moved to Minneapolis in 1997 and currently owns a house in Longfellow.

"I started as a youth minister, spent a year volunteering

in Eastern Kentucky in the Appalachians, worked as an intake specialist at Volunteer Lawyers Network, then worked at St. Stephen's Catholic Church for nine years as the Director of Social Justice before switching over to St. Stephen's Human Services where I worked in community engagement," said Heying.

Then her life trajectory changed.

'Going to Dunwoody at age 38 was like doing a polar plunge'

Heying earned her auto technician degree from Dunwoody in 2010, and then worked at Sears Auto Center for two years.

Then, she opened, The Lift. "The Lift is a car repair shop obviously, but we're also a place that provides a listening ear, warm hospitality and support," said Heying. "I often joke that we are social workers, financial counselors, and grief counselors and then we fix cars on the side. We have a high value on meeting people where they are at, providing a listening ear and moral support – honor their dignity as a whole person. My entire background has laid that foundation."

"Going to Dunwoody at age 38 was like doing a polar plunge – super shocking, hard to explain, an extremely hard experience, and also exhilarating and eye opening."

"I love Dunwoody and it provided me (who had zero car experience) with a solid founda-



"Going to Dunwoody at age 38 was like doing a polar plunge – super shocking, hard to explain, an extremely hard experience, and also exhilarating and eye opening," said Longfellow resident Cathy Heying, who is executive director at The Lift garage, a low-cost option for those at 150% of federal poverty guidelines. (Photo by Carina Lofgren, Portraits from 6 ft)

tion from which to build The Lift. But at the end of the day I'm a people person. I'm not that great of an auto tech. I can get by but my brain is just not wired that way so it is hard work for me to think like that."

She's glad she got her auto tech degree as she did a lot of the car repairs along with all volunteers in the first years. Plus, it gives her credibility with techs, donors, and customers. But, it isn't where her best skill set lies so she spends most of her time these days supervising staff, doing administrative work, and raising money.

But when they're short-staffed, she still gets pulled in.

Can't keep up with demand

The Lift began by subletting one bay one day a week over on Nicollet Ave. in 2013. They continued to grow until they had four bays and were open five days a week. Heying began officially as paid staff in 2014.

In 2018, The Lift moved to

its current location at 2401 E. Lake St., tucked between the Hiawatha Ave. bridge and Arby's.

They began with no paid staff and served five to 10 people.

Today, they have a staff of 12 and serve 100-120.

The Lift focuses on safety and drivability repairs – things to keep the car safely moving forward. They don't do major work such as engine overhauls or transmissions.

Still, they cannot keep up with the demand.

"We are really interested in partnering with other local shops to gauge their interest in perhaps taking on one appointment a week and charging the same rates we do for that appointment," said Heying. "Even with the massive growth we've had in seven years, we still are typically booked out three or four months."

People must have incomes at or below 150% of the federal poverty guideline to qualify for services at The Lift.

The easiest way to make an appointment is by visiting [www.thelifgarage.org](http://www.thelif garage.org), but people can also call 612-866-5840. The Lift charges \$15 an hour for labor plus parts at cost. "We rely completely on donations and grants to cover our overhead so we can keep our prices that low for our customers," said Heying.

They're also looking at expanding operations to add more days and hours, and expanding the mobile van efforts in an effort to meet the great need in the community.

Standing in solidarity

Located a block from the Third Precinct meant The Lift was

at the center of last summer's turmoil.

"We did okay all things considered," said Heying. They kept a constant vigil at the site, which was pretty successful, until the Arby's next door went up in flames. Then Heying pulled everyone off site for their safety.

"Our mobile repair van was trashed and most of the tools stolen, our front office was broken into, a lot of broken glass, broken equipment, stolen office equipment. We also lost some customer car keys, but luckily the cars were never taken. Some passersby stopped those who had entered the building before they really got into the shop itself where we had many customer cars and a lot of expensive equipment."

The experience didn't stop The Lift from purchasing their building last summer.

"We are here for the long haul," said Heying.

"One-quarter of our staff live in the neighborhood so we are personally connected to the community. We contribute to the local economy in that we buy parts from the local O'Reilly, Napa, and Autozone. We buy our coffee for our waiting room at Peace Coffee. Many of the staff are eating lunch in the community, doing our grocery shopping after work or running to Target on our break!"

"We love this neighborhood and as a business and as staff members we are invested in building community, creating partnerships and growing a vision of our community that is about peace, equity, art, meeting people's needs, celebrating and standing in solidarity with one another."

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Driving all electric in South Minneapolis

By IRIC NATHANSON

During the two years that Rod Johnson and his wife, Kathy Hollander, have owned their all-electric Chevy Bolt they have been able to cross routine auto maintenance off their "to do" list.

"We have had to change windshield wiper fluid one or twice, but that's about it," Johnson reports. "The car has really run maintenance free."

Rather than filling a gas tank every few weeks, the Longfellow couple merely plug their Bolt into the standard 110 electrical outlet in their garage and let the car sit there overnight while it is being charged.

The Johnson Hollanders belong to a growing group of electric vehicle (EV) users that power their cars by connecting to an electric outlet or charging station. In Minnesota, that group numbers nearly 15,000. "We are seeing a substantial increase in the numbers of EVs on the road in this state and nationally," says Diane McKeown, the metro area director for the Clean Energy Resource Teams. (CERTs). "That trend is going to continue now that more models with broader driving ranges are coming on the market."

Johnson says that the family Bolt can run for up to about 240 miles on a full charge. "That is more than enough for our driving in town. We plug the car in the garage about once a week. Even then, we find that we don't need a full charge. If we were planning a longer drive over several days, we would need to plan in advance and identify charging stations along the way. But charging has not been an issue for us."

Johnson has not calculated the amount of electricity that the Bolt uses each month, but that amount in dollar terms is minimal, he says. "We really haven't seen any significant increase in our monthly Xcel bill. Our electric clothes dryer costs more to run than our car."



Rod Johnson and Kathy Hollander love their Chevy Bolt. The charging unit plugs into a standard 110 volt wall outlet, and then the charging plug fits into a port on the outside of the car. Using the ChargePoint app, users can monitor the Bolt's charging progress while away from the car. The Bolt can go about 240 miles on a full charge. (Photos by Terry Faust)

Early tech adopter

Like the Johnson-Hollanders, Nancie Hamlett drives a Bolt, but the Chevrolet plug-in was not her first all-electric car. An early technology adapter, Hamlett started driving a Zap-Xebra in 2006 when all-electric cars were a rarity. "I felt like a real energy pioneer when I was driving the Xebra," Hamlett said. "People would give me a thumbs up when I was on the road with it."

But the three-wheel plug-in, with a range of 80 miles on a full charge, never caught on in the broader market. After only three years in production, the China-based ZAP Corporation stopped manufacturing the Xebra in 2009.

After the Xebra, Hamlett drove hybrids, but decided to go all-electric in 2019. "Hybrids meant that I had two systems, one electric and the other combustion, so I decided that an all-electric plug-in made more sense because the maintenance was a lot simpler," she said.

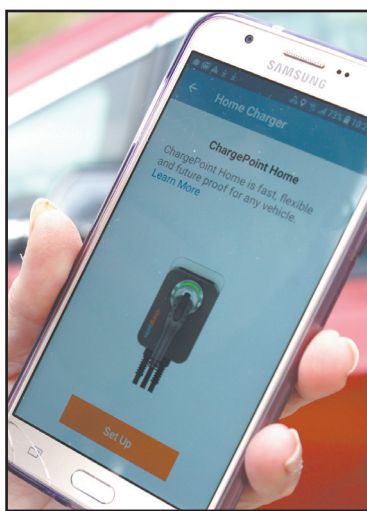
Hamlett started with a Nissan Leaf in 2019 and moved on the Chevy Bolt in 2020. "I only need

one charge a month," she explained. "The Bolt has a range of 240 mile on a full charge, but I find that I can get up to 320 miles because I am only driving around town. At most I am spending about \$5 a month for the electricity needed to run the car."

Hamlett and Johnson-Hollanders purchased their Bolts while the federal tax credit for the General Motors vehicle was still in effect, but that tax credit expired in April 2020. Since then, GM has compensated for the loss of the credit by enhancing the company discounts for the Bolt.

"We haven't seen any drop in sales now that the credit has disappeared," reports Paul Zirbes, general sales manager for Roseville Chevrolet. "Early on, limited availability of charging stations had hampered EV use to some extent, but we don't see that as an issue in the Twin Cities. "More than 80% of our Bolt customers are able to charge their cars in the privacy of their own homes and get the driving range they need on a day-to-day basis."

When EVs first came on the market in the early 2000s, Min-



nesota's cold winters were seen as a barrier to their widespread in this state because below low temperatures were associated with lower battery efficiency. But that barrier has diminished as battery technology has improved. Johnson says that the driving range on a full charge for his Bolt has declined from 240 to about 170 miles during the coldest months. "That is more than enough to get us around town even in December and January."

"The reality is that electric vehicles are great winter cars," says energy consultant Jukka Kukkonen. One of their best features is their rapid heating system, reports Kukkonen who experienced that feature with his own EV, a Nissan Leaf. "It was a typical 16 degree Minnesota winter day when I went into our cold garage and reversed the car outside to the alley. While I waited for the garage door to close I

wondered why the automatic fan was already running and to my surprise it was already pushing lukewarm air from the heating ducts. I drove less than a block and the air coming out was already hot. I had never experienced that kind of heating performance from any car before."

He added, "Electric vehicles are also so much more affordable to drive. Even in colder months when driving consumes more energy, driving an electric car for 1000 miles will cost you less than \$40. Driving a traditional 25 miles-per-gallon car for the same 1000 miles even with present day lower gas prices costs you well over \$100."

Bob Kirk, who lives at the Becketwood Cooperative in Longfellow, doesn't own an all electric vehicle, but he thinks that an EV is a good fit for people in his age range. "We are not commuting to work any longer and we not doing a lot of highway driving. Plus, EVs are mainly maintenance free, so that is a real attraction for many us." But Kirk went on to say that providing charging stations can be a challenge for older senior buildings like Becketwood that weren't designed to accommodate electrical vehicles. "The newer senior developments in the Twin Cities have charging stations built into their facilities, so that gives them a competitive advantage as they try to appeal to the growing baby boomer market. Going forward, we need to connect with that market."

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Buying and selling a home in the time of COVID-19

Experts weigh in

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

While some people refer to the last 11 months as the Big Pause, it has been anything but that for real estate broker and business owner Mike Smith. He said, "I've been busy for the last 15 years, but never anything like this. The only word I have for this housing market is 'crazy.'"

Smith, who owns Anderson Realty, said, "I thought 2020 was going to be a humungous year in the Twin Cities housing market before COVID-19 hit: people are leaving the coasts because of wildfires and hurricanes. This is a great place to live, and our population is growing by about 4,000 people every year."

"They come to the Twin Cities and don't think twice about spending \$300,000 for a nice bungalow. In Boston, San Diego, or Seattle, that same house would cost upwards of \$800,000. I helped at least a dozen parties move to the Twin Cities from both coasts last year."

When the reality of the pandemic set in, some homeowners started re-evaluating their homes and the way they lived in them. Sometimes, they found that the open floor plan they had loved before just didn't suit them anymore.

Smith said, "Let's face it, people are stuck at home. Many people work at home, teach



Real estate broker and business owner Pat Rosaves pointed out that homes are selling rapidly, even fixer-uppers. Houses are selling within four days on the market with multiple offers. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

their kids at home, and entertain themselves at home. Plenty of people started to feel the walls closing in around them. Those who can afford it may opt to move to a larger home, or at least one with more doors that close."

It all adds up to a time like no other, with factors we have not seen before driving people to

buy and sell in a frenzy.

That frenzy didn't abate, not even during the very real and painful weeks following George Floyd's murder. Smith said, "As business owners on Lake Street were preparing for the possibility of property damage, I was outside nailing plywood across my windows. Tucked into my back

pocket, my cell phone never stopped ringing. People wanted to schedule showings all over South Minneapolis, even during the week of curfew. I couldn't understand it. We had to press pause."

Anderson Realty is housed in the same building as Forage Modern Workshop and across

From Pat of River Realty:

One of the best ways to prepare your home for sale is to cull through personal belongings. On average, people end up "re-distributing" about 30% of their belongings in preparation for a move. Having less furniture and clutter in the home makes it seem more spacious, and also helps prospective buyers envision themselves in a new space.



"I've never been busier than I was this past year, but I've also never been more fulfilled."
~ Mike Smith of Anderson Realty

the street from the Hi-Lo Diner, both of which are entrepreneurial ventures of Mike Smith's. He said, "By anybody's standard, we're a small real estate brokerage. My grandmother started the business 60 years ago, and she is still my inspiration. We have always been small and family-owned."

BUYING AND SELLING >> 9

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Selling a home during COVID-19

Realtors have been doing things differently during the pandemic. Buyers must be careful when viewing homes, wearing masks and using disinfectants. Sellers are not able to have showings overlap, so it takes more time to get everyone through a house. A typical time for a showing is 15-30 minutes these days. Prospective buyers must get in and out quickly before making a very big decision – about whether or not to make an offer. If their offer is accepted, buyers will have plenty of time to look over the home during the inspection period.

Sellers have their concerns, too. They often leave their fully prepared homes for the first three days of being on the market, when the largest number of prospective buyers will come through. On returning, the take obvious precautions such as wiping down surfaces and air out their home – just to be safe.

Removing a restrictive racial covenant from your home title

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Since 2019, Minnesotans have been able to remove restrictive racial covenants that still remain on their home titles.

Racial covenants are clauses that were used by real estate developers in the last century to discriminate against and prevent people of color from buying homes in certain neighborhoods.

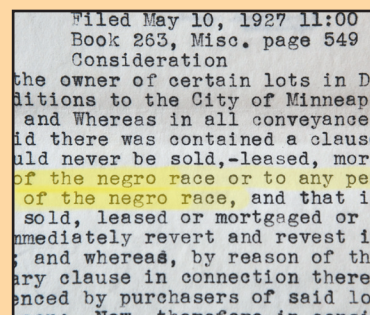
The Longfellow neighborhood is blanketed in restrictive racial covenants.

The 2019 legislation (authored by Longfellow resident and state legislator Jim Davnie) lets residents fill out a form related to the title of their property, to clarify that the restrictive covenant is ineffective, and to legally discharge it from their title. The Hennepin County website has been updated with information for homeowners who want to record affidavits denouncing restrictive racial covenants.

How to take action

Because these covenants are no longer enforceable, you can choose to do nothing, or you can take action based on your property's land type. A little research will tell you if your property is listed as torrens or abstract.

Torrens – the vast majority of these restrictive covenants have



already been removed or will automatically be removed upon the next transfer of title.

Abstract – you can denounce restrictive covenants by recording a discharge form. Follow these four steps:

1. Obtain the following information from the abstract containing the restrictive covenant:
 - Document number
 - Date of recording
 - Names of owners
 - Legal description
 2. Complete the form on the Hennepin County website called "Discharge of Restrictive Covenant Affecting Protected Classes."
 3. Have the form notarized.
 4. Record the document with Hennepin County (See Conventional and eRecording information section on the county website)
- There is no cost to remove a restrictive covenant from your abstract.

From the Just Deeds Project website (based in Golden Valley):

Restrictive covenants have been unenforceable and illegal for decades, so why does this matter now?

Restrictive covenants continue to send a message about who is welcome in our community and who is not. It's time to proactively renounce this discriminatory language and send a new message of inclusion and belonging.

Community conversation about restrictive covenants is an important step toward racial equality. Restrictive covenants played a role in how Minneapolis neighborhoods were planned and developed. The segregation that exists in and around our community today was carried out through a coordinated effort by developers, government (local, state, and federal), realtors, lawyers, bankers, and ordinary people.

The housing patterns that resulted from restrictive covenants persist today. Decades later, most homes with restrictive covenants are still owned by White people. On average, those homes are worth 15 percent more than a similar home without a restrictive covenant.

Because of racially discriminatory housing policies, including restrictive covenants, Minnesota has one of the largest racial disparities in the country in areas such as income, homeownership, education, and health outcomes. Many of these disparities can be traced back to the fact that families of color and people of certain religions could not purchase homes in certain areas and, therefore, did not have access to well-funded public education, healthcare, homeownership, parks and recreation, and the ability to build generational wealth.

BUYING AND SELLING >> from 8

"I've never been busier than I was this past year, but I've also never been more fulfilled. It's been very rewarding helping people move during this time."

Smith is a housing expert and entrepreneur with 15 years of experience in the Twin Cities housing market. He said, "My background as a real estate appraiser, investor, small business owner, and licensed contractor give me the skills, confidence and know-how to be an effective realtor in today's crazy market."

Mike Smith can be reached at 651.324.6211 or by email at mikesmithrealty@gmail.com.

A stressful time for buyers

Seward resident Pat Rosaves have been a real estate broker and business owner for over 30 years. Her business, River Realty, specializes in homes along the Mississippi River and throughout the greater Longfellow neighborhood.

She said, "We are a small, local company. Our clients are also our neighbors, which gives us a special accountability. Because we serve a smaller area, we are able to be experts. We have our fingers on the pulse, and are confident of our ability to sell homes in this neighborhood."

Rosaves has seen crazy times before, but nothing that compares with the past year and the beginning of 2021.

This type of housing market can be difficult for buyers, she observed. The inventory of housing stock in the Twin Cities is low for the second year in a row, which means there are more interested buyers than there are properties for sale.

She said the challenge of this time can be summed up in two words for buyers: "multiple offers."

Rosaves explained, "Every house we list gets so much attention, even the fixer-uppers."

BUYING AND SELLING >> 12



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Q & A with Jay Anderson

By TESSA M. CHRISTENSEN

Most sellers become buyers and it's a pro/con market on either side, observed Jay Anderson, who has been selling in South Minneapolis since 1993. He is a broker/realtor with Coldwell Banker Realty.

"Just remember, the real estate market is just that, a market. Pandemic or not there is no bad market, only bad prices."

How would you describe the current housing market?

When COVID-19 showed up, I was surprised how many people still wanted to buy and



South Minneapolis real estate agent Jay Anderson encourages people to consider using the COVID-19 addendum for a purchase agreement.

sell in a global pandemic.

The market has not slowed and has been quite busy due to low interest rates. I've heard cli-

Tips from Jay Anderson:

- Sellers can talk to their loan officer about doing bridge loans to buy first and sell second in this market.
- Buyers can disclose their professions as being COVID-Stable (if applicable) in multiple offer situations.
- Both can agree to use the COVID-19 addendum for a purchase agreement if situations arise due to COVID-19.

ents say: It seems that people are selling and leaving the City in droves! The flip-side is that people are buying and moving into those homes being sold. There is

no exodus from Minneapolis and people are always coming and going for a multitude of reasons.

The spring market starts Jan. 1 every year for sellers due to lack of inventory. The demand is even higher this year due to historic low interest rates and the lack of inventory.

How has COVID-19 changed what people are looking for in a home?

Some motivations to move has been for new location, larger homes, more yard space and home offices. However, many buyers just want to buy a nice house in this market and will give on some wants. People buy and sell for many reasons in Minneapolis, including downsizing, and the pandemic isn't the main driver in wants in my opinion.

What is this market like for

buyers? For sellers?

This is a good market for sellers due to lack of inventory, and a good market for buyers due to interest rates. Many buyers are looking at monthly payment instead of sale price due to the historically low interest rates.

It's often tough for buyers in this competitive market and remember, sellers most often become buyers. This may explain a log-jam in inventory. However, things are very fluid and often the market changes quickly, including a typical and normal June/July lull.

What are people doing differently to sell and buy given the pandemic concerns?

Sellers are setting ground rules for showing their property including having only the "decision makers" in the property. Masks and hand sanitizers are required, and only agents are to touch the property. The new standard is short showing times of 15 minutes versus one-hour windows that do not overlap another agents.

Buyers are driving separately and looking at a select few homes as they are being scrutinized online with more information and pictures available.

The real estate landscape is a lot different. Clients need to be re-educated and pre-pandemic expectations need to be managed. Agents are often asked not to attend inspections and closings. Purchase agreements are signed online, closings are pre-signed and now some closings are on-line.

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- Pinterest the perfect patio! Search for pictures of patios that you would like to see in your landscape. There are many options, so spend some time daydreaming online.
- Reserve your spot! Landscaping companies are usually booked in advance. Schedule a consultation to get the process started!

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MAGIC ON THE ICE

>> From 1

"I know there were several political opinions present but there was something visceral and human that brought us together. I think that's what I love about Minnesotans so much: we embrace the winter, and work with the natural elements to make life here not only tolerable, but wonderful.

"What we can do is only limited by our imaginations. It's really a great way to live."

Little Free Ice Rink

Younan has been a resident of South Minneapolis for 10 years, and moved to East Nokomis in the summer of 2020 to be closer to the lake and enjoy the visual space of the city's lakes and parks.

"I have loved getting to know the neighbors and coming together on projects outside. Being so close to nature and green spaces has been amazing," said Younan.

They had a backyard rink in the past, and opted to create one on the lake itself this year with a few neighbors. Younan spent most of winter break out on the lake working with pumps, buckets and an electric generator trying to engineer a workable system to prep and maintain the ice.

One afternoon, as he was prepping water holes for the Little Free Ice Rink with an electric chainsaw, Younan observed the large blocks of ice floating in the holes they'd made for pulling out the water.

"It dawned on me that we could make blocks on a bigger scale," said Younan. "I had also been inspired by the efforts of the folks up in Little Falls after they set the world record for the largest carousel a couple years back. I mentioned it to a few friends and a couple of the crazy ones said they'd be up to help."



The ice carousel on Lake Nokomis brought the community together outside. "It's a small gesture, but from my vantage point, it had a big impact on the local community," said Ben Younan, who designed it. (Photo by Mimi Schirber)

All ages joined in

It was a neighborhood – and a family – project. Thirteen-year-old Aiden (a student at Sanford Middle School) helped his father crunch numbers where geometry and algebra were needed. "Our math estimated the carousel was eight tons!" remarked Younan.

Ten-year-old Sofia (a student at Dowling Urban Environmental School) helped pull out the ice blocks and welcomed other kids. This winter the father-daughter duo also slept in a quinzee in their front yard when the overnight low was -20°.

Ben's partner, Amber Blom Younan, who runs a private practice in mediation, conflict coaching, and circle facilitation, put together the beautiful light tree and luminaries that lit up the space.

Broomball was a huge hit this year, as well. One Friday night they put together a neighborhood tournament with teams and brackets.

Exhausting, but worth it

The work of creating the ice carousel began with a lot of careful planning, focusing on efficiency and safety.

They needed to make sure the thickness of the ice was adequate, but not too thick that their saws wouldn't reach through to the water.

The other big decision was figuring out what size to make it. The first one was 35 feet in diameter and the second one was 60 feet.

"To begin, we stake a center spot, attach a static rope, and mark the circle by etching in the snow," explained Younan. "We then have to clear the snow and mark the circle again by etching in the ice. From there we begin cutting that first line with saws. The cutting gets quite sloppy because once we hit water, we're constantly sprayed with a generous stream of lake water and ice all over our hands and legs. It ends up being so ridicu-

lous; once we go numb it's sort of laughable.

"Next we cut another circle about two feet outside the first line so that we can remove small pieces at a time. Once we cut two circles two feet apart

clear around, we're ready to start spinning.

"It's exhausting work, but worth the effort in the end."

Will there be another carousel on Lake Nokomis?

"Yes, I think so," said Younan. "There have been so many people asking us to do it again. It's a tremendous amount of work but now that we've pulled it off, there are others willing to help."

Small gesture, big impact

Younan is grateful for all the people who helped, contributing their part to the group effort.

"This was all about community. Yes, it's been a hell of a year with all the things that have happened. So much pain and numbness this year. Making a silly circle in the ice was certainly more than the project itself," observed Younan. "It was about giving people the opportunity to take a break from the screens and the news and re-discover some of what our wonderful city has to offer."

"It's a small gesture, but from my vantage point, it had a big impact on the local community."

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-Josh, East Nokomis Resident



"When I'm not making ice carousels, I help people buy and sell homes. My family and I live here and I'm committed to building community. I have a personal goal to give whatever I can to help make this wonderful neighborhood a place we are all proud to call home!"

Ben Younan
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MPRB committee moves golf course master plan forward, 3-2 vote

Plan will change course from 18 holes to 9 holes

By TESSA M. CHRISTENSEN

The golf course will remain at Hiawatha Golf Course, but it will likely shift from 18-holes to 9-holes.

After a contentious six-year planning process, the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board Planning Committee approved moving the master plan forward to the full board on a 3-2 vote. Voting against were Commissioners Vetaw and French. Voting for were Commissioners Musich, Forney and Mayer. The vote followed a public hearing.

Next, the plan will be viewed by the entire board.

"I'm here to express my support for the plan not because it is the perfect plan, but because it's a really good compromise," stated local resident David Ka-

plan, who served as the chair of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC). "This was a very difficult process with so many viewpoints."

He added, "Most importantly, it gives all involved in the conversation something but no one got everything, and that is the hallmark of a good compromise."

The plan for the Hiawatha Golf Course carves out three areas for golf divided by spaces for water. It seeks to improve drainage on the site and provide floodplain space. "The last decade has been the warmest and wettest in Minnesota history," remarked MPRB Project Manager Tyler Pederson, pointing to research by the Minnesota Climatology office.



The planning process since 2015 has included nine public meetings, seven CAC meetings, and 10 focus open houses. During the 45-day comment period, 345 surveys were collected. Of them, 127 were supportive of the plan in some aspect. Two contradictory themes were in the comments: keeping 18 holes of golf and removing golf all together.

The master plan includes a Backyard Neighborhood Park

space at the corner of Longfellow Ave. and 44th that will include a nature play area and picnic tables. It was expanded after comments from community members.

Cross country skiing will remain, and snowmaking facilities added on the southwest corner. A trail system will be added year round through the lower northwest side of the site from the Lake Hiawatha Recreation Center and then follow the property line down the west and south sides until it hooks back up with the existing trail system.

The estimated cost for implementing this master plan is \$43 million. Implementation of the plan will be incremental, and the plan is a starting point, according to Tyler Pederson. "Partnerships are essential," he said.

BUYING AND SELLING >> from 8

Houses sell quickly, typically within four days on the market and with multiple offers. We've seen cases where there have been more than a dozen offers on a single property.

"But," she cautions, "not all homes sell right away, showing that it is possible to list a house too high. This is where the right real estate agent comes in. Today's buyers are very sophisticated and aware of the market."

River Realty has been voted favorite real-estate company by Next Door neighbor three times in recent years. Rosaves said, "I am grateful to work with people who are more interested in doing the right thing for their clients than making one more sale. During COVID-19, we are helping people make intelligent decisions about their futures."

Pat Rosaves can be reached at 612.724.1314 or by email at pat@riverrealty.net.

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Minnehaha Post office to stay at 3022 27th Ave.

The United States Postal Service (USPS) has made the decision to rebuild the Minnehaha Post Office in South Minneapolis in the same location, 3033 27th Ave S., Minneapolis, MN 55406, as it has been since 1970.

While there is not a current construction timeline, all services will continue to operate out of the temporary facility located at 10 W. Lake Street, Minneapolis, MN 55408, until further notice. "We thank all who have made it their mission to represent the community and those that provided written feedback while

USPS navigated the options for the Minnehaha Post Office," said USPS representative Nicole Hill.

When the project is completed, the Minnehaha Post Office will provide a full-service retail and house local mail delivery operations. Customers can expect to receive the same level of service from their own community as they have in the past.

While the Postal Service is sensitive to the impact of this decision on its customers and the community, the Postal Service properly considered community input and this decision is con-

sistent with Postal Service objectives. Postal Service operations are not supported by tax dollars. To be self-sustaining, the Postal Service must make decisions that ensure it provides adequate and affordable postal services in a manner that is as efficient and economical as possible, according to Hill.

This is the final decision of the Postal Service with respect to this matter, and there is no right to further administrative or judicial review of this decision.

It has been a busy start to 2021

First, a little bragging from 2020. NENA supported 97 homeowners, property owners, and 11 businesses with over \$130,000 in grants and loans. In addition, we brought in more than half a million dollars in matching funds to our community.

Find more information on the following projects at nokomis.org

- Run for a Seat on NENA's Board of Directors - NENA will be hosting its online annual meeting on April 22, 2021. Again, we will offer online and telephone voting to elect our new Board of Directors members. Run for a seat and join us for a meaningful volunteering experience.

- Food Truck Rally - NENA is planning a spring event on Saturday, April 17, 2021, to raise money for the Nokomis East Food Distribution project. We also hope to safely bring back the NENA Kickball Tournament and Fundraiser in July. Mark your calendars!

- Earth Day Neighborhood Clean-Up - NENA's Green Initiatives Committee is planning a neighborhood clean-up in April. More details to come. Join the committee on the third Thursday of the month.

- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee - NENA's newest committee has launched several exciting projects including a social media campaign Honoring Black History Month. Join us on the first Tuesday of the month.

- Nokomis East Community Gardens - Community gardeners are starting plans for the 2021

season. Volunteers are welcome for the Giving Garden (food production for local food shelves), the Gateway Garden (Pollinator garden by the 50th LRT station), and the Nokomis Naturescape (Pollinator garden at Lake Nokomis). All volunteer skill levels appreciated!

- 2021 Garage Sale Day - NENA, Standish-Ericsson Neighborhood Association, and the Corcoran Neighborhood Organization are starting plans for a Garage Sale Day in June.

- We're moving - In April, NENA will be moving to a smaller office above Casa Maria at 34th and 50th. Crosstown Covenant Church is donating space for the Nokomis East Food Distribution Project. See below for more information about distribution days.

Nokomis East food distribution

Please join NENA every Tuesday and Thursday in March from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for the Nokomis East Free Food Distributions. We offer a wide selection of dairy, meat, staples, cleaning supplies, and personal care items. We are located at 4313 E. 54th Street. All are welcome!

Please call or text Karla Arredondo, NENA community organizer at (612) 293-9683 to schedule a pick-up time. Please wear a mask and practice social distancing.

We also need volunteers for pre-packing and donations of clean paper and reusable grocery bags. Email karla.arredondo@nokomiseast.org for more infor-

Nokomis East Neighborhood Association

By **BECKY TIMM**, Executive Director
becky.timm@nokomiseast.org

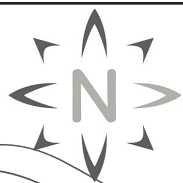
mation. The Minnehaha Food Shelf is an additional resource open on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., located at 3701 E. 50th Street. More info at www.minnehaha.org/foodshelf

Curb appeal matching grants re-open on April 1

Planning an exterior project visible from the sidewalk? Plan to apply! Grants are available for homeowners, renters, and residential property owners in the four Nokomis East neighborhoods of Keewaydin, Minnehaha, Morris Park, and Wenonah.

Examples of eligible exterior improvements may include, but are not limited to painting and trim work, exterior lighting, masonry work and tuck-pointing, restoration of historically appropriate exterior finishes, and hardscaping.

Eligible participants can apply for up to \$500 in matching grant funds. This is a one-to-one matching grant and a reimbursement project. This is a first-come, first-served program. Visit NENA's website at nokomiseast.org/curb-appeal-matching-grants/ for more program information and to apply starting on April 2, 2021.



Nokomis East Neighborhood Association

Curb Appeal Matching Grants

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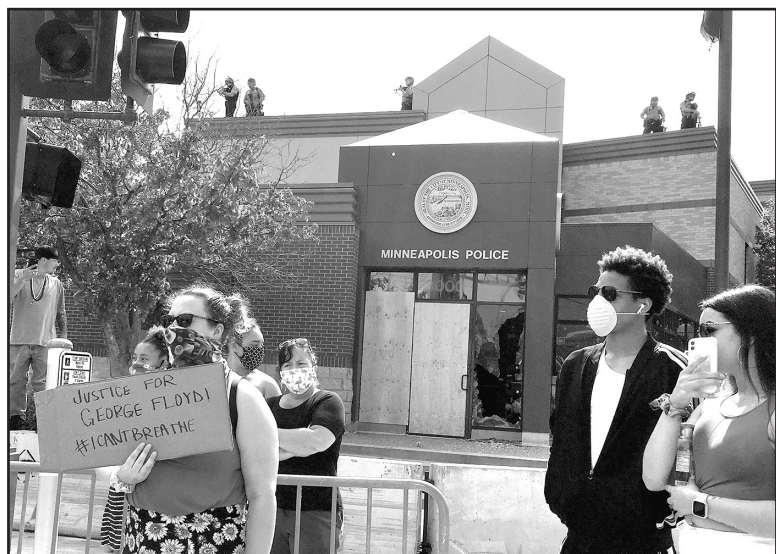
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Visit nokomiseast.org/curb-appeal-matching-grants/ to participate in our housing programs.



People protest in front of the Third Precinct on May 27 in the Longfellow neighborhood at E. Lake St. and Minnehaha Ave. By the end of the protests, the Third Precinct and many other buildings were destroyed by fire. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

Businesses: Prepare

- Back up data and move important documents to another location.
- Create an emergency plan. Suggestions at Ready.gov.
- Connect with neighbors and other businesses owners.
- Sign up for city updates according to your neighborhood at <https://www.minneapolismn.gov/contact-us/sign-up-for-news-alerts/>
- The city planned to release a information in late February through the CPED department with guidance for how property owners can prepare for the risk of property damage.

MPD prepares for Derek Chauvin trial

>> From 1

"I believe we need to look for spaces to restore hope in our communities. We don't want our businesses to shut down."

He stressed that the first amendment right of protesters will be protected, and he drew a line between those that are protesting peacefully and those engaging in violence or civil disobedience who will be arrested. MPD Chief Arradondo acknowledged that as a result of a court order in August initiated by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, authorization for crowd control weapons and "non-lethal force" can only come from him or his designee.

According to Chief Arradondo, what makes this time different is that MPD has been preparing for it for eight months. The department has had conversations with various people and groups, which they did not have time for after the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020.

This time around, there will be a more visible police presence that is augmented by up to 1,900 National Guard members, some of whom live in Minneapolis. Another 1,000 will be in St. Paul. Law enforcement agencies including the state patrol, Hennepin County Sheriff's Department and others from across the state are assisting MPD. There will be one central command center instead of trying to coordinate from different locations, and MPD will take the lead.

Officers will be embedded in the Minneapolis Fire Department so that firefighters can get to a fire.

The city is committed to make sure 911 calls get through, and is working to increase staffing levels.

Those along Lake St. can expect to see officers and National Guard humvees in the area as a preventative measure, according to Chief Arradondo.

The mayor will have the ability to put curfews in place based on the situation at the time.

There are a few ways for people to stay informed.

"GovDelivery and the City's Neighborhood Community Relations department will be working to disseminate information to all relevant community partners," according to Matt Kazinka of the Lake Street Council. "They will aim both to share accurate information about activities and counter disinformation. Groups like Lake Street Council will help share this information."

Block leaders are encouraged to connect with businesses owners and neighbors, and to also reach out to crime specialist Kali Pliego at kali.pliego@minneapolismn.gov.

The city's Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) department was expected to release a FAQ sheet/checklist at the end of February for businesses on how to prepare for the trial.

Is Round Two coming?

>> From 1

Kennedy and Cain law offices is located at E. Lake and 34th. Dan Kennedy observed that their building was not damaged last summer, in part, he believes, because the neighbors blocked off streets at night during the unrest and patrolled the area.

To do this well, neighbors need to know what constitutes "usual" traffic. Does a business have deliveries made at 3 a.m.? Do they have workers coming and going throughout the night or early morning hours? How can they manage their unconscious biases?

BIPOC and LGBTQI employees of some of the businesses along Lake Street were harassed by neighborhood watch groups who didn't recognize them, a problem pointed out by Anna Tsantir of Two Betty's Cleaning Co. (4010 E. Lake).

Kennedy remarked, "People on the street were highly effective. It was also great for community building. My block, like many others, is a pretty diverse block. People got to know each other."

They gathered for a BBQ over the summer, and have stayed in touch. When he sees people walk past his business now, he recognizes them. "I feel better about neighborhood security because I know my neighbors, and they know me," said Kennedy.

"The property destruction in May galvanized neighborhood cohesion. That may have prevented further property damage in May, and may do so again."

'What is the city's plan?'

During last summer's protests, protesters parked in the neighborhoods and then walked to sites such as the Third Precinct

at Minnehaha and Lake. Businesses asked: can the city use jersey (concrete) barriers to block off additional traffic at key intersections to prevent folks coming in by car who may want to cause damage?

They also expressed concern about the area around the Third Precinct during the trial, where many businesses were destroyed by fire, including Minnehaha Lake Liquor, GM Tobacco, Gandhi Mahal, Minnehaha Post Office, MIGIZI, the El Nuevo Rodeo building (with Town Talk Diner, Scores Sports Bar and others), Cash N Pawn, Arby's, Domino's, Auto Zone, Wendy's, and an apartment building under construction. It took months for Aldi, Target, Cub and the library to repair their buildings and reopen, and other smaller businesses and those in the Coliseum remain closed.

Businesses want to know what plans the city has for their neighborhood.

They also asked where people should go to protest. Some businesses are discussing how to keep the area around the Third Precinct safe for businesses and any protest gatherings and not a place for escalation.

'How do we stand together?'

Cathy Heying of The Lift Garage (2401 E. Lake) said they also had minimal damage to their building although they were located next to the Arby's that burned down. "We were here 24/7. People would come up with baseball bats to the building. I'd say, 'Can I help you?'" recalled Heying. "Oh is this your building?" they'd ask. When she said, 'yes,' they'd apologize and leave.

"It worked for us," stated Heying. "What if it is just us

again? How do we stand together as a community and care for one another?"

Last summer, some businesses communicated via text with their staff members who were out protesting, which helped them keep track of what was happening as it occurred.

Other blocks used platforms such as Discord, WhatsApp, GroupMe, and Signal.

"People look to organizations like ours to derive some idea of what to do," said Kennedy.

The group is discussing how to move forward, and has begun reaching out to city and police staff, partner organizations and others with their questions.



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NEBA member restaurants held together by community during COVID-19

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By BOB
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"We're coming out of it strong," proclaims eternal optimist Jon Rud who with his wife and business partner, Nancy Rud, has owned and operated Berry Sweet Kitchen at 54th Street and 34th Avenue since 2013. Jon is referring to how he and Nancy feel as restaurant owners in the Nokomis East community as they have weathered the COVID storm. "We have amazingly loyal customers from the neighborhood. They have been so good to us. They have been stepping up big time by ordering a lot and tipping generously. We feel incredibly grateful."

Also feeling the love of a kind and caring clientele holding her business together is Tamara Brown, founder and owner for the last six years of Sassy Spoon at 5011 34th Avenue South. "Our customer base is super loyal – they keep coming back. We are a destination restaurant, as we are gluten-free, so we appreciate not only our neighborhood customers but those who come from a distance." Tamara is quick to point out that not only loyal patrons but loyal, long-term staff have made this unusual time so much more tolerable. "Seven of us work here including me and we're all great friends."

Alfonso Sanchez and his three business partners committed to leasing the beautiful space formerly occupied by Al Vento at the corner of 50th Street and 34th Avenue in February 2020. Little did they know a worldwide pandemic was about to unfold that would test their mettle even before opening the doors of their upscale Mexican restaurant, Casa Maria.

COVID-19 caused significant delays in securing necessary licenses and performing cosmetic alterations to the space. By the time Casa Maria actually opened well into June, the business model was a far cry from what had been envisioned by its owners and only take-out service has been available.

Previously Alfonso worked as a cook for 24 years, and just one of his partners has had restaurant ownership experience. The foursome is characterized by unbridled enthusiasm for their new venture, and is hopeful that once COVID-19 is in the rear-view mirror, their onsite dining service will flourish. "We have not advertised and our business thus far has all been word-of-mouth," said Alfonso. "Though we are not yet well-established, our customers – many of whom live in the neighborhood – report they love our food and we are so



The four owners of Casa Maria (5001 S. 34th Ave.) are (left to right) Oscar Paz, Humberto Santiago, Alfonso Sanchez, and Modesto Reyes. (Photo submitted)

pleased." Casa Maria has a goal to become a fine destination restaurant known for creating authentic Mexican dishes consistently sourced from the highest quality ingredients.

COVID-19 arrived last year just as Berry Sweet was set to substantially expand their seating space by June, add a dinner menu, and begin liquor service following a long-fought process to secure licensure. "March through May were tough for us as we learned how to do carry-out and adjusted our days and hours of operation," Jon said. "We put our plans for adding dinner on hold repeatedly. We made take-out dinner available for a while but that ended up costing us more than we made." Determining how many staff members the business could support and keep busy has been part of the COVID-19 learning curve as well. Nancy noted that at times Berry Sweet's staff has been reduced from between 12 and 14 to as few as four. "We've been seating at 50% capacity since June during the times we've been open," Nancy said. Berry Sweet was closed altogether from Nov. 29 through Jan. 14 – during which time the Ruds vacationed with wonderful friends who Nancy points out have been especially generous and supportive. "Jon and I had each been working about 10-hour days, and we continue to work long hours. It's very stressful and I have not felt rested."

Sassy Spoon was closed altogether March through June and later re-opened part time for take-out.



Sassy Spoon (5011 S. 34th Ave.) owner Tamara Brown is grateful for her loyal customer base that comes from around the Twin Cities area for the gluten-free menu.



Jon and Nancy Rud have owned and operated Berry Sweet Kitchen (5406 S. 34th Ave.) since 2013. (Photo submitted)

Entrepreneurial spirit

A common ingredient in great measure shared by the Ruds and Tamara as restaurateurs is entrepreneurial spirit. "Sassy Spoon is my child!" proclaims Tamara. "We had enjoyed success beyond all expectation, then COVID-19 hit. Our take-out business could be better, but I feel driven to keep the business successful. I've never thought

about working for someone else." The Ruds admit that while there have been days in the past year when the thought has crossed their minds to work for somebody other than themselves, as with Tamara they love their work and that passion propels them forward. "We've always just wanted to be able to work. Lately we have just been trying to survive," said Nancy.

Staying strong

While Sassy Spoon has not procured any loans to stay afloat during COVID and has survived on true grit, the owners of Berry Sweet feel that in addition to the generosity of their patrons, they owe their survival to PPP loans and grants – including a \$5,000 gift from area businessman Bob St. Mane through St. Mane's Minnesota Strong effort which garnered a fair amount of press coverage late last year. Nancy said one neighborhood senior who resides at Nokomis Square Cooperative mailed the Ruds a check for \$30 with an accompanying note encouraging Jon and Nancy to 'Stay Strong.' "We were just so moved by her kindness," said Jon.

Delivery and online orders

Sassy Spoon has not participated in a delivery program because as Tamara explains, "We are a tiny restaurant and we rely on customers to come pick up their orders." Berry Sweet attributes no more than 25% of their business to delivery through DoorDash, a service which in Minneapolis can retain up to 15% of a participating restaurant's take. Casa Maria has delivery service available through both DoorDash and ChowNow, though Alfonso is uncertain as to what percentage of their business this accounts for.

Known for their catering ser-

vice during normal times, Berry Sweet Kitchen has handled no more than one catering gig each month since the pandemic hit. "We had \$6,000 worth of catering orders booked when COVID-19 hit," said Jon. "All canceled." Nancy added, "When we opened Berry Sweet, we envisioned ourselves as a catering service primarily, but now the restaurant drives our business and catering has just been icing on the cake."

The Ruds feel the owner of their building has been exceedingly understanding and that they could not wish for a better landlord. "We planned to try to buy the building, but now we'll wait and see what happens," said Nancy.

What will this summer look like?

Somedays "normal" feels far away to Tamara. She'd love to believe that before terribly long Sassy Spoon can be back up and running for indoor dining. Meanwhile, she is trying to envision options for what re-opening might look like. She looks forward to having table service – and especially beverage service – outside once again as the summer months are typically her best season.

Jon said he only sees business getting better as 2021 progresses. "Our senior crowd has been returning, though some remain fearful of dining indoors," he noted. "Once people have been vaccinated and we are able to raise capacity, Berry Sweet will be in a strong position to get through the next couple years – thanks to the generosity of this community."

"But in business," added Nancy, "we are always careful to not over-spend."

Alfonso and his partners have lots of determination and hold great hope for the future of Casa Maria. Meanwhile their take-out proceeds can only just cover the overhead, and Alfonso personally is working seven days a week. Alfonso notes that his daughter, Eylani, who is social media savvy, has stepped up and been a tremendous contributor to the effort. His team feels it's important to keep spirits high, and to that end decorated the main dining room for Valentine's Day in February even though dine-in guests were not expected.

Jon noted he and Nancy have occasionally enjoyed exchanging ideas with other area restaurateurs through their membership in Nokomis East Business Association (NEBA), and Tamara said she likes the warm energy of the neighborhood business community.

If you or someone you know would like to get involved with NEBA or find out how you can help with NEBA's next project, you can contact the organization at nokomiseast-ba@gmail.com.

NEBA board member Bob Albrecht owns Bob Albrecht Real Estate, LLC in Keewaydin.



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Memberships in local groups has soared during pandemic as neighbors freely exchange goods and services

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

When South Minneapolis resident Kathryn Spotts first heard about the Buy Nothing Project in 2017, she learned there were only two groups operating in the Twin Cities: one in St. Paul's Highland Park and one in the Whittier neighborhood.

Wanting to share these opportunities with her Standish-Ericsson neighbors, Spotts formed a new Buy Nothing Project neighborhood group four years ago.

She said, "The Buy Nothing Project is an experiment in the 'gift economy.' Neighbors ask for things they need to have or borrow through a dedicated Facebook page. It's about neighbors relying on neighbors, and making human connections – it's also about buying and storing less stuff."

Membership has more than doubled since the pandemic set in, with 600 plus members participating in the free exchange of goods and services.

Sharing from a sense of abundance

Spotts explained, "The Buy Nothing Project isn't about overthrowing a market economy or never buying anything new. It's about recognizing a sense of abundance and sharing what we already have."

The first project started in 2013, when two friends created an experimental hyper-local gift economy on Bainbridge Island, Wash. Since then, it has become a worldwide social movement, with groups in 30 different countries.

Neighborhood groups form gift economies that complement local cash economies. Whether people join because they'd like to get rid of clutter, or to save money by getting stuff for free, they quickly discover that the Buy Nothing Project is more than

BUY NOTHING PROJECT



"We aren't out to solve all the problems of capitalism, but we are an opportunity to operate outside of it."

~ Kathryn Spotts

Kathryn Spotts (at left) said, "The Buy Nothing Project went through a giant equity overhaul this summer. It's been hard to diversify our groups, because our groups reflect our neighborhoods and our neighborhoods are largely segregated in Minneapolis. I am very aware of how privileged I am when I go up to somebody's porch to take something that has been set out for me. Nobody challenges me, because I'm white." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

just another free recycling platform.

A gift economy's real wealth is the people involved and the web of connections that forms to support them, according to Spotts. "The Buy Nothing Project is about setting aside the scarcity model of our cash economy, in favor of creatively and collaboratively sharing the abundance that is already here."

"Some things that come into our homes are only used once: a post-hole digger, an air mattress, a 1,000 piece puzzle will not be put together twice. Chances are, someone in our neighborhood could find a use for them and pass them along when they are done."

How it works

Spotts explained, "The site doesn't operate on a first-come, first-served basis. The gifter lists their good or service and can give to whomever they choose: the closest neighbor, the one with the best joke, the person who has never received anything from the site before, the neighbor they haven't met yet, and so on."

"This is one of the ways we strive for a kind of equity. It also eliminates the capitalist drive to be first, and the impulse to be on Facebook all day looking for great stuff."

COVID-19 changes

Spotts attributes the rapid

growth of the Standish-Ericsson group to people being home more during the pandemic. Some need things to fill up space, and some need to get rid of things to make more space at home. She said, "The importance of home has greatly expanded. I also sense that neighbors want to reach out to neighbors more, even if we can't see each other in-person very easily."

"All of our exchanges are done by leaving things on porches and doorsteps these days. I can't wait until we can have a meet-up or a yard sale swap with our members, once the pandemic is under control."

Find your group

Longfellow and Nokomis East also have Buy Nothing groups that are accepting new members. To find your neighborhood group, go to <https://buy-nothingproject.org/find-a-group/>. The embedded link will take you directly to Facebook, where you can click on "Join Group." Facebook will present you with three questions. Answer all three questions, so the group's administrator can approve your request. If you are unable to view these questions, or you have any other questions or concerns, send a message to the person named in the "About/Group Description" section.

The Buy Nothing Project asks you to join only one group, so that you can "give where you live," with the goal of building resilient community connections. Each group has basic Buy Nothing Project rules they ask people to read before joining.

Sprouting

The Buy Nothing Project has a word for what has happened in Standish-Ericsson, and that word is "sprouting". The group has gotten so big that they may soon become two separate Standish and Ericsson groups.

Spotts said, "That's what happens with this model. The point is to get to know one another. I used to know all the members in our group, but I don't anymore. It's a good problem to have."

To learn more about the principles of gift economies, visit the Buy Nothing Project website at www.buynothingproject.org.

The Standish Ericsson group has recently created a spread sheet of their lending library, which can be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/yycwe99n>. Spotts said, "I hope this list leads to many fewer people in our neighborhood owning tools, gadgets, and gear that they use once every five years."

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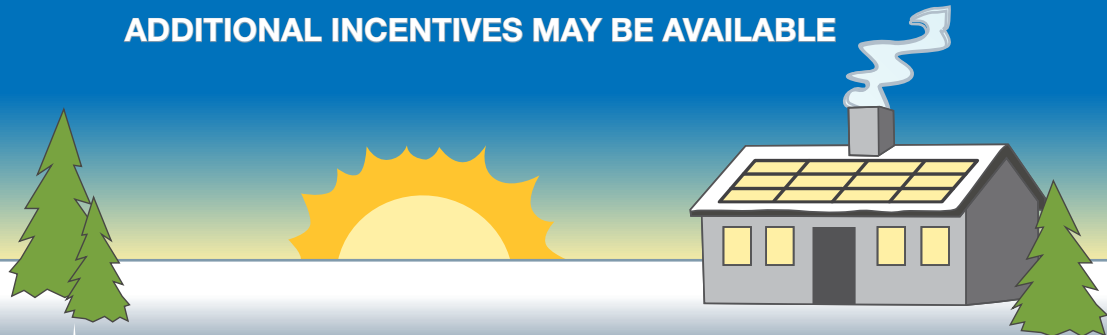


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