

# SOUTHWEST Connector

NEWS FOR EVERYONE, DELIVERED TO EVERYONE • OCTOBER 6, 2022 • VOL. 1 • NO. 18



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The proposed building for 4352 Zenith Ave. S. by Sustainable 9 drew many neighbors to the Minneapolis Planning Commission meeting on Sept. 19 with concerns about affordability, privacy, and green space. The proposed four-story building will replace a single-family home, and is allowed under the 2040 plan.

## NEIGHBORS CONCERNED ABOUT 2040 PLAN

Taller, larger buildings going in where single family homes were, with pricetags over \$1.3 million

By **Chloe Peter**

A goal of the 2040 plan is to encourage equitable and affordable housing, but it also creates gaps for condominiums worth over \$1.3 million.

A Linden Hills proposal by Sustainable 9 for four luxury condominiums at 4352 Zenith Ave. S. was debated during the Minneapolis Planning Commission meeting on Sept. 19, 2022. The Sustainable 9 office is located a few blocks away from the proposed site at 3511 W. 44th St.

"I have supported the 2040 plan because I'm an advocate for justice and equality in housing, and this is not what I see happening with the new housing in the neighborhood," said Mary Brown, who lives next door. "I'm a pediatrician and my spouse is a marriage and family therapist, and we are being priced out of

our own neighborhood by developments like Sustainable 9's."

There is currently a single family home on the .24-acre lot that is valued at \$445,000. It was purchased by Brett and Janelle Hanson (partners of Sustainable 9) in November 2021, and then transferred to S9 Asset Holdings, a division of Sustainable 9.

The lot is just north of the former trolley car right-of-way and Wooden Ship Brewing. The Trolley Lines Condo project includes demolishing the existing single-family dwelling on the site and constructing a new

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## CHURCH MAKES ROOM FOR DEEPLY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

At 39th and Chicago, Calvary will add new apartment building in the parking lot, and convert its education building for 41 housing units

By **Jill Boogren**

Sept. 11, 2022, marked the last day of service for a while at Calvary Lutheran Church (3901 Chicago Ave.). It looked a little different on this day, mostly celebratory, a little bittersweet, with Brass Solidarity leading a musical procession into and out of the church, former pastors and congregants giving thanks, George Floyd Square (GFS) community members offering testimony and preaching, a presentation following food and fellowship, and a documentary crew filming the whole thing.

Calvary is doing what few ministries would. They are downsizing their space while expanding their service to the community – by making room for affordable housing.

Calvary is partnering with Trellis and Simpson Housing Services to convert Calvary's education building and roughly half of its church basement into housing units. A brand new apartment building



The Calvary Lutheran Church congregation spills into the street to the upbeat music of Brass Solidarity on Sept. 11, the last service Calvary will have there until renovation is complete to add deeply affordable housing units to 39th and Chicago. In the interim, Calvary will worship at Iglesia Luterana San Pablo/St. Paul's Lutheran Church (2742 15th Ave.). (Photo by Jill Boogren)

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Suzy Messerole (left) and Tana Hargest of the Subversive Sirens practice at the Phillips Aquatic Center. "We do a lot more than just spread joy," Messerole stated. "Community is a very big part of our strategy." The group practices on Saturdays. (Photo by Terry Faust)

## SUBVERSIVE SIRENS IMAGINE A BETTER WORLD

Non-binary synchronized swimming team advocates for Black liberation, equity in aquatics and body autonomy

By **Jan Willms**

The world of queer synchronized swimming is very small. But the Subversive Sirens, a non-binary synchronized swimming team out of Minnesota, is making a big splash. (Forgive the pun.)

Advocating for Black liberation, queer visibility, equity in aquatics and radical body acceptance, the swimming team had its beginnings in 2016 when Signe Harri-day, an activist and Black leader in Minneapolis and St. Paul, attended the Gay Games and decided she wanted to participate.

"She asked me if I wanted to compete with her, and it sounded like fun, so I said yes," said Longfellow resident Suzy Messerole, a member of the Subversive Sirens. "I thought we would be engaging in self-care, and it would be a good thing."

Messerole said they looked through the menu of competition. "We wanted

nothing with a ball and nothing where we had to run. We saw synchronized swimming and we thought, 'We can totally do this!'

"We swim. We dance. We do yoga. And Signe had a one-week synchronized swimming camp in the fourth grade. So we were totally ready," Messerole said.

"We started practicing, and we were taken under the wing of these synchronized swimmers in their 70s. We got three other people to join us, and we competed in duet and team combo," she said. They won gold in team combo and silver in duet in their age group. They also won gold

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## CHURCH MAKES ROOM

will be built in the parking lot next door. In all, 41 housing units will be created, many of which will have three or more bedrooms. Fifteen of the units are reserved for supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness.

Several keys make the project “deeply affordable,” according to Trellis Vice President of Housing Development Dan Walsh. First, there is 100% project-based rent assistance, which enables them to serve an “extremely low-income population.” The Minneapolis Public Housing Authority awarded Section 8 rent assistance vouchers, and Simpson secured “housing support,” a rental and living subsidy for the supportive housing units.

“Everybody that lives here will only pay 30% of their income towards the rent,” said Walsh. “So, if their income is \$100, they’ll just pay \$30 towards the rent.”

They also put a formal income restriction on all the units to be at or below 30% of the area median income, and they’ve added a land use restriction to prevent any future building owner from converting to market rate units or other use of the property. The restriction is in place for 55 years, but Walsh envisions it being in place for much longer.

“We’re more than 30 years old, and our mission is to keep housing affordable indefinitely, so I hope that Trellis is just as strong in 55 years, so then we’ll sign another one,” he said.

Calvary will become one of the tenants, and the Calvary Emergency Food Shelf will return to operate in the non-housing area of the basement. Other plans for the space make the project unique, as well. Inside the sanctuary, a room divider will be installed to create a community space at one end and a place for worship and a small kitchen at the other. The stained glass windows and the church’s exterior will not change (the existing buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places), and the banners on the bell tower and outer wall will stay.

In collaboration with the community, the Chicago Avenue Fire Arts Center is creating a public art sculpture for the courtyard between the church and education buildings (see sidebar).

### CALL TO ACTION

Conversations within Calvary about what to do with their excess space had been underway for several years. For Shari Seifert, a Calvary member since 2010, it was really important to think about their values, including valuing and doing what’s best for their neighbors. Rather than just sell to the highest bidder, they began exploring the possibility of creating affordable housing.

Then came spring of 2020 – the pandemic and the very public murder of George Floyd down the street.



Calvary Lutheran Church at 39th St. and Chicago Ave. To its left is the apartment building that will be built in the parking lot. To the right, behind the church, is the education building that will be converted to apartment units. (Rendering by UrbanWorks Architecture)

### CAFAC TO CREATE PUBLIC ART AT CALVARY

The Chicago Avenue Fire Arts Center (CAFAC) will be creating a public art piece guided by the Calvary community, which includes the congregation, food shelf and Urban Arts Academy, all of whom have also used space in the buildings.

To show examples, volunteer coordinator and instructor Jess Berman Tank (above left) and CAFAC artistic director and founder Heather Doyle shared art forms cast from objects selected by George Floyd Square community members as meaningful to them. Shown here, from left to right, is an enamel design, metal casts of photographer Billy Brigg’s camera and caretaker Jeanelle Austin’s hand, and a texture pressed in clay.

Other objects shared (not pictured) were keys from the piano at The Peoples’ Way, seeds from a garden, texture from fabric inside the South Shack, the word MINNEAPOLIS from a manhole cover that was accessible when the streets were closed to through traffic, and a spray can. A variety of materials and techniques were used – enameling, plasticine clay, silicone molding and a metal pour.

“Our concept is these will be installed throughout the Square, sort of like a historic tour of... what’s happened here,” said Doyle.

For the Calvary project, CAFAC is asking for input on themes or interests that tie the Calvary



community together, as well as for elements that make the space a natural community hub.

“It will be fun to take a look at what everyone has contributed and ideated in the space,” said Doyle. “It’s a great opportunity to really engage with the community that’s here and have them be able to come see their own work in their community.”

Once created, the sculpture will be situated in the small courtyard between the church and the former education building, with design elements carried throughout the space on garden fencing, bike racks and some planters. CAFAC is located at 3749 Chicago Ave.

According to food shelf coordinator Melissa Brooks, food distribution, which had evolved into a free grocery store focused on customer choice, moved “back into bags and out to the corner of 39th and Chicago.”

“When George Perry Floyd was murdered, people came from all around to this neighborhood to grieve, process and witness with the George Floyd Square community in Minneapolis. After the fires and looting closed many stores, our increased visibility in the neighborhood led many neighbors from near and far to Calvary,” said Brooks during the Sept. 11 service. “Our congregation and the surrounding community stepped up with

time, money and lots of donations of food and household items, coming in every day. The need that was already present in the neighborhood became more visible with the lines of people and cars at our distribution as word spread of the sharing of food that we were doing.”

Other needs became evident, as well. Chris Van Meter, a 10-year member of the church, said being a block away from where George Floyd was murdered, “really cemented us, gave us a chance to open up to the critical needs.” He remembers when media used the space during the Uprising to recharge – their batteries and themselves.

“One day there was a woman who

just needed some peace,” Van Meter recalled. “She was from one of the networks, and she sat down at the piano, and she just played for 20, 30 minutes. She had not had that solitude in quite a while.”

Calvary responded in a multitude of other ways as protests continued. Seifert recalls being met with many “yes”es to requests for support that came in the form of people setting up tables, bringing masks, food and water to people, nurses showing up to give emergency care, creating a rapid response team in case emergency shelter was needed.

Speaking to the congregation, Roosevelt High School teacher and resident of George Floyd Square Marcia Howard recalled being walked through the building where there were plastic tubs for if they’d get doused with teargas. There were snacks, charging stations and clothes if people needed them. She said the question had to be asked of the higher ups whether they could use the church as sanctuary, and they said, “Yes.” That if anything were to happen on that block, everyone could find safety and shelter at Calvary.

“I don’t think that people outside of south Minneapolis understand the significance of this congregation saying ‘Yes, we in fact, open our doors,’” said Howard. “That did not mean everybody here was on 38th St. But what they were sayin’ was that 38th was welcome here.” This was met with a robust applause.

“We were outside,” said Seifert. Soon she heard of neighbors meeting in the streets and started showing up herself. “The group evolved into the most amazing community, a beloved community, that gets more right about being a good neighbor, liberation and justice than any church I’ve ever been a part of,” she said. “I mean, we’re workin’ on it.”

In many ways the housing project is a continuation of that work. It demonstrates a “tremendous care for neighbor,” said Seifert, while at the same time addressing racial disparities in housing and in income. As a real estate agent herself, she spoke to the value of determining the highest and best use of the land.

“I think we found it,” she said. “I think this is the highest and best use of that land.”

Van Meter sees it as a chance to change public perception of the neighborhood.

“It’s gonna give us a chance to hopefully draw people in and see that this community’s not just worth salvaging,” he said. “It’s beyond that. There’s confidence in it again.”

### BUILDING COMMUNITY

Delivering the sermon together, guest Rev. Jeanelle Austin, executive director of George Floyd Global Memorial, and Pastor Kjell Ferris touched on themes of love, rest, the responsibility to care for one another, helping others reach their fullest

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# MOST LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS LOSING CITY FUNDING

This year 13 of the 20 SW neighborhood organizations will receive under \$20,000

By **Cam Gordon**

Next year many neighborhood organizations in Minneapolis will be receiving less financial support from the city than they have for years, or even decades. While all 20 southwest neighborhood orgs received over \$20,000 last year, 13 are set to get less in 2023 under the mayor's proposal. Bryn Mawr is the lowest with \$11,943.

"The Armatage Neighborhood Association (ANA) will receive just \$14,131/year in funding from the City of Minneapolis starting Jan. 1, 2023 compared to \$31,263/year in 2020 unless more neighborhood funding is approved," said a statement issued this month from the association. "While we support the city's new funding requirements, greater focus on equity, and shifting more funding to our neighborhood colleagues in areas of the city that need it most, the ANA's \$14,131 per year in city funding will make it very difficult to maintain the basic services we provide to residents."

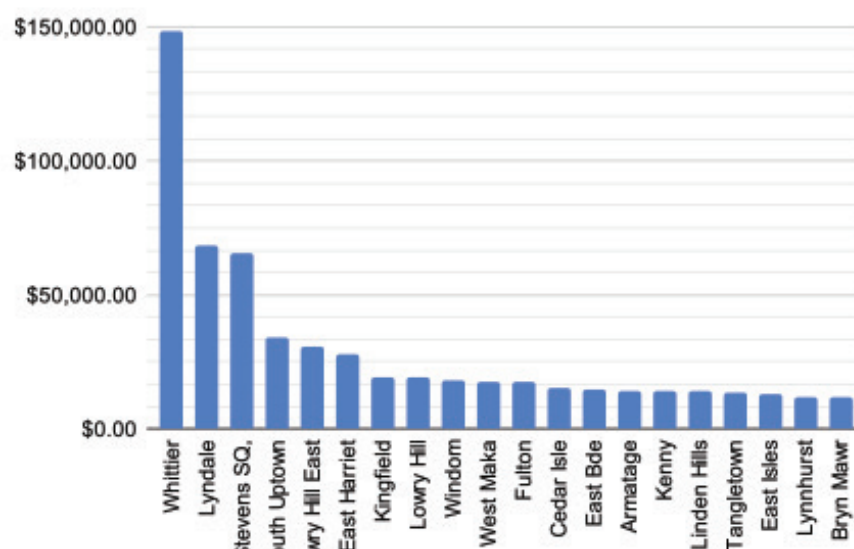
The mayor's proposed budget for 2023 includes \$3.1 million allocated through three dedicated funding programs specifically for neighborhood organizations. That includes \$840,000 in the Neighborhood Network Fund, \$2.16 million in the Equitable Engagement Fund, and \$100,000 in the Collaboration and Shared Resources Fund. Last year these three funds received over \$3.7 million.

The Neighborhood Network Fund is designed to support the day-to-day operations of the city's network of 70 neighborhood organizations. These funds can be used for the administration and operating expenses and provide the same base level of funding for each neighborhood. This fund is proposed and scheduled to be reduced to \$10,000 per neighborhood in 2023 from the \$20,000 the council approved for this year.

The Equitable Engagement Fund will increase by roughly \$170,000, bringing it to over \$2 million. This fund goes to neighborhoods in varying amounts based on their designation as an area concentration of poverty, evidence of gentrification, and the number of cost burdened households. The funding is provided to support activities that focus on equity and increased participation in neighborhood decision-making. Next year some neighborhood groups will see an increase in funding from this source, including the Whittier Alliance which will go from \$147,384 in 2022 to an estimated \$148,266 in 2023 when the network and engagement funding is combined. Whittier will be receiving more than any other neighborhood in the city, ahead of Cedar Riverside, projected to receive \$111,052, and Jordan at \$98,111.

The Collaboration and Shared Resources Fund provides resources to support the consolidation or the sharing of resources among neighborhood organizations.

## PROJECTED SOUTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD FUNDING 2023



Adapted from the Neighborhoods 2020 Program Guidelines

In addition to the \$3.1 million dedicated funding to neighborhood organizations, the mayor has proposed a \$250,000 increase to a Partnership Fund. This fund may be used by separate community-based organizations who partner with recognized neighborhood organizations to engage underrepresented residents.

### KENNY 'FEELING A REAL SQUEEZE'

Kenny is among the neighborhoods whose funding will be decreased. "This is a very difficult time for neighborhood organizations, ours as well as many throughout the city," said John Erickson who co-chairs the Kenny Neighborhood Association Board. He noted that at a time when residents are asking more from the neighborhood organization, "We are feeling a real squeeze. It's a real challenge." To address the cuts, Kenny has been looking into corporate sponsors for events, selling ads in their newsletters, and working with other associations to share event costs and administrative expenses.

### FUNDING USED TO BE \$20 MILLION A YEAR

The amount of overall funding going to neighborhood groups is lower than it has been for decades. From 1990-2010, after the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) was established as a joint initiative by the state legislature and city council, \$20 million a year was dedicated to support neighborhood groups and projects. Over a 20-year period of the program, \$400 million was spent through neighborhood associations.

When the program ended in 2011, the city started a new department, the Neighborhood and Community Relations department. Prior to creating the Neighborhoods 2020 program with its four funding streams, the city created the Community Participation Program. At one point a city work group recommended a funding level of \$10 million a year for neighborhood support with a higher minimum, but the city council at the time directed staff to cap it at \$4.1 million.

Sarah Linnes-Robinson, who works with both Lyndale and Kingfield neighborhood groups, points out that some neigh-

borhoods are still relying on NRP reserves, or revolving loan funds, to cover costs. "In my understanding the city council direction was to establish the Partnership Fund and to also fund the neighborhood associations at \$25,000 minimum per year," she said. "If the base funding does not increase, it will soon cost as much in administrative overhead to accept the funds as we receive from the city, so in my opinion, it is just a matter of time as old NRP funds are depleted before many groups decide that it isn't worth taking the funding from the city at all."

The cutting off of funding is a way to kneecap the neighborhood associations and remove the ability for us to be there if, or when, a community crisis arises."

Sarah Linnes-Robinson



with, most don't bother to call me back," she said. "Through the Partnership Funds, the city is funding many inexperienced programs and asking for zero accountability, and running many of these funds and the responsibility for these projects through the experienced neighborhood groups without providing financial compensation to us."

### LOSING A CRITICAL PART OF WHAT MAKES THE CITY UNIQUE?

With Kenny set to receive only

\$14,131 (from roughly \$23,000 this year) from both the network and equitable engagement funding, Erikson said, "As a board we don't know where we will be. Keeping the base funding at \$25,000 would make a tremendous difference. We would be able to continue and expand services and help provide a stable and welcoming neighborhood environment." He believes that a strong neighborhood organization can help build a local support system that can help improve mental health, address crime and safety and can "take pressure away from citywide services."

The Armatage board also stressed the importance of neighborhood groups and safety. "Neighborhood organizations are also an important part of Minneapolis' community safety network. We know, through direct experience, as well as empirical evidence, that knowing and connecting with your neighbors leads to safer communities."

They wrote, "Over the decades, neighborhood organizations have connected not just neighbors with each other but to their elected officials, resources to help address needs, educational programming, and more. As the city budget continues to reduce financial support for many neighborhoods in favor of non-geographic-based organizations, we risk disenfranchising large sections of the city, cutting communications between the people and the decision makers, and losing a critical and irreplaceable part of what makes Minneapolis unique and special."

Linnes-Robinson said, "The cutting of off funding is a way to kneecap the neighborhood associations and remove the ability for us to be there if, or when, a community crisis arises."

The city council will be considering amendments to the mayor's proposed budget in the weeks ahead, but so far it is unclear if any work is being done to make any changes in funding to neighborhoods.

"It's too early for me to say whether or not I plan to make amendments to the mayor's 2023-2024 recommended budget," said Ward 11 Council Member Emily Koski. "I absolutely support neighborhood organizations and know the value that they bring to the City of Minneapolis. I really do believe neighborhood organizations are what bring neighbors together, and what bring communities together."

Koski served on her own neighborhood group board in the past, and says that she is connected to each of the neighborhood organizations in Ward 11 as a council member. "I know about the struggles they are facing around funding, staffing, and I want to help neighborhood organizations, NCR [Neighborhood and Community Relations department], and the City of Minneapolis in finding solutions."

### GIVE INPUT AT PUBLIC HEARINGS

The city council's budget committee will be meeting throughout the month with public hearing on the budget set for Nov. 10, at 10 a.m., Nov. 15 at 6:05 p.m. and Dec. 6, 6:05 p.m. when the approval of a final amended budget is expected.

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potential and building a flourishing community.

In designing the project, Walsh took to heart a sentiment shared with him by Howard: this development needs to be "of the community and for the community." That meant considering who was going to live there, the quality of the spaces and how it was going to be managed. One of the things he's especially proud of is they've allocated funds from their operating budget for a half-time position for a

services and activities coordinator for all units. Although they'll work for Simpson, they won't be attached only to the 15 supportive housing units. They'll make sure all of the residents are connected to community resources.

Wendy Wiegmann, Simpson's associate director, is excited this position will be built in. She envisions a lot of families on site, kids' activities, movie nights, as well as formation of a resident council who will decide what activities to offer, how to build community in the space, and how best to use money in an annual budget. Even more, Wiegmann is excited to be able to be of service in south Minneapolis,

where Simpson originated 40 years ago.

"This is where people want to live. People want to stay in this community. They want to be able to afford to live in this community and to be a part of it," she said. "And I'm just really excited to be able to partner and offer them assistance and service to keep people here."

In closing out the sermon, Rev. Austin initiated a call and response, so familiar out in the streets: "Tell me what community looks like" and "Show me what community looks like." It was met inside the sanctuary with a loud and resounding: "This is what community looks like!"

Renovations in the existing space are

expected to take nine months, with construction of the new building complete a few months later. In the interim, Calvary will worship at Iglesia Luterana San Pablo/St. Paul's Lutheran Church (2742 15th Ave.). The food shelf is closed while they move and expects to reopen in a temporary space in mid-October. For updates, check the Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/calvaryfoodshelf](http://www.facebook.com/calvaryfoodshelf)



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# I'VE GOT QUESTIONS ABOUT GUNS IN AMERICA

When does the right to own a gun capable of such destruction become more important than the lives we are losing? I'm not talking about recreational hunting or going down to the firing range; I'm talking about owning fully automatic assault weapons. This is a problem that impacts us even here in Minnesota. According to the City of Minneapolis 2022 Gun Violence Overview from Aug. 10, fully automatic gunfire is up to 183 instances this year compared to 50 this time last year. Since August of 2020, when the first automatic gunfire was recorded in the city, 390 instances have occurred.

In the column that I wrote on Generation Z (printed in the Sept. 8, 2022, edition of the Connector) I mentioned that my generation has had to grow up with the ever-looming threat of gun violence. I talked about the Sandy Hook Elementary shooting and how it felt to see students my age be in that kind of situation. I talked about wondering if our school drills would be enough and what would happen if it were



By **Chloe Peter**

my school. I think that, with over 490 mass shootings in the United States in 2022 alone, we need to sit down and have a conversation about the Second Amendment. No screaming or yelling at each other, but actually talking and expressing and learning.

The argument many use is that their freedoms to bear arms is being infringed upon, but what about the freedoms of those who have lost their lives, are forever changed by gun violence, or are friends and family of someone impacted? What about the children in schools being taught to run, hide, and defend themselves? What about the teachers that need to worry about how they will protect their students? What about the parents terrified to send their children into school?

I remember having a conversation in high school with one of my peers about how they thought of ways to escape in each classroom just in case an active shooter situation happened. I had thought of this as well, and so had others in our class. At the time, we made it into a joke: our classroom daydreams could be an action movie.


Sometimes, it'll hit me in the grocery store or church or the theater or at a concert. These are all places where multiple

mass shootings have happened. I try not to live a life in fear, of course, but I am frustrated because I do not have to have these feelings. Citizens could be better protected. While Minnesota is one of only two states to have regulations on assault weapons, I believe, as a country, we could also do better. Jason R. Silva, an assistant professor at William Paterson University, conducted a study that compared mass shootings (a public incident of four or more deaths or injuries) in the United States versus other developed countries. Half of 36 developed countries have not experienced mass shootings in the past 22 years. Only five had more than two mass shooting events. In contrast, the United States had at least one mass shooting every year during 1998 to 2019.

I don't believe that wanting to stop mass shootings and gun violence is as radical or as political as it now seems in the U.S. I think that getting anywhere in terms of laws surrounding gun violence is a problem that both Democrats and Republicans could fix. Because of the rivalry between the two parties, it seems like we have gotten nowhere with both gun control and/or mental health support related to gun violence.

I am tired. I am tired of innocent people being killed. I am tired of worrying about my siblings in school and my husband, who is a teacher, being shot. I am tired of politicians pointing fingers instead of getting things done. Many developed countries do not go through this, and yet, in a country named a "world power," we must go through it again and again. Even with the argument that mass shootings are all mental health-related, and have nothing to do with guns, why are we not addressing mental health more openly? Why do we not have more thorough background checks?

Domestic violence is a large contributor to mass shootings and gun violence, in general. Sixty percent of mass shootings are an act of domestic violence or are committed by domestic abusers, according to an analysis done by "Bloomberg News." Why is this rarely addressed when talking about mass shooting and gun control? How will we hold each other and our politicians accountable in lowering gun violence? Maybe it's time to start talking more about the rights of all the lives that have been lost.

 **Chloe Peter** is a writer, editor, and local news enthusiast. She is an advocate for creativity and learning with a sense of wonder. Contact her at [new@swconnector.com](mailto:new@swconnector.com)

# HEALING CIRCLES REALLY DO HAVE THE POWER TO HEAL

A Latina poet has a creative solution to strengthen communities across the city

Who is a storyteller? It's an important question these days because storytelling matters more than ever. Whoever controls the narrative controls history.

A few years ago, a Nigerian writer named Chimamanda Adichie gave an 18-minute Ted Talk called, "The Danger of a Single Story." The talk is among the most popular Ted Talks of all time with over 32 million views. It is about how our lives and our cultures are composed of many overlapping stories, but many times the complexities of a story are diluted down to a simplistic narrative. These narratives aren't always accurate.

Adichie began her talk with a story about her early childhood. She grew up on a university campus in eastern Nigeria and read many British and American books. When she started writing her own stories as a young child (around the age of seven), her stories emulated what she had read. All her characters had blue eyes and blonde hair, played in the snow, ate apples, and talked about the weather and how nice it was that the sun had come out.

This was odd because she lived in Nigeria and had never been outside Nigeria. "We didn't have snow, we ate mangoes, and we never talked about the weather, because there was no need to," she says.

Her perspective changed when she read African books. She found her authen-

tic cultural voice and warned that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding because we don't get the whole story.

The same can be said about a community. If we don't hear from all the different voices in a community, we might not get the whole story about the state of the community. If we don't get the whole story, a community might be unable to live up to its full potential.

Most major metropolitan cities in the United States today are a melting pot of diverse people, cultures, experiences, and beliefs. This includes Minneapolis. Every voice in a community matters. But some voices are unheard. When voices are missing, needs are unmet.

Lupe Castillo is working to change that. Lupe is the co-founder of Palabristas, a collective of poets, spoken word artists, and writers of ChicanX/LatinX heritage. The group started in 2002 when the National Poetry Slam was coming to the Twin Cities and she noticed that the Latinx voice was missing from the event. She helped organize a group of writers, and this year, Palabristas celebrated its 20th anniversary.

Now, Lupe has a new project called HeartSpeaks Healing Circles. HeartSpeaks works with Palabristas and offers writing and poetry workshops on strength, resistance and resilience. These writing circles provide opportunities for healing. Lupe has years of experience as a cultural arts connector in the Latinx community, using the power of words and ritual celebrations to engage and build community through Palabristas. This is the same spirit HeartSpeaks has.

HeartSpeaks' mission is to create a supportive environment that brings words and stories to life. Writers, new and old,



Lupe Castillo, the co-founder of HeartSpeaks Healing Circles and Palabristas, shared her words of wisdom at a Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association's Twin Cities Community Pop-Up Market at Mueller Park this summer. (Photo by Eric Ortiz)

can share their stories and express their truths. Participants in the circle can be seen and heard, creating a path to healing.

"The inspiration for HeartSpeaks was to create consensus and harmony in communities most impacted by racism and systemic barriers to well-being," Lupe told Minneapolis Creates. "It's not about who's right or wrong. It's about listening so everyone feels heard and witnessed, to be part of the community."

HeartSpeaks also has brought writing circles to two schools in Minneapolis, including El Colegio, a small public high school serving English and Spanish students since 2000. Lupe, who has four children, 13 grandchildren, and infinite wisdom, includes drumming in the heal-

ing circles with Britt Howell, the program director for BF50 Indigenous Health, a community organization that promotes health, wellness and cultural arts education. When students present their verbal artworks, a drum, or another instrument like a tambourine, is played.


"It's all in the name, HeartSpeaks," says Lupe. "The body is drumming and the words are rhythmic – so including drumming is just incredible. It's a way of saying to the community, we are here. We are these beating drums, like a beating heart."

HeartSpeaks continues its work with young people and students and is looking to increase its role in the community. In June, HeartSpeaks Healing Circles was awarded a Creative Response Fund grant to expand the impact of healing and community support.

The Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association (LHENA) has partnered with HeartSpeaks and BF50 Indigenous Health to expand our community building program. The healing circles and health, wellness and cultural arts education will be part of more pop-up markets in the future to strengthen the community.

A community works best when every voice is heard. That's how we change the narrative.

If you are interested in learning more about LHENA's community building program and healing circles, or being involved, let us know at [bit.ly/community-blockprogram](https://bit.ly/community-blockprogram).

 **Eric Ortiz** lives in the Wedge with his family. When he's not community building, he's the director of media for Big Edition and writes bilingual children's books with his kids. Their first book, "How the Zookalex Saved the Village," is available in English and Spanish.

## SOUTHWEST Connector

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## 1 2040 PLAN

three-story, four-unit residential building with three-bedroom units. All units will share a centralized elevator and staircase, and a fitness area on the second floor. The ac units will be a couple feet from the rear property line. The units on the first floor will have access to outdoor decks in front and rooftop decks in back. The 14,222-square-foot building will have one level of underground parking accessed from a single driveway off of Zenith Avenue South, with a green roof on top.

The site is currently zoned R2B Multiple-family District. To construct a four-unit building the site must be rezoned. The new building would be 26 feet from the street, and about 7 feet on the other sides. A deck would be three feet from the property line on the south side.

Another Sustainable 9 building in Linden Hills, also with four units, is currently priced at \$1.385 million each.

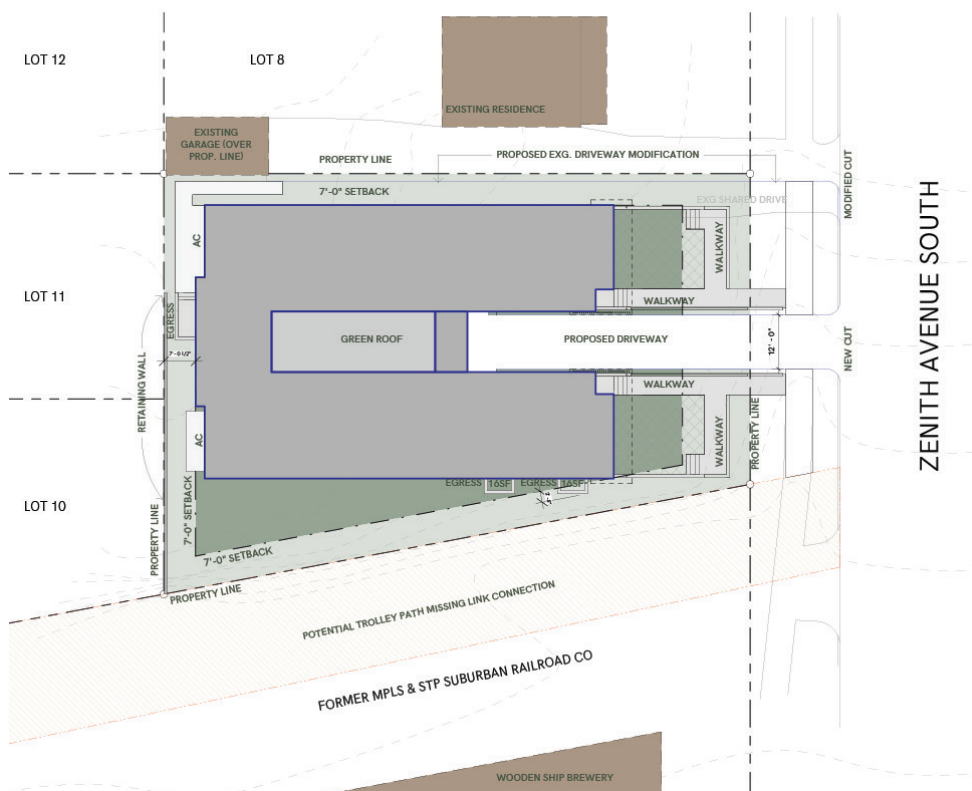
Since 2000, White non-Hispanic and Asian households have seen increases in household income while Black households have seen a decrease of 40 percent in income throughout Minneapolis, according to the Minneapolis 2040 website.

Planning commissioners debated whether affordable is always associated with equitable. Several stated that this type of development is what they would like to see more of coming out of the 2040 plan. Commissioner Aneesha Marwah pointed out that the Sustainable 9 building plans are helpful for those who need wheelchair access. Commissioner Becky Alper (who represents the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board) said these condominiums could be helpful to the elderly. She mentioned that it made her think of her own aging parents, who would appreciate being in an accessible home while also remaining in an urban neighborhood.

### ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

This is far from the first debate about the 2040 plan implemented in Minneapolis in 2020. Hennepin County Judge Joseph Klein stopped the implementation of the plan in June of 2022 when concerns were raised about the environmental impact that the plan would have. In a lawsuit filed against the plan, Minnesota Citizens for the Protection of Migratory Birds, the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis, and Smart Growth Minneapolis claimed that the 2040 plan violated the Minnesota Environmental Rights Act. However, in July of 2022, the plan was temporarily implemented once again.

Environmental concerns were also



A local developer plans to raze this single family house and construct a four-story, four unit luxury condo at 4352 Zenith. The plan includes a 47-foot dividing wall behind the house, which neighbors say will cut off light from their properties, harming their gardens and green space. Multi-unit buildings are allowed under the city's 2040 plan.



The projects are not meeting the ideals of affordability, elimination of disparities, feeling more connected, natural cultural amenities and climate forward jobs programs."

Linea Palmisano



ect, said, "The proposed design would have a wall the entirety of my property line...I have eradication of all my natural light, and obviously a lack of privacy issue

brought up at the Planning Commission meeting on Sept. 19. Several large trees will need to be removed at 4352 Zenith, and a request to see the water runoff and drainage plan for the building was made.

The plan for the condos at 4352 Zenith includes a 47-foot dividing wall. Neighbors say it will cut off light from their properties, harming their gardens and green space.

Stephanie Untiedt, the neighbor directly behind the Sustainable 9 project,

with (people in) the elevators peering into my home windows and yard."

The pictures of the proposed building do not include the backyard neighbors nor does the 360-degree rendering video that was presented at the Planning Commission meeting. Rather, they show a large meadow, which Untiedt claims is misleading to potential buyers and community members alike.

"(The building) is surrounded by very nearby backyard neighbors, hence, us all feeling 'erased' both literally and metaphorically in this development process," Untiedt said. "Councilmen Rainville stated in the Planning Commission meeting that there were not supposed to have been any 'winners or losers in 2040,' but this clearly shows all the backyard neighbors as 'losers' because this developer is not showing any regard for them."

"In general, the 'transition' zoning between higher intensity and lower intensity still comes as a surprise to many residents in these transition spaces," pointed out Ward 13 City Council Member Linea Palmisano, whose ward includes Linden Hills. "The most aggrieved residents to this new zoning thus far are finding out they live in these transition zones. It is going to be slow to change, and our city won't grow evenly. Clearly a developer saw an opportunity here and acted.

"People think that it's out of place with existing zoning, but it isn't and has been this way since 2019. Having a suddenly much larger building in this transition space as of right, when the places all surrounding it remain with much larger setbacks and greenspace, is a big change in the fabric of our neighborhoods. Neighbors are taken aback at the massing and gentrification happening even within these relatively small-scale corridors and side streets. The things that will make these new projects fit well are a lot of communication between developers and these nearest residents. These new projects are dramatically changing the feel of what has existed for sometimes generations. These projects are not meeting the ideals of affordability, elimination of disparities, feeling more connected, natural cultural amenities and climate forward jobs programs.

"Those are often not things that the city can condition onto a land use application. But these types of considerations and working together really are critical to our city's future."

The Planning Commission intended to continue this conversation at its Oct. 3 meeting. Commissioners encouraged Sustainable 9 to reach out to homeowners in the neighborhood in order to talk about compromises in the development. At this time, Untiedt has said the developers have not reached out.

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# TILE ARTIST CREATES UNIQUE PIECES FOR HOMES

Inspired by nature, Haruko Ruggiero is guided by ‘less is more’ principle

By **Tesha M. Christensen**

Standish tile artist Haruko Ruggiero always had a sense that she would develop her own “something” related to interior design and patterns. She began by fashioning together mosaics.

“Finding my tile options lacking in color variety and appeal, creating my own tile line became a new and stronger focus,” Haruko said.

Learn more about her work below.

## WHAT OTHER THINGS TIE YOU TO THIS SPACE?

Ruggiero: I have lived in Standish for just about 10 years. I grew up in Whittier and went to Andersen Elementary and South High, so I spent many years on this end of Lake Street. Many of my friends were in this neighborhood. What ties me to this space now are my home, garden and studio, and that I have no plans to move. I view my home as a treasure to consistently improve and care for and to pass on to my family. When I see home-insecure people in this city, which is increasingly common, I am ever aware of the notion of the “haves and have-nots” and it is a more than disconcerting situation for our city and for our country to be in. To have safe, clean and private shelter is not something to take for granted.

## WHEN DID YOU FIRST START MAKING TILES AND WHAT PROMOTED YOU TO DO THIS WORK?

Making tiles is a way to create pattern, and also a way to create something that enhances a home, both of which have cap-



Haruko Ruggiero, who grew up in Whittier and now lives in Standish, points out that the smaller houses in south Minneapolis offer the opportunity for homeowners to make the most of what they have, and to make each space special. (Photo submitted)

tured my interest for many years.

I am drawn into pattern in textiles, tiles, jewelry, woodcarving, landscape design, plants, animal and rocks, household objects. Essentially, where patterns exist, I am curious and will no doubt take a closer look to consider.

People have been creating patterns since the beginning. There are notably

consistent similarities, as well as differences, amongst patterns around the world and throughout time. One such example would be the triangle shape that is prevalent in southwestern patterns in states such as Arizona or New Mexico, yet also present in patterns originating thousands of miles from there, where the Uyghur in

## TIPS FROM A TILE ARTIST

Haruko Ruggiero’s tips for people who are trying to decide whether to place tile in their homes and what to select are:

- If you are looking to bring new energy into a room, changing to or adding tile is a great way to do it. Welcome the opportunity to introduce new texture and color. Choosing color is indeed easier said than done, but color makes such a difference in terms of the feel a room has (dare I say, “Stay away from grey?”). Make a list of what colors make you happy to be around, and importantly, ask yourself which colors you have enjoyed for years? Those are the ones to go with, the colors that don’t seem to veer from your core style.
- If you spend a fair amount of time in your home, invest in what you like.
- When making decisions, take your time and don’t rush, if you don’t have to. Deliberate if you need to. Unless, of course, you know right away what you would like once seeing the options! Which is most certainly a fortuitous thing!
- Ask yourself if you want the uniformity and/or texture that a machine will make or that which a hand will make. Both can be beautiful and just the right way to tile a wall, albeit certainly representative of different histories.
- Decide if you want to create further dimension with the arrangement of the tile shapes. Patterns can be made with a single shape or with two. Geometrical patterns can bring a sense of balance and unity when playing out and resolving on a wall.
- Determine how much time you have. With handmade tile there may be a wait for the finished products. In the case of Ruggiero Artisan Tile, the tiles are usually complete within 4-8 weeks and not longer. I work on just a few orders at a time, with the tiles being produced gradually and consistently over many consecutive days.



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# FOR HEALTHIER YARD AND WORLD, SKIP FALL CLEAN-UP

Climate change, habitat loss and pesticides are causing dramatic declines in populations of insects and the birds who need them – with likely dire consequences for humans' quality of life and even our survival. Yet while urban gardens and parks are increasingly seen as important places to sustain biodiversity, a curious autumn ritual continues: "cleaning" our yards in preparation for winter. Sadly, this outdated habit of removing organic material (especially leaves) actually harms the ecological health of our yards and our environment.



By **Constance Peppin**

Insects rely on fallen leaves and other natural debris to cover and insulate them from the elements during winter, and removing all this valuable organic material removes them, too. Fallen leaves are not litter, but are food and shelter for butterflies, moths, and many other beneficial insects who keep our ecosystem working. Bugs, however annoying or creepy to some people, are not optional. Without insects and the "services" that insects provide, such as pollination, the food chain we rely on would collapse, including in our own vegetable gardens.

The Xerces Society, a science-based international nonprofit working to protect the natural world by conserving invertebrates and their habitats, advises: "Abandon the brush. Let the logs be. Surrender the soil. Disregard the garden. The colder seasons call for a healthy amount of neglect in the outdoors to ensure invertebrates have shelter and food."

And when they say leave the leaves, they also mean save the stems of garden plants. Most insects spend winter hidden in leaves, hollow stems, trees, brush piles and soil. Dead stems, such as last year's raspberry or wildflower stems, provide nesting space and shelter for many types of beneficial insects. In the fall, leave dead stems intact; in the spring, cut back the



dead stems, leaving the stubble at heights from 8 to 24 inches. "Insects will make their nests inside and larvae will develop over spring and summer. These insects hibernate in the stems over fall and winter until they emerge as adults the next spring."

Doug Tallamy, entomologist, researcher and University of Delaware professor, also advocates for a new approach to conservation that starts in our yards. The choices we make about how we clean up in fall and spring can help counteract an overdeveloped, fragmented landscape

that threatens the food web. He explains that caterpillars are the major group of animals that transfer energy to birds and other animals. A lot of caterpillar cocoons are rolled up in the leaves of trees. So when we rake those leaves and burn them or bag them as trash, we're throwing away most of the life created in our yards.

Tallamy encourages us to think of leaves the same way we think of water: the best practice is to keep both on your property. "Don't let water run off. Same thing with leaves. So all the leaves that fall on your property should stay there, because that's part of the cycle. They're going to return the nutrients to the soil that were taken up by the trees' roots and used all summer long, so the tree gets to use them again. Leaves are the perfect mulch." Why rake up your leaves, throw them away and then go buy bark mulch in the spring?

As the Xerces Society explains, "Leaving the leaves and other plant debris doesn't have to mean sacrificing your yard to the wilderness. The leaves don't need to be left exactly where they fall. You can rake them into garden beds, around tree bases, or into other designated areas. Too many leaves can kill grass, but in soil they can suppress weeds, retain moisture, and boost nutrition."

At least: think twice before you rake, mow, and blow this year; at best: don't do it! Save your garden clean up until the spring. Wait until spring temperatures are in the 50s for at least a week. By then, insects living there will emerge and start their cycle of life again.

## RESOURCES:

- "Put Down Those Pruners" by the Xerces Society
- "Bee-Friendly Garden Cleanup" by Heather Holm
- "Six reasons to NOT clean up the garden this fall" by Jessica Walliser



**Constance Peppin** is co-founder of the Friends of Roberts Bird Sanctuary and co-leader of the Linden Hills Trolley Path Naturescape project.

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# MFD COMMEMORATES 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST ALL-WOMEN FIRE CREW

Fire Chief Bryan Tyner says it isn't just women who stand on their shoulders. "We all stand on your shoulders."

By **Jill Boogren**

Current and former fire department staff, city officials, friends and family joined together at Minneapolis Fire Station 5 (2700 Bloomington Ave.) on Sept. 23, 2022, to honor the four members of the first all-women fire crew in Minneapolis history: former Fire Captain Jean Kidd, fire motor operator Mary Mohn, and firefighters Vicki Hoff and Bonnie Bleskachek.

The first woman was hired as a firefighter for the Minneapolis Fire Department (MFD) in 1986, more than 100 years after the department was founded. Among those early hires were these four women, who joined the department in the 1980s. From 1992-1994, they worked together as the crew on Engine 5. Now retired, they were recognized as trailblazers in the field.

"For them to step in that role and take that courage to be the first... being the first is not easy," said Assistant Fire Chief Melanie Rucker, the event's emcee. "So we commend these women. And not only did they come onto the department, but they blazed the trail through the promotional ranks, as well."

Deputy Fire Chief Kathleen Mullen listed a number of their other "firsts" and accomplishments: Bleskachek was the first woman fire chief in the history of this department. Kidd was the first woman fire motor operator, the first woman captain, the first woman battalion chief, and the first woman deputy chief. Hoff was the first woman fire investigator. Mohn was an avid part of the union.

"Two of [the women] never took a promotional test that they did not test number one in," said Mullen, to applause. "These women didn't just have to be good. They had to be the very best. And then some."

High-ranking officials in the department spoke to the barriers women faced. Rucker said it took a lawsuit to get the then all-White-male department to include minorities and women. And that was just to hire them.

Mullen didn't pull any punches about one of their biggest obstacles. "Let's keep it



TOP: (left to right) Mary Mohn, Bonnie Bleskachek, Vicki Hoff and Jean Kidd stand in front of Engine 5, their rig from 1992-1994, when they served as the Minneapolis Fire Department's first all-women crew. BOTTOM: Hoff, Mohn, Kidd and Bleskachek share laughs and stories from their time serving together on Sept. 23, 2022. (Bottom photo by Jill Boogren)



real," she said. "The reason this all-woman crew formed is because when Jean Kidd was made captain there were no men that would work with her. So think about that reality."

Deputy Fire Chief Rita Juran spoke of the significance of this crew opening up the space for other women.

"The path these women created has been marched by many women throughout the years. They helped open the door,

proving that women could be competent firefighters and competent leaders," she said. "These women did not just toe the line, they have excelled, allowing others to excel."

Sherri Waisanen, president of the Women's Firefighter Association who has been a firefighter for nearly 23 years, said she's been on an all-women crew for about four or five years. She described her captains as having their own way of being

strong, demanding and forceful – both on the scene and in the firehouse.

"It's been a refreshing change from earlier in my career," she said. "We get things done, just like the others on other rigs. Except we'll get that surprised look from people on the streets when we take our helmets off and step off the rig and [they] see all women."

The number of women in the fire services has dwindled in recent years, however.

In 2002, the MFD included 70 women, 15% of the department. That was their heyday, and MFD was considered a world leader. Today, the number of women is about half that and falling. According to Waisanen, about a third of the women now in the department will be retiring within five years.

A resolution read by Ward 9 City Council Member Jason Chavez states that MFD is on a trajectory to fall below the nationwide four percent of career firefighters who are women – a trend many of the higher ups vowed to reverse.

Juran said inclusion and acceptance come with numbers. Numbers in diversity create balance and equity, which in turn provide a healthy environment where all can thrive.

"This might sound funny, but we need to hire a number of women so we can stop counting the women," she said.

And, as several people reiterated, representation is key.

"You have to see someone who looks like you to understand that it's a possibility for you," said Mullen, who extended that beyond gender to include the Somali, Hmong and Hispanic communities, as well.

As Rucker put it during a Q&A the previous day, "You see it, you can be it."

Fire Chief Bryan Tyner and Waisanen presented a plaque that contains an image of Mohn, Bleskachek, Kidd and Hoff posing together during their time on the crew. "A lot of people have remarked on how the women in this job stand on your shoulders. But the truth of the matter is, that we all stand on your shoulders. We're a better department because of it," said Tyner.

The plaque will be posted at Fire Station 5.



**VIEW MORE PHOTOS** in the online version of this story at [www.SouthwestConnector.com](http://www.SouthwestConnector.com)

## 6 TILE ARTIST

Northwestern China live. The people of those places both use triangles, perhaps symbolic of mountains and/or spiritual ideas, but the two groups do so differently, with their own color palette, line width, and sense of spacing. Another example would be bands of pattern created by lines encompassing a floral or geometric pattern within, and that is shown in the work of the Sami people from far northern Europe and Russia, yet also by the Bedouin of the Arabian Peninsula. Walking through the exhibits at the Minneapolis Institute of Art provides countless opportunities to view objects presenting patterns of all kinds from around the globe.

### WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

In addition to the patterns and designs created by others over millennia, it's the details in nature that I encounter while walking, in my garden or yard, or in an image in a museum, online or in a book. The designs you see on plants and animals, like a monarch butterfly, a birch tree or a dill frond, are tremendously inspiring and I love how I have an opportu-

nity, in making tiles, to incorporate these elements of our natural world into living spaces. The tiles I make that are imprinted with plant material and bark embrace the intrinsic symmetry or asymmetry, pattern, detail and dimension that the material holds. The tiles that are hand-scored honor the sense of motion that exists from lines.

I am guided by the principle of "quality over quantity" and inspired by the notion of "less is more." When something serves its purpose thoroughly, draws admiration in its craft, is undoubtedly sturdy and long-lasting, these are the marks of ideal things to acquire for use and/or enjoyment. In our highly consumptive world, I am happy to only have "one" of something and to plan to keep it indefinitely. Through an artisanal lens, I value each time I encounter another person who has developed/is developing their skill – whatever it may be – and presents ideas or things, one single creation at a time. It may be a chair, a song, a belt, a knit scarf or a pie. When it is steeped in the maker's commitment, interest and knowledge of what they are doing, it is very moving.

Many homeowners in south Minneapolis have relatively small homes, es-

pecially when compared to the homes that are frequently built now, which reflect a more than doubling of the average "square footage per person." With these smaller houses we have an opportunity to make the space very special, paying keen attention to each wall and each little space. I think making the most of what you have is a very worthy aspiration, albeit a humbling one. Updates and changes by way of handmade tile, artistic light switches, refinishing woodwork or adding another window are all efforts that are slightly more subtle initially, yet highly impactful in making a home elegant and no doubt more valuable.

### WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT WORKING WITH CLAY?

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With clay you can make objects that are used or engaged with day to day; providing daily visual nourishment when encountered, which could be from viewing the tiles on a wall or perhaps the experience of drinking from a handmade mug. When you look at or hold the item, you can sense the humanity, the consideration, and the effort behind it.

More at [www.ruggieroartisantile.com](http://www.ruggieroartisantile.com).

## WINNERS



Southwest Connector owner Tesha M. Christensen and editor Chloe Peter (not shown) chatted with folks about the paper and what they'd like to see in it during a community pop-up at Mueller Park on Sept. 15, 2022. That same day, Southwest Connector Marketing Specialist Suzie Marty talked to folks at the Linden Hills Festival.

### DRAWING WINNERS

Congrats to Cora Holt, Emma Haasl and Anna Pliner! They each won a four-pack of tickets to the Renaissance Festival.

# NEW CAREER AND TECH ED CENTER COMING FOR MPS STUDENTS

Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) and community leaders will officially break ground at North High School on Friday, Sept. 16 for a new Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center and significant renovations to the North building and grounds.

The state-of-the-art CTE facility, opening in fall 2023, will give students across Minneapolis access to hands-on skills and knowledge using industry-validated curricula to earn post-secondary credits and industry certifications. Career pathways will include: engineering, robotics, drones, computer science, and media arts.

Aligned with a well-balanced high school experience, CTE courses emphasize the development of real-world skills and practical knowledge within a selected career focus. When students enroll in CTE courses they build resume-worthy experiences and are connected to a variety of career exploration activities which include guest speakers, worksite/company tours, and internships. As part of the comprehensive district design, MPS is consolidating CTE classes at the new CTE Center.

The project will also include several renovations to North, along with an enhanced Jazz88-KBEM studio equipment and studio remodel. The radio station's temporary home for the next year will be in the West End area of St. Louis Park, in space rented from iHeartMedia.

"Please bear with us as we complete this move over the next few weeks," said station manager Dan Larkin in an email update. "We are working hard behind the scenes with Minneapolis Public Schools



Leaders break ground for a new career and tech center at North High School on Sept. 16, 2022. For the next year, KBEM-Jazz 88 will be located in a temporary home. (Photo submitted)

IT, our engineers, and the fine folks at iHeart to make this as seamless as possible, but you know how moves can go, right? We may have moments (hopefully not hours) where we need to be off the air, or resort to back-up programming, but know that we are doing all of this to make sure we can continue to deliver everything you love about Jazz88."

We'll be back in all new digs, with

new, updated facilities and equipment, a new stream, and better resources for MPS students pursuing creative media studies. While there may be inconveniences, as with any move, this is a big win all the way around, and we thank you for supporting us and being a part of it," added Jazz88 Development Specialist Andrew Diemand.

## CITY BRIEFS

### MAXIMUM PROPERTY TAX LEVY SET

The Board of Estimate and Taxation (BET) has approved the levy increase of 6.5% as proposed by Mayor Jacob Frey. At the September meeting, BET member Steve Brandt moved to amend the resolution by reducing the general fund levy from \$286,963,777 to \$283,379,823, and the total property tax levy from \$444,386,708 to \$440,794,754. That would have lowered the increase to 5.6% but was voted down on a 4 to 2 vote, with elected BET Board President Samantha Pree-Stinson joining Brandt in support of it. Following that vote, the mayor's proposal was approved on the same 4 to 2 vote, with District 1 Park Commissioner Billy Menz, Council President Andrea Jenkins and Ward 11 Council Member Emily Koski joining the mayor in supporting a maximum levy increase of 6.5%, or \$27 million, in 2023. The City Council could still approve a lower amount as part of the budget they are set to approve in December.

### 2022 ELECTION

Early voting for the Nov. 8 general election is underway. You can vote early at the Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services center at 980 E Hennepin Ave. or at the elections service area in the Hennepin County Government Center, Skyway Level, 300 6th St. S. On Election Day, anyone who hasn't voted early can only vote at their assigned polling place. All polling places are open from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. If you are going to vote on election day you may have a new polling place because of the redistricting process. Find your polling place at [www.pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us). To see your sample ballot visit <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/>.

### CITY ANNOUNCES NEW SAFETY ENDEAVOR

In September, Mayor Frey announced a new public safety effort he is calling "Operation Endeavor." Cedric Alexander, recently appointed Commissioner of Community Safety, wrote that, "Operation Endeavor will be an all-hands approach where our resources – assets from

the five departments under the Office of Community Safety, prosecutors, and officers at all levels of government, our community partners, and business leaders – will be strategically deployed in various roles." At the press conference where it was announced, Mayor Jacob Frey said it will be "a comprehensive approach to public safety and it will coordinate city services - from police to prosecutors to violence prevention groups - and crack down on crime." Alexander and Frey were joined at the conference by Minnesota's Commissioner of Public Safety John Harington, Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman, Minneapolis Police Commander Jason Case, Police Chief Amelia Huffman and Jennifer White from the Office of Violence Prevention.

### CITY GOVERNMENT RESTRUCTURING

The City Council received a presentation on the draft government structure ordinance authored by Ward 13 Council Member Linea Palmisano on Sept. 20. If approved, the ordinance would remove and replace significant portions of the city's Code of Ordinances to implement a new government structure as recommended by Mayor Frey. On Oct. 4, there was a "mark-up session" where amendments to the draft were considered. On Oct. 18 at 1:30 p.m., there will be a public hearing prior to final council consideration set for Oct. 20 at 9:30 a.m. The proposed ordinance significantly restricts the City Council's role and limits its ability to direct leadership of departments or offices except in the cases of the City Clerk, City Attorney, and Auditor. The Mayor will be granted exclusive authority to direct all other departments which will be generally divided into two super-divisions, called the offices of community safety and public services. The City Attorney is the only division where both the council and the mayor will maintain shared authority to direct, although only the mayor would have authority to terminate the City Attorney's employment with the city.

### YARD WASTE PICK UP

Yard waste pickup returned to a weekly collection schedule starting Oct. 3 and the yard waste collection season has been

extended through the end of November.

### HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT CLOSURE PROCESS

The city recently updated its website on homelessness and encampment response, which includes a flowchart explaining the city's encampment closure process. Ward 1 Council Member Elliot Payne reports, "City leadership decided timelines with encampments will only be shared with an internal work group. Updates will only be provided to staff outside that work group once encampments have already been cleared." In July an ordinance relating to the city's encampment response policy was introduced by Ward 12 Council Member Aisha Chughtai and Ward 9 Council Member Jason Chavez, who hope to craft a new encampment response policy this year.

### RENT STABILIZATION WORK GROUP

The city's new Rent Stabilization Work Group had its first meeting Sept. 13. The group is scheduled to meet through December and submit recommendations to the mayor and city council in early 2023 for an ordinance following the charter amendment approved last fall that authorizes the council to regulate rent increases.

### 44TH ST. APARTMENTS

Following approval by the city's planning commission and a city council committee, the city council is likely to also approve the Neighbors by the Lake, LLC's plans for a new apartment building at 2815, 2817, 2821 44th St. W. in Linden Hills. The project, if completed, will result in a 4-story, 38-unit building with 27 below-grade parking spaces, and 42 bike parking spaces. It requires a rezoning from R2B to R4, and a height increase from three to four stories. The project was granted a "climate resiliency premium" because it will meet the Minnesota Sustainable Building 2030 (SB 2030) 2010-2014 Energy Standard, and achieve a 60% carbon reduction from the 2003 average building baseline.

## NEIGHBORHOOD BRIEFS

### WESTMINSTER TOWN HALL FORUM BEGINS

Are Americans hopelessly divided? Are the rifts in politics and culture insurmountable? Not according to the four speakers appearing this fall at the Westminster Town Hall Forum. Four intellectually diverse speakers will address how to bridge divisions and build a more respectful, pluralistic society in the "Healing Our House Divided" series. Up first was "Service, The Antidote to Polarization" on Wednesday, Oct. 5. Jonathan Reckford serves as chief executive officer of Habitat for Humanity International. He spoke to how service can build community across difference. All of these programs are entirely free and open to all at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis. Parking is available on-site. Music begins one-half hour before the speaker, and a free "Breads & Spreads" reception will follow. All forums will also be livestreamed at [westminsterforum.org](http://westminsterforum.org).

Up next is "Mending the Rural-Urban Rift" on Oct. 25. Lisa Pruitt's roots in rural America go back five generations. As a legal scholar at the University of California Davis, she studies how rural and urban communities engage the state differently. She will argue against conflating rurality with whiteness, while seeking a more nuanced understanding of rural and working-class whites, especially in the era of Trump.

### SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE FORUM OCT. 15

League of Women Voters Minneapolis will host a candidate forum for Minneapolis School Board on Saturday, Oct. 15, 1 to 2:30 p.m., at the University of Minnesota Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC), 2001 Plymouth Ave. N, Minneapolis. All candidates on the general election ballot have been invited. Advancing Equity Coalition is a co-sponsor for this candidate forum. This event is free and open to the public. The forum will be live streamed at <https://youtu.be/d3LMGXBCM4k> and recorded for later viewing on YouTube. Go to LWV Minneapolis ([www.lwvmp.org](http://www.lwvmp.org)) website for access to the recording after the event.

### CINE LATINO KICKS OFF OCT. 13

MSP Film Society is thrilled to announce the full lineup for the 10th Annual CINE LATINO Film Fest, an annual celebration of the best new Latin American, US Latinx, and Ibero films. This year's event runs Oct. 13-20, and includes over two dozen films from nearly a dozen countries and cultures. All Cine Latino screenings take place at MSP Film at The Main Cinema (115 SE Main Street). More at [mspfilm.org](http://mspfilm.org)

### POSTERS FOR PARKS OCT. 22

Back in person at Royal Foundry Craft Spirits after two years of online-only (and record-breaking!) sales, Twin Citians can once again come together for the annual Posters for Parks for Show. The 2022 gallery-style event on Saturday, Oct. 22, 4-8 p.m. at the Royal Foundry showcases the work of over 40 local artists who created original poster designs inspired by Minneapolis's renowned parks and the people, plants, and animals that share them. Posters for Parks benefits the Twin Cities community, with 50% of each \$45 poster purchase going to the artist, and proceeds from the remaining 50% designated for the Minneapolis Parks Foundation's People for Parks Fund. Last year, more than \$36,000 was raised, which helped the Parks Foundation make nine equity-aligned grants throughout Minneapolis in 2022, supporting Slow Roll MSP, swimming lessons at Webber Natural Swimming Pool, and Afro Cardio/Yoga classes at North Commons Park and much more.

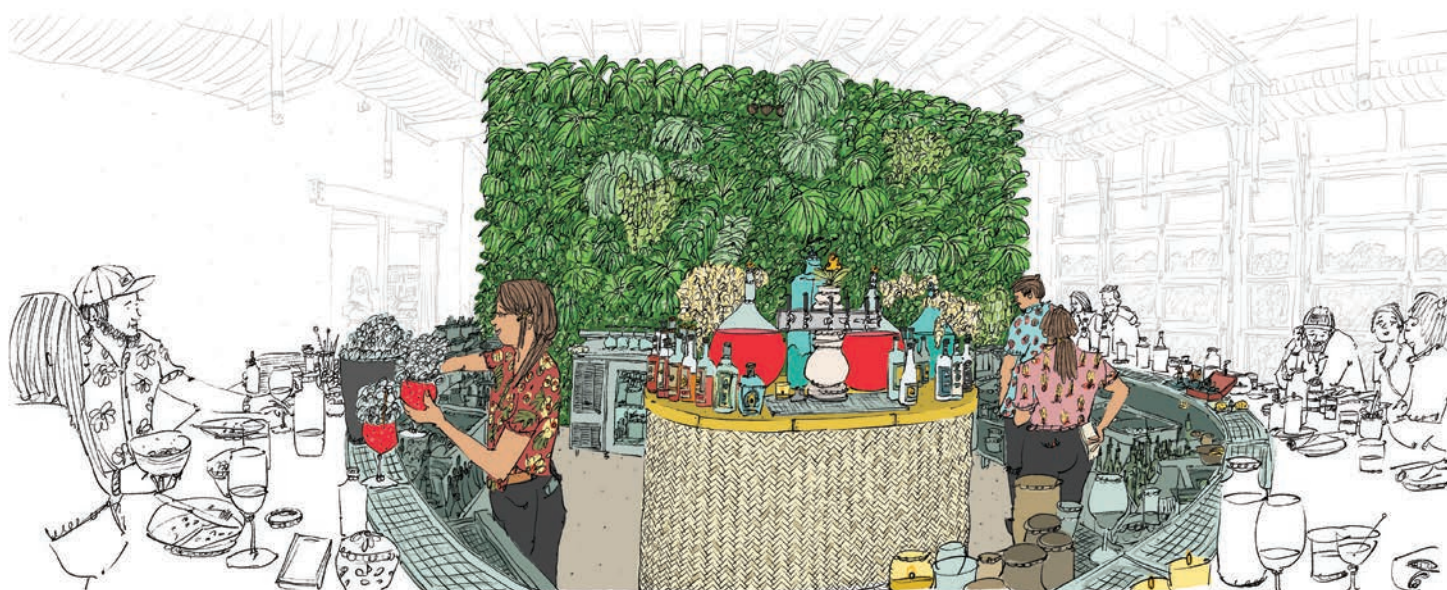


Briefs compiled by Cam Gordon.

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### COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The Importance of Peace - Explore a unique perspective on how to access Peace and Hope in today's world shared by Prem Rawat through dynamic videos. This class on inner peace is through the MPLS Community Ed system at South HS four Thursday evenings beginning 10/27 through 11/17/22 from 6:30 - 8 pm. Call to register at 612-668-4326.

### CRISIS HOTLINE

Call the Minnesota Day One Crisis Hotline at 1-866-223-1111 if you or someone you know is seeking shelter due to a dangerous relationship or needs to create a safety plan.

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## 1 SUBVERSIVE SIRENS

and silver at the 2019 International Gay and Lesbian Aquatics (IGLA).

Most recently, The Subversive Sirens presented a combination piece of synchronized swimming and lesbian love poetry.

"I'm a theater artist," said Messerole. "I wanted to explore the more theatrical views of synchronicity. I wanted to do something that could be done in an outdoor pool, and the poetry was an inspiration."

She was awarded a Minnesota State Arts Board and Artists Initiative grant to do a piece in a swimming pool, and two weeks later COVID-19 hit.

Messerole got the music, composed by Peter Morrow, and the poetry by Natalie Barney and Audre Lorde. It took her nine months to create the three-minute sequence in synchronized swimming. Morrow composed three songs, and the first one was used for this piece of theatrical synchronicity called "Love of Silver Water."

The event was presented June 15, and Messerole taught the public some synchro as part of it. "We were having so much fun in the water," she said. The State Arts Board allowed those who received their funding at the height of COVID-19 to wait a year to give their performance.

Messerole said the two-hour event at the Jewish Community Center in St. Louis Park included the performance, synchronized swimming lessons and a splash mob.

Messerole said she will do the other two pieces of music at some point. "The last piece is really meant to involve lots of community," she said. "The dream is I would teach a little bit of synchro to 15 to 20 people, and they would enter the water for the last piece of the song."

Because the Sirens are competing next summer and getting their routines ready, Messerole said she might wait until after



Suzy Messerole (left) and Tana Hargest. On this Thursday, Tana coached Suzy on some of her moves at the Phillips Aquatic Center. The Sirens will be appearing in London. (Photo by Terry Faust)

that to work on the choreography for the second piece of her grant.

The Sirens practice every Saturday on a regular basis at the Phillips Aquatic Center in Minneapolis. "That pool is awesome," she said. "We love them. They love us. It's a pool where swimmers of color on our team have never had an issue. And that's not true for all pools."

When getting ready for a performance, Messerole said the Sirens practice three to four times a week.

"There are queer swimming teams in a lot of different states. New York and California have big ones," Messerole said. "There is an organization in the Bronx that is almost all elderly Black folks who do synchronized swimming. In the Twin Cities, the group called the Northern Pikes took us under their wing and taught us to swim."

"But our pillars are very specific to us," she added. "All of us are activists, and these issues feel very connected to us." Messerole said one thing has changed for The Subversive Sirens, however.

"When we started we were super body punked, and body autonomy was very important to us, but loving your body was almost overwhelming to some. So we have gone down the path of really understanding what body autonomy is. And for some, that hyper positivity was too much."

She said the synchronized swimmers are people who are day in and day out activists. "We're trying to imagine a better world. Envision large-scale as well as small-scale changes. It is not lost on us who does and doesn't have access to water, a connection to the land, or who is most affected by the Supreme Court decision on abortion rights."

"We were not surprised at the over-turning of Roe V. Wade," Messerole said. "These rights are all connected, and we try to disseminate good information and try to really message that there are organizations on the ground prepped and ready for this."

She said people have been working on these issues for a long time, and there is a deep connection between the loss of medical rights for transgender people and loss of rights for women.

Messerole said the journey (seeking equality) has been long. "It has been long for the seven generations before us, and it will last into the next seven generations," she stated.

She said that there is an element of what the Subversive Sirens do to encourage care and encourage people to engage with their bodies.

“

It is not lost on us who does and doesn't have access to water, a connection to the land, or who is most affected by the Supreme Court decision on abortion rights."

Suzi Messerole

There is something very important about not disconnecting with your body," Messerole said.

Before the pandemic, we were doing monthly splash-es, where 30 to 40 people aged two to 90 would come out. We would teach synchro and then do a splash mob. That is just such

a really great thing for people who have not felt welcome. It is sometimes very challenging for people of color and Trans folks.

"We do a lot more than just spread joy," Messerole affirmed. "Community is a very big part of our strategy."



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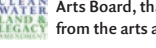
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**MIDDLE/UPPER SCHOOL (6-12) OPEN HOUSE**  
Thursday, October 27, 2022, 8:30-10:30 a.m.  
1712 Randolph Avenue, St. Paul

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