

SOUTHWEST Connector

NEWS FOR EVERYONE, DELIVERED TO EVERYONE • MARCH 2, 2023 • VOL. 2 • NO. 4 • 24,000 CIRCULATION

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4 Youth can become community problem solvers

8 New police chief O'Hara described as change agent

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HAS SNOWFALL MADE DENT IN DROUGHT?

Fate of drought, Minnehaha Creek levels still depends on spring weather, say experts

By Allie Johnson

Last summer was one of the driest on record in the Twin Cities, and the latest U.S. Drought Monitor shows that most of Hennepin County, including Minneapolis, remains in a moderate drought half-way through the winter.

But the unusual amount of snow and rain in December and January – as well as the big snowstorm at the end of February – has left many Minneapolis residents wondering: Has the snowfall made a dent in the drought?

Pete Boulay, a climatologist with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, said the wet start to the winter has certainly improved the drought somewhat, although all that precipitation means less than if it rains over the summer.

“We’re in better shape now than we were in November,” he said.

Luckily, Boulay said this year’s shallow frost means the ground is still soft under all the snow the area has gotten, which has allowed some water to seep in. When the snow melts and the spring rains come, the soil will be able to retain more of that moisture – that’s good news for reversing the drought.

The outlook for the rest of the season, though, depends on what happens in the next few months.

April will be the month to watch, because that’s when the weather starts to warm up, and

Hundreds of volunteers prep and set up for the annual Luminary Loppet on Lake of the Isles. Why do they do it? Jim Young shares his story.

By Tesha M. Christensen

How do you put together a luminary event attended by over 10,000 people?

With lots of volunteers.

Loppet Luminary Committee Chair Jim Young helps coordinate the team of people who shape ice from lake water

and set it in place for the annual event on Lake of the Isles. They put in thousands of hours.

“Over the years, the Luminary Loppet has grown to become one of the signature events for the Twin Cities area, and also is a substantial fundraiser for the Loppet Foundation. To be part of the team that has



TMC GARNERS 20 AWARDS AT MNA



TMC Publication's three newspapers earned a total of 20 awards at this year's Better Newspaper Contest through the Minnesota Newspaper Association. They were presented on Jan. 26, 2023. Left to right: Eric Erickson, Tesha M. Christensen, and Terry Faust celebrate and hold up a selection of the nine first place award plaques the newspapers earned.

In its first year, the Southwest Connector earned a total of nine awards, spanning its articles, photographs, and advertisements. >> More on page 3 and online.



GIVE FEEDBACK ON NEW ZONING RULES

City council poised to approve new rules this spring as it implements 2040 Plan

By Cam Gordon

The city is poised to take a big step this spring when it enshrines zoning regulations that will guide the city's growth for decades to come.

Ward 7 City Council Member Lisa Goodman, who chairs the council's Business Housing Inspections and Zoning Committee, gave notice of her intent to introduce major amendments to 11 different sections of the city's code of ordinances as part of implementing the city's 2040 Comprehensive Plan in February.

“The new and amended regulations are intended to allow a range of uses appropriate for each zoning district and provide a greater degree of predictability for residents, businesses and the development community,” wrote Goodman.

“The city is legally obligated to eliminate the conflicts between our zoning code and our comprehensive plan,” said city planning manager Jason Wittenberg. “Minneapolis 2040 leaves quite a bit up for discussion,” he said. “So, people can use their influence to get more of the uses they want to see more of, and limit uses that they find less desirable.”

“This is truly a once-in-a-generation opportunity to change our city to be more walkable, more complete, and more neighborly,” said Brit Anbacht, a Field neighborhood resident and volunteer with the group Neighbors for More Neighbors.





Minnesota fine art: looking at the ice sculptures at Lake Harriet for the 2023 art shanty projects.
(Illustration by WACSO)

TAKE A VIRTUAL TOUR of this year's Ice Shanties @ SWConnector.com

2 TMC GARNERS AWARDS

NEWS

1) First Place, Sports Story - Eric Erickson, "Unforgettable dream come true," Midway Como Frogtown Monitor, October 2021. Judge's comment: Great use of photographs put this entry in first place. Great writing and what a day for those athletes! It is like we were there!

2) First Place, Investigative Journalism - Jill Boogren, "Did city mislead, downplay public input on 38th and Chicago survey?" Southwest Connector, Dec. 2, 2021 (also ran in the Longfellow Nokomis Messenger). Judge's comment: The information from the survey was very enlightening on this issue. Comments from the postcards didn't match public officials' comments. Information was displayed attractively which helped with understanding the content.

3) First Place, Hard News - Tesha M. Christensen, "A new Dale Street bridge," Midway Como Frogtown Monitor, September 2021

4) Second Place, Hard News - Tesha M. Christensen, "It's Cheatham Avenue now," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger

5) Third Place, Hard News - Tesha M. Christensen, "Should 3rd Precinct stay in Longfellow?" Longfellow Nokomis Messenger

PHOTOS

6) First Place, Photography Portrait and Personality - Terry Faust, "Affordable housing architect," Southwest Connector, March 3,



Jill Boogren holds her award for first place in investigative journalism that she earned for her article, "Did city mislead, downplay public input on 38th and Chicago survey?"

2022. Judge's comment: Good composition, fill flash, and posing of the subject, each of which is a skill of its own.

7) First Place, Photography News Photo - Tesha M. Christensen, "Art on the Edge," Southwest Connector, Aug. 4, 2022.

8) Third Place, Photography Feature Photo - Tesha M. Christensen, "Blindfolded clay throw down," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger, September 2022. Judge's com-

ment: Liked the composition of the photo and the story line. Good composition with great lines of focus down the potters' line.

INFOGRAPHIC

9) Second Place, Use of Information Graphics and Graphic Illustrations - Tesha M. Christensen, "Lake Street 2 years later," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger, July 2022. Judge's comment: Nice pictures

DESIGN

10) Third Place, Typography and Design - Andoni Aldasoro and Tesha M. Christensen, Southwest Connector. Judge's comment: Good design. A great entry in a crowded field.

ADS

11) First Place, Advertising Campaign - Tesha M. Christensen, "Henry W. Anderson Mortuary," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger

12) First Place, Use of Color in Advertising - Sandra Mikulsky and Tesha M. Christensen, "Roadrunner Records," Southwest Connector. Judge's comment: I like the orange for an ad for a record company. It harkens back to a time when harvest golds and earthy shades were all the rage but the shade you choose doesn't scream 70s.

13) First Place, Best Advertisement - Sandra Mikulsky and Tesha M. Christensen, "Village Shores," Southwest Connector. Judge's comment: Winner has the best balance, use of white space, accurate photo (doesn't look like stock image, even if it is) and large text to grab the eye.

14) First Place, Institutional Advertisement - Sandra Mikulsky and Tesha M. Christensen, "Yinghua Academy," Southwest Connector.

15) Second Place, Use of Color in Advertising - Sandra Mikulsky and Tesha M. Christensen, "United Noodles," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger. Judge's comment: You did a good job pulling the red and green from the photo into the words - it ties it together.

16) Second Place, Best Advertisement - Sandra Mikulsky and Tesha M. Christensen, "ReUse Center," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger.

17) Second Place, Institutional Advertisement - Denis Woulfe and Tesha M. Christensen, "Elmhurst Cemetery," Midway Como Frogtown Monitor.

18) Third Place, Use of Color in Advertising - Denis Woulfe and Tesha M. Christensen, "Fun City Dogs," Southwest Connector. Judge's comment: There was just the right amount of different colors to tie everything together and draw the eye, without overdoing it.

19) Third Place, Best Advertisement - Tesha M. Christensen, "Longfellow Business Association," Longfellow Nokomis Messenger.

20) Third Place, Self-promotion or House Ad - Tesha M. Christensen, "Looking for carriers," Southwest Connector.

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~ Larry LaVercombe, Lakes Area Realty

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SOUTHWEST Connector

3 ZONING CHANGES

"The last time the zoning code was overhauled was in 1999. The time before that was approximately in the 1970s. Most likely we will not be changing the code in a major way again for another 20 to 30 years."

The draft plan was released for review on Jan. 21 along with an online survey to gather public feedback about it. On Feb. 15, the city held an online public meeting.

The new rules will not change any current uses of properties, but they will provide guidance and limit, allow or expand possible future uses.

NEW ZONING CATEGORIES

At a recent Planning Commission Committee of the Whole meeting, Wittenberg and other planning staff highlighted some uses often found to be less desirable. These included entertainment uses, liquor stores, tobacco shops, firearms dealers, pawn shops, check cashing establishments, and automobile services.

The new proposal creates new primary zoning categories with specific uses allowed or prohibited within them. The new categories, or districts, are urban neighborhood (UN), residential mixed-use (RM), commercial mixed use (C), downtown (D), production (PM), transportation (T) and parks (P). To find more details and submit comments people can see <https://minneapolis2040.com/implementation/land-use-rezoning-study/>.

DEADLINE EXTENDED TO MARCH 26

The deadline for comments on the draft was set for Feb. 26, but has been extended an additional 30 days until March 26, following a letter signed by Roxanne O'Brien & Shalini Gupta, co-founders of Community Members for Environmental Justice (CMEJ) that requested an extension to the process. The letter was co-signed by 20 additional organizations.

"Zoning is one of the most important functions of city law," the letter said. "As zoning was established nearly a 100 years ago in many cities across the country, it has historically played a major role in segregation and concentration of unwanted uses in lower income and communities of color. This rezoning will decide how and where specific industries, and hence pollution, will be allowed. Those decisions disproportionately affect the health and well-being of environmental justice and communities of color in the city."

"To result in a better more equitable zoning code revision," the authors requested a six-month public engagement period and that the city design a process, especially within the city's two designated



Brit Anbacht (right) chats with Jan Lyson and Ward 11 Policy Associate Corinne Horowitz (center) about the 2040 Plan and zoning. (Photo submitted)

Green Zones, that would "allow the city and neighborhood organizations to incorporate meaningful public input about the specifics and language of the proposal."

"I think that the extension is the bare minimum as far as having compassion or acknowledging that it is already going so fast," O'Brien, who is also a member of the Northern Green Zone advisory committee, said after the 30-day extension was announced. "It's still insufficient, and not what the 2040 plan had in mind about future community engagement."

With the extension, the public hearing at the planning commission has been scheduled for April 24, with consideration of the council's Business, Inspections, Housing, and Zoning Committee tentatively set for May 16, and the full council vote set for May 25.

INDUSTRY AND RESIDENTIAL AREAS

O'Brien is most concerned about where industrial uses will be located and how close they might be to residential property, as well as schools and parks, including the new park and housing proposed for the Upper Harbor Terminal area. She wants those areas examined carefully, and worries that "too much may be left to the discretion of staff."

One aspect of the plan, highlighted at the Feb. 15 meeting, was that it will no longer allow many intense industrial uses that were allowed in the past. The proposal does away with the "industrial" zones, and replaces them with production and processing areas for production, processing and distribution of products "that have minimal or no air, water, or noise pollution impacts, and that provide quality living-wage jobs." As called out in

the 2040 plan, future uses will be limited and "new heavy industrial uses that harm human health or the environment" will not be allowed throughout the city.

As outlined in the proposal, this includes uses like shingle, asphalt, battery and paint manufacturing, which will not be allowed as a new use anywhere. However, the new proposal would permit concrete, asphalt and rock crushing; concrete, stone, clay, or tile production; small scale forgeries and foundries, grain elevators or mills, recycling facilities and waste transfer facilities. At the meeting, staff encouraged people to review and submit comments on if and where these uses would be permitted.

Anbacht is organizing more on the southside, and has already conducted two community walks in her neighborhood to help educate people about the how properties might be affected.

Under the proposal, there are three exclusively residential districts. The UN1 district allows for small-scale residential uses. The UN2 district allows for small to moderate-scale residential uses. The UN3 district allows for moderate to large-scale residential uses near transit routes and stations. These areas allow a wider variety of housing types, but they would not allow any new commercial uses.

"There are legitimate concerns that zoning is supposed to help mitigate," said Anbacht. "When we live in a city, we live with our neighbors within hearing distance. The barking dog, the noisy party after 10 p.m., the delivery trucks. I live within the noise zone for the airport, as well as 35W. But those noises also come with benefits like a bakery where you get a donut before work, or a meal at a bar on the weekend without having to drive for 40 minutes first."

A point of contention is the interpretation of the 2040 plan's policy to not encourage commercial uses on land designated as residential. "Staff has been very conservative in their interpretations of some of the language of the 2040 plan, in particular that 'not encouraged' must mean 'prohibited' with regards to commercial uses," Anbacht said.

Anbacht, Neighbors for More Neighbors, and some planning commissioners are suggesting that some commercial uses could be allowed in these residential areas provided certain conditions are met.

"It's particularly apparent how restrictive the zoning is when looking at the map," said Park Board and City Planning Commissioner Becky Alper. "I see a lot of benefits, particularly from a 15-minute city perspective, of allowing additional uses within walking distance of residences as we seek to have three out of every five trips, taken by walking, rolling, or transit."

Fellow commissioner Chris Meyer said, "A potential proposal I'm working

on would be to allow low-intensity commercial – coffee shops, dentist, thrift store – on corner sites throughout the city."

"This is a step forward in the ongoing implementation of the 2040 Plan, and as we move forward, I want to make sure that I'm thoughtfully gathering feedback from Ward 11 to bring into our discussion at City Hall," said Ward 11 City Council Member Emily Koski, who is the council's appointee to the commission. She asks that Ward 11 residents, business owners, and local developers contact her with feedback.

When the plan was approved, Wittenberg recalls, a point was made to legalize existing commercial properties in residential areas, but there was also a call to preserve areas for housing to accommodate current needs and projected growth. Wittenberg said, "I think people are being selective in the reading of the policies. It was staffs' feeling that there was never much discussion of allowing new commercial uses [in these residential areas]." He said the proposal overall "will increase the amount of commercial zoning in the city by 50%."

Neighbors for More Neighbors has identified areas along bus lines where multi-story buildings are in UN districts, which means commercial uses in any part of those buildings would be prohibited. Allowing some conditional commercial uses there, they suggest, could lead to more complete neighborhoods in more areas especially along bus routes.

There is also interest in changing the square footage allowed in the residential mixed-use areas, at least to allow grocery stores to be larger than other allowed uses in an area. Anbacht uses the example of the Aldi grocery store that recently announced that they are closing in North Minneapolis. Along Penn and Fremont, the draft code would limit the commercial space to 5,000 square feet but the store that is closing is closer to 10,000 square feet.

'WE NEED TO LEGALIZE A GROCERY STORE'

With the planning commission expected to make recommendations at the end of April, ideas and organizing will likely pick up in the coming weeks. More time could allow more people to dig into the details and build support for the changes they want to see.

"We have a two-year-old kid," said Anbacht. "I want the changes we make now to make it possible for them to live a car-free life anywhere in the city when they are an adult. Zoning code determines which neighborhoods are allowed to have corner stores and daily necessities in walking distance and which are not. We need to legalize a grocery store before we can walk to one."



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YOUTH CAN BE COMMUNITY PROBLEM SOLVERS

Big things are happening with students learning to think globally and act locally.

I am going back to school. Not as a student. But as a guide.

First, I was invited to speak at my kids' school, Risen Christ, for vocation day. I spoke to third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth graders about my professional journey in journalism and media.

Other professions on the panel included a chef, a musician, a children's book author, a dentist, a seminarian, a banker, an artist/teacher, a lawyer, a small business owner (coffee cafe), a doctor, and an education technology entrepreneur (my wife). It was an inspiring day.

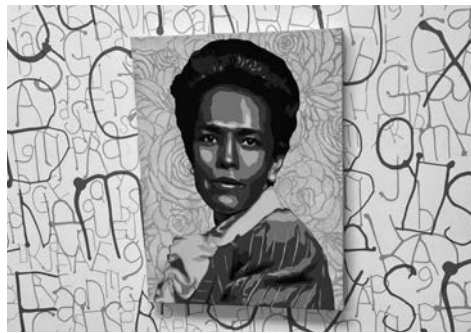
Risen Christ is the only Catholic school in Minnesota that provides a dual language education to a diverse community of learners. Classes are taught in Spanish and English across all subjects, and every day, students get 50 percent of their instruction in Spanish and 50 percent of their instruction in English. It's an inspiring place.

Being bilingual through a dual language immersion (DLI) programs has a lot of benefits for students, including:

- Enhanced brain development, which leads to better thinking, mathematical and problem-solving skills.
- Higher academic achievement in all subjects.
- Additional knowledge and under-



By **Eric Ortiz**



Painting of civil rights and human rights activist Ella Baker in the Ella Baker Global Studies and Humanities Magnet School office in Minneapolis. (Photo by Eric Ortiz)

standing of one's native language.

- Greater understanding, appreciation and respect for other languages and cultures.
- Ability to communicate with other ethnic and cultural groups.
- Better employment opportunities once school is completed.

Risen Christ isn't the only school in Minneapolis where students are learning how to be global citizens. At Ella Baker Global Studies and Humanities Magnet School, they are learning about the world and their place in it. They are learning to slow down in our digital age and empathize, to understand how someone else feels. They are learning how to think about things globally and act locally.

"Ella Baker is a place where I strongly believe as a community, we can come together and do anything that we put our minds to," says Ella Baker principal Holly Kleppe. "We have an amazing staff, students and parents. And as a community,

coming together to make change in our world is what we need."

I witnessed the strength of the Ella Baker community firsthand when I was invited to speak to their Knowledge-to-Action (K2A) classes in sixth, seventh and eighth grade. I gave a quick pitch to each of their K2A classes about the community solutions work we are doing and invited them to join our team.

I also asked students what problems they see in our communities today. Their responses? Racism. Pollution. Crime. Littering. Ecosystem. Police brutality. Gun violence.

They asked if the community solutions could be related to school problems. Of course. We want to create solutions for any community problems we can.

Our work is aligned with their K2A focus, which is being done at Ella Baker in collaboration with World Savvy, a national education organization headquartered in Minneapolis. World Savvy partners with educators and community leaders to help teach students how to be responsible global citizens. With our diverse country, interconnected global economy, and complex collective challenges, World Savvy recognizes the education system requires a new kind of teaching and learning experience to prepare the next generation.

Knowledge-to-Action (K2A) is part of that reimagining. K2A is a multi-step process where youth learn about an issue, research potential solutions to address the root causes, think about how they can impact the issue, and devise an action plan to create positive change.

This knowledge-to-action approach is similar to the DECIDE framework designed by Professor Kristina Guo, which was cre-

ated in 2008 to help healthcare managers make the right decisions. It consists of six steps:

- D = Define the problem.
- E = Establish the criteria.
- C = Consider the alternatives.
- I = Identify the best alternative.
- D = Develop and implement a plan of action.
- E = Evaluate the solution.

The objective is to find practical solutions and minimize mistakes.

Being good at problem-solving is an important skill to have. We want to help students sharpen this skill and gain confidence to share and implement their ideas. They have good ideas (sometimes great), and we can learn from them and grow.

That is why the focus of our community solutions work is putting children first. The Strong Mind Strong Body Foundation, a Minneapolis community-based organization where I am board chair, is partnering with the Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association, Ella Baker School, and World Savvy to develop a community solutions program with students that solves community problems.

Youth will be a vital part of our community solutions team. We will give them the training, tools and opportunity to be community problem-solvers and create positive change in the communities where they live, work and play.

As Ella Baker, the civil rights and human rights activist, said, "Give light, and people will find the way."

Rise and shine.



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.

MAYOR FREY – WHAT ARE YOU HIDING?

GUEST COLUMN

By **Daniel Colten Schmidt**

At the corner of 28th St and Longfellow Ave in East Phillips neighborhood, south Minneapolis, the Roof Depot building quietly awaits its unknown fate.

The city wants to demolish the Roof Depot to build a new Public Water Works facility, which will replace the existing one in the Marcy-Holmes neighborhood. In contrast, East Phillips residents want to renovate the Roof Depot building to be used for urban agriculture, low-income housing, a solar array to power 700 homes, and a small-business hub.

East Phillips residents are resisting the city's plan for two main reasons: 1) the Roof Depot building sits on an unremediated section of a Superfund site and demolition would fill the air with unknown amounts of lead-arsenic dust; 2) the city's proposal includes 888 parking spaces and a diesel fueling station which would drastically increase neighborhood pollution levels, and the likelihood that residents develop more, and harsher, health conditions. The East Phillips neighborhood is already burdened by a major share of the



Protesters attended the Jan. 26 city council meeting to show their support for the community plan for the Roof Depot site, as well as the Feb. 23 meeting. There was no public comment during the meetings, and city council members approved demolishing the Roof Depot building and continuing with the plan to build a new

city's pollution, resulting in some of the highest rates of asthma, heart conditions, lead exposure, and cancer levels in all of

Minneapolis.

All of this information is publicly available through city-authored documentation, yet the city relentlessly pushes their plan into the unconsenting East Phillips community. Why?

In my search for an answer, I came across a city-authored document titled, "Minneapolis Water Yard: Proposal for New Two-Story Structure on Existing Site," which offers an ostensibly-win-win solution.

The analysis concludes that it's in everyone's best interests to upgrade the Water facility that already exists in the Marcy-Holmes neighborhood. The report demonstrates that Marcy-Holmes residents desire the renovation in their neighborhood, whereas East Phillips residents are vehemently opposed. The document also states that renovation at the Roof Depot site will cost the city more money. The report also notes that carbon-free goals adopted by the city would be more easily obtained at the Marcy-Holmes site. Finally, the document shows that the same architectural plans already designed for the Roof Depot site can be re-used at the old site, saving the city millions of dollars.

Why isn't this Marcy-Holmes option viewed favorably by the city? I tried to ask

Mayor Jacob Frey, but I was told by his Director of Operations, "The Mayor will not meet with you now, nor ever, on this subject." Faced by secrecy, I am left to imagine...

Mayor Frey lives three-quarters of a mile from the Marcy-Holmes Water Yard site. Is it possible that Frey is pushing the building into East Phillips because he doesn't want so many diesel vehicles in his own neighborhood?

It is also possible that Mayor Frey has made a back-room deal for the Marcy-Holmes property which he hasn't disclosed. It is astounding that Frey's neighborhood boasts a 9.5% population of finance and insurance professionals. Is the mayor in cahoots with a developer who has their eyes on that property?

Or, maybe Frey picked East Phillips for his pollution project because he thinks we lack the financial and political power to prevent his injustice.

The point is, we don't know. When you view both options side-by-side, the city's relentless push for expansion into East Phillips raises questions which have not been answered.

Mayor Frey, what are you hiding?



Daniel Colten Schmidt is a south Minneapolis resident who is part of the Defend the Depot protest.

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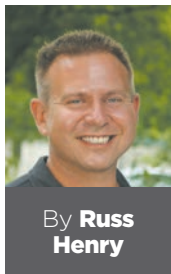
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CAN MINNEHAHA CREEK BE RESTORED?

Leaves rustle in a dry creek bed, tiny fish drift ever so slightly in stagnant pools of murky water. Drips slip past and quietly fall over the limestone cliff. While the mighty gush of Minnehaha Falls usually fills the park with the constant roar of a 65 cubic feet per second leaping 53 feet down from the limestone edge on its way to the Mississippi, the drought of 2022 saw a complete standstill to the water flow through the creek. Similar but less severe droughts stopped the creek flow in 2000, 2009, 2012, and 2021, as well. These droughts leave residents worried for the health of the creek and lakes, and they aren't the only problems facing this highly urbanized watershed.



By Russ Henry



While the mighty gush of Minnehaha Falls usually fills the park with a constant roar, the drought of 2022 saw a complete standstill to the water flow through the creek. Similar but less severe droughts stopped the creek flow in 2000, 2009, 2012 and 2021. What does this year hold for the waterfall and winding creek? (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

Minneapolis loves Minnehaha Creek and falls. Traversing the entire city, west to east and culminating in a stunning waterfall, it is the highlight of an important nature corridor and recreational space between lake Minnetonka and the Mississippi River. While drought may temporarily remove this beloved landscape feature, spring melt from this winter's barrage of snow will soon fill the creek, and once again Minnehaha Falls will roar with thunderous splashing to the delight of visitors and residents alike. Long before President Johnson's foot prints were enshrined in concrete at the top of the falls, Minnehaha Creek and the bodies of water associated with it were highly productive food sources for local Dakota and other Indigenous Peoples. These vital resources were plundered into near oblivion by White settlers.

Dakota scholar and author, Dr. Waziyatawin, executive director of Makoce Iki cupi stated, "Settlers rarely recognize the inherent importance of letting natural features be, to exist as they were intended, instead only seeing value in what people have created at the expense of the natural world. Certainly, this is the case at Bde Psin." (Rice Lake/Bde Psin now called Lake Hiawatha.)

"Since settler occupation, 90 percent of the wetlands in Minnesota have been destroyed. It's hard to imagine a more destructive culture than that which invaded our beloved homeland."

HOW IT USED TO BE

Reading historical accounts of the massive productivity of local ecosystems and the way that productivity was attacked and dismantled is to see a glimpse into the devastating reality of colonization that occurred in Minnesota. According to Rich and Susan Cairn, in their report, "History of Minnehaha Creek Watershed," "When Americans first passed Minnehaha Creek around 1800, they saw unbroken wilderness. In fact, Native Americans had lived here for millennia, growing crops and opening the forest with regular burns. Yet theirs were mostly impermanent changes. By contrast, the first White settlers in the 1850s soon logged and plowed most of the watershed. Wildlife retreated to undeveloped corners. Large animals such as bear and bison disappeared. As farmers drained lakes and wetlands for fields and pastures, runoff increased. Animal wastes and erosion fouled the waters."

Writing about the early 1900s, author Coates P. Bull, recorded: "Sucker and Redhorse each spring swam from Lake Harriet through the outlet into Minnehaha... Settlers, even from Eden Prairie and miles to the west, brought their spears to harvest bushels of these fish to eat and to feed pigs... Farmers... could, and did, go down with pitch forks and pitch the fish out onto the banks for their fish fry."

From an article encouraging European emigration in an 1852 Massachusetts paper, "The prairies are small, so that tim-

ber and water are easily accessible. And the natural meadows afford an abundance of good hay. A farmer may come on early in the spring, with team and stock enough for a well-cultivated farm. He can readily find a location, where he can plow land and put in his seed... The lands west of the Mississippi river, heretofore belonging to the Sioux Indians, are now open to settlement, and emigrants have been pouring into them like a flood for the last few months... Those who wish to get good farms, and to get them cheap, will do well to come on early in the spring...."

As the creek was being plundered for its ecological riches, the watershed that surrounds and feeds the creek was being permanently changed. According to the report compiled by the Cairns, "Settlers could 'pre-empt' or claim 160 acres at a low government price as long as they built and occupied a house, fenced and cultivated land right away. ... By 1860 the entire watershed had been claimed, most of the forest had been logged, and most of the prairie plowed."

As development continued through the 20th century, the watershed has been dramatically altered. According to Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Communications Coordinator Stacy Carlson, "Over the last 100 plus years, the creek's natural curves have been straightened and ditched, and in places the creek has even been relocated to accommodate land use change. A land survey from the 1850s shows stretches of the creek located up to two blocks north of where it runs today. In addition to the creek being moved, the surrounding land has been changed in a way that fundamentally affects parts of the water cycle. For example, 33% of the Minnehaha Creek subwatershed is covered by impervious surfaces, and Minneapolis has lost about 88% of its wetlands."

CONSIDER STORM-WATER RUN-OFF

Given the massive difference in the way the watershed is managed today, is it possible to recover any glimpse of the historical health and productivity of the creek and watershed in today's urban environment?

St. Thomas University associate professor of biology and biochemistry, Gaston 'Chip' Small, provided context: "One of the big differences between urban watersheds and more natural watersheds is the extent to which we have altered the hydrology, by [constructing] impervious surfaces. In urbanized watersheds, a much larger fraction of rainfall becomes surface runoff, and streams tend to be 'flashier' with large jumps in discharge following

rain events. This can scour stream beds and cause erosion of streambanks."

Professor Small further explained: "Runoff from urban watersheds also typically carries contaminants from roads, lawns, and other land cover – chloride from road salt is a big issue, but also fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, and other chemicals. For example, leaf decomposition is an important part of nutrient cycling in forests, but leaves from roadside trees that end up in storm sewers represent a significant input of phosphorus in urban lakes. Collectively, these impacts are referred to as 'urban stream syndrome' and often lead to a biotic community dominated by pollution-tolerant invertebrates." When asked whether pollution tolerant invertebrates provide enough nutrition at the right times of year to feed an abundance of native fish and birds, Professor Small stated, "I would guess that, in highly polluted streams dominated by pollu-



Since settler occupation, 90% of the wetlands in Minnesota have been destroyed. It's hard to imagine a more destructive culture than that which invaded our beloved homeland."

Dr. Waziyatawin

tion tolerant species, you're not going to have a lot of strictly insectivorous fish, and maybe more likely to have omnivorous fish species that could adapt to available food resources (or no fish at all). I suspect, too, things like mosquito control in the metro has a big impact on food resources for insectivorous birds and bats."

Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD), is the federally funded organization whose watershed wide mission is to: "protect and improve land and water for current and future generations." Carlson spoke to me about the importance of their work. "Replacing nature's storage and filters has increased the volume of runoff when it rains, and the pollution delivered to the stream. It has also fragmented and degraded the riparian corridor that used to buffer the creek, reducing wildlife habitat and separating communities from the creek ecosystem." When asked about MCWD's work to restore the health of the watershed, Carlson stated, "In the Minnehaha Creek corridor, we have emphasized partnerships to regionally capture and treat stormwater runoff before it is delivered to the stream. We have ad-

Experts weigh in on problems, suggest solutions

ressed the physical structure of the creek, its geomorphology, by adding meanders, in-stream woody debris and pools and riffles to mimic a natural system. And we have expanded, restored, and connected the surrounding riparian greenspace for wildlife and people."

And there is still so much more restoration to be done. When asked what would happen if 100% of the rainwater falling on the watershed were diverted into rain gardens, swales, ditches, and seasonal wetlands, Carlson replied, "Whenever you're able to stop water from draining straight from an impervious surface to the creek or any water body, there can be significant benefits for the whole ecosystem." She added, "We always encourage people to take a step back and see their community as part of a larger ecosystem."

HOW TO FIX THE CREEK

Renowned ecologist and New York Times best-selling author, Doug Tallamy, recently weighed in. When asked what we could do to improve the ecological productivity of Minnehaha Creek, Tallamy replied, "Historically these streams want to be shaded. They want to be colder than they are. You cut down the trees, warming the water and right away that cuts out several species of fish including the trout.... We've removed woody debris that used to be a function of all of our waterways to make them navigable and prevent ice dams and maybe because we thought it looked ugly, who knows, but that's where the fish breed."

Tallamy continued, "Around every stream is a flood plain – it's supposed to flood. We killed all the beavers which were a function of every aquatic system in this country and, in doing so, we changed the hydrology of the entire country. Now they're starting to come back, we've got to let them do that, allow them to come back. Shading streams, bringing the beavers back, allowing some wood debris in the water, and creating a flood plain around the creeks would boost the productivity tremendously. And, of course, what does the shade got to be from? From native plants, because the primary component of the food for the fish in the streams, isn't aquatic insects, it's the insects that fall into the stream from the trees and plants above.... Put all those things back and you will build the fish populations up again.... One report showed 80% of fish insect consumption comes from insects falling out of trees and in the water."

"Within the Minnehaha watershed you've lost your infiltration, the deluge of water after a big rainfall speeds up and scours the stream. Storm-water runoff is a major killer of streams. Whereas, a well-buffered forest riparian community will reduce the flow into the creek. It could soak up the rain as a sponge and then slowly release it so you have steady flow through the year instead of this deluge in the spring and then nothing. It's the same old thing, putting the plants back solves most of the problems."

"You don't want the influx of nitrogen, phosphorus, and silt into the streams because that degrades them on every level. Seasonal wetlands and rain gardens are your best bet. Minnehaha Creek flowing through the center of Minneapolis is a challenge because its surrounded by concrete. But you have a huge park system in Minneapolis and every one of those acres should be designed for storm-water retention in one way or another."



Russ Henry is a landscaper, naturalist, gardener, soil health specialist, and educator. The Longfellow business owner is devoted to pollinator protection, urban farming, local food system development, and restorative justice.

Q&A WITH CHILEEN PAINTING

Chileen Painting is a third-generation, family-owned business started in 1952. Their home restoration techniques range from painting to woodwork to enameling. Greg Chileen brought Chileen Painting to the Twin Cities metro area in the 1990s after his service in the United States Marine Corps to focus on the restoration of older homes.

WHAT ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS ASKING ABOUT?

Greg: They always want to know how long the job will take. We pay a lot of attention to quality and value good workmanship. For most jobs, we give them a time frame like 5-7 days. Customers worry about picking out the colors.

WHAT TIPS DO YOU HAVE TO SHARE?

Greg: Hire quality contractors that you trust and you will have a better peace of mind with value and quality.

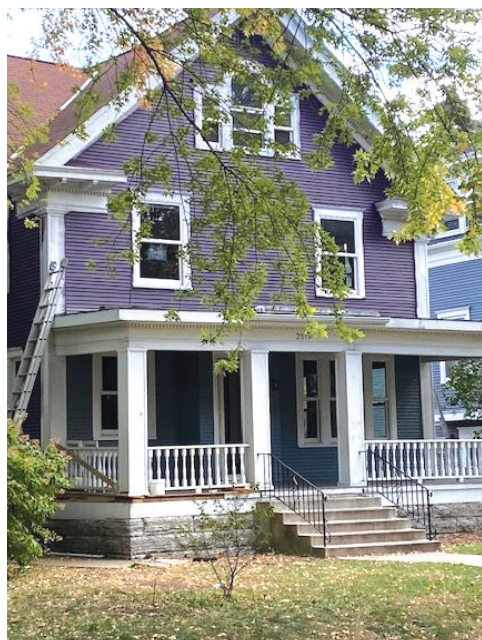
HOW HAS COVID, SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES, AND HIRING ISSUES AFFECTED YOUR BUSINESS?

Greg: In some cases, it has gotten easier as homeowners are available because they are working from home. Paint supplies have gotten better and stores are close to full strength now.

Q&A WITH RAY N. WELTER HEATING

Ray N. Welter Heating Company celebrated its 100th year in 2012. Ray 'Rick' Welter, III, shared tips and information on the business located at 4637 Chicago Ave.

UP CLOSE WITH LOCAL CONTRACTORS



These two houses got a facelift courtesy of Chileen Painting, a family-owned business around the lakes.

WHAT ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS ASKING ABOUT?

Rick: Lately the most common question has been about heat pumps as these have never been a popular option in our climates. The technology is changing rapidly as to their effectiveness in cold climates. I am still not a big believer that the most common style air source heat

pumps are worth it yet. They need 35 degrees outside temperature to kick over to the furnace, and our winters have many days that are below 35. So, I'm not convinced yet, but do believe with improved performance it will be a great option.

Customers mostly fear costly and inopportune timing of breakdowns.



Rick Welter with his dad, Ray Welter, II on their 100th anniversary.

HOW CAN PEOPLE REDUCE THEIR HEATING AND COOLING BILLS?

Rick: I believe changing your filter often and keeping your outdoor AC condenser clean are the only real options besides changing the temperatures you find comfortable in your home to help reduce costs.

Get regular clean and checks from a professional. And beware of anyone doing a clean and check for too cheap; they tend to be the pushy sales technicians.

WHAT SETS YOUR COMPANY APART?

Rick: Our honesty and transparency, as well as longevity, seem to be what people gravitate to most as there are several companies that I have seen that can install well but miss some personal touch somehow. My dad has said we are big enough to get the job done well at a fair price but are small enough to really care about the customer.

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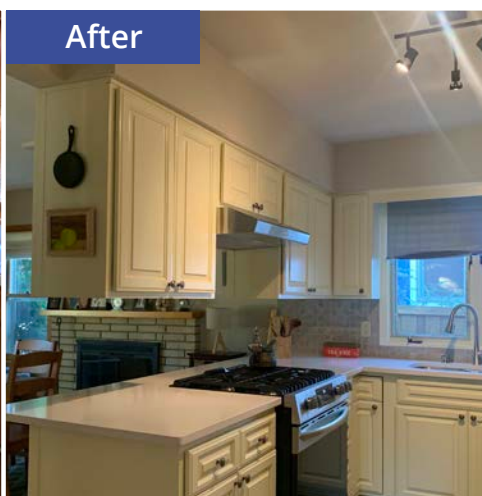
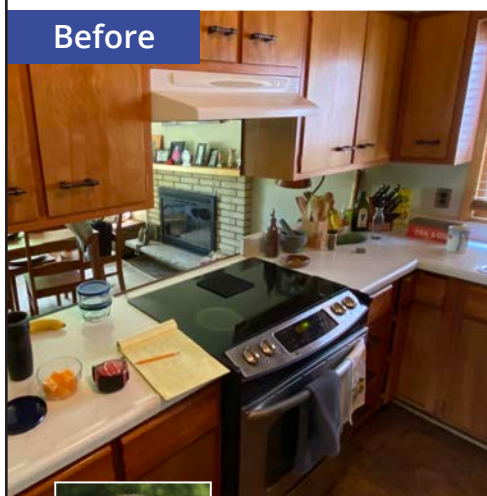
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DROUGHT

Minneapolis sees a big jump in precipitation.

"That's the critical month for where we're going to wind up," Boulay said. "A dry April will make the drought worse; a wet April will help get us out."

Another question on the minds of many Minneapolis residents is what Minnehaha Creek – and by extension, Minnehaha Falls – will look like this summer and fall. During last year's drought, the creek dried up in many places and the falls slowed to a trickle, then nothing at all.

Right now, Hennepin County has at least three inches of water on the ground that's not going anywhere, regardless of what happens the rest of this season. And when the snow melts, that water will be enough to get the waterfall flowing again.

"There will be falls in the spring," said Boulay confidently. "We have enough water in the ground that it will be pretty; it won't be a trickle."

But when it comes to what Minne-



haha Creek will look like as the season wears on, that depends mostly on Lake Minnetonka.

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) operates the Gray's Bay Dam, which was built to manage the flow of water from Lake Minnetonka into Minnehaha Creek.

Like most bodies of water in the area, Minnetonka is still low from ongoing drought, said Tiffany Schaufler, senior project maintenance coordinator with the MCWD. The Twin Cities will need a sig-



Droughts are a part of the climate – always have been, always will be."

Pete Boulay, DNR

nificant amount of precipitation to overcome the deficit and raise the lake levels enough to keep a consistent amount of water in the creek.

Schaufler echoed Boulay in saying the next few months will

determine what direction the drought will go, and at this point, there are too many unknowns to predict what Minnehaha Creek will look like.

"It's hard to say exactly what will happen," she said. "At the end of the day, our water levels directly correlate to how much water falls from the sky."

Overall, Boulay said he's "cautiously optimistic" about Minneapolis' drought outlook this spring and summer.

He also reminded residents that while climate change may cause more frequent and intense periods of droughts, Minne-

sota has always had to deal with drought.

"Droughts are a part of the climate – always have been, always will be," he said.

WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME

The fate of Minneapolis' drought remains uncertain, but there are some things Minneapolis residents can do to prepare for another potentially dry summer.

Schaufler advises taking a hard look at your yard and the ways you can prevent water from running off into the street, like planting a rain garden, adding more irrigation, or changing up your landscaping to capture more moisture.

And the more informed you about the drought conditions in your area, the better. The U.S. Drought Monitor is updated every Thursday if you want to keep tabs on the status of the drought. You can also sign up to receive email updates from the MCWD about current water levels on lakes and streams in the area as well as other helpful information.



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****SEE REFERRALS ON NEXTDOOR**

NEW POLICE CHIEF DESCRIBED AS CHANGE AGENT

By **Tesha M. Christensen**

"In order to have a change, we need a change agent," stated Ward 7 Council Member Lisa Goodman during a Lunch with Lisa event on Feb. 1, 2023.

She admitted to having some trepidation about hiring an outsider as police chief, and said she let Brian O'Hara know that when she met with him.

"We need someone who really understands us," Goodman told the people having lunch at the University of St. Thomas downtown Minneapolis campus. "You know what I found out? Brian O'Hara does. I have been overwhelmed by the work so far. This is the person to lead us through that effort."

"With the issues we're facing, we don't have time for nonsense. We need to get to the point," stated O'Hara, who was sworn in on Nov. 7, 2022. O'Hara explained that he worked on police reform in Newark, N.J., operating for five years under a federal consent decree. Currently, there are two investigations going on in Minneapolis – one by the State Department of Human Rights and the other by the U.S. Department of Justice – and he expects a number of mandates for reforms to be issued.

"We need to be able to bring the police officers along voluntarily and support them, and show them there are ways to do this job a different way," remarked O'Hara.

"The mission of our agency is very simple. We need to do everything that we can to have fewer victims of crime and violence, and at the same time do so in ways that build trust in community."

He said that officers need to operate in ways that demonstrate the values the community wants to see.

O'Hara said their greatest priority is to address the "unacceptable amount" of gun violence in the city. He pointed out that the trajectory of gun violence is declining, specifically in the second half of last year. "We actually ended the year with over 100 fewer shooting victims," he stated. "That's 100 fewer families that were affected by gun violence in the city. But it's still at an absolutely unacceptable level."

By working with as many partners as possible, O'Hara said they're working to be precise in their efforts. He pointed out that the Police Activities League has been reestablished, and they're trying to attract more young people from the city to be police officers.

"It's incredible difficult to become a



Police Chief Brian O'Hara said, "With the issues we're facing, we don't have time for nonsense. We need to get to the point." He attended the Feb. 1, 2023 Lunch with Lisa held at the University of St. Thomas. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

police officer in this state as compared to other states," observed O'Hara. A Harvard graduate couldn't be hired as an officer here without going through the peace officer training at a local college and then going through the specific training for the city of Minneapolis. This makes it harder for older workers to switch careers or single parents, he said. The Minnesota system of peace officer licensing is unique in the nation because it requires peace officers to obtain a two or four-year post-secondary degree, and there is no state-sponsored police training academy. After earning the degree, officers then take the POST Board's Peace Officer Licensing Examination to become eligible to be hired as a peace officer. After that, they receive specific training from the city they are hired at. The Minneapolis Police Academy training course is 14 to 16 weeks.

"We're trying to enact some legislation to change that," said O'Hara.

They're also working to attract more officers from other states, although he said that will require more money.

O'Hara observed that Minneapolis officers bid on shifts in different ways than he is used to, and that results in them working under differing supervisors and with varying team members. It is not the traditional model of working with one group of officers. "You can't get to know your fellow officers as well," he said. It affects the unity of command as well as ac-

countability. "Each person should answer to one particular person and know them well," said O'Hara.

He changed the policy on how people can make a complaint on an officer to make it easier. "If someone is saying a Minneapolis Police Officer is doing something wrong, we need to write it down and look into it," said O'Hara.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT A PRIORITY

O'Hara pointed out that the level of serious crime is higher than it has been in a generation. "But we cannot allow the police department and our officers to only do law enforcement issues. It's incredibly important to have engagement."

A pilot program began in February in the Third Precinct to hold a monthly community meeting with command staff as

LUNCH WITH LISA

In the last 26 years of her role as a city council member, hundreds of people have attended monthly Lunch with Lisa events. They've toured public works facilities, fire stations, the stadium, and more. Attendance is typically about 50, although some (like the event with the new police chief) draw in larger groups.



In this last year of her term, Ward 7 Council Member Lisa Goodman is asking people to let her know what they want to learn and do.

they review crime and brainstorm strategies.

O'Hara said that morale in the police department is an issue that has been brought up. "We try to do some simple things to reward officers and build motivation and appreciation," he stated. He wants the focus to be on rewarding good behavior while at the same time putting strong processes in place to hold officers accountable when their behavior is not what the community expects.

In New Jersey, they shared photos and body camera video of officers doing non-enforcement work in the community, such as an officer who helped shovel a driveway when a resident couldn't get out. Unfortunately, he pointed out that Minnesota state laws only allow for the sharing of body camera footage for the "most terrible things."

He said, "Engagement and trust building is just as important as reducing the number of victims."

OCCUPATION AT THE ROOF DEPOT SITE BROKEN UP



Over a hundred Minneapolis Police Officers and 50 squads shut down an eight-block radius around the Roof Depot site at Longfellow and 27th on Tuesday evening, Feb. 21, 2023, at about 6:15 p.m., and forcibly removed Indigenous people and allies who had began a peaceful occupation of the site that morning at dawn. Neither residents nor press were allowed within two blocks of the site. View videos and photos online at www.swConnector.com.

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2023 PREDICTIONS FOR THE LOCAL REAL ESTATE MARKET

TEAMING UP FOR GOOD

Last year, I posed a few questions about how the current events of that time might affect the real estate market. How would sanctions and the war in Ukraine affect our economy? Would supply chain issues continue to disrupt our markets? And what about interest rates?



By Larry LaVercombe

First of all, it is news to no one that interest rates doubled in the last year, rising from roughly 3% in January 2022 to over 6% today. And yes, that had a chilling effect on the market last year. The graph at right shows the precipitous drop in the number of sales over the past year. If you've followed the market at all this likely comes as no surprise.

HOW DID I DO?

Last year, I made a few predictions. Let's see how accurate I was. Here's what I said:

2022 Prediction #1 – Single Family Home Prices will continue to rise. The value of land, and for single family homes, is still increasing, and despite 10 years of significant appreciation, prices have not even come close to peaking in Minneapolis.

With the 2040 plan, Minneapolis city has encouraged a lot of housing construction, but mostly this construction is taking the form of tall rental buildings. More people will move into the tall rentals, and eventually many of those people will want a yard. Thus, demand will increase for single-family homes, and so will their price and value.

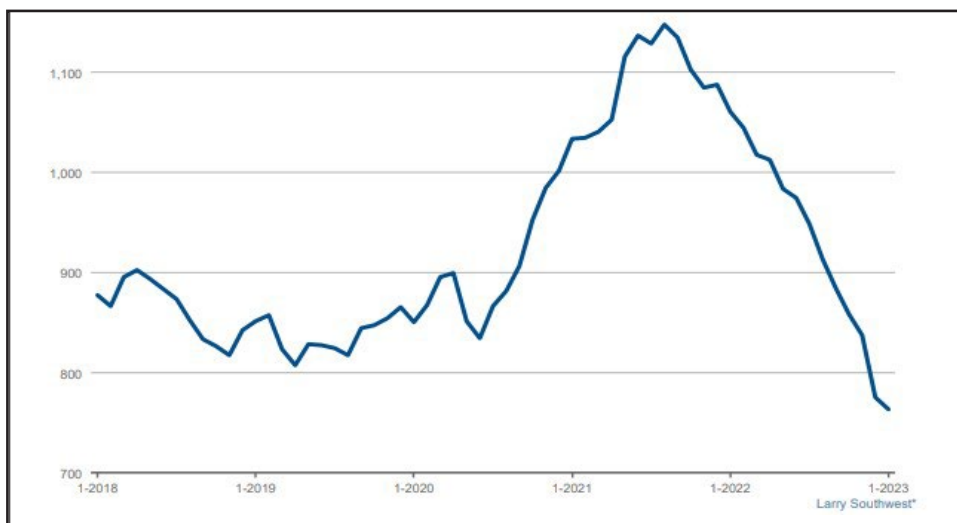
I also quoted these two projections from The Metropolitan Council and the North Star Policy Institute as evidence of my opinion that demand for Minneapolis single family homes will continue to rise for a long time.

"Twin Cities region will gain 818,000 residents between 2020 and 2050."

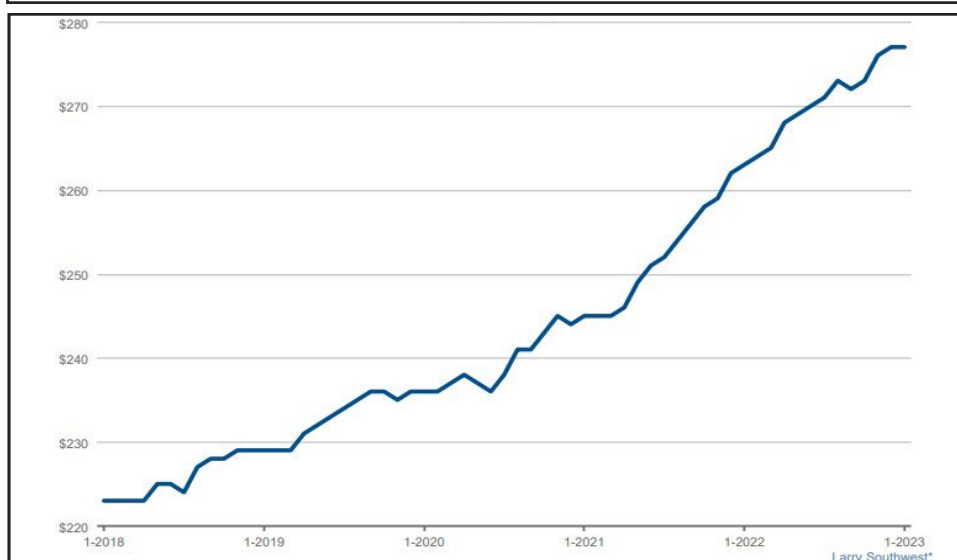
"96% of state population growth from 2016 to 2050 is projected to occur within the seven-county metropolitan area. Hennepin County is expected to lead the state in terms of total population growth, adding a projected 339,000 people by 2050."

Was I correct? The graph at right indicates that despite the slowdown in sales, prices have continued to rise.

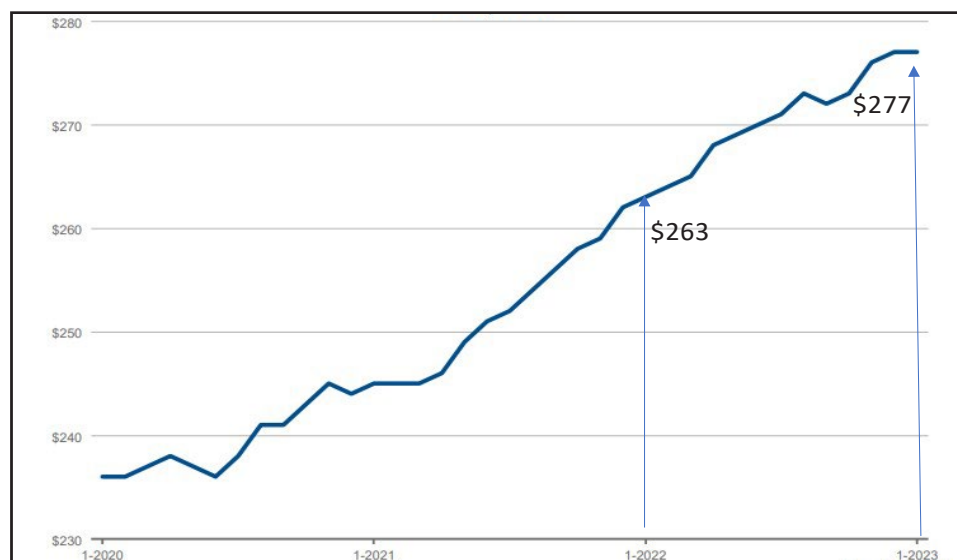
2022 Prediction #2 – Multiple offers will be the norm in Southwest from now until June. For the last five years, late winter and



Closed Sales in Southwest Minneapolis – 5 Year History



Price Per Square Foot in Southwest Minneapolis – 5 Year History



Price Per Square Foot in Southwest Minneapolis – Last Year

spring have been flooded with buyers and highly competitive multiple offers, and then by June, the market begins to slow. Note to Sellers: It's far better to enter the market in May than in July.

That seasonal slow-down was greater than normal last year. As seen in the first graph, the sudden rise in interest rates caused sales to not only slow, but to plummet in the second half of last year. Speaking for myself, I sold 14 properties in the first half of 2022, and only four in the second half. So, my prediction was right, but I was more right than I wanted to be.

2022 Prediction #3 – Okay, in my opinion, my first two predictions are sure bets. Slam dunks. So, here is something more risky. Southwest Minneapolis experienced a 9% increase in prices last year, and I predict this year's advance will be just as hefty. Why? Because we have record low inventory right now, and coming out of COVID-19, demand is going to be as high as ever. Prices are going up a lot this year... again.

How did I fare on this one? According to the graph at left, median price per square foot in January 2022 was \$263, and over this year, that number rose to \$277. That increase of \$14 amounts to a 5.25% increase.

So, while I predicted a 9% increase, we only actually achieved 5.25%.

Am I disappointed? Well, actually, 9% is a lot. That kind of number, over years, can make things unaffordable, and can lead to falls and crashes. So honestly, I'm somewhat glad that while I was and still am very bullish on Minneapolis real estate, it's a good thing values aren't rising too fast.

MY PREDICTIONS FOR NEXT YEAR?

All of the above, again. Minneapolis remains one of the best cities in the country to live in, and we have not hit the peak in home values. We will have multiple offers again this spring. Activity will fall off in late summer, although not nearly as much as it did last year.

And on a percentage basis, I predict... oh... only 4.5% percent this year over last.

I'll revisit this again next February. Thanks for reading! Good luck out there!



Larry LaVercombe is a writer, filmmaker, and activist, born in Detroit and arrived in Minneapolis in 1975. He lived in a treehouse in San Diego before getting an MFA from the USC Film School. He writes most days, and as Team Larry he has been selling residential real estate in Minneapolis for 26 years.



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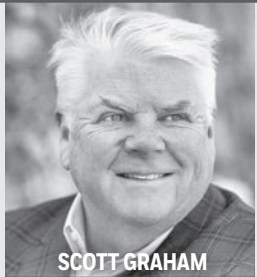
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CITY COUNCIL RACES: WHO IS RUNNING IN WARDS 7 AND 13?



KATIE CASHMAN



SCOTT GRAHAM



Ward 7

In Ward 13, Kate Mortenson has joined the race and will be challenging incumbent Linea Palmisano for the city council seat she currently holds. Mortenson lives in Lynnhurst and is the founder of iPondr@Work, an education company.



LINEA PALMISANO



KATE MORTENSON

Two new candidates announced that they will be running for City Council on southwest wards this year. For Ward 7, where Lisa Goodman is not seeking reelection, Katie Cashman has announced her candidacy and will be joining Scott Graham and Kenneth Foxworth (no image available) in seeking election to be the new council member. Cashman lives in Stevens Square-Loring Heights and works at the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy. Graham lives in Cedar-Isle-Dean, west of Cedar Lake, and owns Uptown Reality. The Democratic-Farmer-Labor party also reports that Foxworth is seeking the party's endorsement for the Ward 7 Council race. He has no apparent website and has not registered his campaign with the state.

CITY BRIEFS

LEGALIZING SAUNAS

After receiving a citation requiring them to close down by March 3, a Linden Hills business, Embrace North, is trying to find a way to stay open and change the laws regulating saunas in the city. They have started an effort, called "Legalize Sauna Mpls Movement" to help get a permission to stay open while city rules are changed to allow saunas outside of downtown and to allow mobile saunas to operate outdoors. In addition to zoning code violations the city has also noted health and sanitation concerns. The business, located at 4420 Drew Ave. S. has released a video (<https://embracenorth.com/>) and held a town hall meeting on Feb. 22.

PICKLEBALL COURT ON ZENITH

After Charles Moity, at 3501-3515 Zenith Ave. S., purchased the property next to his home and tore down the home that was on it, he installed an outdoor pickleball court in the former home's front yard. Subsequently, the city's Zoning Board of Adjustment determined that it violated the city's zoning code rules about a required front yard (from 96.7 feet to 18 feet) and retaining walls. He appealed the decision to the city's Business, Inspections, Housing and Zoning committee, and they recommended granting the appeal, on Feb. 14. The committee's recommendation was approved by the full council on two days later.

NEW CITY HEALTH COMMISSIONER

Following a public hearing on Feb. 15, the committee voted to send the Mayor's nomination of Damon Chaplin to be the next Minneapolis Commissioner of

Health forward to the city council without recommendation. The council approved his appointment Feb. 23, and Chaplin is expected to begin his role on March 20.

SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT APPOINTMENTS

The City Council has approved a set of 2023 appointees to serve on the special services districts in the southwest Mpls area. Most will be serving two-year terms. For the 50th and France Special Service District Advisory Board the appointees are Peter Deanovic, Heidi Bing, and Steve Young. For the 54th & Lyndale Special Service District Board they are Josh Koempel, Kelby Howell, and Dan Leitner. For the Eat Street district they are Adam Erickson and Sam Turner. For the Linden Hills district they are Jen Bellefleur, Mark Dwyer, Mark Settergren, Felicity Britton, and Peter Hinkle. For Lowry Hill they are Frank Inamagua and Tom Fletcher. For Lyndale-Lake the appointees are Stuart Ackerberg, Denise Arambadjis, Cole Rogers, John Meegan and Christina Le. The appointees for the Uptown district board are Samuel Ankin, Will Shew, Jacqueline Knight, Jeffery Herman and Nicholas Hall.

NEW SHELTER, HOUSING AT 1ST AND 28TH

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development is recommending approval of applications by Simpson Housing Services, Inc. for the properties located at 2730, 2734, and 2740 1st Ave. S. If the rezoning, conditional use permit and a site plan review is approved by the Planning Commission, they plan to build a new four-story 42-unit residential building, 72-bed emergency shelter and a clinic. They will demolish the Simpson United Methodist Church and other buildings that now stand on the site. The proposed mixed-use building will

include a commercial kitchen and dining room community space, and a 24-hour front desk.

MONEY FOR CLEANER AIR AND ENERGY

Minneapolis' Green Cost Share program is taking applications until April 3 to provide matching funds to Minneapolis property owners who make property updates that lead to greater energy efficiency and pollution reduction. The program has an annual fund of \$2,000,000.

28TH STREET TOT LOT PARK IMPROVEMENTS

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is working on improvements to the 28th St. Tot Lot Park and is seeking community input on two concepts they developed in partnership with City of Skate. Feedback and comments on the initial concept designs and park naming preferences is due by Friday, March 10. There is an online survey.

2023 OPEN STREET CALENDAR

In February, the city council approved five Open Streets events for this year as follows: June 10 on Lake Street from 2nd Ave. S. to 22 Ave. S.; July 16 on Glenwood Ave. from Washburn Ave. N. to Bryant Ave. N.; Aug. 20 on Cedar Ave. from Washington Ave. S. to 6th St. S.; Sept. 16 on West Broadway from Penn Ave. N. to Lyndale Ave. N.; and on Oct. 8 on Lyndale Ave. from W. 22nd St. to W. 42nd St. During these events, the city closes the streets to motor vehicle traffic, and opens them for pedestrian use including walking, rolling, biking and to connect with neighbors and promote local businesses.



Briefs compiled by Cam Gordon.

NOT MUCH NEWS, BUT AN IMPEDIMENT

The quarterly Metro Transit service change March 18, 2023 is going to be a sleeper. Even though we were promised that a hiring blitz would alleviate the driver shortage and enable a return to the better service of the past, it hasn't happened yet. The coming service change consists solely of minor time adjustments.

For the Southwest Connector readership area, the only change is to Route 6: Three school-day only morning southbound 6G trips for Southwest High School students are being eliminated. However, the afternoon trips directly from the school to downtown Minneapolis will continue operating.

Some people blame the transit driver shortage on the stereotype that "nobody wants to work anymore." I don't really think that's true. What is true is that there is a mismatch between the jobs people



By John Wilson

want to do and the jobs that need doing. For example, there is no shortage of YouTube influencers....

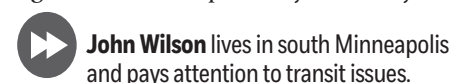
Seriously, Metro Transit may need to look outside the box to find more drivers. They have already tried raising wages from \$21 to \$26 per hour and have offered hiring bonuses of up to \$5,000 – and are still not getting enough takers. Part of the reason is fear of being attacked by a deranged passenger or catching a disease. Even though the COVID-19 pandemic is dying down, some people will take a long time to forget it. Perhaps new benefits are in order. For example, a child care facility at or near the bus and train garages would probably be appreciated by drivers. As to fear of being attacked, perhaps extra pay for driving "problematic" routes would somewhat make up for it. I would say better policing, but Metro Transit has a police officer shortage too, and besides, they also don't seem to be able to find that balance where they curb unsafe and intimidating behavior without hassling people over every little thing.

CONCRETE IMPEDES GREEN LINE WORK

There has been unfortunate news regarding the Green Line extension just in time for this issue: a concrete impediment was discovered that will once again put a delay on construction.

It is becoming clear that this route along the Kenilworth Trail was a big mistake due to environmental impacts. Ironically, I was originally for this route due to its seemingly lower costs. Now, I wish they had done something like run it down Hennepin Avenue, where it would have served a lot more people and hopefully been less of a pain to build. Honestly, I worry that the problems with the Blue and Green Line extensions are going to kill new light rail projects in the Twin Cities for the next 50-100 years.

Bus Rapid Transit still seems to be the most viable improvement for the near future. The B Line (Lake Street) and the E Line (Hennepin and France Avenues) are still planned, and are way less controversial with less construction issues than the light rail. Let's hope it stays that way.



John Wilson lives in south Minneapolis and pays attention to transit issues.

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

SWHS 80S ALL-CLASS REUNION JUNE 17

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of graduating from Minneapolis Southwest High School, the Class of 1983 is hosting an 80s All-Class Reunion on Saturday, June 17, 7 p.m., at the James Ballentine "Uptown" VFW Post 246. All rad grads from 1980-1989 are welcome, and so are spouses and significant others. More at <https://fb.me/e/61zwRrBmZ>.

JOIN LINDEN HILLS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

The Linden Hills Chamber Orchestra is inviting local musicians to join its ranks for the current season. Under the direction of Conductor and Music Director Yuri Ivan, the adult volunteer orchestra presents free public concerts and outdoor bandshell concerts in the summer. The orchestra additionally performs twice yearly at local retirement communities as part of its outreach efforts. Interested musicians should have intermediate to advanced playing ability and previous ensemble or orchestra experience. Rehearsals are held on Thursday nights from 7-9 p.m. at Southwest High School. You need not reside in Linden Hills to join. For information about current openings and rehearsals, visit <https://lhco.org/join-the-orchestra>. Follow LHCO Linden Hills Chamber Orchestra on Facebook.

LINDEN HILLS HISTORY GROUP MARCH 20

Join Linden Hills History Study Group for a discussion about the early 1900s reflections of Linden Hills by Thimble Bee member Martha Schoonmaker and her imagined community of the future in 1925 on Monday, March 20, 7 p.m., St. John's Episcopal Church, 4201 Sheridan Avenue S. Suggested donation is \$5 for non-members of Linden Hills History Study Group. Everyone is welcome. For more information: www.lindenhillshistory.org.

BMNA SEEKS INPUT ON DEVELOPMENT

The Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association is seeking input on a proposal to welcome approximately 650 children and adults to the neighborhood when Wirth on the Woods (2800 N Wayzata Blvd) is fully leased. The board will vote on the proposal at the BMNA Meeting on March 8, 2023. For more information on the project, go to <http://2800wayzata.com/> or <http://wirthonthewoods.com/>.

PAUL SHANAFELT TRANSITION TO NEW ROLE

Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association (LHENA) Executive Director Paul Shanafelt left the organization on Feb. 22, 2023.

He began a job working for council member Aisha Chughtai as her policy aide on Monday, Feb. 27.

"When I was hired to work for LHENA in the summer of 2017, I had little idea just how much this community would inspire me," wrote Shanafelt in his last e-newsletter. "Neighbors championed supportive and uplifting endeavors that continually provided a light for this community, especially during unprecedented and challenging times. The Wedge is full of leaders, advocates, doers, creators, entrepreneurs, teachers, and caretakers. Together, we helped create a neighborhood where people feel connected, neighbors take care of each other, and big ideas come to life. ... It's been the privilege of a lifetime to work for this wonderful community."

The LHENA board of directors are working on a staff transition plan.



1 LIGHTING UP NIGHT

grown this event is both humbling and very gratifying. It has also been a lot of fun," said Young.

Dave Bryan manages Ice-Cropolis and luminary distribution. Mary Hoffman handles candle ordering and Sonotube preparation. Hal Galvin is in charge of specialized equipment including the Water Cow and Pantoozelator. Willie Anderson pulls together Icehenge. Bill Dossett directs Luminary Lane, Luminary Hall and special equipment for making balloon luminaries. Glen Olson guides the Enchanted Forest. Cees Duijndam leads luminary bunker construction and paper bag luminaries. Carla Pardue organizes the party. Among the others who take charge of various aspects are Bob Amis, Carlyn Unger, Emme Corbeil, Laura Morrill, Charlie Henke and Jeff Evans. And Loppet staff Lindsey Johnson is in charge of Luminary operations.

Young started off making paper bag luminaries and then lighting them. "After finishing that, I looked out at all the candlelit ice luminaries laid out on Lake of the Isles, and thought that working to make that happen again the next year seemed a whole lot more interesting than any random volunteer position I'd been assigned to before," he recalled. So, he started doing more.

"For each event we need a certain number of people, equipment and materials, a place, date and time," he explained. "Generally we need to have the event publicized on the volunteer sign-up website. I make sure that all these parts are in place for each event."

Planning begins each fall, and the group of volunteers discusses whether they will add any new features. They set up a tentative schedule and start ordering supplies. "For new features, we may need to do some prototyping and planning for how the process for making the luminaries will work and what equipment will be needed. We plan to have most of the luminaries finished and stored by mid-January, a couple of weeks before the Luminary Loppet is scheduled to happen. This gives us a bit of time to finish up if (when) something goes wrong," said Young.

Early on, the Loppet Foundation was mostly oriented towards putting on cross country ski racing events. "After a few years, they were looking for ways to expand their focus beyond just ski racing events, and someone suggested a nighttime luminary event similar to the Book Across the Bay event that is put on in Ash-



land, Wis. We started small (our lake isn't quite as big as the one near Ashland) and grew from there," recalled Young. "Over time we added specialized equipment for filling luminaries and laying out the course, and we learned a lot more than you'd ever want to know about freezing and storing ice outside."

At the first Luminary Loppet in 2006, three years after the first City of Lakes Loppet



at Theodore Wirth Park. Individuals and families learned from luminarians in the weeks before the event how to make the ice luminaries at home, where they stored them safely until dropping them off at The Trailhead before the event. Two days were shifted due to extremely cold weather. The event returned to Lake of the Isles in 2022. Due to poor ice conditions (caused by heavy snow with slush underneath), the 2023 event was moved to land and held two weeks later on Saturday, Feb. 18. This year's new feature was Luminary Hall.



To be part of the team that has grown this event is both humbling and gratifying. It has also been a lot of fun."

Jim Young

Volunteer shifts started at 10 a.m. on Saturday. They stripped large wood molds from the slabs of ice used for Ice Henge, and removed the forms from the Ice-Cropolis feature. They distributed ice luminaries

around the lake using snowmobiles and tubs, and then placed and lit candles in the suspended ice forms. Those in the Enchanted Forest used bamboo poles of various lengths to place candle lanterns in the tree branches on the small peninsula. During the two days before the event, volunteers set up snow fencing, hung banners, and rigged lighting.

Along the way, Young has learned that if you set a bucket of water out to freeze and make a luminary, the top, bottom and sides of the luminary all freeze at a different rate. "The top will be the thickest, the bottom the thinnest and the sides are somewhere in between," he pointed out. "If you want your luminary to be mostly very clear ice, freeze it slowly. You can do this by freezing it at mild temperatures (e.g. 25°F) or by wrapping it in insulation."

What has surprised him? "If you set 1,000 buckets of water out to freeze overnight and you walk near them early the next morning, you can hear little cracking sounds as the ice expands in the buckets."

"There are a lot of other people who also think messing around with ice and water outside in winter in Minnesota is fun!"

To learn more, view the volunteer page on the Loppet website.



VIEW MORE PHOTOS of the Luminary in the online version of this story at www.SouthwestConnector.com

TOP: Volunteers fill buckets with ice from Lake of the Isles that will be used in the Luminary Loppet. (Photos submitted)

MIDDLE: Using drills, volunteers create holes for the candles that will be lit by other volunteers just prior to the start of the event. (Photo submitted)

BOTTOM: Luminary Hall was this year's newest attraction along the southwestern part of the lake. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

pet ski race, about 150 participants enjoyed a candle-lit ski around Lake of the Isles. Two years later, the Luminary Loppet attracted over 1,300 participants, and added an ice pyramid, fire dancers, and the first appearance of the Ice-Cropolis. It grew to over 1,500 candle-lit luminaries and over 5,000 participants in 2013.

The event was modified due to COVID-19 in 2021, and held over five

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HELP WANTED TIPS ON HOW TO KEEP AND MAINTAIN STAFF

By **Tesha M. Christensen**

It's been called the Great Resignation, the Big Quit and the Great Reshuffle. Resignation rates across the United States have remained high since COVID-19 hit in the spring of 2020.

Businesses are struggling to find people to fill positions at all levels and departments with qualified staff who will be reliable and show up.

"If you are an employer struggling to find workers, ask yourself what you could be doing different," advised Midway Area Chamber of Commerce and south Minneapolis resident Chad Kulas. "Can you look at other job boards? Ask different people if they know anyone? Have you considered hiring people with disabilities? What incentives can you offer that will last? Culture has become a very important priority to attract and maintain employees. What are you doing to make sure you have a great culture?"

"Employees want flexibility, good pay and benefits," pointed out Kara Sime of Your HR Navigator. "In addition, I see employees ask about and expect a positive work environment, more than in the past."

Current job openings are offering more incentives and many are focusing on flexibility, Kulas pointed out. "The ability to work remotely is now very common and seen by many as a perk for applying. I've also seen unlimited PTO, though I've also heard employees who have it oftentimes take less days off."

He added, "Flexibility is the biggest thing – and actually was even before the pandemic. For over 10 years I've heard

“

Employees want flexibility, good pay, and benefits.”

Kara Sime



or aging parent to a doctor's appointment, they want a boss who understands they can work earlier or later that day.

"While this trend has been going on for years, the pandemic certainly made it bigger. Now if your kid is sick or you or a family member was COVID-exposed, employers need to understand you may need to alter your schedule on the fly."

While more employees want to be remote or have more work flexibility to be remote more often, more employers are pulling people back into the office, observed Sime. "So, there is going to be a disconnect here at some point. And, in my opinion from 25 plus years of professional experience, I think our pendulum had to swing way over to remote work because of COVID-19, but it swung so far to one side it has to swing back to a middle ground where some live and in-person work is needed. It is true that there just are some things that need to be done in-person or are more effective live where non-verbals can be seen and accounted for in the conversation."

"In addition, as human beings, we have a physical need to be with and interact with other humans, so I can see that

employers talk about the shift from employees prioritizing their paycheck to prioritizing the work-life balance. Employees really value time off and the flexibility to get the job done when it fits them best. If they need to take their kid

employers who stay with remote workers are going to have to get very creative with the structure and plan new interactions and ways of connecting with the other humans in the workplace."

To draw people in, some businesses are offering incentives for those who are there in person.

"They might offer free food and drink, or games like ping pong, pool, darts. These ideas were all popularized by tech firms in Silicon Valley years ago," remarked Kulas. "I'm also seeing more opportunities for team bonding; this is becoming more important when some

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For over 10 years I've heard employers talk about the shift from employees prioritizing their paycheck to prioritizing the work-life balance."

Chad Kulas



Sime primarily works with small to medium-size businesses. Some are offering referral bonuses for employees to make qualified referrals. Others are offering sign-on bonuses – some for all positions, and some for really key positions that are core to the business or need special skills and training.

TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

"For employers, find the right balance

of getting the bottom line you want and maintaining happy employees," recommended Kulas. "With a tight job market, employees and job seekers have the upper hand in negotiation, so make sure you're treating your employees the way they want to be treated. If you can create a great work culture, you have a leg up on others. Also, don't be afraid to change what you're doing and find uncommon solutions. The world changes and you need to adapt."

"I wish there was a silver bullet or a top three list of things to do, but there isn't," said Sime. "Main tips, however, are to actually live and create a healthy workplace for people. Treat your employees as you want your children to be treated when they venture out into the work world. We spend one-third of our life at work, so employers should focus on employee well-being overall – helping employees to be successful people in the world will pay dividends at work with productivity, loyalty, happiness and engagement. This benefits the company, the employee and the community at large. While creating this intentional and healthy culture takes time and effort, this attracts and retains people better than any hiring bonus."

TIPS FOR EMPLOYEES

"For employees, the past few years have made many people rethink the type of job they want," remarked Kulas. "While this means you should also be thinking of the type of work you want to do, job loyalty means more than ever. You will be appreciated if you stay at your current job, and the grass isn't always greener elsewhere. While you should look for better fits, don't just leave because you think you can find a slightly better spot."

"Think about the future of that particular job. What does it look like in 10 years? Twenty? Can you do it for the rest of your working life? Will a machine replace it?"

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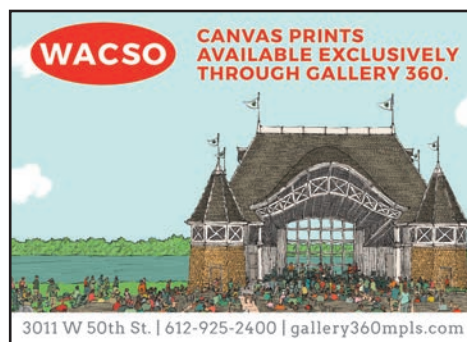
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LAMPS

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believes in buying local and shopping local. She has held various positions over the years that promote local artists and tourism, including as an art buyer for Love from Minnesota

Company, artisan manager at St. Croix Promotions and Retail, and docent at MIA. She is the owner of Everett & Charlie, a Linden Hills art gallery where art meets experience. It features only Minnesota artists. She is a TMC Publications marketing specialist, and can help you develop a comprehensive marketing plan that fits your budget and needs.

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