



Citizens to stop paying police costs for private work

Taxpayers will no longer be subsidizing off-duty side jobs for its police officers; 2024 cost for cars and equipment estimated at \$1.4 million

By CAM GORDON

Minneapolis will begin collecting fees to recover costs for the use of city-owned resources by Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) officers who work for private or nonprofit organizations when they are not on duty working for the city.

The city law change, unanimously approved by the city council on Jan. 30, 2025 and subsequently signed by Mayor Jacob Frey.

"I was proud to bring forward an ordinance to enable the city to recoup fees along with my co-author, Council President Payne," Wonsley said. She added that this is "the first step to reining in an inequitable and fiscally appalling program, and is crucial for advancing our goal of an equitable citywide community safety system."

"This is good governance, plain and simple," said Payne. "Taxpayers shouldn't be asked to subsidize private side jobs for police or any city employee."

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It's Minnesota Food Shelf Month

Kevin Corrado volunteers at the Minnehaha Food Shelf, which is serving more people now than ever before. The number of households served each month increased by 65% from January 2023 to January 2024. In December alone, the food shelf provided assistance to 1,020 households. >> Learn more about the food shelf on page 12.

Overcoming homelessness at Restoring Waters

New project provides safe living for women along with supportive services

By IRIC NATHANSON

The soothing sound of a bubbling fountain greets visitors to the new affordable housing development at Highland Bridge in St. Paul. The fountain is a symbol for the aptly named Restoring Waters, a 60-unit apartment building for women emerging from homelessness.

The Highland Bridge project, which opened in April, was developed by the non-profit Project for Pride in Living in partnership with a St. Paul community agency, Emma Norton Services.

With a history stretching back to 1920s, Emma Norton, named for a prominent St. Paul social reformer, was established to provide safe living space for young women coming to the Twin Cities for school or work. For the last 30 years, the agency has operated a homeless shelter for women on Robert Street in St. Paul. Along with a bed, Emma Norton provides supportive services for women dealing with mental illness, chemical dependency and spousal abuse.

"This project at Highland Bridge came about because our original building in St. Paul was aging," explains Shawna Nelson Wills, Emma Norton's Advancement Di-

RESTORING WATERS >> 6

Will 112-year-old grain elevators be demolished?

Save Minneapolis from the Wrecking Ball Coalition hopes to save Nokomis Mills

By CAM GORDON

Howe resident Joel Albers wants to stop the demolition of the 112-year-old grain elevators near 35th and Hiawatha.

Known as the Nokomis Mills and Elevators, much of the campus was originally constructed in 1914. It is currently owned by the ADM Milling Company. It includes several buildings on 2.4 acres of land between 35th and 36th streets on the east side of Hiawatha.



Albers, a pharmacist, is not a historic preservationist but with support from about 30 neighbors he has formed the

Save Minneapolis from the Wrecking Ball Coalition. On their behalf he has formally appealed the 5-4 decision of the Minne-

The Nokomis Mills and Elevators at 3501 Hiawatha Ave. are owned by ADM Milling Company and may be torn down to build housing. In 2010, the the Ralston-Purina feed mill on the southeast corner of 38th and Hiawatha was razed and replaced by the 180-unit Longfellow Station project. Through a mix of historic and affordable tax credits, Dominion remade the historic millwork at 4041 Hiawatha into Millworks Loft housing units, which opened in July 2017. (Photo by Gabe Gordon)

apolis Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) on Feb. 4, 2025 to permit the complete demolition of the grain elevators and other buildings, currently up for sale, on the site.

The demolition application was submitted by Louis Zachary of The Zachary

GRAIN ELEVATORS >> 16



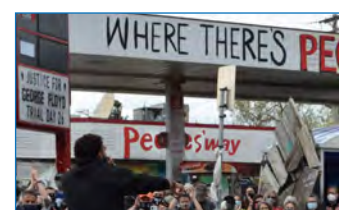
How Roosevelt students are working to feed their community

PAGE 5



Homeowners are experimenting with paint colors, say local painters

PAGES 8-9



Range of building types and uses proposed for Peoples' Way

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Showing some love on Valentine's Day

The local branch of the Immigrant Defense Network and supporters gather on the Lake Street/Marshall Avenue Bridge on Friday, Feb. 14, 2025 with signs stating, "We love our immigrant neighbors." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

Immigrant Defense Network launches amid rising enforcement actions

On Feb. 14, 2025, a historic partnership of immigrant, labor, legal, faith, and community organizations launched the Immigrant Defense Network (IDN), a coordinated effort in Minnesota dedicated to protecting and empowering immigrant families.

The launch of IDN comes at a critical time when immigrant communities in Minnesota are facing heightened enforcement actions. This week, Rochester, Minn., was the site of the "Valentine's Raids" which are part of a broader pattern of ag-

gressive immigration enforcement under the current administration. In response, COPAL (3702 E Lake St.), a member of the IDN, organized an emergency protest, demonstrating the urgent need for coordinated community defense networks.

"Today, we made it clear: Minnesota stands strong in solidarity, committed to protecting and supporting its immigrant communities," said COPAL Organizing Director Ryan Perez. "We will not let fear divide us, instead, we are strengthening our network to safeguard, inform, and up-

lift one another and the communities we serve and represent."

The press conference was followed by IDN's "Love Your Immigrant Neighbor" Day of Action, a statewide mobilization where IDN members and allies delivered 14,000 Valentine's Day cards providing words of encouragement and crucial Know-Your-Rights information. Supporters also took to bridges in Minneapolis, St. Paul, Mankato, Austin, Monticello, and Rochester, standing together for justice and in solidarity to display Minneso-

ta's unwavering support for its immigrant neighbors.

As immigrant communities face an increasingly hostile political climate and intensified enforcement actions, IDN is taking decisive action so 20,000 Minnesotans can learn about their rights, will train 2,000 Community Rights Ambassadors, and advocate for legislative measures that safeguard the safety, dignity, and future of all.

Minnesota is home to over 500,000 immigrants who contribute to the state's economy, paying \$3.5 billion in federal taxes and \$1.7 billion in state and local taxes annually.

NEWSPAPERS OUTPERFORM FACEBOOK

Groundbreaking research by an Australian cooperative of publishers, ThinkNewsBrands, discovered that irrespective of Facebook ad type, ads in newspapers outperformed Facebook by up to four times. Findings from the group's benchmark series, The Social Chapter, was released in August 2021 and compared news with social sites and examined key indicators and ad metrics.

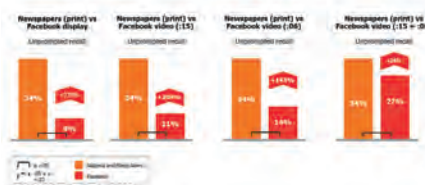
Irrespective of Facebook ad type, ads in newspapers outperform Facebook by up to 4X



NEWSPAPERS MATCH YOUTUBE

Newspaper ads do more than hold their own when compared to consumers' ability to recall what they've seen in print and on the social media darling YouTube. Research by an Australian cooperative of publishers, ThinkNewsBrands, found advertising carried by news publishers outperformed the shorter YouTube ads and were on par with the longer videos. That's an ROI for newspapers selling across media platforms.

Irrespective of Facebook ad type, ads in newspapers outperform Facebook by up to 4X



"Social media is simply no alternative to news. News has strong reach, superior trust, memorability and business impact."

— ThinkNewsBrands

ABOUT THIS RESEARCH: Newspaper effectiveness is universal, so that's why we're sharing benchmark research from an Australian cooperative of publishers, ThinkNewsBrands, that also appeared as an E&P magazine article. Sources: AdTrust Wave 3 research IPSOS November & Newsworks/Flamingo/Tapestry, How people buy

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Our Streets, district councils push for at-grade options

Re-Thinking 94 update

By JANE MCCLURE

Frustration is growing over the Rethinking I-94 project proposal to drop two at-grade options. The Rethinking I-94 Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Jan. 17 discussed recommendations to eliminate options from further study, in the face of pushback from local elected officials and many community groups.

The Rethinking I-94 project involves the freeway from I-35W and Highway 55/Hiawatha Avenue in Minneapolis to Marion Street in St. Paul. Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) officials and project consultants hope to have one option set for detailed studies by 2026. Construction wouldn't start until 2030 at the earliest. The project does not have any funding yet.

MnDOT Commissioner Nancy Daubenberger emphasized that the recommendations are preliminary, with review of all 10 alternatives to be finished this spring. St. Paul and Minneapolis City Councils and Hennepin County Board PAC representatives objected to dropping the two options that would fill in the 7.5-mile freeway trench and replace it with an at-grade roadway. So did many of the 145 community members who signed up to speak. They represented Our Streets, the champion and developer of the at-grade proposals, area district councils and individuals.

Our Streets members rallied to speak. Leaders announced earlier in January that its efforts to get a federal U.S. Department of Transportation Reconnecting Com-



A view of Interstate 94 as it cuts through the Seward neighborhood in Minneapolis.

munities grant fell short, despite having matches from the city of Minneapolis and Hennepin County.

"I have no doubt that MnDOT's decision to rashly eliminate the two at-grade boulevard project options significantly undermined our application," Our Streets Executive Director José Antonio Zayas Cabán said in a website statement. "With the incoming presidential administration, this was our last opportunity to leverage these critical federal dollars. It's incredibly disappointing to see Melissa Barnes and the rest of the Rethinking I-94 team completely disregard the community they serve and instead pursue the easy choice of status quo."

At-grade advocates said that retaining those options is seen as righting historic wrongs and reconnecting communities long split by the freeway. It is also promoted as having long-term positive effects for climate change.

Many objected in the meeting chat during public comment, when MnDOT sent out a news release summarizing the meeting before it finished.

All of the remaining four options would allow for construction of the proposed Rondo land bridge. The bridge faces challenges on another level as Minnesota House Republicans have introduced a bill trying to block that project.

Elected officials unsuccessfully pushed

to be able to vote on each of the 10 options at the meeting. Six of 10 options are eyed for elimination, including expanding the freeway, and separating I-94 into local and regional routes. The options are in an environmental impact statement (EIS) process.

Russ Stark, chief resilience officer for St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter, said that while there are reservations about at-grade options, those should not be ruled out. At the same time, he noted that the three years of filling the trench with "constant trucks" must be considered. Benefits of developing land along the at-grade boulevard would need many years to take shape.

The four concepts that are recommended for further study would allow a reconfigured or reduce freeway to move forward. Ideas include a dedicated lane or continuous shoulders for bus rapid transit. All four would allow a proposed Saint Paul land bridge, spearheaded by Reconnect Rondo, to be built.

Most people who commented spoke for retaining the at-grade options, arguing that it would reduce air pollution, and add housing and businesses where the trench is now. Area district councils spoke for maintaining the at-grade options including Union Park District Council, Summit-University Planning Council, Hamline-Midway Coalition, St. Anthony Park Community Council and West Seventh/Fort Road Federation. Federation comments centered on that neighborhood's history of being split by I-35E years ago.

Minnesota Chamber of Commerce and Minnesota Trucking Association were among the few business groups speaking against the at-grade options, citing the challenges in delivering goods.

OFF-DUTY POLICE >> from 1

According to state law, any fees must be set to accurately recover costs identified through a formal study. The council has called for such a comprehensive fee study to be completed by May 1. That study will provide detailed costs of vehicles, materials, uniforms, administration, and other costs associated with the off-duty work. The council is expected to vote on the fee amounts this autumn with collection starting on Jan. 1, 2026, at the earliest.

DECADES OF CONCERN

Controversy about city police officer off-duty work is not new.

"For decades, both subject matter experts and directly impacted residents have been telling city leaders that MPD's off-duty system is ripe for corruption and is a bad deal for residents," said Wonsley.

In 1990, police lieutenant Mike Sauro, who was working off-duty in downtown Minneapolis, was found to have used excessive force and the city was required to pay \$700,000, as part of a civil award settlement.

Then-Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton and then-Police Chief Robert Olson tried to put officers' off-duty work under the department's control, but the police officers' collective bargaining group, the Minneapolis Police Federation, sued the city and won a court-ordered injunction in 1995. In 1997, a court-approved settlement agreement said, among other things, that the city "agrees that Minneapolis police officers have the right to contract to provide services during the off-duty hours and wear their uniform, badge and gun while performing such duties."

"City leaders have spoken publicly about their concerns with off-duty since at least 2017 when MPD officer Mohamed Noor shot and killed a resident named Justine Ruszczyk after working off-duty and starting his on-duty work with very little sleep," said Ward 7 Council Member

Katie Cashman. "Estimates using MPD data indicate that such fees could have reached up to \$1.4 million in 2024."

A 2019 city audit of the practice recommended eliminating cash payments and having the city take over the scheduling, billing, and paying of wages for off-duty work. It also noted that the city already charges larger "secondary employers that have a higher demand" an hourly rate for squad car usage and that other "police departments require secondary employers to share the cost of liability insurance" for off-duty work, something Minneapolis has never done.

In 2020, Mayor Frey convened an off-duty task force, but the group appears to have only met twice and not produced any recommendations or report.

Also in 2020, the Main Street Alliance, a coalition of small local businesses, called for overhauling the system and a city policy change removed the decades-long practice of requiring business or groups to hire off-duty officers as part of licensing conditions or event permits. Organizations may still be required to hire qualified security or traffic control services.

In 2022, as the most recent police contract was being negotiated, retired Minneapolis police officer Gregory Reinhardt said that "the off-duty provision needs to be reviewed and improved." As an officer, Reinhardt did off-duty work for the Minnesota Vikings and Whole Foods. "I basically had to curry favor to get those jobs," he said. The department would ap-

prove the businesses where he could work, but "someone in the rank and file would make the assignments and would collect a management fee."

Wonsley started working on the issue in 2022. "Residents were upset and perceived this as the city enabling a 'pay-to-play' system for police services," she recalled, "where corporations were able to pay to receive police services when other residents were not receiving them."

In 2023, a U.S. Department of Justice report concluded that the city's "secondary employment (or 'off-duty' employment) system undermines supervisory authority" and that the jobs can pay up to \$150-175 per hour. They reported "that MPD allows officers to use its squad cars (and gas), and the officer keeps all the compensation. The city gets nothing. Some patrol officers manage these opportunities, deciding who gets the lucrative work. Because MPD allows patrol officers to control whether supervisors get off-duty employment opportunities, supervisors have ample disincentive to hold officers accountable. MPD's off-duty employment practices impede effective supervision."

QUESTIONS REMAIN

At this point it is not only unclear what the fee amounts will be, but also how they will be collected, who will pay them, and what possible negative consequences could result.

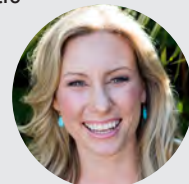
At the council meeting on Jan. 30, Ward 8 Council Member Andrea Jenkins shared concerns about how adding fees might impact police off-duty work generally and said that "the cost should not be borne by the officers themselves."

"We have to enter this with an open mind," said Ward 3 Council Member Michael Rainville. "Let's not raise the cost to such an extreme that people are not able to afford their events." Some larger events, he noted, like the Twin Cities Marathon and Pride, use a large number of officers and squad cars. Cashman, who also represents much of downtown, also shared concerns about raising costs for events.

"I am anxious to get the fee study back from MPD," said Ward 13 Council Mem-

OFF-DUTY WORK CONTRIBUTED TO DEATH OF JUSTINE RUSZCZYK

In 2017, MPD officer Mohamed Noor shot and killed Justine Ruszczyk after working off-duty and starting his on-duty work with little sleep. The 40-year-old Australian-American woman had called the police to report a possible rape. She died in the alleyway entrance located on the north side of West 51st Street between Xerxes Avenue South and Washburn Avenue South. Damond's family brought a civil lawsuit against the city of Minneapolis alleging violation of Damond's civil rights, which the city settled for \$20 million in 2019. On June 7, 2019, Noor (the city's first Somali-American officer) was sentenced to 12 and one-half years in prison.



Katie Cashman



City leaders have spoken publicly about their concerns with off-duty since at least 2017 when MPD officer Mohamed Noor shot and killed a resident named Justine Ruszczyk after working off-duty and starting his on-duty work with very little sleep."

ber Linea Palmisano, "so we know exactly what we are looking at here." Currently off-duty officers can be called back to work for the city at any time. "I want every off-duty officer to be able to swap into active duty whenever necessary," she added.

Payne brought up the federation contract and how, in past contracts, the city has been "off-loading a lot of management rights in exchange for lower pay." With the latest contract, he noted, base salary was significantly increased, and he hopes that the city can negotiate to gain more authority over off-duty work in the future.

"I'm proud that after nearly 30 years of inaction by city leadership, this council has brought significant accountability and fiscal transparency to what has always been a system ripe for abuse," said Payne.

Join the conversation, and let us know your diverse thoughts on the issues that affect your neighborhood. Send letters and guest commentaries to news@LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com.

Give me a minute

BY VALERIE FITZGERALD
Howe resident



We are coming up on five years since Mr. George Floyd was murdered at Cup Foods by a police officer. Memories of that time carry a strong emotional charge: the daily COVID-19 briefings from Governor Walz and Commissioner Jan Malcolm and then, the daily briefings about the unrest following Mr. Floyd's murder. The curfew alarm, the Blackhawk helicopters, the explosions through the night, sleeping with the light on to make sure I could move quickly if I had to.

Senator Patricia Torres Ray posted on Facebook through the night, advocating for her constituents. Unicorn Riot provided live video as unrest took place on Lake Street and throughout the Twin Cities. Nekima Levy Armstrong, a civil rights lawyer and activist, led peaceful protests.

I first saw Ms. Armstrong on the news show Almanac in 2015, when she was president of the Minneapolis NAACP. She appeared to comment on the police killing of Jamar Clark.

When Mr. Clark was killed, the Hennepin County Attorney determined that "the officers acted in accordance with Minnesota Statutes authorizing deadly force" (quoting from the Wikipedia entry about Mr. Clark). Ms. Armstrong countered that systemic racism resulted in Black Americans, especially men, being targeted and subsequently killed during routine interactions with police.

THE RECKONING

At the time, I was in the habit of believing what I saw on the news. Ms. Armstrong's argument created doubt and cognitive dissonance. I compartmentalized my troubled feelings. When the protests stopped being reported in the press, I felt that my life went back to normal. I knew the problem had not gone away, but I could ignore it.

For the next five years, when I felt troubled by high profile reports of police killings of Black men and women, I filed those feelings away in my subconscious so I could keep functioning. In 2020, with Mr. Floyd's death and the pandemic, my ability to ignore cognitive dissonance began to disintegrate. Two people in particular helped me to begin unpacking all that compartmentalized material in my brain.

2020 was the year I started reading Heather Cox Richardson's Letters From An American. Heather is a history professor at Boston College. On March 7, 2020, she wrote, "It seems to me that, historically, we have swung between two extremes. When our lack of government oversight of the economy leads to the rise of extremely wealthy people who take over our political system and use it to promote their own interests, a crisis lays bare the misuse of the government for the rich. Americans then rise up and insist on an active government that protects the equality of opportunity on which our democracy depends. Three times before now, we have played out this pattern." Those three times were the 1850s-60s, leading to the Civil War; the early 20th century, when The-

odore Roosevelt regulated business; and the 1930s, when Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal helped people like my parents survive the Great Depression.

I also read Resmaa Menakem's book, "My Grandmother's Hands." Resmaa is a somatic trauma therapist who spent much of his career in Minnesota. He wrote, "Throughout the United States history as a nation, White bodies have colonized, oppressed, brutalized, and murdered Black and Native ones. But well before the United States began, powerful White bodies colonized, oppressed, brutalized, and murdered other, less powerful White ones."

Both Resmaa and Heather wrote about the cruelty involved in slavery, but they also wrote about how a wealthy, powerful minority persuaded less affluent Whites that slavery was justified because light-skinned people of European descent were inherently superior to darker skinned people.

For example, I grew up believing there was the potential for financial success if I worked hard enough, yet it always seemed like I struggled financially. Some leaders explained financial struggles like mine by blaming immigrants, or Black people or Jewish people or some other group that didn't deserve to succeed. These people, they said, were taking jobs from Americans like me and robbing us of our opportunity for wealth.

I didn't consciously agree with that sentiment, but the part of my brain that compartmentalized racial violence held onto a vague, wordless fear. That fear found expression in July of 2022, when I took a two-day online course from Resmaa called Foundations of Somatic Abolitionism.

Resmaa taught about White suprema-

cy as a trauma response. He asked us, the White participants, to describe what happened when our trauma response is activated by discussions of race and racism. I answered, "A sense that I have to be able to survive in the world and I don't want to give up the survival skills I have now. A sense that if I let go of my place in the hierarchy, I will never get it back; fear of economic instability, being old and homeless and alone. Fear of losing friends and family, of being disliked."

I finally heard the voice of all those troubled feelings I had filed away in my subconscious over the years. I began to think about how my great grandparents learned to be White when they came to the U.S. throughout the 1800s, and how my parents passed down those lessons to me.

Resmaa wrote, "Race has its own unique charge, texture, weight, and speed. The ability to hold and work with the energies isn't inborn. It needs to be acquired through effort and practice." For me, whiteness has gone from something that was invisible, to something I was ashamed of, to something I finally accept as a reality that needs to be dealt with.

This is the first of four columns that document my racial reckoning. For me, this process started with learning the history involved in separating humans by race. Next, I placed my own family's immigrant experience into a broader historical perspective. Finally, I looked at how the world has changed during my own lifetime. This writing is simply one woman's perspective on learning to see and accept whiteness in my own identity.

Valerie Fitzgerald is a clinical counselor who has worked in mental health care since 2011. She resides in Howe.

Stories and Journeys

BY DONALD L. HAMMEN



Moving past the 2024 Presidential election results for me means that I have reached the following conclusion: There was dis-information and voter suppression. Especially voter suppression. My trusted source for all things voter suppression is the statistician/investigative reporter Greg Palast. You can check him out at www.gregpalast.com.

Candidate for Vice President Tim Walz when asked by a reporter his view on Project 2025. He said he viewed it as a playbook and why create a playbook if you don't intend to use it. The more I scroll through Project 2025, I have concluded that this is a fascist playbook for the merger of state and corporate power playing out in Washington, D.C. And now Elon Musk has gained entrance to the Social Security Administration possibly giving him access to my (our) Social Security and Medicare information. Project 2025 is in play. I'm asking myself if Elon Musk was truly about rooting out waste, fraud and abuse why would he not bring in accountants to do the job. Instead he is bringing in computer programmers.

Moving past presidential election results

It took Hitler 53 days to turn Germany from a functioning democracy into a dictatorship. I am scared and angry. Where are we headed as a nation? How is this not a coup?

HOPEFUL LOCALLY

For some reason, I'm feeling hopeful locally after the January meeting of Elder Voices (Telling Our Stories/Sharing Our Journeys) at Turtle Bread. I was joined at the Elder Voices table by seven people – all new. There was Erin, Cathy, Beate, Mary Glen, Chris and Anna. Here's what I took away from the meeting. Everyone obviously came to tell their story and share their journey. Everyone was a Messenger or Connector reader. Four of us have an interest in or connection to the Minneapolis Advisory Committee on Aging. Everyone wanted to leave their e-mail and phone number, which means Elder Voices now has an email list for future communications. And now I need to announce the following:

ELDER VOICES (TELLING OUR STORIES/SHARING OUR JOURNEYS) IS SCHEDULED TO MEET FRIDAY, MARCH 28, 10-11A.M. AT TURTLE BREAD, 4205-EAST 34TH STREET.

Look for the table with the All Elders sign.

So dear reader, assuming despair is not an option, what is giving you hope these days? Tell yourself, tell others or tell me via tesha@tmcpub.com. And if you have read this far you have taken the plunge into the river(flow) of life experiences which is Stories and Journeys. And thanks to James who recently emailed me his sources of information for getting him through the next four years.

A CHANCE TO MEET WITH REPRESENTATIVE SAMANTHA SENCER-MURA

That is scheduled to happen at the March 26 meeting of the Longfellow-Seward Healthy Seniors SOLOS Resource Group. SOLOS are people who cannot or choose not to rely on family alone to navigate their lives. She will be addressing how a bill becomes law. Hint: it starts with an idea from people like you and me. SOLOS meets from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Brackett Park Community Room, 2728-S.39th Ave., Minneapolis.

MINNEAPOLIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AGING UPDATE

The group meets the second Thursday of the month at 1 p.m. Location now and for the foreseeable future is the Public Service Building, 505-4th Ave. S. Next meeting is March 13. March is the month for anyone who thinks they might want to be on this committee to go through the pro-



Samantha Sencer-Mura

cess of being considered. Ultimately you need the endorsement of your city council member. In February, policy aides to City Council member Robin Wonsley attended. There was a presentation by a member of the city clerk's office. These meetings are open to the public which is why I am able to attend.

I'm thinking we need each other now more than ever.

IN GRATITUDE.

Donald L. Hammen is a longtime south Minneapolis resident, and serves on the All Elders United for Justice Board of Directors.

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Story ideas always welcome.

Letters to the editor under 200 words and news releases for publication can be e-mailed to news@longfellownokomisemessenger.com. Unsigned letters will not run.

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Tesha M. Christensen

Printing by: House of Print

This issue is printed on recycled paper using soy-based ink. Approximately 95-97% of material that enters the print facility is recycled.

TMC
PUBLICATIONS CO



Delivery:

612-235-7197, delivery@TMCpub.com
Mail subscriptions are available at \$40 a year.

Contributing Writers & Photographers:

Jan Willms, Jill Boogren, Cam Gordon, Donald Hammen, Terry Faust, Iric Nathanson, Jane St. Anthony, Margie O'Loughlin, Terbutu Ochothow

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From our kitchen to your plates: *How Roosevelt High Schoolers feed their community*

Roosevelt
High School

By ROSALIND SMITH



The Roosevelt High School (RHS) Community Meals are a way for friends, family, and other community members to celebrate our aspiring chiefs at Roosevelt. If you would like to know more about what these events look like you can visit the Longfellow Nokomis Messenger website (LongfellowNokomisMessenger.com) and read an article I wrote called “High School’s culinary arts program goes beyond the classroom.” While I was writing and researching for that article I had so many questions that I did not have the time to put in it. So in this sequel we will be going deeper into this program, exploring not just the impact, but how they actually make these meals happen.

All community meals are centered around what students are learning in class. The last community meal was about their Native/Indigenous American unit and this upcoming one is highlighting their soup unit. The March 6 offering is the Empty Bowl meal. At this event you will be able to buy bowls from the RHS pottery class to eat out of, as well as donate with QR codes and cash. All proceeds from the Empty Bowl meal will be given to the Minnehaha Food Shelf to help people with food insecurity. There will also be a few speakers from the RHS Zoology and Global Politics classes talking about the effects of food insecurity.

Now if you are anything like me you want to know how this program budgets for these meals. I was lucky enough to talk to one of our program’s leaders



Caryln Shanley, Ben Cuevas-Rengstorf and volunteers serve items at the Roosevelt High School’s farm to school community BBQ meal.

Carlyn Shanley about how they budget and where they get these ingredients. The Roosevelt Culinary Arts (RCA) program is in a transitional period, attempting to shift buying produce from large companies to buying the majority of their produce from local businesses and farmers. At the moment they get most of their produce from Costco or Cub. They have already made a big transition from beef

to bison, with help from program leader Ben Cuevas-Rengstorf’s family farm. The RCA wants to make the smallest impact they can on our environment. The diagram below shows where they get most of their produce. Over the next few years they want to completely flip so they are barely buying from these big corporations.

Funding is the main obstacle for them. It costs almost double to buy onions from The Good Acre or TC Co-Op Partners Warehouse. And when you need five plus pounds and large quantities of other foods, it really adds up. Each week they send emails out to students’ families showing what their students made and saying they can donate if they choose. They get about \$300 each month from their website donations. They also have a Seward Grant this year which rounds up



to about \$7,000. They also cater school events and do community meals which gives them a little more. The total for a school year is \$35,000. So each student per year gets a little less than \$100. With this limited budget they will never be able to buy from local markets without sacrificing their students’ learning.

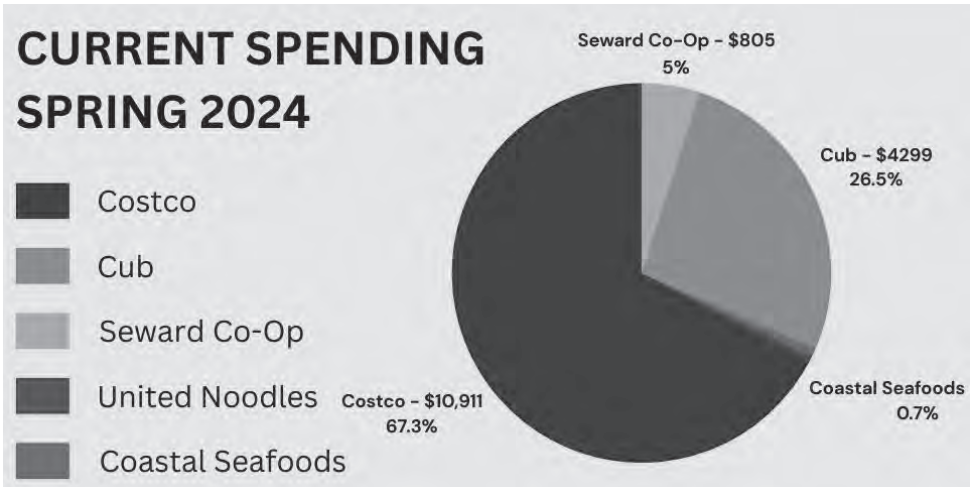
The best way that we can support this program is shining light on it. I talked to Carlyn about what it is like to get ready for these meals. They spend the week leading up to the meal cooking. Every class contributes something to these meals. On the day, they set up folding tables, compostable dishes/silverware, and catering hot plates. At 4:30 p.m. they open the doors and people can start eating. Then for the next two hours, the student volunteers serve food and make sure that they don’t run out. I asked Carlyn if they had ever run out of food and she said no. They normally plan for 200 people, but she hopes they will need to increase that number soon.

For this meal, the RCA program has tried to more outreach. Inviting middle schools, Roosevelt ambassadors, the Minnehaha Food Shelf crew, and, of course, whoever reads and shares this article.

If you would like to attend the Empty Bowl meal it’s on March 6, 2025 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at Roosevelt High School. The address is 4029 S 28th Ave. If you can not attend and would like to donate you can go to rooseveltculinaryarts.org and press the donate button in the top right hand corner.

These students deserve just as much love and attention as every other school program, and I hope that with these two articles that more people help these teenagers learn what they love.

PRICE COMPARISON			
Ingredient	Costco	The Good Acre	TC Co-Op Partners Warehouse
Cheddar Cheese	\$2.48/lb (Conventional, not local)	N/A	\$3.56/lb (Conventional, local)
Onions, yellow	\$0.68/lb (Conventional, not local)	\$1.40/lb (Organic, local)	\$1.20/lb (Organic, not local)
Bell Peppers	\$4/lb (Conventional, not local)	\$1.98/lb (Organic, local)	\$4.54/lb (Organic, not local)
Tomatoes	\$1.03/lb (Conventional, not local)	\$1.96/lb (Organic, local)	\$1.16/lb (Organic, not local)





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Becketwood seniors promote environmental awareness

By IRIC NATHANSON

With three grandchildren of their own, confronting climate change is more than a worldwide imperative for Jan and Richard Sutton, it is also a very personal family matter.

"We are thinking ahead to the world that our grandchildren and future generations will inherit. That's what motivates many of us," says Jan Sutton, who chairs Becketwood Cooperative's Environmental Committee.

Sutton and her Becketwood neighbors are also part of a national movement known as Elders Climate Action. "ECA's goal is to mobilize elders throughout the U.S. to combat climate change while there is still time to protect future generations," she said. "We have a very local focus. That is where we can have an impact."

At Becketwood, Sutton's ECA group organized a five-week training course to help educate co-op members about the broader climate issues.

"The course included a climate simulation," she explains. "It looked ahead to 2030 and examined the climate impact in concrete terms if current trends continued. Then we discuss the different steps we could take to mitigate these impacts. At the last class, everyone made their own commitment to take climate action, using their own skills and interests."

While Elders Climate Action is a recent initiative, Becketwood's climate efforts extend back to 2000, when the co-op's Environment Committee was established. "Environmental sustainability is more than a concern of a single group at



Environmental committee members helped promote Becketwood's participation in Hennepin County's Plastic Free Challenge. They include (left to right): Margaret Kirkpatrick, Diane Dube, Jan Sutton, Richard Sutton, John Pegg, and Susan Sisola.

Becketwood," said Susan Sisola, the committee's former chair. "Sustainability is incorporated in our co-op's core values which commit Becketwood to environmental stewardship and the use of environmental science and practices in the co-operative's operational decisions."

Sisola explained that an environmen-

tal impact statement is now included in any project proposal that comes before the co-op's board for approval. As a result of a 2024 board directive, projects seeking board endorsement must explain how the proposal will mitigate the effects of climate change at Becketwood.

"This policy's intent is to make en-

vironmental concerns central to all decision-making at Becketwood going forward," Sisola noted.

Becketwood's Environment Committee is currently working with Hennepin County's 2025 Plastics Challenge aimed at reducing the use of household plastics. The committee is also involved in an effort to boost the number of Becketwood residents accessing renewable energy (solar and wind) through their local electrical utility, Xcel Energy.

“

My biggest concern is for my grandchildren. When I am gone, I don't want them to say to each other, what did grandma do to deal with the issues we are facing today. I want them to know that I did something.”

Jan Sutton

“This may be a difficult time for many of us, given the approach of the new administration in Washington,” said Jan Sutton. “But we can't get caught up in all this depression and anger, when we listen or watch the national

news.

“We need to keep working at a local level and state level. That is where we can make a difference. Mother Earth's conditions don't change just because there is a new administration in Washington.

“My biggest concern is for my grandchildren. When I am gone, I don't want them to say to each other, what did grandma do to deal with the issues we are facing today. I want them to know that I did something. I didn't just stand there waiting for the catastrophe to happen.”

RESTORING WATERS

>> from 1

rector. “We were putting more money into maintenance than we were into programs. The Robert Street building was never intended to be permanent housing. It was really intended to be short-term and transitional for people who had very immediate needs. We wanted a building that worked for our clients on a long-term basis. Our last building was concrete with shared rooms. That worked for people for a while, but it wasn't a permanent solution.”

In 2018, Emma Norton started working with PPL on a new building that would serve the St. Paul agency's target population. At the same time, PPL was building its own 75-unit affordable apartment building, Nellie Frances Court, on an adjacent block.

Restoring Waters now provides 60 units of permanent housing and serves as the administration center for the social service agency.

As one of several non-profit developers selected to work at Highland Bridge, PPL is responsible for building 300 units of affordable housing at scattered sites throughout the 122-acre development on the former Ford site. PPL's 300 units are intended to help Highland Budge achieve its goal of providing 760 units of affordable housing for people with incomes up



Emma Norton's Advancement Director Shawna Nelson Wills (left image) pointed out they incorporated trauma-informed design principals in the new building at Highland Bridge.

to 60% of the Twin Cities area median. Half of the 760 units are intended for people with very low incomes at 30% of area median. PPL's Nellie Frances Court has a 60% income eligibility requirement while Restoring Waters is aimed at potential tenants with incomes up to 30% of median.

“Restoring Waters has been a win for both our agencies,” said Nelson Wills. “We have been able to get this beautiful new facility and PPL has moved closer to meeting its affordable housing goals.

“In our building plans, we have incorporated principles of trauma-informed design. The colors, the rounded corners, the open vistas; everything has been built to help people coming here feel calm, safe and comfortable. We also have great pro-



gramming spaces in the building. These spaces are intended to help people heal and recover.”

While the programs at Restoring Waters are aimed primarily at Emma Norton residents, the agency does provide walk-in-services for non-residents who are in need of short-term mental health services. The walk-in program, known as the Living Room, provides peer counselors who can help clients deal with their mental health needs in a holistic way.

“Our overall goal at Emma Norton is to help our clients live independently,” Nelson Wills explained. “In St. Paul, we provided three meals a day and other direct services. Here we have communal meals for special occasions but mainly

people on their own. With the help of our staff, we do what can to help our residents become more self-reliant.”

Emma Norton's Advancement Director says that staff and residents have received a warm welcome from their neighbors across the street at Marvella. “The people there have been wonderful. When we first opened, a group of them came over with welcome baskets for each of the apartments, with cleaning and cooking supplies, towels, sheets and other necessities each of our residents would need to set up housekeeping.

“We wanted to make sure than when people moved here, they had a fully furnished apartment. We didn't want them to move in and then have to sleep on the floor.

“Highland Bridge is a wonderful location – close to jobs, transit and the beauty of the Mississippi River,” noted Paul Williams, PPL's outgoing Executive Director. “Our folks deserve to be there. They deserve the opportunity to take pride in the place that they live. We are grateful to the city of St. Paul and Ryan Companies for believing in that same opportunity. The community has welcomed us with open arms and in a true sense of partnership, including Marvella residents who have helped pay for the installation of solar panels on top of both the Nellie Frances and Restoring Waters buildings. We couldn't be more pleased.”

SOLAR INSTALLATIONS AT HIGHLAND BRIDGE

Hillcrest Avenue in Highland Bridge separates Marvella, Presbyterian Homes' senior housing development, from two affordable apartment buildings across the street, Restoring Waters and Nellie Frances Court, built by Project for Pride in Living.

Bill Wernz, who lives at Marvella, can look out at the two PPL buildings across Hillcrest, knowing that he has played a role in improving their energy efficiency.



Wernz spearheaded a successful effort to construct solar collectors on the roofs of the affordable apartment buildings across from Marvella.

A renewable energy advocate, the retired attorney was looking for ways to further his cause

when he came across a little-known Minnesota state tax incentive aimed at promoting investments in affordable housing. Under the state program, Minnesota tax payers can get an 85% state income tax credit for contributions to newly constructed affordable housing projects.

While the state tax credit is not aimed specifically at renewable energy investments, Wernz decided that he would use the credit to generate funding for those energy saving measures. After persuading PPL to use its tax credit dollars for solar collectors on its Highland Bridge buildings, Wernz was able to raise \$70,000 in tax credits for PPL by knocking on the doors of his friends and

contacts, including his Marvella neighbors, and encouraging them to contribute to the state program.

Wernz has also raised funds for solar equipment at a PPL project in St. Louis Park and continues to fund raise for solar installations at other affordable projects throughout the Twin Cities.

Already, Wernz's efforts are having a positive impact on operations at Restoring Waters and Nellie Frances Court, where solar is cutting electrical costs at the two building by more than 50 percent.

'When you give back, it comes back to you'

By SOMMER WAGEN

Daniel Kennedy has seen Longfellow at its best and worst, and worked to build community through 30 years of volunteer work.

The longtime business attorney founded his legal practice, Kennedy & Cain, PLLC, in Longfellow in 1995, just across the river from where he grew up in St. Paul.

"I just never left," said Kennedy, who attended St. Paul Public Schools and later Breck School in Longfellow before it moved from 4200 West River Parkway to Golden Valley.

In the 30 years since, Kennedy, now 60, has sought to play a key role in its revitalization, especially in its darkest moments.

"When you give, it comes back to you," Kennedy said. "Everybody benefits."

Kennedy joined the Longfellow Business Association right after opening Kennedy & Cain, right as LBA was being established.

Kennedy, who is now on the LBA board of directors, said he was motivated to join both because of networking opportunities with future clients, and because of the positive impacts his local business association had on his community growing up.

"I knew the power of that dynamic, when businesses worked together, to strengthen the community," Kennedy said.

Kennedy said the LBA achievement that was most rewarding to him had been revitalizing the intersection of 27th Avenue and Lake Street prior to the damage done during the civil uprising in 2020.

Kennedy said the intersection had long been neglected when revitalization efforts began.

"It's the gateway of Longfellow from the western side, where Hiawatha [Avenue] and Lake meet," he said. "The buildings had not been given enough attention. They were in some part vacant, some parts degrading, and there was trash blowing around in the street."

Kennedy's involvement in both the LBA and LCC ultimately facilitated uplifting the intersection. Because of Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) funding that the Longfellow Community Council (of which Kennedy was on the board at the time) had access to, those



Dan Kennedy observed, "Now I can drive down Lake Street and say, 'I know that person, I know that person. It just makes you feel very at home.' He added, "I don't feel 60, I don't feel 50. I feel about the same as I always have. I don't run as fast anymore, but life is great."

buildings were given the attention and investment they needed, according to Kennedy.

"[27th and Lake] really got a shot in the arm as one building owner after another saw that the investment could pay off as other owners were also investing," Kennedy said.

Kennedy's care for his community extends beyond the businesses he serves to the very people that live in Longfellow, as seen in the critical role he sought to play in its darkest times.

Just one city block separates 27th and Lake from the site of the former Minneapolis Police Department third precinct, which was destroyed in the civil unrest following George Floyd's murder.

Gandhi Mahal owner Ruhel Islam lost his restaurant building at 3009 27th Ave. S when it burned down. With no place to do business, Kennedy gave Islam his spare

office.

"Dan is a wonderful human being," said Islam, who now operates Curry in a Hurry at 3025 Franklin Ave. "I really appreciate his service and how he leads by example, and he's very accommodating."

Kennedy and Islam engaged in deep discussions as the dust settled on E. Lake Street. Eventually, the two invited other Longfellow community members affected by the Uprising to join the meetings.

The conversations were hosted on the front lawn of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, the warm summer weather facilitating COVID-safe connection.

"We had a strong need to find one another – to share both the trauma of the preceding days and the conviction that not all that was destroyed was to be mourned," said Holy Trinity lead pastor Ingrid Rasmussen in an email statement. "Those

Longfellow attorney Dan Kennedy's 30 years of service include LBA, LCC and Longfellow Rising

were the seeds of a powerful and sustained organizing collective that has continued to meet and to advocate for our corner of the city."

Those seeds eventually grew into Longfellow Rising, a group still working to rebuild Longfellow with a focus on BIPOC ownership and the knowledge that the community's strength lies in its diversity.

I appreciate Dan Kennedy's service and how he leads by example."

Ruhel Islam

According to Kennedy, 19 buildings within two blocks of the former third precinct didn't recover after 2020, many of them being underinsured and unable to cover the costs of remodeling on top of demolition.

What's more, Kennedy said, "The city did not step forward, the state did even less than that, and the federal government did virtually nothing."

While Kennedy said Longfellow Rising is "still a work in progress," their work has shown business owners the possibility of successful investments and has brought Kennedy closer to his community.

"We've been able to keep [27th and Lake] relevant," he said. "The latest victory has been re-opening the Coliseum Building. I also got to know the business people who had become my friends in a completely different way."

Overall, Kennedy said he views life as an accumulation of friendships and knowledge that continuously grows.

"Now I can drive down Lake Street and say, 'I know that person, I know that person,'" he said. "It just makes you feel very at home."

"I don't feel 60, I don't feel 50. I feel about the same as I always have," he continued. "I don't run as fast anymore, but life is great."

Sommer Wagen is a University of Minnesota student majoring in journalism. They're an arts and entertainment reporter for the Minnesota Daily and just started as a contributing writer for Lavender Magazine.

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Homeowners experiment with paint colors, say local painters

By LULU JAECKEL

Whale gray, dry sage and french press are some of the popular names of interior paint colors right now at Benjamin Moore, a paint company.

Sid Triantafilou, a local painter and owner of Greco Linden Hills Painting, said earth tones such as brown, tan and red have also gained popularity.

"I'm glad that something other than gray has come to be," Triantafilou said. "People are experimenting and that's been nice."

Triantafilou went to school to become a carpenter but joined a painting and design program when an opening became available.

He was the top of his class and won first place in the Vocational Industrial Clubs of America award for his painting skills.

One of his most recent projects features earth tone colors. His client requested that their living room and dining room be painted to match the colors in their fireplace.

Greg Chileen, owner of Chileen Painting, said bold colors are becoming popular.

"Colors like gold and bright, bright colors that feel more welcoming and bring out warmth, are becoming popular," Chileen said. "Especially in kitchens and bathrooms."

His most memorable project he worked on was restoring the Lake Harriet band shell.

John Roberts, the owner of John Roberts Painting, has worked as a painter and carpenter for over 40 years. His first painting job was in 1979 in Virginia, Minn. where his mentor, Orlando Secola, helped him paint a bakery.

"Orlando taught me the business," Roberts said. "Fifty percent of this job is promotion. He would walk down the street and everyone knew him."

Roberts graduated from a two-year carpentry program at Eveleth Area Vocational Technical Institute in 1985.

He enjoys his work because it's not a 9 to 5 job.

"There's some people that want to be free you know," Roberts said. "They don't want to have to punch a clock. I work for myself and I get the job done but I don't have to punch a clock."



Sid Triantafilou of Greco Linden Hills Painting paints houses in residential neighborhoods, including East Isles, near Lake of the Isles. (Photo by Lulu Jaeckel)

A lot of times, people already know what color they want for the interior and exterior of their house, Roberts said. It's usually an off-white, tan, yellow or gray.

"A lot of people who are looking to sell their house will go for a more basic color too rather than bold colors," Roberts said.

He also said ceilings are usually painted off-white and accent colors look the best in small rooms.

Tim Schaub, the owner of T Schaub Painting LLC, said choosing colors for a home is very subjective.

"Color trends change every year," Schaub said. "But light gray has always been a popular color for the interior."

Steve Polta, the owner of Steve's Painting, and Schaub both love their jobs because they transform people's houses.

"I love beautifying older homes and



restoring them," Polta said.

All of these local painters use water-based paints with low volatile organic compounds.

Volatile organic compounds include chemicals that have short and long-term health effects, according to the EPA. VOCs are emitted as gases from products like paints and cleaning supplies.

"We use the best paint and we don't cut any corners," Triantafilou said.

REASONS TO HIRE A PAINTER

Although painting is a project that can be tackled by do-it-yourselfers, there are various advantages to calling in a professional to handle painting projects. Here is a look at some of the benefits to working with a professional painter.

Cut down on the job time

A professional painter can reduce the project timeline. Painters have the skill set and experience to complete a project in a timely manner. This means the job will be streamlined from preparation to clean-up.

Pay attention to details

Professional painters are likely to do a job that is nearly flawless, especially after homeowners exercise their due diligence and vet painters carefully. Professionals will pay attention to the small details that less experienced painters wouldn't think about.

Reduce your workload

Painting can be a time-consuming job, and most of it occurs even before you pick up a brush. It can take hours to prep walls, patch holes, remove moldings, and apply painter's tape.

Painters already have equipment

Do-it-yourselfers may need to buy new tools before beginning the job. This means brushes, rollers, tape, tarps, trays, and much more. Unless you plan to paint multiple times, this can make stocking up a considerable investment. Professionals already have all the right gear and tools of the trade.

Lasting results

Professional painters understand which products will produce the desired results, depending on the wear and tear of the space. Paints are not all created equal, and certain walls, floors and trim may require unique priming and preparation that novices are not familiar with. Professional painters can help ensure durability and save homeowners from having to do the job again in a few months or years.



Greg Chileen, owner of Chileen Painting, said bold colors are becoming popular. "Colors like gold and bright, bright colors that feel more welcoming and bring out warmth, are becoming popular," Chileen said. "Especially in kitchens and bathrooms." (Photo courtesy of Metro Creative Graphics)

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Expert advises shifting mindset to view AI use as an interactive one to help generate ideas versus getting one right answer

By TESSA M. CHRISTENSEN

"There's going to be a huge impact on media and the culture based on Generative AI," said Danny Olson during a recent Midway Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon.



Danny Olson

He's the AI and Emerging Platforms Lead at Weber Shandwick, a global communications agency, and his background includes sales, digital marketing, and public relations.

Olson pointed to the new Google overview summaries generated by AI that are appearing at the top of search pages that can pull information from a variety of sources. They can be read without clicking into another source, which means people won't be going to other businesses or media websites, using their information without paying for it. AI is bringing new gatekeepers, he pointed out. "It dictates how we learn about the world and go about our day."

Olson quoted former Google CEO Eric Schmidt: "We're going to have a very different world and it's going to happen very quickly. Imagine if you had Aristotle to consult with you on logic. Oppenheimer to consult with you on physics. Not the person but rather the knowledge, the scaling intelligence of these truly brilliant people who were historically incredibly rare. What are we going to do when super intelligence is broadly available to everyone?"

AI CHANGES EVERYTHING

"Let's talk about how this changes everything," remarked Olson.

This changes search.

"We're not even getting to the click," he said, pointing to how this will have a huge impact on media.

It changes learning.

Olson observed that right now he's using generative AI to write about 80% of his performance reviews. He puts all the feedback and information into AI, which then generates a summary, saving him hours of time.

It changes media.

People can create reporters, background and voices that are entirely generated by AI.

It changes influencers.

There are now individuals on social media who are not real. Their photos and the accompanying text are completely created by AI.

MEETING THE AI MOMENT

Text prompt

Pretend you are a communications strategist for Anheuser-Busch specializing in stakeholder engagement and reputation building. Take the following outline and turn it into a 1,000-word newsletter for wholesalers detailing upcoming events and special promotions. The author's tone should be friendly. Here is an outline:

A detailed persona helps the AI understand the overall tone and direction of the command

Clear instruction for a specific task

Adding tone helps guide the AI

Visual prompt

Elements for a detailed image prompt

What's in the scene
Subject, description of action, state of being

How the scene feels
Art form, mood, style references

How the scene is set up
Lighting, colors, framing

Syntax matters. Here's a sample Midjourney prompt.

CONTEXT TYPE

DESCRIPTION

STYLE

COMPOSITION

A photograph of an angry full-bodied wolf in the foggy woods during sunset, with dramatic lighting and shot with a wide angle lens – ar 16:9

Danny Olson of Weber Shandwick provided examples of and tips for writing good text and visual prompts when using generative AI during a Midway Chamber luncheon.

It changes experiences.

Researchers at Shenzhen People's Hospital in China using an AI fusion of multisource data to identify key features of vitiligo, a skin condition characterized by the loss of skin pigment, and to help with its diagnosis and treatment.

It changes risk.

"It changes us," said Olson.

He acknowledged that there is a great deal of fear around AI right now and people are worried that AI will replace people in jobs.

His personal belief is that there won't be fewer jobs but that there will be different jobs for people. "You and technology working together," Olson said, "not you versus technology."

WHAT IS GENERATIVE AI?

Generative AI maps patterns and relationships in large data sets, and uses that knowledge to create new content, such as images, video or text, explained Olson.

WHAT IS AI GOOD AT NOW?

- Producing coherent and contextually relevant text.
- Translating text with high accuracy.
- Creating images and art from descriptions.
- Analyzing large datasets for patterns

or trends.

- Summarizing documents into different formats.
- Tutoring and explaining a wide range of topics.
- Generating new thoughts for ideating and brainstorming.
- Generating creative content like art, music and fiction.

AI is useful not for answers, but for ideas, said Olson. "It is meant to be iterative where you go back and forth with it, versus expecting a single polished answer."

WHERE DOES AI STRUGGLE?

- Suffers from vulnerabilities in data privacy.
- Encounters difficulties performing basic math.
- Limited in creating truly original ideas or concepts.
- Biases present in its training data.
- Liabilities due to complex AI ownership laws.
- Struggles with recent events post-training cut-off.
- Hallucinating nonsensical or irrelevant results.
- Inaccurately generating images of specified text.
- Lacks deep understanding in specialized fields.

• Struggles with adhering to specific word counts.

"AI will give you an answer but it doesn't always have the right information to give the answer," observed Olson. "That's where the interrogation comes into play." AI is a collection of data but it doesn't necessarily have all of the data on a subject.

"It's not truly creative," he added. "It can only imagine what exists."

WHERE TO START?

Current AI platforms include:

- SENSING: Blackbird.ai and NextAtlas
- SEARCH: Perplexity, ChatPDF, Opinionate.io, and Consensus
- CREATION: Adobe Firefly, Leonardo.ai, DALL-E, Runway and ChatGPT

Olson pointed out that there is a typical learning curve that moves beyond the hype. First, people are excited that ChatGPT can answer all their questions. Then they realize that ChatGPT doesn't understand what it is saying and is only predicting plausible answers. They realize that ChatGPT will return incorrect answers that are statistically plausible but not based in fact. They begin to understand that ChatGPT is best used when there isn't a precise "right answer." Only then do they recognize how to get value from ChatGPT and avoid the risks.

A mindset shift is required. AI isn't a silver bullet.

This makes the "prompt" really important.

"We are serving as editors or as people engaging with the product," said Olson.

The process should involve a prompt from a human that is detailed with clear instructions for a specific task.

It isn't about giving one prompt and getting one answer. It's about doing a prompt, getting an answer, doing another prompt, getting another answer, and doing that multiple times before a human edits and creates the final human output.

Olson's mom is an esthetician and small business owner. She isn't a marketer. But she can use AI to generate email subject lines.

There are also legal issues about taking information directly from a prompt and using it as is. All of the information in AI was pulled from someplace else. The legal consensus, according to Olson, is that you can't take stuff from a prompt and use it directly "much like you wouldn't take a piece of text from Google search and reprint it as your own."

It's tricky right now because generative AI isn't providing a source for where the information came from.

"Assume you are using copyright material," Olson recommended.

The other issue with AI material is that the programs are biased. "They are built by people," said Olson. "There might not be explicit bias but [there is] implicit bias. Don't take it word for word."

"The interactive use of it is how you get the most value."



11 AWARDS FOR TMC PUBLICATIONS

At the 158th annual Minnesota Newspaper Association Convention, TMC Publications earned 11 awards. Accepting them in person were (left to right) Tessa M. Christensen, Jan Willms and Terbut Ochothow. Our woman-owned, family-run newspaper group includes the Longfellow Nokomis Messenger, Midway Como Frogtown Monitor and the Southwest Connector.

- Business Profile, 2nd place: Tessa M. Christensen for "South Lyndale Liquor triples size"
- Columnist, 2nd place: Eric Ortiz
- Human Interest Story - Personality, 3rd place: Jan Willms for "The Sign Painter"

- Social Issues Story, 3rd place: Jan Willms for "Helping youth succeed"
- Photography News Photo, 1st place: Tessa M. Christensen for Slice Pizza ribbon cutting
- Photography News Photo, 2nd place: Terbut Ochothow for "African Fest"
- Photography Portrait and Personality, 2nd place: Terbut Ochothow for "Brewery owner"
- Typography and Design, 1st Place: Southwest Connector
- Advertising Excellence, 2nd place: Southwest Connector
- Use of Photography as a Whole, 3rd place: Southwest Connector
- Use of Information Graphics and Graphic Illustrations, 3rd place: Intersection of ideas on I-94

Minnesota nights getting warmer

Twin Cities Meteorological Society hosts annual State of the Climate

By JARROD SCHOENECKER

The Twin Cities Meteorological Society's 4th Annual Minnesota State of the Climate event, held at the Anpétu Téca Education Center in Roseville, had a special focus on Minnesota's long-standing weather observation network.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Assistant State Climatologist Pete Boulay led three simultaneous presentations on a night that was supposed to have had three presenters.

DNR Senior Climatologist Kenny Blumenfeld fell ill and was unable to present, and Boulay presented on his slides covering the bulk of the current numbers on Minnesota's climate.

"Minnesota's nights are getting warmer, particularly in the winter months from December through February," said Boulay. On average in Northern Minnesota, the temperature is now 7.3 degrees warmer now that it was climatologically speaking 100 years ago.

Boulay also says that the trend is keeping less snow pack on the ground too. "Less snow equals warmer winters," he said. This process makes the warm-ups exponential even by small numbers.

An arbitrary group favorite was presented, the annual Top 5 Weather Events for Minnesota, featuring the five significant weather events from the previous year that those who are weather-connected, such as meteorologists and severe weather spotters, are sent and are voted on.

This year's number one in the Top 5 was the exceptionally wet period from June 15-22. There was a significant amount of rain over southern Minnesota during this period, which caused historic flooding.

"This really started getting traction when the national news picked up the dam failure at the Rapidan Dam south of Mankato," said Boulay said. This also coincides with the record flooding in Waterville, Minn.

A full list of the Top 5 Minnesota Weather Events of 2024 can be found at dnr.state.mn.us/climate/journal/ under the December 2024.

The last portion of the evening was to hold a presentation by Meteorologist Michelle Margraf, the Central Minnesota CoCoRaHS coordinator, on the history of the weather observers role in climatology.

Margraf's presentation was thwarted from being presented Monday though. She stated, "At the instruction of the Department of Commerce we are unable to participate in public-facing speaking engagements until further notice. As a result, I will be unable to participate in the Twin Cities Meteorological Society meeting on



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Assistant State Climatologist Pete Boulay talks about the history of observing networks in Minnesota. (Photo submitted)

Thursday evening." The Department of Commerce oversees the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which her job is housed under.

CoCoRaHS, started in 1998, stands for Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network and is a group of trained volunteer observers that report mostly precipitation back to be recorded. There are some observers of CoCoRaHS have been reporting for decades, according to Boulay.

Boulay, being a state employee rather than a federal employee, generously offered to present what he could of her information, focusing highly on the long-time observers network for weather held here in Minnesota.

MNgage and the National Weather Service's Cooperative Observer Program were groups that were highlighted. MNgage is also a volunteer reporting network similar to CoCoRaHS that began in the 1960's. The Cooperative Observer Pro-

gram was first established by Congress in 1890 when the United States Weather Bureau was established, which was the name used previously for the National Weather Service.

Boulay said, "There are less coop observers in the state, only about 175. In addition to precipitation, many of them have a temperature gauge as well."

The standardized affordable and accurate rain gauge that most of the observers use, which the public can purchase as well, was designed decades ago by Product Alternatives, Inc., located in Fergus Falls, Minn. Their Stratus Rain Gauge is the official rain gauge of NOAA and National Weather Service observers. The gauge measures accurately to 1/100th of an inch and can measure up to 11 inches of precipitation.

"It can be used to measure snow too," said Boulay. "Just don't forget to take out the inner cylinder and funnel or they will crack."

Boulay encourages anyone who is interested in being a volunteer observer to check out CoCoRaHS. He says, "Anyone interested just has to go to cocrabs.org and click on the button for 'Join CoCoRaHS' to get started."

Jarrold Schoenecker is the president of the Twin Cities Meteorological Society. Reach him at TwPresident@TCMetSoc.org. For more on the Twin Cities Meteorological Society, visit TCMetSoc.org. They are a group of weather enthusiasts and meteorologists that has been in existence since 1948.

Range of building types, uses proposed for Peoples' Way

By JILL BOOGREN

Four applicants submitted varying plans for developing the Peoples' Way (site of the former gas station) at 3744 Chicago Ave. in response to the city of Minneapolis' request for qualifications.

Minnesota Agape Movement, currently located at 3741 Chicago Ave., is proposing a six-story building that would include, from the first floor up: a café, lobby and gift shop; a civil resilience museum focused on civil unrest and the resilience of George Floyd Square; a business incubator; a media hub with a music studio, podcast and radio station; an entertainment venue with a bar/restaurant; and a rooftop garden with community event space. Memorials would be integrated throughout.

P3 Foundation (David's Place) would build a community center with meeting rooms, event and recreational spaces, art studios and gallery, and a business incubator. Services would include youth mentorship programs, adult life skills courses in literacy and financial planning, and mental health and wellness work-



A gathering at the Peoples' Way in 2021. (Photo by Jill Boogren)

shops. Memorials would be integrated into the space, and a memorial garden would be designed with native plants, benches and educational signage that conveys the history and significance of the site.

Rise & Remember, which has preserved thousands of offerings and street

art at George Floyd Square both on and off site since 2020, proposes to create a memorial garden, a covered memorial structure and a greenhouse, and install self-cleaning public restrooms. They would remove the existing building but preserve its façade and move it to the west-end edge of the property. The memorial


garden and greenhouse would provide residents and visitors a space to reflect, and the gathering space could be used for public events.

Urban League Twin Cities is proposing a four-story building that would include a George Floyd Museum to serve as the primary memorial site, as well as a multi-purpose community space with college and career readiness programs, workforce and job training, home ownership resources, and a theater project. Street art would be integrated into the structure. Mutual aid services would continue, and an outdoor gathering space would include an Indigenous garden and 24-hour public restroom.

The city of Minneapolis, which owns the property, is looking for community input on the proposals before selecting one to bring to the city council and mayor for approval. Project staff are holding informational pop-ups to answer questions and get feedback.

PEOPLES' WAY POP-UPS

- March 4, 2-5 p.m. at Hosmer Library (347 E. 36th St.)
- March 8, 11 a.m.- 2 p.m. at Bichota Coffee (3740 Chicago Ave.)
- March 11, 3-6 p.m. at Powderhorn Recreation Center (3400 15th Ave., Room 103)



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Learn more and RSVP at longfellow.org

Minnehaha Food Shelf seeks community support during Minnesota Food Shelf Month

NOKOMIS EAST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

By Sarah Friedman
communications manager
sarah.friedman@nokomiseast.org



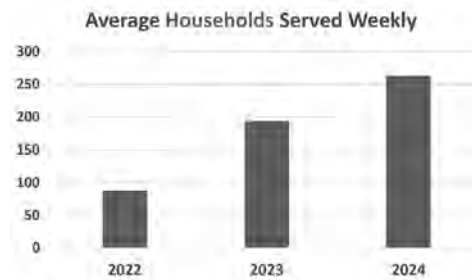
As Minnesota marks the 44th Annual Food Shelf Month this March, Minnehaha Food Shelf is calling on the community to step up and help address food insecurity. Designated by the Minnesota Council of Churches, this month serves as a crucial time to raise awareness and garner support for food shelves across the state, including the vital work being done by Minnehaha Food Shelf.

GROWING NEED FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE

Hunger continues to be a pressing issue in Minnesota, affecting one in 10 residents and one in seven children. In 2023, Minnesota recorded over 7.5 million food shelf visits, reflecting a 30% increase from 2022. Minnehaha Food Shelf reflects the increase in food shelf visits. In 2022, they served an average of 400 individuals each week, but in 2024, they served on average of almost 1,200 individuals per week. Nationally, more than 50 million Americans, including over 13 million children, live in households struggling with consistent access to nutritious food. Seniors are particularly vulnerable, with over five million individuals aged 60 and older facing hunger, according to Second Harvest Heartland and The Minnesota Star Tribune.

This escalating demand has been evident at Minnehaha Food Shelf, where the number of households served each month increased by 65% from January 2023 to January 2024. In December alone, the food shelf provided assistance to 1,020 households.

"It's a remarkable operation and it's been tested in the past few years as demand has grown and our numbers have grown," said board member Janice Carleen Linster. "In July 2021, we had 258 household visits which mean that an average of 12 households per hour went through the facility – pretty standard for many food shelves. Fast forward to July of this year – three years later – we had 1,267 household visits in that same time period. That's an average of one household every minute passing through our doors consistently for five hours!" During that same three year period, average monthly food expenses went from \$2,915 to \$9,950. The



food shelf had to cut back on items such as toilet paper, cooking oil, and laundry detergent, but has kept fresh produce on their shelves.

HOW MINNEHAHA FOOD SHELF OPERATES

Located at 3701 E. 50th St. in Minneapolis, Minnehaha Food Shelf opens its doors every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. During that time, a dedicated team of 30 volunteers and one part-time staff, George Gallagher, distributes essential food items to 250-300 households. Offerings typically include meats, cheeses, milk, eggs, fresh seasonal produce, pasta, and rice, much of which is sourced from local food banks.

"Food expenses grew to \$126,000 in 2024, and despite such high demand on its services, Minnehaha Food Shelf maximized its resources by maintaining low overhead costs, ensuring that 81% of all donations go directly toward food purchases," said Carleen Linster. Minnehaha Food Shelf distributed over 3.7 million pounds of food in 2024.

Minnehaha Food Shelf is a collaborative effort supported by four South Minneapolis churches: Minnehaha United Methodist Church, Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church, Living Table United Church



Rebecca Hamblin (left) and Katy Bennewitz volunteer at the food shelf.

of Christ, and Grace Episcopal Church. However, assistance is available to all community members, regardless of religious affiliation.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

This March, community members have an opportunity to make an even greater impact. Thanks to a generous \$5,000 Challenge Gift, all donations made during Minnesota Food Shelf Month will be doubled. Financial contributions help Minnehaha Food Shelf plan ahead and make bulk purchases of essential food items from local food banks.

For those looking for a way to contribute, consider the 33-cent-per-day challenge – a \$10 monthly donation that can make a significant difference. Any recurring gift increases the organization's ability to provide consistent food assistance to families in need. Donations can be made online at minnehaha.org/foodshelf.

In addition to financial contributions, Minnehaha Food Shelf also welcomes donations of food and personal care products. Items such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, bar soap, and diapers are always in high demand. Donations can be dropped off in the large blue barrel outside Minnehaha United Methodist Church or brought in during food shelf operating hours– 10am-3pm on Tuesdays.

THE POWER OF VOLUNTEERS

The work of Minnehaha Food Shelf would not be possible without the dedi-

cation of volunteers. Each Tuesday, greeters, registrars, food handlers, and packers work together to ensure that guests feel welcomed and receive the assistance they need efficiently. Volunteers also keep up their Facebook page, newsletter, and website.

Longtime volunteer Jetta Wiedemeier Bower shares her experience: "I love to volunteer because it's fun. I love the team that I'm on, and I love that we get to have a positive impact on the lives of hungry people. I can't think of a better use of my time."

If you're interested in making a difference in the community, Minnehaha Food Shelf is always looking for new volunteers. Whether you want to work on-site or help behind the scenes, there are numerous ways to get involved.

EVERY CONTRIBUTION COUNTS

Food insecurity remains a major challenge in Minnesota, but with collective effort, it is possible to make a lasting impact. Whether through financial support, food donations, or volunteering, every contribution helps ensure that families in South Minneapolis have access to the food they need.

During Minnesota Food Shelf Month, let's come together to support the Minnehaha Food Shelf and make sure no one in our community goes hungry. For more information or to volunteer, please email foodshelfvolunteers@minnehaha.org.

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JANE CURRY'S ONE-WOMAN SHOW

On May 18, 2025, the Minnehaha Food Shelf is proud to present Nokomis East resident Jane Curry in her acclaimed, one-woman show, "Samantha 'Rastles' the Woman Question." Curry performs the character, Samantha, who she describes as "a rustic philosopher from the late nineteenth century" based on the humorous books by Marietta Holley. In her day, Holley was favorably compared with Mark Twain.

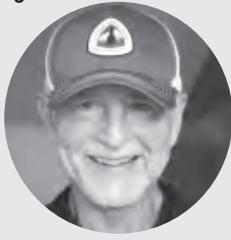
Among other programs she has devised, Curry has performed Samantha since the early 1980s, beginning at the 1981 Minnesota Chautauqua.

The program begins at 2 p.m. at Minnehaha United Methodist Church, located at 3701 East 50th Street in Minneapolis. The show is most suitable for ages 12 and up. Donations are requested for the performance. All proceeds go to the Minnehaha Food Shelf which, on one day a week, serves more people and distributes more food than many local food shelves that operate five days a week.

Curry describes herself as a "recovering academic."

Outdoor enthusiasts sell out theater for Banff Film Fest, next events set for April 24 and May 8

Midwest Mountaineering may have closed after 53 years (309 Cedar Ave.), but owner Rod Johnson (at right) is still hosting outdoor social events like the Banff Film Festival at the Riverview Theater (800 42nd Ave. S).



Johnson of Seward has lived in south Minneapolis his entire life. Midwest Mountaineering has been screening the Banff World Tour for 30 years. "The University of Minnesota decided not to allow non-university groups to continue to use Willey Hall, so we switched to the Riverview Theater," he explained.

Johnson enjoys getting people who love the outdoors together. He keeps going because people love the films, he observed. His favorite film was, "Conflict Tiger," about the man-eating tiger in Siberia.

The Dec. 12 and 13, 2024 screening were sold out. Each night featured a different set of films.

"The Canyon Chorus" on Thursday night included Mikah Meyer of Seward (at right), who said a few words after the film. The film is about a whitewater rafting and inflatable kayak trip a group of LGBTQ+ men took down the Green River through Desolation Canyon.



Meyer is known for his three-year, world-record road trip to all 419 U.S. National Park Service sites that made him the first to experience all parks in a single journey. He's continued that passion in the 2020s with the creation of the Outside Safe Space Program, which

provides allies a simple way of making The Great Outdoors more accessible. Meyer's next feature length film – an expansion of Canyon Chorus – is now in development. Join Meyer on another LGBTQ+ travelers' trip June 7-10, 2025 down Oregon's Rogue River.

At the December film screening, Johnson announced that one of his former managers, Stephen Schreder, will be opening Lake State Mountaineering in the North Loop. An online store is currently operational and he also does pop-ups. The shop focuses on climbing and paddling gear.

The next batches of Banff films will be shown Thursday, April 24, 7 p.m. (group three) and Thursday, May 8, 7 p.m. (group four). Tickets at www.midwestmountaineering.com.



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- Minnehaha United Methodist** • 3701 E. 50th St. • 612-721-6231
- ✦ **Nokomis East Food Shelf**, 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 2-4 pm
- Crosstown Covenant** • 5540 30th Ave. S • 612-724-3601

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CITY BRIEFS

MET COUNCIL IMAGINE 2050 PLAN

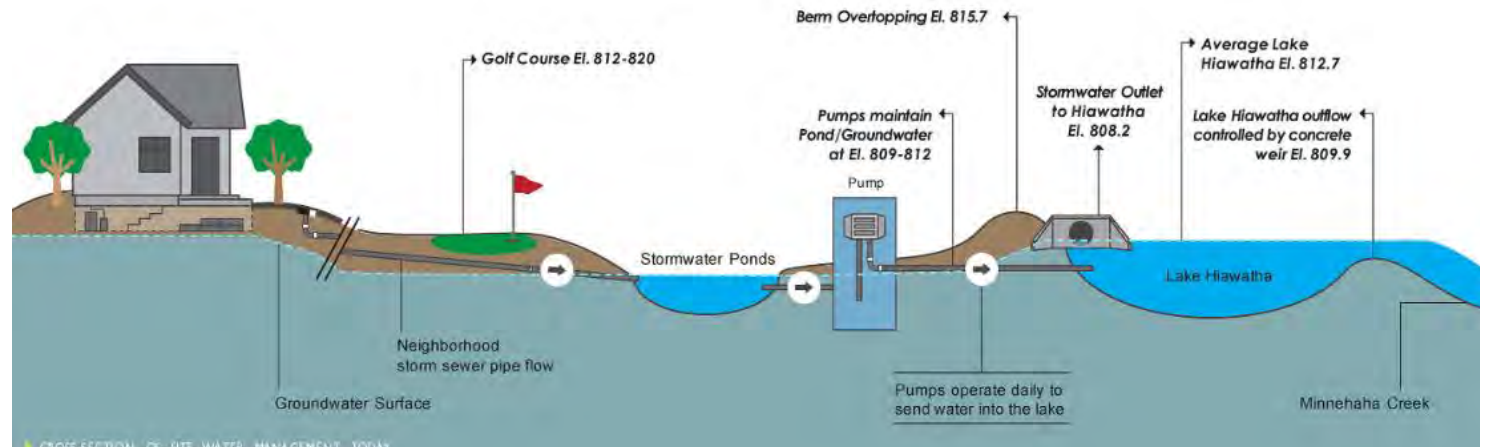
The Metropolitan Council has approved its 'Imagine 2050' plan which sets the long-range policy foundation for housing, land use, regional parks, transportation, and water for the seven-county region. The plan includes the council's local forecasts for population, households and employment and predicts that the area will add 650,000 people by 2050, with Minneapolis reaching 500,000 total residents for the first time since the 1950s. In accordance with state law, this plan serves as a development guide for local governments to create consistent, compatible, and coordinated local comprehensive plans within the regional policy framework.

GEORGE FLOYD SQUARE STREET LAYOUT

Mayor Jacob Frey has vetoed the city council's 9-4 vote to delay a final decision about the street layout at George Floyd Square to further evaluate the pedestrian mall concept adjacent to 3744 Chicago Ave (aka The People's Way). This is consistent with a previous resolution the city council passed in December that would allow for vehicular access to local residents and businesses. The veto can be overridden with nine votes.

NEW WARD 8 CANDIDATE

Josh Bassais has announced his candidacy for Ward 8 City Council member. The seat is currently held by Andrea Jenkins, who has yet to announce a reelection campaign. Soren Stevenson has also formally announced his candidacy for the position.



HIAWATHA GOLF COURSE

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is designing and engineering the new golf course and park they are calling Hiawatha Links to help implement the long-term plan for Hiawatha Golf Course that was completed in 2022. They held an open house on Jan. 16 and completed a survey process in February. Detailed designs are expected to be shared this fall.

NEW POET LAUREATE

Junauda Petrus has been named this year's Minneapolis Poet Laureate. Among her extensive work in the city, she was lead artist with the Heart of the Beast Theatre's May Day Parade from 2015-2017, and City Page's Artist of the Year in 2016. Her 2019 novel, "The Stars and the Blackness Between Them," is about two teenaged girls in living Minneapolis. Petrus also wrote a piece entitled "Sweetness for George" following the police killing of George Floyd, and is a co-founder of the Minneapolis-based Free Black Dirt, a collective of writers and creators who seek to "spark and engage in critical conversations."

HUMAN RIGHTS AGREEMENT

Effective Law Enforcement for All (ELEFA), the evaluator hired to track the city's compliance with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights settlement agreement, issued their first semi-annual report. The report covers work done from March 18 to Sept. 30, 2024, and identifies some changes in policy, training, and the handling of misconduct complaints, as well as plans for equipment, technology, facilities, and data systems. The report is on ELEFA's website. The next review period will cover work completed between Oct. 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025.

COMMUNITY SPACE AT FORMER POLICE STATION

The mayor and city council are moving forward with plans to use the city-owned building at 3000 Minnehaha Ave. for its voter and elections staff, storage and services, as well as a ground-floor space set aside for community use. The city is seeking proposals that are due March 14 for a tenant who will manage and program the community space. They intend to include the selected tenant in the planning, design and build-out of the community space.

SPECIAL SERVICE DISTRICT APPOINTMENTS

The city council has appointed the following new southwest Special Service District (SSD) advisory board members for two-year terms. Any property owner, or their representative, who pays the district's service charges, is eligible to serve on the district's board. Boards advise the city council and staff on desired services, annual budgets, district activities and concerns.

- Bloomington Lake - Julie Ingebretsen and Julian Ocampo
- 48th & Chicago - Harvey McLain and Joyce Tesarek

CITY BOULEVARDS

The city council is considering amending its boulevard ordinance to allow raised beds, shrubs and more to be planted on city boulevards. The ordinance passed the City Council's Climate & Infrastructure Committee on Thursday, Feb. 20 but has been delayed in order to consider if and from who permits should be required.

- Compiled by Cam Gordon

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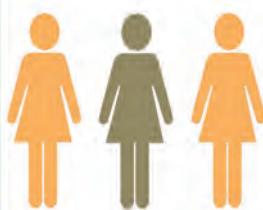
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Developer Louis Zachery and a slim majority of commissioners believe the costs associated with reuse of Nokomis Mills are unreasonable. Local resident Joel Abler, other neighbors and some commissioners, believe adaptive reuse is feasible. Commissioner Thomas noted that available state and federal tax credits for historical preservation, as well as low-income housing credits and Brownfield clean up credits, were not included in the financials. (Photo by Gabe Gordon)

GRAIN ELEVATORS >> from 1

Group, Inc., a construction company that has not shared any detailed plans for future development, other than an interest in developing housing at the site.

The HPC's approval is conditional on a mitigation plan that includes a method to document or recognize the history of the site. It would be reviewed by city staff prior to a wrecking, or demolition, permit being granted.

HPC commissioners Marais Bjornberg (chair), Ethan Boote, Paul Mellblom, Mariel Rodriguez and Toshihiko Karato voted to approve the demolition. Commissioners Namdi Alexander, Travis Herr, Amy Thomas, and Lindsey Wallace voted against it.

The hearing before the city council's business, housing & zoning committee to consider reversing that decision will be held on March 4 at 1:30 p.m. in Room 350, of the Public Service Center at 250 S. 4th St. Anyone is welcome to speak at the hearing. The city council is expected to make the final decision at their March 18 meeting.

So far, the consensus among staff, commissioners, and Albers, although questioned by Zachary, is that the property is an historic resource. It appears to be eligible at both the national and local levels for historic designation under three criteria: 1) The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history; 2) it contains and is associated with distinctive elements of city or neighborhood identity and; 3) it embodies distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction.

According to city law, an historic resource can only be demolished if it is "necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition" or there is no "reasonable

alternative to the demolition considering the economic value or usefulness of the existing building."

The current debate, and disagreement, centers on the later.

Zachery, and a slim majority of commissioners, believe the costs associated with reuse are unreasonable. Abler, other neighbors and some commissioners, believe adaptive reuse is feasible.

During his testimony Zachery stressed the high costs of keeping the vacant and boarded builders secure. "ADM pays \$.5 million on security a year," he said. "If the building does not come down ADM's got a massive problem on their hands." He also noted challenges with rehabilitating any of the properties for housing because of size and condition.

OTHER SILOS REUSED IN CITY

CPED staff, and a slim majority of commissioners agreed, although city staff provided several examples about how similar properties, in part or in whole, have been reused and repurposed.

Their report noted "there are a variety of alternative uses for a vacant milling complex with a grain elevator and grain silos. Reuse options include but are not limited to: a computer server farm, brewery, event space, museum, collaborative studio and art space, climbing walls, hotels, housing, and a cannabis farm."

In the 1980s, for example, the Layhart Grain Elevators were converted into the Calhoun Isles Condominiums at 3141 Dean Ct. In the St. Anthony Falls Historic district mill ruins, grain elevator, and grain silos were saved and converted in the Mill City Museum. In 2016, the HPC reviewed and approved a demolition of historic resource for the Bunge Elevator Complex at 932 12th Ave. SE that included saving and adaptive reusing of the headhouse.

Albers, who testified at the hearing, contends that neither Zachary nor city staff provided "anywhere near the neces-

sary information sufficient for the Heritage Preservation Commission to make an informed, evidence-based decision."

Several of the commissioners who opposed complete demolition, including Commissioner Wallace, were also concerned about a lack of detailed information and questioned the estimates provided by the person applying for the permit. "I'm concerned about there not being a full housing plan in place," said Wallace.

"The blank slate approach feels heavy handed," said Commissioner Alexander. "I am not convinced about the financial burden."

Commissioner Thomas noted that available state and federal tax credits for historical preservation, as well as low-income housing credits and Brownfield clean up credits, were not included in the financials. "I am definitely not for a blanket demolition," said Thomas. "I would like to see parts of the buildings preserved in a creative way."

Despite five commissioners supporting the staff recommendation and approving the demolition based on the lack of a reasonable alternative, all nine commissioners seemed convinced of the value of the site and the area as representing a significant part of Minneapolis' milling history. Even Mellblom, who made the motion to approve complete demolition, express hope at least some of the remaining six mills along the corridor might be preserved even if all of this one was not. Karato also noted the historic significance of the corridor of the grain elevators, mills and silos. He said, "I would hate to see it all gone."

COULD THERE BE ADAPTIVE REUSE?

Albers favors inclusive community-based approaches to "transitioning" older and historic places "where development of a property need not mean tearing down old buildings and constructing new ones. It can mean reimagining and



In the St. Anthony Falls Historic district mill ruins, grain elevator, and grain silos were saved and converted into the Mill City Museum.



In the 1980s, the Layhart Grain Elevators were converted into the Calhoun Isles Condominiums.



The Bunge Elevator Complex at 932 12th Ave. SE included the recent saving and adaptive reusing of the headhouse.

repurposing the buildings."

He wants to see adaptive reuse of as much of the area as possible, and is hopeful that the city council will reverse the commission's decision when they get more information.

If the committee members vote to deny the appeal, they could also add or change the conditions to the demolition permit.

If they grant the appeal, this will stop demolition, establish interim protection for the property for one year, and start a historic designation study to determine if the property meets the criteria for landmark designation. During that time, any exterior alterations to the property would be reviewed by staff and possibly the HPC, as well.

When the study is completed, the staff would present it to the HPC and council committee. The final designation decision would be made by the city council and mayor. If designated, any exterior alterations would need to be reviewed by preservation staff, the HPC and, if appealed, the council. This would include any proposed partial or full demolitions in the future.

TWO PROJECTS ALONG HIAWATHA

1) 35th and Hiawatha, former Nokomis Mills and Elevator, most recently operated by ADM. The Zachary Group is seeking a demolition permit. They have not released detailed plans for what they hope to do on the site, but have said they have an interest in developing housing. (Subject of this article)

2) "Checkerboard" building at 38th and Hiawatha. Plans for another mill and elevators in the corridor at 3716 Cheatham are being discussed, but a demolition permit had not been applied for at this time. The current plan would redevelop the site into a pair of apartment buildings, Cheatham Apartments, and one would offer deeply affordable units, and preserve the checkerboard tower.



A historical photo of Nokomis Mills.

The buildings being discussed for a demolition permit are at 35th St. between Hiawatha and Cheatham Ave. They are not currently in use, and security guards are a regular presence at the site. A hearing on the demolition permit is planned for March 4, 1:30 p.m. before the city business, housing and zoning committee.