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Uproar over planning commission vote on TCGIS building project

City attorney rules vote invalid after complaints from SHSA; but commission says it will not revisit the issue

By TESSA M. CHRISTENSEN

A questionable vote by St. Paul's Planning Commission Chair Elizabeth Reveal on Jan. 25, has some Warrendale neighbors in an uproar.

When the planning commission voted on the variances and site plan requested by the Twin Cities German Immersion School (TCGIS) for the tear-down of the former St. Andrew's Church and construction of a new 25,000-square-foot addition, the votes were both ties at 6-6.

Typically a chair does not cast a vote unless it will break a tie. In this case, Reveal cast a vote that created the tie. According to Robert's Rules of Order, a motion fails on a tie vote, pointed out members of Save Historic St. Andrew's (SHSA) in a letter to St. Paul Director of Planning Luis M. Pereira expressing the group's frustration.

"If this meeting had been conducted properly—and in accordance with both past and best practices—the recommendation from the Zoning Committee to deny the variances would have been carried forward on a 6-5 vote, and we would have no reason to appeal," wrote SHSA officers.

According to an email written by Pereira on Jan. 29, "The city attorney's office has advised staff that the variances and site plan were not properly approved because the commission reached a

tie vote." Because of this, the planning commission was expected to re-open the vote on the same items at its meeting on Feb. 8.

Instead, they voted to not review the issue. The full impact of a non-decision was unclear as of press time. However, an appeal by either SHSA or TCGIS is expected.

Under state law, the school's variance requests will be considered approved if the city does not act otherwise within the statute's 60-day timeline, explained Dist. 10 Community Council Executive Director Michael Kuchta. "In the case of the variances, that timeline runs out Mar. 26. Among things that are not clear is the status of school's site plan (deadline Mar. 6), which version of variances would take effect, and whether the planning commission's denial, approval, or non-decision on the school's variance requests can—at this point—be appealed to the city council."

"We urge the city council to correct this action by placing a moratorium on any expansion request by TCGIS and to deny the variances requested," stated SHSA members.

TCGIS did not comment on this latest action.

Approval not valid

Early reports following the Jan. 25 meeting stated that the planning commission approved the

site plan on a 7-5 vote. However, as Kuchta explained, the vote is not valid.

"Before the final vote on the site plan, commissioners voted twice on the three zoning variances the school would need to move forward," explained Kuchta. "First, the planning commission rejected the recommendation of its zoning committee to deny the variances. That vote was 6-6. (Under normal procedure, a tie vote means a motion fails, because it does not have a majority.) Immediately after that, commissioners voted 6-6 on a motion to approve the variances. The tie vote meant that motion also failed."

"The commission charged forward, however, and rejected its zoning committee's recommendation to reject the site plan; this vote was 5-7. Finally, the full commission voted 7-5 to approve the site plan. The site plan includes dozens of conditions the school must meet to receive building permits. Among these conditions: the three zoning variances—a 3.1-foot variance on height, a 1 percent variance on lot coverage, and a 34-space parking variance. The problem? The site plan relies on variances that have been rejected."

Reveal's experience

Reveal also serves on the zoning committee, although she was not

present at the Jan. 17 meeting during which the committee recommended denial of the variances and site plan on a 5-1 vote.

Reveal, a resident of Ward 2, was appointed to the Planning Commission in 2011. Her term expires in 2020. She served as an ex-officio member of a planning commission in Philadelphia and worked closely with planning departments and commissions in Seattle and Washington, D.C. before returning to St. Paul in 2009.

There are currently 17 members on the planning commission, which has space for 21 members. Only 12 members were present at the Jan. 25 meeting.

Zoning committee's opinion

The recent planning commission votes come after a series of meeting over several months as the teardown and new construction proposal by TCGIS moves through the approval process.

On Dec. 18, 2018, the District 10 Board voted to approve the three variance requests and a site approval plan while expressing that this was not a vote against or for historic designation of the former church. The District 10 votes are considered advisory to the city council.

This was followed by the Jan. 17 zoning committee meeting that recommended the planning commission deny the variances and site

plan. The five commissioners who voted to deny expressed concerns about TCGIS being a "commuter school," heavy traffic during pick-up and drop-off times, lack of off-street parking, and a school that is too much for the site. In his opinion, Commissioner Kris Fredson said that he thought city staff gave too much weight to the land use policy versus the historic preservation policy.

In support of the school, Commissioner Cedrick Baker pointed out TCGIS owns the building.

The city council has final say on the TCGIS building project, as well as the historic designation of St. Andrew's Church. It is planning a public hearing on Mar. 20.

Traffic and congestion relief

As reported in the Jan. 17 zoning committee minutes, TCGIS has agreed to use crossing guards at Como and Oxford, and direct staff and parents to avoid parking on Como to facilitate better traffic flow. A crosswalk will also be added to designate a single point of crossing at Como and Oxford, and the signal light at Lexington and Como will be tweaked.

TCGIS is also exploring offering discounted Metro Transit passes, encouraging the use of the Zipcar car-sharing app, increasing school bus use, and investigating staggered release times.

Chain of serendipity leads to publication of co-author's first book

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Writers sometimes have a flash of inspiration—but last summer, Como Park resident Jennifer Victor-Larsen experienced both a flash and a boom.

"We had such stormy weather in June," Victor-Larsen said. "Every time it stormed, I was reminded of the story my grandmother used to tell us when we were children. Though the story changed slightly with every telling, the message was always the same: Baby Thunder was lost and was looking for Mama and Papa Thunder. The crashing sounds of summer storms became less frightening to my sister and me when we were little because our grandmother said it was just the family calling out to each other until Baby Thunder was found."

Victor-Larsen continued, "In the middle of one particularly bad thunderstorm, I sat up in bed

and texted my sister, Katy Korby. It was early last summer when family separations at the US/Mexico border were on the rise. Most people that Katy and I knew were appalled by this practice; we believe that, for kids, being lost for even a little while is traumatic. The message I sent my sister was this, 'Should we finally write down the Baby Thunder story, and send the profits to an organization that helps children and families separated at the border?' Also awake in the middle of the night, she texted back one word, 'Yes!'"

The storm was the first in a series of fortunate events that lead to the publication of Victor-Larsen and Korby's illustrated children's book. Victor-Larsen recalled, "Katy and I decided to write down our own remembered versions of our grandmother's

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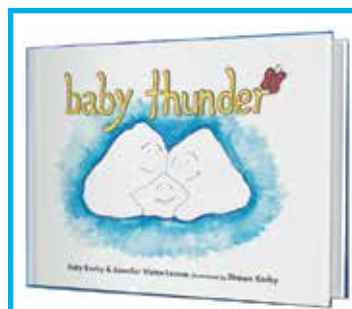
Como Park residents, and sisters, Jennifer Victor-Larsen (left) and Katy Korby (right) participated in a panel discussion at the St. Anthony Park Library. The event was called "Stories: the Door to Compassion, and also featured local author William Kent Krueger. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

Como authors' first book

Continued from page 1

story. We were sitting at my kitchen table and my brother-in-law, Shawn Korby, was there too. He and his wife own a real estate company, and he is also a talented artist. While Katy and I were talking and writing, Shawn started to sketch. The ideas he came up with became the watercolor illustrations for our book."

The sisters were able to put their grandmother's story down on paper, to take what she'd created for them—and use it to help other kids. They found an organization in Florence, AZ, called The Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project that works with families in detention. Their grandmother's first name, coincidentally,



Baby Thunder gets lost and is scared, so Mama and Papa Thunder call out until Baby Thunder is found. Their book is a story about comfort and hope—that no matter how lost you are, you are loved and can always be found. All profits from sales go to support organizations helping children who are lost and alone. (Photo provided)

had been Florence. The Florence Project is the only organization in Arizona that provides free legal services to detained children caught in deportation proceedings.

"Baby Thunder" is a book for and about families, and its creation was a family affair as well. Victor-Larsen's mother-in-law, Ava Larsen, a retired children's librarian,

was an invaluable part of the work team. Victor-Larsen said, "She brought us books she thought were effective for the early readers our book is geared toward."

On a sister's weekend in Grand Marais, Victor-Larsen and Korby met notable Minnesota children's book author Betsy Bowen at a craft fair. When they

described their book, Bowen suggested they contact her designer to pull all the pieces together. Victor-Larsen said, "That's just the way this project has gone for us. Doors kept opening, and people kept helping."

Victor-Larsen and Korby are doing a number of "Baby Thunder" events in the metro area. They

are partnering with friend, neighbor, and *New York Times* best-selling novelist William Kent Krueger for library events. They're scheduled to be at the Anoka Public Library on Feb. 16, and the Hamline Midway Library in the spring. Their joint presentations are underscored by deep mutual concern over the current immigration crisis.

The sisters are also available for elementary school presentations and readings of "Baby Thunder" free of charge. Email Jennifer@herosearch.org for more information or to schedule. Victor-Larsen and Korby believe that "Baby Thunder" is both timely and timeless. It is about being lost and about being found. It is about the basic need for children to feel safe and loved.

"Baby Thunder" can be purchased locally at Micawber's books (2230 Carter Ave. in Milton Square).

Letters to the Editor

Beware the Law of Unintended Consequences

To the Editor,

Margie O'Loughlin's piece in last month's *Midway Como Monitor* regarding Mortenson Construction's involvement in building the new soccer stadium seemed more like a promo piece than a serious news article.

While some individuals may be intrigued by the nuts and bolts of stadium construction—such as how many cubic yards were moved off the site daily when digging "a really big hole"—I suspect most residents would prefer getting answers about what, if any, redevelopment is going to happen in the Midway beyond the additional interim parking lots that were approved last August.

Mortenson Construction supervisor Greg Huber might believe "that businesses of all sizes in this neighborhood will benefit from the transformation of the Super Block," but the new construction certainly did not benefit longtime tenants like Midway Bowl, Rainbow Foods, Perkins, Pearle Vision, and Walgreen's, which saw their locations bulldozed and their employees scattered. (Not to mention that Delaware North Hospitality, the stadium's concessionaire, plans to fill many food service jobs by getting nonprofits to provide volunteer workers—the same formula it follows at Target Field.)

Let's remember that when the city council dedicated \$22.4 million in taxpayer subsidies for the stadium project, it was based on all sorts of fabulous projections of what was going to occur in the adjacent area, including 1 million square feet of new office space, 420,000 square feet of retail and commercial space, 620 residential units, 400 hotel rooms, and 4,720 parking spaces.

While no one expects such development to happen overnight, the notion that the area is going to see anything remotely close to those numbers is simply not credible. What developer is going to build a 400-room hotel on the site when the former Sheraton Midway was not sustainable? And why would anyone add new office space there when many downtown office buildings are now being converted to apartments and condos?

Mr. Huber cited the 650,000 worker hours created by the stadium as evidence of "a lot of meaningful employment to a lot of people," but if you do the math, over 20 months those hours translate into approximately 208 full-time positions. Any good-paying job is certainly important to the individual who has it, but in this case, the city's \$22.4 million in public funding translates into a staggering \$108,000 per job created!

Stadium supporters and city officials will scoff at those numbers, claiming that the public infrastructure costs for the stadium would "have happened no matter what got built there." Except that all the public infrastructure is stadium specific, from the VIP parking lot, promenade, and sidewalks to the relocation of utilities, new sewer and lighting systems, and underground garage.

Had the city followed its original master plan developed five years ago, those infrastructure costs would have been for street and block improvements that might have supported new housing or retail development that conceivably would have yielded additional tax revenue. Instead, the area has been saddled with a stadium that will be exempt from property taxes for the next fifty years—an amount estimated as high as \$3-5 million annually in analyses conducted by both MPR and the *Pioneer Press*.

Apart from development concerns, the other important question begging for an answer

is how the city plans to address the traffic, parking, and noise issues that will be generated by the thousands of metro-area soccer fans who drive to games and expect the neighboring streets to serve as their parking lot. Unfortunately, with the home opener only two months away, all we know for sure is that we will have a stadium surrounded by asphalt and no parking or traffic plan in place aside from the team urging its fans to consider taking light rail or carpooling to games. Great.

Although some people may think that no amount of money spent was too much to rid the area of the eyesore created on the former bus barn site, what I see is the bungling of an enormous development opportunity. Imagine the genuine community benefits that could have been realized if our elected officials (especially our former mayor) and Metro Transit had dedicated the same zeal to marketing the site for something other than a soccer stadium that will sit vacant about 90 percent of the time?

And when the luster from the new stadium wears off, and all the promised new development does not materialize, then what? Will principal Minnesota United owner Bill McGuire and his partners, who now control most of the former Midway Center site, do nothing? Or will we soon hear talk about the need to "create excitement" and "build on the momentum" of professional soccer? (After all, the city has already floated a proposal

to allow more bars to locate on University Ave., as if more places to drink is a panacea for St. Paul having no long-term strategy for creating livable wage jobs.)

One possible outcome: the team pushes to add another 50 or so events to Allianz Field so that we can really make the Midway a "happening place." McGuire assures us this won't happen, as maintaining the soccer pitch in "top condition" is non-negotiable, but when traffic jams start to mount later this year and murmurs of con-

necting Ayd Mill Rd. directly to westbound 94 via St. Anthony Ave. begin anew, anything might be possible.

After all, with Sears now closed on Rice St., the city will soon have another major eyesore in search of public largesse.

Tom Goldstein

(Goldstein is a graduate of the William Mitchell College of Law—now Mitchell Hamline—and a former member of the St. Paul School Board. He has lived in the Midway the past fifteen years.)

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German Immersion School expansion absent collaboration with community

An expansion of choice would burden the surrounding neighborhood with consequences

By Kevin Anderson, Teri Alberico, Anna Mosser, Bonnie Youngquist
—for Friends of Warrendale, Save Historic St. Andrew's LLC.

"Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody."
—Jane Jacobs, from her classic *"The Death and Life of the Great American Cities"*

The Warrendale neighborhood, nestled amongst the leafy trees on the southern edge of Como Park, represents many things to many people. For hundreds of us, it is home; it is family. It is an investment in property, a place to raise kids, and garner relationships with friends and neighbors. It has been a place for schoolchildren to learn and forge the bonds that can last a lifetime. It is all of these things and more because the neighborhood has successfully woven its many diverse uses into a cohesive whole.

In 2013, we welcomed new neighbors. The Twin Cities German Immersion School, a public charter school, moved into the former church and school building. The families have brought great energy, but unlike previous schools, nearly three-quarters of the current 585 students travel by car.

Unprecedented numbers of automobiles streamed into this residential neighborhood. Neighborhood parents struggled with the safety of their children at our bus stops. On formerly calm corners, cars repeatedly violated school bus flashing lights and stop arms. In the

five years since the school moved in, it has more than doubled its enrollment, even as it reduced its on-site parking. Nearby streets filled with parked cars, and twice a day, clogged with lines of cars that routinely extend several blocks in either direction.

But the tipping point came in the spring of 2018 when the school announced not only a further expansion but their intention to tear down the crown jewel that for nearly a century kept watch at the heart of the neighborhood. The beloved and extraordinary former Church of Saint Andrew's, which had been social and physical center of the neighborhood—would be leveled.

More students would mean more cars, more congestion, less safety, and less livability. Moreover, we would lose our neighborhood's most visible historic structure and neighborhood landmark.

A group of neighbors quickly assembled and started a petition to delay the demolition. Father John Forliti, a widely-respected retired Catholic leader who has lived most of his life on the same street corner as Saint Andrew's, invited German School board members and neighbors to his house for a series of dinners. Relationships were forged at these meetings. Everyone, school parents and neighbors alike, pressed board members to work collaboratively to explore alternative solutions that could include preservation of the unusual and ornate former Church of Saint Andrew's.

In response, the school's current board Chair said flatly, no.

The goodwill between school and community quickly unraveled.

In the following months, we've tried twice more to explore collaborative solutions. We identified skilled architects willing to contribute their expertise in architectural design and collaboration. When the district council asked the school to explore collaborative solutions last August, the school board rejected them. When we asked again last fall, we were rejected a third time.

The expansion that the German Immersion School proposes would make the school much denser than any other school in the city's residential zoning districts. Their student population would be over four times denser than the median school in any of the city's R1 to R4 zoning districts. The school looks to receive city zoning variances, city site plan approval, and city financing for a project that tears down a historic building and creates untenable transportation gridlock and safety concerns. These public asks are huge.

Unlike traditional public schools, which adjust to demographic and market swings, charter schools have control over their enrollment. The schools themselves set their enrollment cap each year. This expansion is the board's choice. In actuality, it is an effort to push the true costs of operating the school onto the neighborhood. Instead of paying to bus most of their students, as other schools do, they expect the neighborhood to carry this burden in the form of reduced safety and livability. Instead of restoring the former church, as Cesar Chavez Academy Charter School did in Saint Paul, they want to build a facility that suits their immediate needs, pushing the loss of an indelible landmark on as a cost to their neighbors.

Rather than agree to neighborly collaboration, this school has mounted an unprecedented, cynical and antagonistic offensive on those neighbors who disagree. This is a sophisticated campaign designed to turn political support in their favor, identifying and cultivating allies, turning neighbor against neighbor.

At the center of the school's strategy is TenSquare, a national for-profit consulting firm that currently operates in seven states and the District of Columbia. One of the city's most connected, lucrative, and controversial charter consulting companies, Ten Square prefers to operate out of public sight, but their local Director of Real Estate Development quietly attends public meetings and coordinates

public strategy. They communicate with paid media strategists, legal consultants, and architects. Their fees are paid by the school with taxpayer dollars.

Throughout all this, we neighbors aren't willing to give up on the hope of finding a future together. We hold fast to our core belief in collaboration.

In Saint Paul, there are examples of former churches reused for performance spaces, homes, and yes, a charter school facility. Tom Fischer, the former Dean of the School of Architecture and Design at the University of Minnesota, met with the school and community leaders last summer. He walked away believing win-win solutions were eminently possible, even within a tight budget. In the AIA Guide to Twin Cities Architecture, retired *Pioneer Press* writer Larry Millet called out the building as one of the best local examples of period revival. While rain gardens and pollinator gardens have their benefits,

the environmental rewards of adaptive reuse are far more significant. The greenest building is the one already standing. This building deserves to be valued, not leveled.

Renowned writer and urban observer Jane Jacobs believed that a diversity of uses is what gives life to urban neighborhoods: schools, homes, churches, offices, and parks. She encouraged density for its critical role in the health of urban neighborhoods. But along with those beliefs, Jacobs realized, as we all should today, that a neighborhood's core historic fabric and identity matters. Perhaps above all, she recognized that the delicate balance of uses and density that can make urban neighborhoods great can only come about when the people of that neighborhood have a central role in shaping its future. Together.

Learn more at <https://savehistoricsaintandrews.org>. Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/historicstandrews1.

Talking trash

With open forums, complaints, and petition drives, new trash collection system gets bombarded by criticisms

By JANE MCCLURE

St. Paul's organized residential garbage collection system has brought lower costs for some customers. But others are spending more for the same or less service. Owners of duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes are coping with an abundance of trash carts, and in some cases, not enough space to store them. Ward Four Council Member Mitra Jalali Nelson is getting an earful as she launched a series of meetings to discuss the city's trash program.

Area residents can weigh in at 6pm Feb. 21 at Hamline-Midway Branch Library, 1558 W. Minnehaha Ave.

Nelson said that while she's not sure what changes can be made, she's concerned about poor customer service and the "ridiculous" billing issues. "This is not fun to hear about," she said. "I think this is a situation that has to change."

Her intent in talking trash is to collect feedback and see what can be done to change the organized collection program that began in October 2018. City officials and the St. Paul garbage haulers' consor-

tium are to meet soon to discuss how the program has gone. The ordinance establishing the program calls for a meeting every February.

More than two dozen people filled a Merriam Park Branch Library meeting room Jan. 17 to discuss the city's organized residential trash collection system. The meeting was the first in a series of meetings Nelson is hosting. A second meeting was held Feb. 7 in St. Anthony Park after the deadline for this issue of the *Monitor*.

"We're here tonight because the system isn't working for everyone," Nelson said at the January meeting. While making it clear that any changes would have to be made through negotiation, Nelson intends to take constituent stories and push the city's Department of Public Works to make improvements to trash collection service.

Since she took office last year, organized collection tops the list of topics people call the Ward Four office about, said Nelson.

Organized collection was approved before Nelson took office last year. "I did not vote on this issue, but I did inherit it," she said.

The city's residential haulers have a spokesperson through one of the national companies, who didn't respond to a request for comment.

The current contract is to be

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And check us out on the web at: www.MonitorSaintPaul.com

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• The Como Park Booster Club is hosting its 5th annual fundraiser at the Urban Growler on Sun., Mar. 3, from 4-8pm. Como parents, alumni and community members are all invited to be part of the fun at a great event with fantastic food, music, and entertainment.

All proceeds from the event benefit Como students. The Booster Club is committed to enhancing educational opportunities and all extracurricular programs, clubs, activities, and athletics that need financial support. Information about ordering tickets is available in the Booster Club advertisement in this edition of the Monitor. Any questions can also be emailed to como-parkboosterclub@gmail.com.

• The Como Park Asian American Club (CPAAC) sponsored the CPAAC Multicultural Fair on Jan. 11 in the Como Auditorium. Members of the community joined Como Park student performers to provide a variety of performances for a packed house. The celebration concluded in the cafeteria with a delicious spread of ethnically diverse and delicious food offerings.

• After final exams for the first semester concluded on Jan. 24, a talent show featuring Como students was held in the auditorium. A dozen musical and dancing acts were selected to perform after open auditions were held the previous week. It was a fun stress reliever for the supportive audience and a showcase of creative and talented Como students. The talent show was sponsored by Como's Link Crew (student leadership team) and Tri-M (music honor society).

• Faith Jackson, a St. Paul attorney and creator of the scholarship and recognition program called "Minnesota Black Girl Magic Showcase" visited Como to speak with students who are interested in STEM careers (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math). Two representatives from the STEM community and the National Society of Black Engineers also shared their stories with students and gave suggestions for suc-

News from Como Park High School

Compiled by ERIC ERICKSON, Social Studies Teacher

Booster Club fundraiser, community events, field experiences



The Como Park Asian American Club (CPAAC) hosted the CPAAC Multicultural Fair in the Como Auditorium. (Photo by Eric Erickson)

cessful preparation in STEM careers.

• As part of their studies about art and social movements, students in Mademoiselle Teefy's level 2 French classes took a field trip to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the Walker Art Center. Museum docents provided tours of French art and provided information about Francophone artists. Students engaged in discussion about the pieces and made connections to their classwork preparation.

• Fifteen Como students participated in the Youth in Government Model Assembly program at the state capitol from Jan. 10-13. The program gives high school students from across the state opportunities to serve as legislators, judges, attorneys, lobbyists, government officials, and media representatives in the sessions that are conducted by the youth themselves. Como seniors Asha Hassan and Pa Nhia Vang have enjoyed the assembly so much that they've participated in multiple years. It was an impactful and inspiring experience for all of Como's participants, organized by Ms. Liz Paone, who teaches in the social studies department and the Academy of Finance.

• Cadets from the Marine Corps JROTC spent a couple of cold January days at the Minnesota National Guard training facility at Camp Ripley near Little Falls. The bitterly cold temperatures did not deter the determined cadets from adventure. Activities included winter skills training, ice fishing, nighttime cross-country skiing,

and fat tire biking.

• The public is invited to attend and participate in the Como Community Input Meeting on Mon., Feb. 25 at 6pm at Como Park High School. The purpose of the meeting is to gather information and feedback about potential enhancements to Como Park's athletic facilities.

A brief overview of current resources will be provided by both Como staff and district leadership. The presentation will be followed by a discussion related to what neighbors and stakeholders envision and desire for athletic facilities at Como Park High School to serve the best interests of the community.

• The National Honor Society (NHS) at Como is continuing its book drive to support students at Como Park Elementary School. Co-

mo's NHS is coordinating with the Children's Book Express, which is an organization that collects picture and chapter books and donates them to young, beginning readers.

Students have brought in over 100 books thus far, but the stated goal is 500. The community is invited to support as well, so if you have any old children's books that you are no longer using, please consider donating them to the cause! There is a big box in the main office where donations are being collected. NHS students will organize all deposits, and deliver the books to the elementary students at the end of April.

• The Como Park Cougars' wrestling team clinched the St. Paul City Conference championship on Feb. 4 at Como with a 56-20 victory over Humboldt. The Cougars' regular season conference record of 5-1 secured the title for the first time since 2004. Senior Alonte Johnson placed second in the individual tournament for his weight class. Three Cougars became city champions by winning their respective weight categories including senior Mu Ku Shi, sophomore Stone Frasl and sophomore Sully Lucy.

Como Community Council Corner

By MICHAEL KUCHTA, Executive Director

Como Ave. trail

An off-street trail on the north side of Como Ave. is the common link among options the city in examining to extend the Grand Round between Hamline and Raymond avenues. More than 125 people dropped into the Como Park Streetcar Station Jan. 15 to get information and ask questions about the bicycle and pedestrian trail the city plans to build in 2020/21. Further discussion took place Feb. 12 at District 10's Land Use meeting.

Go to the project website (www.stpaul.gov/comotrail) to get details on the various options for traffic, parking, and trails under consideration for each segment.

Athletics, tobacco tops agenda

The monthly meeting of the Como Community Council board is Tues., Feb. 19, 7pm at the Como Park Streetcar Station, 1224 Lexington Pkwy. N. The meeting is expected to include:

- A presentation by Como High School officials about the potential of adding more bleachers, a speaker system, a concession

stand, or a press box to the school's athletic field.

- A recommendation from District 10's Neighborhood Relations committee on whether to take a position on raising the purchase age for tobacco products to 21 in St. Paul.

The Como Park Streetcar Station is at the northeast corner of Lexington and Horton. Renters, homeowners, and other community members are always welcome to attend and participate. (If the technology works, the meeting also will be live-streamed on the council's Facebook page: District 10 Como Community Council.)

Voting age drops to 16

The Como Community Council board voted in January to lower the age of its "membership" from 18 to 16. That means 16- and 17-year-olds now can vote in district council elections and committee meetings, and run for the District 10 board.

Upcoming meetings

- Environment Committee: Wed., Feb. 27.

- Neighborhood Relations Committee: Tues., Mar. 5.

- Land Use Committee: Wed., Mar. 6.

All meetings typically begin at 7pm at the Como Park Streetcar Station, which is at the northeast corner of Lexington and Horton. Renters, homeowners, and other community members are always welcome to attend and participate. Whenever possible, agendas are posted in advance in the "Board News" section of District 10's website.

Office at Streetcar Station open once a month

The Como Park Streetcar Station is now open on the first Sunday of each month. It is a great chance to pick up organics recycling bags or kitchen starter kits, or chat with a District 10 board member who is staffing the day. Hours are noon to 4pm. Upcoming dates are Mar. 3 and Apr. 7. The Historic Streetcar Station is at the northeast corner of Lexington and Horton.



French students participated in a field trip to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and Walker Art Center. (Photo by Patricia Teefy)

News from Galtier Community School

By SAMANTHA HENNINGSON

The weather has been unforgetting, but it's been warm and busy inside Galtier Community School this winter.

Feb. 11 was National African American Parent Involvement Day. All parents were invited to spend part of or the entire day with their students at Galtier, including an all-school assembly. Lunch was provided from local restaurants.

Midway resident Anne Reid is a teaching artist for COM-PAS. She will be at Galtier for a couple of weeks in February. K-3 students will be doing

seed art including self-portraits, landscapes, or portraits of their heroes. Fourth and fifth graders will be making night lights where they build all the circuitry from scratch and then design and create custom shades for the night lights.

Winter field trips will include pre-K and Kindergarten students heading to the Children's Theater for either "Mr. Popper's Penguins" or "The Biggest Little House In The Forest." Third graders will head to the Minnesota Zoo for a day of ani-

mal adventures.

On Feb. 28, Galtier will host its Winter Wonderland event where families and students will enjoy food, activities, and being together in community.

For neighbors interested in supporting Galtier Community school, they can check out donorchoose.org and search "Galtier" for projects seeking funding. Alternately, Galtier has a wish list of books for its library that anyone can purchase via Amazon and donate directly to the school: <http://a.co/0lYsKhX>.

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We win an award!

Hamline Midway Coalition is proud to be awarded the Watershed Project Award from Capitol Region Watershed District!

This award recognizes an organization, group or individual for a project that demonstrates an innovative and effective solution for protecting, managing and improving water resources of the CRWD. Hamline Midway Coalition received this award in recognition of Pierce Butler Meadows, a project that was a culmination of more than a decade of community interest for ecological and aesthetic improvements at the intersection of Pierce Butler Rte. and Snelling Ave.

The Hamline Midway Coalition's Environment Committee developed partnerships with numerous community, educational and environmental groups who came together for a week-long series of planting events.

The project concluded with a Plantón Móvil event for people to "lend mobility" to plants, and for plants to "borrow their slowness" to people lead by artist Lucia Monge.

Special thanks to:

- Steve Mitrione. Mitrione was the idea-generator for the meadows. Without his leadership, passion for the project, and extensive work (for years!) the Pierce Butler Meadows may never have been a reality.
- Valentine Cadieux is a Professor and Director of Sustainability and Environmental Studies at Hamline University and another leader for the Meadows project. She has worked with students from

Hamline Midway Coalition

By MELISSA CORTES, Community Organizer

Hamline on the site and is an ongoing force to further this project, lending her expertise to beautify and develop signage and conduct ongoing studies at the Meadows.

- Hamline University Students also deserve recognition for their time and energy, particularly Hannah Hoeger and Maren Grunnet. Specifically, they led the Plantón Móvil procession with Peruvian artist Lucia Monge. A collaboration between Hamline University, Hamline Midway Environment Group, and the Capital Region Watershed District led to a walking forest becoming a walking prairie through a several week art-based process of building relationships with the native plants and land. With the help of neighbors and teachers and students from Hamline University, Hamline Elementary, and Hmong College Preparatory Academy, more than 1500 native plants were planted in the Basin. This project grew partnerships we will continue to connect young people to the site.

- Hamline Midway Environment Committee has played a large part in this project, bringing together neighbors to do the hard planting work and exploring the relationship between prairie land and what it means to build a relationship with the land that is designated as "native planting."
- Hamline Midway Coalition's

community organizer, Melissa Cortes, is continuing her work into the new year and leading efforts to maintain, beautify, and promote the Pierce Butler Meadows to the Midway community, and beyond.

As an action-oriented, neighborhood community organization, we look forward to hosting community engagement events at the Pierce Butler Meadows, which will focus on educational seminars (such as habitat improvement and plant identification) and will be woven into discussions with multi-generational, diverse communities to connect new audiences to the developing site. This may include seminars on bird migration, how to build a habitat in native prairies, and involve students from the Monarch Lab at Hamline University.

Residents will be offered the opportunity to engage in ongoing maintenance at the site, including litter removal, mulching, watering, and fostering plant health. As the site develops, HMC will draw on the energies of residents to bring visibility, awareness, and ongoing learning opportunities to the Pierce Butler Meadows so residents are invested in, and aware of, this incredible resource in our neighborhood.

Neighborhood Honor Roll

Each year, District Councils

gather to celebrate the outstanding volunteers that go above and beyond to make our city a better place to live, work, learn, and play. This year, the Hamline Midway Coalition was honored to recognize a group of outstanding individuals.

The first honoree was Holy Trinity Church's Racial & Ethnic Reconciliation Team. This team of dedicated individuals launched "Community Conversations for Racial and Ethnic Reconciliation and Understanding" in December of 2017 to initiative four honest conversations between residents on often difficult topics. This team invited engaging speakers and facilitators to help the audience navigate the conversations. More the 400 attendees participated in the conversations demonstrating the team's work and dedications.

Also, honored were Karen McCauley and Jessica Kopp. They formed a coalition to overcome challenges that help prevent the closing of Hamline Elementary in 2014. They created a working group between the school and neighborhood and build a family resource room open to all families and organizations in the Hamline Midway Neighborhood. They've also facilitated discussions to create the first Lab School in Minnesota. You'll see them both at committee meetings and gatherings as they work toward building a vital bridge between

school, parent and the residents of Hamline Midway.

Lastly but certainly not least, Hamline Midway coalition honored Anne Hendrickson. Hendrickson is an entrepreneur and owner of Work it, a co-working space dedicated to movement, innovations, and activity. She formed a group in the Midway called the Midway Economic Community composed of small businesses, neighbors, and stakeholders. This group meets monthly to create, connect, and tackle challenges of owning independent businesses in St. Paul, and offers a place where all are welcome. Her impact in the neighborhood is vital and brings renewed energy to the Hamline Midway.

These honorees were recognized at an award ceremony held at the University of St. Thomas, Woulfe Hall in January.

New board members

Hamline Midway Coalition is excited to share with our community our elected Board Members for 2019! We had a fantastic turnout for voting and ten candidates in total! Three board members were re-elected, and we welcomed three new members to the Board. Thank you to everyone who ran for a seat, voted, and lent their voice. Bios can be found on our website at www.hamlinemidway.org/about/board:

- Mike Reynolds: Subdistrict B1
- Greg Anderson: Subdistrict A
- Erin Pavlica: Subdistrict C1
- Thom Foss: Subdistrict A2
- Dan Buck: Subdistrict B2
- Tachianna Charpenter: Appointed at-large

The Hamline Midway Library, 1558 W. Minnehaha Ave., is your neighborhood gathering spot where you can enjoy great programs and Internet access, and access portable WiFi hotspots, books, CDs, DVDs and more. It is all free with your library card. Here's what's coming up.

For families and kids

Preschool Storytimes in English happen Fridays from 10:30-11am, with upcoming story times on Feb. 15 and 22 and Mar. 1, 8, and 15. Storytimes feature stories, songs, puppets, and more. They're a great way for caregivers to bond with children and build social skills, listening comprehension, and letter and number recognition while creating a solid foundation for lifelong learning. Children of all activity levels are welcome!

Evening Storytimes happen Tuesdays from 6-6:30pm on Feb. 19 and 26.

Calling all builders and mak-

News from Hamline Midway Library

By CARRIE POMEROY

ers! Science Saturday is happening on Sat., Mar. 9 from 1:30-3pm. School-aged children and their families can explore fun science and art projects. This month the theme is Cardboard Construction, with opportunities to construct a house, a fort, or something else!

Fireside Reading Series

On Wed., Feb. 20 from 7-8:15pm, the Friends of the St. Paul Public Library's popular and long-running Fireside Reading Series will feature Martin Case reading from his book "The Relentless Business of Treaties: How Indigenous Land Became U.S. Property," an exploration of how land cession treaties supplanted

indigenous kinship relationships to the land with a property relationship to land.

On Wed., Feb. 27, also 7-8:15pm, Karen Babine reads from "All the Wild Hungers: A Season of Cooking and Cancer." In this collection of essays, Babine writes of cooking and caring for her mother after her mother is diagnosed with cancer and ponders the connections between food, family, and illness.

Wang Ping will read on Wed., Mar. 6 from 7-8:15pm from "Life of Miracles Along the Yangtze and Mississippi." In this memoir spanning two rivers, two continents, and two cultures, Wang tells the story of her journeys, her friendships, and the discoveries she's made along the way.

All Fireside Reading Series

events feature coffee, cider, and the opportunity to purchase books and have them signed by the authors. American Sign Language interpretation will be provided for all programs.

For Adults

On Wed., Feb. 27, from 1-3pm, Jody's Documentary Film Series will present the PBS POV documentaries "A Debtor's Prison" and "Public Money." The first film introduces viewers to two women who offer a frightening glimpse into a modern-day debtor's prison. The second film focuses on an audacious experiment allowing neighbors to choose exactly how to spend public money in their community. This event is co-presented by the Hamline Midway Coalition

and the Hamline Midway Elders.

The library presents Finding Home Wherever You Are with Certified Senior Advisor Eunice K. Neubauer on Thur., Feb. 28, 10:30-11:30am. Neubauer will engage participants in a dialogue about what home means to them and share stories of how seniors have moved and been able to create a sense of "home" in their new environments.

The Novels at Night Book Club for adults will meet on Thur. Feb. 28 from 6:30-7:30pm to discuss Diane Setterfield's "The Thirteenth Tale." It tells the story of mysterious author Vida Winter, who lets a biographer write the truth of her life—but first, the biographer has to verify the facts as she delves into Vida's outlandish tales.

The Saints and Sinners Mystery Book Club meets on Sat., Mar. 2 to discuss good mystery novels. Contact volunteer G. Balter for book list or more information at gerribalter@gmail.com or 651-224-5570.

Hawkins retiring

If you've spent any time at our library, you've probably been graced with longtime Hamline Midway branch manager Shelly Hawkins' warm, welcoming presence. This spring, Shelly is retiring from a distinguished career of service with the St. Paul Public Library. Please come to the library on Thur., Mar. 7 from 4-6pm to celebrate and thank Shelly for all she's done for our community and wish her well on her next adventures, or be sure to give her your regards the next time you stop in.

Holiday closure

The library will be closed all day on Feb. 18 for Presidents Day.

CAPITOL REGION WATERSHED DISTRICT SEEKS:

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT to provide support for scheduling conference rooms, answering phones, providing technical support for guests using meeting rooms, updating District website.

COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATE to provide support for the Communications and Engagement Division by designing and implementing communications initiatives that engage stakeholders in the programs and projects of the District.

URBAN BMP TECHNICIAN to provide support and technical assistance in the planning, design, construction and operation and maintenance of green infrastructure practices.



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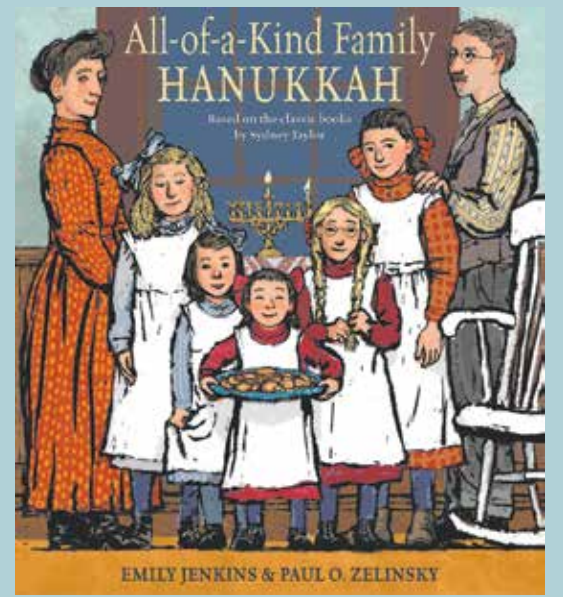
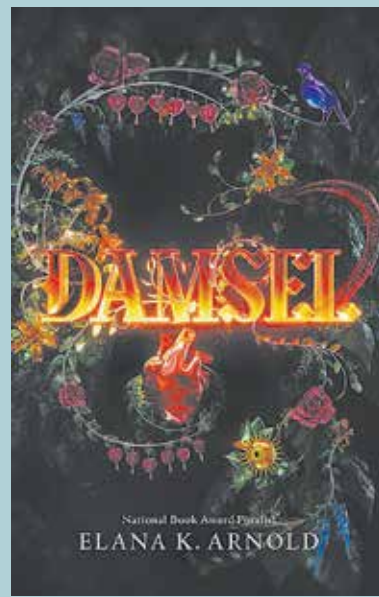
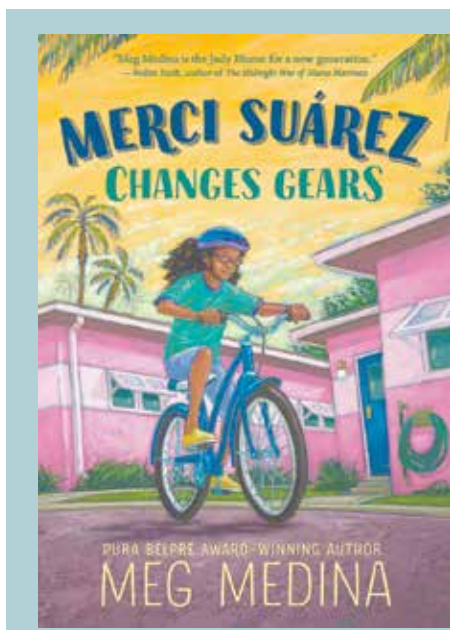
Three HU faculty win book awards at ALA Midwinter Conference

Three Hamline University Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing for Children and Young Adults (MFAC) faculty members won national book awards for their works of fiction at the recent American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Conference in Seattle.

Meg Medina won the 2019 John Newbery Medal for her novel "Merci Suárez Changes Gears." The John Newbery Medal is awarded by the American Library Association to the "most distinguished children's book" published every year.

Elana K. Arnold's novel "Damsel" was selected as a Michael L. Printz Honor Book. The Michael L. Printz Award and Honor Books are ALA honors given for the best books written for teens each year.

Emily Jenkins won the Sydney Taylor Book Award from the Association of Jewish Libraries for her picture book, "All-of-a-Kind Family Hanukkah," illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky. The award recognizes a work of literature for children and teens that authentically



portrays the Jewish experience.

"This continues an impressive run for our MFAC faculty," said Mary Rockcastle, who directs The Creative Writing Programs

at Hamline University. "Nina La-Cour won the Printz Award last year, and Kelly Barnhill won the Newbery Award two years ago. Several faculty have also been Na-

tional Book Award finalists."

Hamline's MFAC faculty are award-winning authors, experienced teachers, and committed faculty mentors. The

program is focused on helping students develop the process and craft of writing in a rigorous, engaged, and supportive environment.

One of the very best things about Hamline Elementary is its educators—their experience, talent, and whole-hearted love for their school keep the students learning and growing as human beings, scholars, and future leaders in our community.

Meet Hamline's dynamic kindergarten duo—teachers with a combined 40 years of teaching experience and amazing hearts to match.

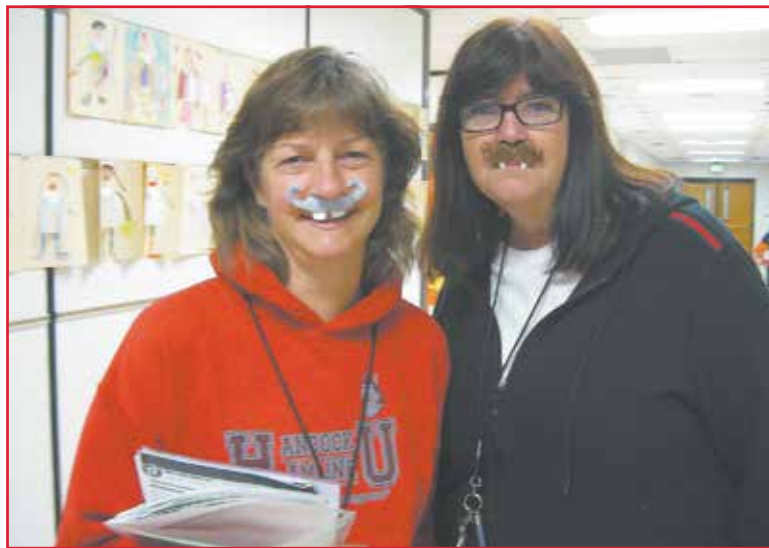
Kathleen Walsh

In her over two decades at Hamline Elementary School, Kathleen Walsh has taught every grade except 3rd (including sixth when Hamline had a sixth grade). This year you'll find her in kindergarten, likely doing one of her very favorite things to do with kindergarten students—singing songs about math, reading, butterflies, and making maple syrup. She says there really is a song for everything and enjoys incorporating music and movement into all areas of study.

When asked what makes Hamline special, Walsh describes the professionalism of her colleagues and how seriously they

Hamline Elementary School

By JESSICA KOPP



Hamline Elementary kindergarten teachers Kathleen Walsh (left), and Carol Schjei have a combined 40 years of teaching experience. (Photo submitted)

take their work with children, how well they support one another, and how much fun they

have as a team. They are friends as well as co-workers.

Walsh also loves how much

she learns from the students and families in the Hamline community saying, "Every day I'm learning something about the world from the kids."

In addition to being a teacher at Hamline Elementary, Walsh knows what it's like to be a Hamline parent. Her children made the journey from Minneapolis with their mom to enjoy the benefits of this amazing place. It was a decision that created long-lasting friendships and a solid foundation for future learning.

Outside of school, Walsh enjoys the great outdoors and spends time with her family at their cabin in Wisconsin tending to their big garden/small farm where they have beehives, bunches of berry bushes, maple trees to tap for syrup, and heirloom tomatoes, all of which they sell to local restaurants and farmer's markets.

Carol Schjei

"I have been teaching Kindergarten at Hamline Elementary since 1998. I LOVE spending my day with five and six-year-olds, and I LOVE Hamline Elementary!" exclaims Carol Schjei.

"Hamline Elementary is set apart from other schools because of our collaboration with Hamline University," Schjei said. "Every day we have 70+ university students in our school tutoring elementary students. Hamline tutors work under a teacher's direction tutoring those students who need extra challenge and those that need extra practice to master skills. They also work with small groups to ensure that all learners are held accountable. At Hamline Elementary, we can meet learners where they are and make great progress with them. Our learners also benefit from going to the University for connections with athletic teams and academic departments, swimming lessons, musical performances, and more."

Schjei concludes "I love Hamline Elementary so much that I hope to teach here until I retire from SPPS."

State Fair approves \$16.3 million for new exhibit complex

Nearly \$20 million in improvements and maintenance projects for the Minnesota State Fairgrounds were approved by the Fair's board of managers during meetings in January. The board approved \$16.3 million in capital work—\$16 million of which is earmarked for a major new exhibit complex on the North End of the fairgrounds, as well as \$3.4 million in maintenance projects.

During the meeting, State Fair General Manager Jerry Hammer previewed the North End development, which is currently under construction on the fairgrounds. The centerpiece of the State Fair's newest neighborhood is a major new exhibit facility with a 12,000-square-foot exhibit hall that will be the fair-time home to annually changing museum-quality exhibits. The North End will also have features that recognize Minnesota innovations

in agriculture, industry and the arts, along with uniquely Minnesota attractions, food, and commercial exhibits.

Improvements and maintenance projects approved for the coming year include: upgrades to the stalling and technology equipment in the Swine Barn, installation of a new overhead cover for the Exercise Ring in the livestock area, improvements to the restrooms in Lee & Rose Warner Coliseum, upgrades to the lighting and fire suppression system in the DNR Building, and dozens of paint, sewer, street and sidewalk and landscape projects throughout the 322-acre State Fairgrounds. All projects will be funded through State Fair operating revenue and grants from the Minnesota State Fair Foundation. The fair is financially self-supporting and receives no



\$16.3 million was allocated for a major new exhibit facility, with a 12,000-square-foot exhibit hall, on the North End of the Fairgrounds. (Photo provided)

government aid of any kind.

The Fair's board of managers also approved admission price increases of an additional dollar in all categories for the

2019 fair over 2018 prices. Admission prices were last adjusted two years ago.

The Minnesota State Fair is one of the largest and best-at-

tended expositions in the world, attracting more than 2 million visitors annually. The 2019 Minnesota State Fair runs Aug. 22-Labor Day, Sept. 2.

Ain Dah Yung Center helps Native American youth thrive

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

The Ain Dah Yung Center (ADYC), which means "our home" in the Ojibwe language, has provided a healing place for American Indian youth and families since 1983. Native Americans make up only 2% of Minnesota's population, but 22% of Minnesota homeless youth are Native American.

ADYC was one of the first agencies in the state to deliver culturally relevant services for Native American youth through their emergency shelter, youth lodge, and cultural programs. They've been delivering those services in St. Paul so quietly and steadily that even neighbors may not know they are there.

The ADYC Emergency Shelter is located at 1089 Portland Ave. It provides culturally specific shelter to Native American youth who are homeless, runaway, in a family crisis, or involved with juvenile corrections. Services include short-term shelter, crisis intervention, information and referral, access to medical/dental care, counseling, and case management.

Residential and clinical director Angela Gauthier said, "Historically, our emergency shelter filled a temporary need, based on the model of a 30-day stay. But we have seen a drastic increase in our length of stay over the last few years. We had one sibling group with four kids stay for nearly a year in 2018. There just wasn't a foster



Ain Dah Yung Center staff (left to right) Jasmine Grika, Angela Gauthier, and Desiree Clater. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

home that could take them for a long time. We have ten beds for youth aged 5-17 and are usually full. We're staffed 24-7."

The Beverly A. Benjamin Youth Lodge is located at 1212 Raymond Ave. It's a transitional living program available to Native American youth aged 16-21 who have no parental substitute, foster, or institutional home to which they can safely go. The Youth Lodge provides a stable, culturally supportive, and safe environment in which youth can address critical barriers

to self-sufficiency—while strengthening their community and cultural connections. Youth must attend school or be looking for employment to be eligible. They work with staff to set educational, vocational and personal goals during their stay at the Youth Lodge. There are six beds available, and residents can stay rent-free for up to 18 months.

ADYC has broken ground on a third facility: a 42 bed permanent, supportive housing complex on University Ave. between Avon and Grotto streets. Completion is

expected in September of 2019. Gauthier explained, "As far as we know, there isn't another model like this in the country for Native American youth ages 18-24. What we'll offer to them as a place to call home, says a lot about what we're telling them they're worth. Residents here will have a lease on their efficiency apartments; they'll pay rent (30% of their income); their unit will be their own. Residents can enter into a lease between the ages of 18-24, but they can stay as long as they like. We'll incrementally accept residents over three months, until we're at full capacity. The Native American inspired design is beautiful, and there will be a cultural activities center and community gathering space on-site, as well as supportive services for residents." Contact angela.gauthier@adycenter.org for more information.

The permanent, supportive housing complex is named Mino Oski Ain Dah Yung, meaning "Good New Home" in the Ojibwe language. Gauthier explained, "It will be easier for us to utilize volunteers in this new space. We'll have a food and clothing shelf, plus a small store where residents can shop for clothing and personal care items using vouchers. Volunteers will be needed to keep the shelves stocked. We'll also have a workforce center there, where community members can volunteer professional development skills

such as resume writing and practicing for job interviews. There will be cooking spaces on each floor, where community members could teach cooking classes and basic meal preparation."

ADYC is holding their 21st annual Cherish the Children Traditional Pow Wow at Central High School (275 Lexington Ave.) on Feb. 23-24. Cost is \$5: free for children under seven, elders, and military veterans. Doors open at 11am, with grand entries of participants at 1pm both days. A community feast will be served on Saturday from 5-6pm, at no additional charge. Food concessions and crafts from American Indian vendors/artists will be available for purchase, and entry is good for both days.

Gauthier said, "There are so many positive things happening in the Native American community. To celebrate that, ADYC has the Ninjanisag Program—which means "Our Children" in Ojibwe. Through this program, youth ages 8-21 are grounded in Native culture through traditional drumming, dancing, and the youth leadership council. I hope that people are aware of the richness of life in Native American culture. One way to witness this is to come to an event like the upcoming pow wow." Learn more about the work of ADYC in the community by visiting www.adycenter.org.

What's it like growing up a Hmong immigrant in America?

Neng Thao, of Neng Now online fame, visits Hamline to talk about the Hmong-American mindset

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

What is it like to grow up a Hmong immigrant in America?

A celebrity refugee and Hmong American answered that question at Hamline University on Jan. 10, and his visit was so popular that the presentation was moved to the college's largest auditorium, the Klas Center.

Neng Thao is an immigrant success story and is now sharing his life with thousands of online followers through his Neng Now channels.

Born in a refugee camp, Thao grew up in Wisconsin and earned a degree in regenerative biology from Harvard University. Two years out of college, he followed a calling to get out among the people and share his experience and knowledge. He began traveling around the world in December 2017. He shares his hopes and dreams with others through videos and Facebook posts. As of January, he had 38,000 Facebook followers.

"He comes with an important message that all of us can learn from," stated Hamline President Fayneese Miller.

Thao's talk, "Hybrid Cultural Identity: The Hmong-American mindset in mainstream America across first, second, and third generation Hmong Americans," is part of a free series organized by the English Learners in the Mainstreet (ELM) Project at Hamline.

"These projects help everyone understand a culture and the importance of culture," observed Miller, who is the university's second female and the first African American president. "Difference makes us great. Difference allows us to do things we might not



Neng Thao of Neng Now, wearing his trademark smiley face shirt, speaks to a crowd at Hamline University on Jan. 10, 2019. Thao was born in a Thailand refugee camp, grew up in Wisconsin, and now travels around the world sharing his life with Facebook followers. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

have imagined before."

She added, "We still have a long ways to go, but this project is a step forward."

Miller pointed out that one of the only top Hmong college leaders in the country, Mai Nhia Xiong-Chen, is employed at Hamline University. She grew up in Wisconsin and now works as Hamline's Vice President of Enrollment.

"There are leaders among you," Miller stated, acknowledging that Hmong immigrants have been in the United States for a relatively short period. "I hope you're proud of all that you have accomplished. You have added so much to the fabric of this nation."

Connections are key

Forty years ago, Hmong were sustenance farmers in Laos. Today they are world leaders and activists, pointed out Thao. "There's not a time in history when we've seen any demographic do that."

With that has come challenges—even between generations of Hmong families.

Thao's grandfather was pulled into the Army at age 14 to fight against the communists. When they fled to a Thailand refugee camp, he somehow got a herd of pigs and made a living off them. Thao was born in that refugee camp, while some of his siblings were born in America.

Thao breaks down Hmong immigrants into three generations. The first, which include his grandparents, was born in Laos. The second includes his parents and himself, those who experienced refugee camps. The third was born in the United States.

"There are three very different demographics," Thao observed, and understanding that is key to figuring out how to fit into American culture.

The problem is that each generation experienced a disconnect from the other. As he grew, Thao didn't want to bother his parents, who were so busy trying to survive day to day that they didn't necessarily have the time to share their language, stories, and culture with their children. During his travels, Thao has seen this pattern repeated in immigrant communities over and over.

"I think that intergenerational connections are the key to success," Thao stated.

When they were in Laos, families worked together in the fields, and there was time to connect. "That's when you just talked to your parents," Thao said. "You felt safe and could talk to anybody about any problem."

In the refugee camps of Thai-

land, families connected over their shared struggle to survive. The entire community connected through struggle, sharing when they had extra, and asking for help when they had nothing. "It's that struggle that has made the Hmong community from Laos and Thailand so strong," Thao remarked.

In America, the immigrants lost that common ground. Kids spent their days in schools instead of working alongside their parents. Many parents worked multiple jobs and left childcare of the younger kids in the hands of the older kids. Kids stopped talking to their parents and lost the mentorship former generations had experienced.

Thao realized on his first day of college that he had only one person he could go to and talk to. It wasn't either one of his parents.

"I never believed there were people who genuinely wanted me to succeed and help me," observed Thao.

Part of that he attributes to a contradiction inherent in the immigrant community. "As new immigrants we want our kids to succeed, but if their kid succeeds and ours don't, it's bad on us," Thao said. He believes that part of this attitude sprang from the experience of genocide the Hmong experienced.

Thao has worked to establish a connection with his parents so that he can go to them, and it's something that's developing every day.

A place to belong

Where do I belong? It's a question immigrants ask as they nav-

Upcoming ELM Talks

- Feb. 20, 4:30-6:30pm, Advocating for Multilingual Students through the LEAPS Act, featuring Rep. Carlos Mariani
- Apr. 18, 4:30-6pm, Working with Refugee Students who Have Experienced Trauma
- May 22, 4:30-6 p.m., Immigration Law and the Classroom

All events take place in the Hamline University Center for Justice and Law, are free and open to the public

More at tinyurl.com/elmpj.

igate between cultures, pointed out Thao.

"I just wanted a place where I could be myself and feel like I belonged," stated Thao. As he travels around the world, he explores these topics in his Neng Now videos.

It was hard to consider asking for help within the Hmong community. "My grandparents got through the war and the refugee camps. How can I ask for help on my math test?" said Thao.

Thao believes the Hmong community is at a pivotal point. The first generation worked hard to survive. The second began picking up on cultural cues. It is the third generation with the skills and resources to succeed culturally and professionally.

"You don't ask for help in the Hmong community," Thao observed. "It wasn't until I started to ask for help that I began to grow."

A longtime Midway industrial/commercial property has a new owner. Minneapolis developer Hillcrest Development has purchased 641-655 Fairview Ave. The large complex has Prior and Fairview avenues as its west and east boundaries, and is two blocks north of the University-Prior intersection.

Work has already gotten underway inside the building, which is now the Hillcrest Business Center. It has had several different users over the years. Built in 1952, it was a printing facility for the Banta company many years ago. More recently it served as a warehouse.

"We're very excited to own this property and excited about its potential," said Scott Tankenoff, managing partner at Hillcrest. Work is already underway inside the building, to abate asbestos and renovate the interior. The intent is for the building to be renovated for shorter-term commercial uses, possibly with an eye on destination retail or hospitality. Parts of the building could also be used for medical or light industrial uses. Its underlying zoning allows for a variety of commercial, industrial tenants.

"The Midway area is an up-and-coming area," Tankenoff said. "It's a solid neighborhood with a lot of good housing, good

Development Roundup

By JANE MCCLURE

Large Midway building complex to be renovated



The building at 641-651 Fairview Ave. is a sprawling complex (in center of photo) that has Prior and Fairview avenues as its west and east boundaries, and is located two blocks north of the University-Prior intersection. (Photo courtesy of Google Satellite imagery)

transit, and amenities." Hillcrest, which has been working with St. Paul city officials on its plans, has already state and Metropolitan Council environmental cleanup grants for the property.

The property was owned for

the past several years by Living Word Church and World Outreach Center, which is moving to a Hillcrest property, Mid-City, in the St. Anthony industrial/commercial area. Living Word bought the Midway build-

ing several years ago and used part of it as worship and child care space. Some space was rented out, but other space remained vacant.

Element Gym and St. Paul Ballet are among the tenants who will remain, but in different spaces. Murphy Warehouse has moved out.

The property is being advertised as ready for occupancy in the first quarter of 2019. It has drive-through space and as many as 25 locking dock spaces. It has most of its parking along Prior and along the southern edge of the building.

Tankenoff said the renovated building will be a good fit with other new or repurposed structures in the area. Hillcrest will host an open house at the building in the spring when work is further along.

Bars under new ownership

Big V's Saloon (1567 University Ave. W.) and Hot Rods Bar and Grill (1553 University Ave. W.) have new owners. Changes are expected before the Minnesota United FC makes its debut at Allianz Field to the south.

Tolch Properties, which already owns the nearby Ashton Building, is the new owner of the two longtime University Ave. establishments and their adjacent parking lots. Tolch also owns a vacant lot between the two bars. The ownership is under a new entity, Midway Entertainment Group, which is going through the city licensing process.

Hot Rod's had been closed for several months. Vic and Jeanne Masanz, longtime owners of Big V's, decided to retire. They had owned the business for more than 40 years.

Gibson's was granted liquor and entertainment licenses Feb. 6 by the St. Paul City Council. Hamline Midway Coalition recommended approval. Big V's is to become the Midway Saloon. Its liquor and entertainment licenses are up for approval Feb. 13.

The Allianz Field stadium received its liquor and entertainment licenses Feb. 6 from the City Council.

Two apartment complexes proposed across from the stadium

By JANE MCCLURE

Two mixed-use retail-apartment projects will go up on Snelling Ave. across from the Allianz Field Major League Soccer stadium. Wellington Management's six-story, 156-unit building will be on the Bremer Bank site at the southwest corner of Snelling and Shields avenues.

Indiana-based Scannell Development's six-story building will replace two commercial properties at the northwest corner of Snelling and Shields. Both buildings housed Furniture Barn. One building is currently construction headquarters for Mortenson, the firm building the stadium.

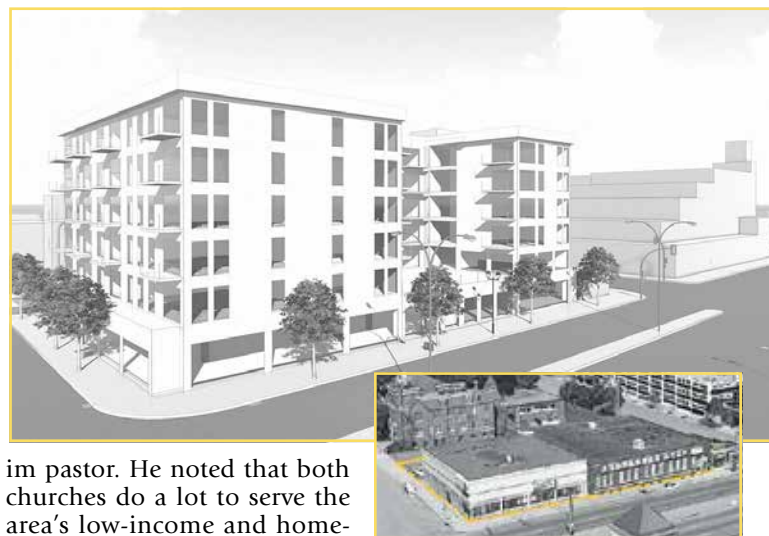
Union Park District Council's land use committee reviewed the projects Jan. 28. The two projects have the potential to add mixed-use development to the areas, as well as market-rate housing. But they also will bring great changes to adjacent churches—Central Baptist and Bethlehem Lutheran-in-the-Midway—and to neighbors on the west.

More than four dozen people attended the meeting to hear about the projects. It was the first community appearance for Scannell, which has a regional headquarters in the Twin Cities.

Both developers will be back before the district council in the future for support for requests to the city. The properties are zoned for traditional neighborhoods mixed use, but each project will require a conditional use permit to build to the desired heights. The Wellington project will also require city approval to have drive-lanes for future tenants Bremer bank and possibly Walgreens. Scannell is likely to ask for a variance of floor area ratio as well, to allow for more density.

Both developers would like to start work on their projects this construction season and be open in 2020.

Many at the meeting were from Bethlehem Lutheran, including Scott Simmons, the inter-



im pastor. He noted that both churches do a lot to serve the area's low-income and homeless population. The Lutheran church houses Open Hands Midway, with a weekly meal, food shelf and clothing closet. He and others said that community still needs to be served, despite a changing landscape.

Simmons and others from the two churches questioned the construction of market-rate housing, saying the area needs more housing for people who have very low incomes. They want developers to include at least a few units in each building for very low-income residents.

Another issue is parking. Longtime church member Steve Hendricks said, "I just don't know where people are going to park."

The Scannell project plans 120 studio, one, two and three bedroom apartments, with 72 resident and 25 public parking stalls, one

The proposed development would replace two existing buildings along Snelling Ave. Both buildings housed Furniture Barn. One building is currently construction headquarters for Mortenson, the firm building the stadium. (Photo taken from PowerPoint presentation from Scannell Properties)

level of underground parking and main floor space for a restaurant and building amenity spaces.

Wellington Management has touted its project as the first market-rate housing on the Green Line area, between downtown and the western end of University in St. Paul. Much housing has been built along and near University, but many of those units are classified as affordable.

Wellington has had its plans

Illustration top left: The proposed development at 441/453 Snelling Ave. would include 120 apartments, 87 parking stalls, and full storefront along Snelling at street level, with wraps around to Shields Ave. It would contain approximately 5,700 square feet of commercial space. (Photo taken from PowerPoint presentation from Scannell Properties)

out to the community before. The latest iteration only uses the bank property. The developers had hoped to purchase an adjacent Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) site, but the price is too high, said Casey Dziewieczynski, development associate at Wellington.

The developers haven't ruled out adding the parcel in the future, "but we don't wish to wait," he said. "That could be a phase two down the road."

The bank and possibly a Walgreens will be two of the first-floor tenants, with a small space for a smaller third tenant. The apartments will be a mix of studio, one and two-bedroom units.

Wellington is working with the adjacent Central Baptist Church on plans including vacating the alley that separates the bank and church properties, and on a new parking structure that would be shared by the church and the new development. Two levels of underground parking are planned beneath the new building.

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Monitor

Send us your news! When you submit your press release it will be considered for the next print edition of the Monitor. You can also go to our website, MonitorSaintPaul.com and enter your information in the online Event Calendar.

Emotions Anonymous meets Wednesdays

Emotions Anonymous (EA) meets each Wednesday, 7pm, at the Hamline United Methodist Church, 1514 Englewood Ave. Use the rear entrance and ring the bell to gain admittance. The meeting is upstairs in Room 7.

The meetings are open to anyone who is seeking to achieve and maintain emotional balance. EA is not a religious group, and they welcome people of any religious affiliation or no religious affiliation. There is no cost to attend meetings. Only first names are used, and everything said at a meeting is confidential.

Creative Enterprise Zone gets \$205,000

The Board of Directors for the Creative Enterprise Zone (CEZ) is pleased to announce new grant funding to support its mission to advance creative, economic and cultural development in the West Midway, the area surrounding three stations along the Green Line LRT.

The CEZ's physical boundaries radiate from the intersection of Raymond and University avenues: south to Interstate 94, east to Prior Ave., north to the railroad tracks by Energy Park Dr., and west to the Minneapolis city limits.

Grants—from five foundations totaling \$205,000 over two years—will support a new equitable commercial development and creative placemaking model that strengthens the creative sector and addresses displacement.

Funds will be applied to the CEZ's community-driven real estate development efforts, hiring a person to champion the CEZ's efforts to foster community ownership of creative maker spaces. Funds also support the CEZ's focus on incorporating earned income real estate strategies that serve a dual purpose: further its mission, and contribute operating income.

The funding will foster practical solutions to the real and urgent threat around land use stability. The CEZ advocates for community development that addresses land use, zoning, public investment, and civic engagement. It acknowledges that increased density, mixed uses, and the pressure of displacement will continue to define the area.

The grant funds include a one year grant from National LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation), and two-year grants from the McKnight Foundation, the St. Paul Foundation, the Mardag Foundation, and the Bigelow Foundation.

New church starts in Midway area

Resurrection City Church held its first service at Hamline Elementary School, 1599 Engle-

wood Ave., on Jan. 27.

Resurrection City Church will meet on Sunday mornings at 9:30am, and everyone is welcome to worship with them. Their stated vision is to "glorify God by seeing people, our city, and the world made new in Christ."

Email julie@rescitychurch.org with questions.

Hope for Recovery Workshop set Mar. 9

NAMI Minnesota (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will hold a free workshop that provides information on mental illnesses, treatments, crisis management, suicide prevention, the mental health system, and local resources along with practical strategies for helping a loved one or friend. This includes learning the LEAP strategy for improving communication: Listen, Empathize, Agree on what you can, and Partner. This workshop is for family and friends of a teen or adult living with a mental illness and people living with a mental illness who are doing well in their recovery. It will be held at NAMI Minnesota, 1919 University Ave., Suite 400, on Sat., Mar. 9, from 9am-3pm.

For information or to register call 651-645-2948 or see "classes" at namimn.org.

ALLY fundraiser planned Mar. 13

On Wed., Mar. 13, Indeed Brewing (711 NE 15th Ave., Mpls.) will host a fundraiser for Midway-based ALLY People Solutions as part of their Indeed We Can program. "Indeed We Can" is a charitable initiative, that puts the power of doing good straight into the hands of the people who make Indeed tick: the employees! The taproom is open on Wednesdays from 3-11pm, and each Wednesday net proceeds are donated to a local nonprofit, chosen and sponsored by an Indeed employee.

There will be food, fun, and a chance to win fabulous prizes. There will be a short program followed by an "Indeed We Can" toast to the upcoming merger between ALLY and Community Involvement Programs.

News from Hamline Midway Elders

Jody's Documentary Series returns Wed., Feb. 27, 1pm at Hamline Midway Library, 1558 W. Minnehaha. Join us to view the PBS Documentaries "A Debtor's Prison" and "Public Money." In "Debtor's Prison" meet two women who'll give you a frightening glimpse into modern-day debtors' prison. Really, "Public Money?" Neighbors can decide how to spend public monies in their very own community? Clearly,

they can't all agree, so who's going to get their way? It's messy, yet orderly. Unpredictable, yet surefire. This is democracy in action. Watch this audacious year-long experiment unfold—in just 15 minutes. Refreshments provided.

The next Monthly Luncheon of Hamline Midway Elders is planned for Tues., Mar. 12, 11:30am at St. Stephanus Lutheran Church, 739 Lafond Ave. (Please note the change in location for this luncheon!) Patty Lammers, Crime Prevention Specialist with the St. Paul Police Department, will present on ways older adults can protect themselves from the latest scams. Chef Erik Hendrickson will prepare a wonderful meal, blood pressure checks will be available, and new attendees are always welcome at their "Second Tuesday" free-will donation luncheon events.

Knitting Group meets Mondays, 1-3pm, at Hamline Church United Methodist, 1514 Englewood Ave. Hamline Midway Elders provides the yarn and needles along with some light snacks. The group members work on projects, such as making shawls to be donated to a local hospice or blankets for a child care center. New participants are always welcome.

Reading Buddies are still wanted the first and third Wednesdays, 10:45-11:30am at Hamline Elementary School, 1599 Englewood Ave. HME partnership with Hamline Elementary School and the Reading Buddy Program. Third-grade students enjoy reading to neighborhood elders, so we're hoping to recruit even more older adults to participate. No experience is necessary, just a desire to interact with children. And you don't have to attend every session, just come when your schedule permits.

For more information, please contact Laurel Collins of Hamline Midway Elders at 651-209-6542 or laurel@hmelders.org.

Lunch, Learn & Laugh slated Feb. 26

Episcopal Homes will hold their Lunch, Learn & Laugh program on Tues., Feb. 26, 11:30am-1pm, at Seabury Senior Housing, 1830 University Ave. The luncheon is \$8, and you must RSVP by Feb. 22 to Kire Meyer-Quist, 651-379-5102 or email KMeyer@Episco-palHomes.org.

The lunch will consist of baked ziti, breadsticks, a mixed salad, and coffee/water.

The presentation will be "Make It OK" with Kay King of the National Alliance of Mental Illness. "The Make it OK campaign strives to change hearts and minds about misperceptions of mental illness by encouraging open conversations and education the topic. This presentation proclaims that it is time to spread the word, stop the silence and Make It OK. More info at MakeItOkay.org."

Register at your local Recreation Center for fun-filled spring activities

Northwest Como Recreation Center: www.stpaul.gov/northwestcomoRec or call 651-298-5813

Welcome new Community Recreation Specialist "Teresa Little" to Northwest Como. Teresa will begin managing Northwest Como on Feb. 4th while Thao will be leaving to manage Arlington Hills Community Center. Best of luck to both of them during their transition. Stop into Northwest Como and welcome Teresa to the neighborhood.

- My Plate My Family, adults, Tues., Feb. 19-Mar. 12, 6:30-8pm, free
- Game Night, ages 8-adult, Mon., through Mar. 25, 6:30-8pm, free
- Ooey Goocy Clay Creation, ages 5-12, Mar. 1, 10am-3pm, \$65
- American Sign Language, ages 13-17, Tues., Apr. 9-May 28, 6-7:30pm, \$85
- Art/Wine/Pizza, adults, Mon., Apr. 8, 6:45-9pm, \$50
- Senior Gamers, ages 55+, Tuesdays ongoing, 1-3pm, free
- Taekwondo, ages 4-17, Tues./Thur. ongoing, 4:30-5:30pm, \$50/mo
- ***Movie Night for adults on Fri., Mar. 8, 7pm.
- ***Join the Northwest Como Booster Club by contacting Teresa Little at Northwest Como

North Dale Recreation Center: www.stpaul.gov/northdaleRec or call 651-558-2329

- Open Dance Studio, ages 13-17, Fri., thru May 31, 2:15-4pm, free
- Baby Ballet ages 3-5, on Fri., Feb. 22-May 3, 12-12:30pm, \$50
- Preliminary Ballet ages 4-6, Fri., Feb. 22-May 3, 12:30-1pm, \$50
- Home School Ballet, ages 7-12, Feb. 22-May 3, 1-2pm, \$90
- Introductory Vegetable Gardening for Adults, Sat. thru Mar. 9, 10-11:30am, free
- Let's Make Soap Essential Oils for Adults, Sat., Mar. 2, 10am-noon, \$5 + \$10 supply fee paid to instructor
- Nursery Rhyme Time Art, ages 3-6, Sat, Mar. 2 & 9, 9:30-11am, \$50
- Boys Group, ages 7-12, Wed, Mar. 6-Apr. 24, 4-5:30pm, free
- Healthy Life, Healthy You Boot Camp, adults, Sat., Mar. 16, 10am-Noon, free
- Advanced Vegetable Gardening, adults, Sat., Mar. 30, 10-11am, free
- Eating Smart, Being Active, adults, Mon., Apr. 8-29, 6-7:30pm, free
- Tumbling, ages 3-5, Mon., Apr. 8-May 13, 5:30-6:15pm, \$30
- Young Rembrandts Jr. Zoo Drawing, ages 4-6, Wed., Apr. 10-May 15, 5:30-6:15pm, \$60
- World of Dinosaurs Pastel Drawing, ages 6-12, Wed., Apr. 10-May 15, 6:30-7:30pm, \$60
- Parent/Child Tot Time, ages 5 & under, M/W/Th, 9am-Noon, free
- Adult Pickleball, Fri., through May 31, Noon-2pm, \$2/daily
- Earth Moon Yoga, adults, Tues. (7:45-8:45pm), Sat. (11am-Noon), \$5/class
- Pilates - Core/Strength/Flexibility, M/W, 7:15-8:15pm, \$5/class
- Senior Fitness, adults, Tu/Th, 9:30-10:30am, free
- Challenge Square Dancing, adults, Mon., ongoing, 6:30-9pm, \$7/wk
- Senior Day, ongoing Thursdays, 10am-3pm, free
- Women's Self Help Book Club, adults, 3rd Thur./month, 6:30-8pm, free
- Taekwondo, ages 4-17, M/W/F ongoing, 4:30-5:30pm, \$50/mo
- ***Join the North Dale Booster Club by contacting Brian Tobritzhofer at North Dale

Bowie announces for Ward 1 Council seat

Anika Bowie announced the first day of Black History Month that she is running to be the next St. Paul City Council member to represent Ward 1 as a DFL candidate.

Born in the Rondo neighborhood, Bowie is a millennial, civil rights leader, educator, artist, community organizer, and product of Saint Paul's promise. In her campaign launch video Anika quotes, "Women like me aren't given a seat at the table. We fight for it." She is a fifth-generation St. Paul homegrown native. Bowie says, "Throughout my career, I have advocated for art, education, restorative justice, and racial equity, and criminal justice reform. My community was built by laborers who made Saint Paul a vibrant place to live. As a candidate for Ward 1, I will continue the path of servant leadership by putting our community first."

Since 2016, Bowie has served as an executive for Minneapolis NAACP. She leads the Ramsey, Hennepin and Dakota County Warrant Resolution Day Initiative, which has helped hundreds of people get their lives restored. She dedicated her professional career to advocating for communities impacted by the criminal justice system as a teaching artist and community organizer for over a decade. She currently serves on the St. Paul Police Civilian Internal Affairs Review Commission and leads the Restore the Vote Minnesota Coalition of over 50 organizations throughout the state.

Bowie lives in the Rondo neighborhood and seeks DFL endorsement.

She graduated with honors from Central High School and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice from Hamline University.

Continued on page 11

Monitor In A Minute

Dale Street bridge reconstruction plans unveiled

Area travelers who use the Dale St. bridge over I-94 to get around will look forward to its replacement. Plans unveiled in January to a packed room show a new bridge with 16 feet of pedestrian, bike and plaza space on either side, as well as public art elements commemorating the Rondo neighborhood.

The Ramsey County Department of Public Works hosted the meeting, which was the last before design work is completed. County officials received \$6 million in federal funds and provided a \$5 million local match for the project. The bridge as well as Dale St. between University and Iglehart avenues will be rebuilt in 2020. That's a delay from the original start date of 2017, but gave more time for public engagement, work on pedestrian and traffic safety issue and adding public art.

Bridge design is about 30 percent complete, with plans to be finished late this summer. Bridge demolition is to start in January 2020, with the project done by fall 2020. Half of the bridge will come down at a time so that one lane of traffic can be maintained in either direction. Travelers should plan on detours. Western Ave. and Victoria St. are the closest multi-use bridges over the freeway. There is a pedestrian/bike bridge at Grotto St.

People generally liked what they saw, especially the public art and pedestrian safety improvements. "Me being a Rondo kid, that means a lot to me," one woman said of the art.

One man who walks Dale St. regularly said he appreciates improvements, saying he keeps his bag at hand to be able to throw it at errant vehicles.

Several questions were raised about hiring, especially the hiring of people of color and women. Ramsey County is starting a six-month workforce equity plan, which will be used in bridge project hiring, said John O'Phelan, county workforce specialist.

The county is working to get more people into building trades

apprenticeship and training programs and will work with local agencies include Ujamaa Place and the YWCA to get people into the trade and hired, not just for the Dale St. Bridge, but for other future projects, O'Phelan said. A similar process was used during Green Line light rail work. Hiring goals will be announced this summer but should be around 30 percent for people of color and 20 percent for women.

Wind, solar changes eyed

A delayed update of wind turbine and solar garden regulations for St. Paul is en route to the St. Paul City Council for a public hearing at 5:30pm on Wed., Mar. 6. The council will be looking at one of the first major updates to the city's renewable energy regulations in almost a decade.

The most recent studies began a few years ago and went through a Planning Commission review and approval process. But changes in city staff and other issues meant the proposed changes were set aside. A new city planner has been assigned to shepherd the project through.

The six pages of changes deal primarily with where devices can be located, heights of poles, and other technical details. The update was sought for several years, as more people considered renewable energy options for their homes and businesses.

St. Paul's regulations have been criticized for being very dated. For example, the current rules don't allow solar gardens or community solar installations.

The changes are meant to bring city regulations into compliance with updated technologies and with a sweeping package of solar energy laws passed by the Minnesota Legislature in 2013. The state laws govern community solar installations or "gardens." These solar device arrays, with multiple subscribers, are connected to the power grid. Subscribers receive a credit on their electric bills for the power the panels produce. The 2013 change allows Xcel Energy to provide energy to clients from solar

gardens. Xcel customers can purchase energy from the sustainable resources. None of those resources are in St. Paul—yet. The city last updated its solar regulations in 2011.

Wind energy devices sought

since 2002 have operated under different regulations, typically under "determination of similar use" requests. That meant governing wind turbines in the same way cell phone towers are regulated. Not long after

a wind turbine requested for Metropolitan State University was voted down by the City Council in 2012, the Planning Commission asked that technologies be studied, and new regulations written.

Hamline Midway Coalition plans upcoming strategy meetings

By JAN WILLMS

The city's 17 district councils have found it challenging over the years to rely on consistent city support. St. Paul started its district council program in 1975 as an innovative means of citizen participation. A 2018 report that looked at the district council system and compared it to citizen participation programs in other cities found the councils struggled with issues such as equitable outreach funding and staff turnover. Most district council staff lack employee benefits. With this uncertainty of city funding, Hamline Midway Coalition (HMC) has tried to prepare for any contingencies.

At its annual meeting in December 2018, HMC reported net assets of \$260,000. "Before my arrival at HMC as executive director, Michael Jon Olson served as executive director for 14 years," said Kate Mudge. "During his tenure, HMC and 16 other district councils in St. Paul were continuously unsure whether the City would continue to fund the District Council system. So each year the financially prudent decision was made to secure foundation/grant support, and HMC raised funds so that we would have alternative funds of roughly two years' worth in case the City decided to discontinue its funding or disband the District Council system."

"As all healthy nonprofits operate, reserves were built to provide funding in times of uncertainty," she continued.

Based on the most recent Guidestar Profile, reportable assets for St. Paul's district councils range from \$24,159 up to \$419,246. They vary greatly because district council assets may include building, property, office equipment, or funds set aside for specific purposes, such as loan funds which are distributed and then paid back over time.

Mudge added that district council staff do not receive health benefits, so there were additional reserves to potentially pay out of pocket to support the health and welfare of staff. "Our reserves also include monies HMC holds for 'fiscal agencies' such as community gardens, the Public Art group and various other organizations, which are not to be used for any purpose other than that of the fiscal agency's discretion," she said.

Mudge said that HMC would be discussing what to do with its reserves at two strategic planning meetings, as well as board meetings, which are open to the public.

For the first time in decades, the 17 district councils will be splitting an additional \$250,000 in 2019 after years of static fund levels. It has been reported that the City Council members agree

that district councils are overdue for additional support, discussing the needs last year before and during the 2019 city budget process.

How much each district council will receive from the \$250,000 has not been finalized. The money will be allocated based on a formula developed more than ten years ago. The formula uses metrics of the planning district's population, poverty levels, employment and number of non-English speakers in each district.

District councils seek community input on local and citywide plans, zoning and variances requests and business license. Each prepares a district plan every decade to guide neighborhood growth and development. Council staff and volunteers field citizen questions and are involved in neighborhood-level crime prevention activities. Many have their own unique programs.

"As an organization, we're in transition between executive directors," Mudge said, regarding HMC. "Our focus areas may be changing, and we are working to identify the numerous opportunities available to advance projects in the Midway."

Support next month's Summer Fun section featuring activities for youth of all ages!

Classifieds

Monitor

Want ads must be received by the Monitor by March 4 for the March 14 issue. Call 651-645-7045 for more information. Your classified ad will also be automatically placed on the Monitor's website at www.MonitorSaintPaul.com

Monitor Want Ads are \$1 per word with a \$10 minimum. Send your remittance along with your ad to Monitor Classifieds, PO Box 168, Osseo, MN 55369. Want ads must be mailed to the Monitor by Mar. 4 for the Mar. 14 issue. Ad copy can be e-mailed to denis@deruyter-nelson.com. Call 651-645-7045 for more information. Your classified ad will also be automatically placed on the Monitor's website at www.MonitorSaintPaul.com

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In Our Community

Continued from page 9

Cuban Rumba class at Drum Center

A co-ed beginning class, Cuban Rumba, will take place at the Women's Drum Center, 2242 University Ave. W., on Fri., Mar. 8, 7-8:30pm. Instruments provided, and the cost is \$20. You can register online at www.womens-drumcenter.org. This is a fun, exuberant class teaching conga and rhythm instrument technique through songs from Cuba. No experience necessary.

Midway Y players place in nationals

Isaac Alberg and Joseph Lallier represented St. Paul Midway YMCA in the 63rd United States Handball Association (USHA) National Junior 4 Wall Championships in Portland, OR Dec. 26-30, 2018.

Alberg placed 4th place in Boys Singles Small Ball, 17 and under; 2nd place in both Boy's Singles Big Ball, 17 and under, and Boys Doubles, 17 and under. Lallier placed 2nd in Boys Singles Big Ball, 15 and under.

The USHA Annual Junior Four-Wall Awards presented three standout players at the year's event: The Vince Gabriele Sportsmanship Award, the Kate Conlon/Kurt Johansson Most Improved Award and the Tom Lynch Newcomer Award. Number one pro player, Killian Carroll, presented the Vince Gabriele Sportsmanship Award to Lallier, and Isaac Alberg received the Kate Conlon/Kurt Johansson Most Improved Award.

Alberg is a junior at Central High School and Lallier a sophomore at Eagan High School.

Isaac and Joseph are a part of the youth handball program at the St. Paul Midway YMCA, 1761 University Ave. W. Experienced players meet Saturdays at the U of M Rec Center, and beginning and younger players meet at the Midway YMCA in the afternoons from 1-3pm. Contact the Midway YMCA for information.

Murray sends teams to National

Murray's two Lego League Teams were awarded Wild Card invitations to the State Tournament. Team Forty 2 won the Project Award, and the Spead Porgz team won the Innovative Design Award.

Forty 2 members include: Kaya Solheid, Josephine Schucker, Jonathan Newman, Ian Bates, Lewie Leifeld, Natalie Westerlund, Isis Davis, Henry Brandt, Gemma Kruse, and Zander England

Spead Porgz members include: Kai Sackreiter, Aria Westberg, Zach Bollman, Freddie Gray, Cate Mackey, Nolan Rognerud, Sophie Warner, and Ashton Bricker

The Minnesota state tournament will be held at Washington Tech.

Kendall's receives prestigious honor

Kendall's ACE Hardware, 978 Dale St. N. and 840 Payne Ave., achieved designation as a "Pinnacle Performance Retailing" store for its out-

Alumni return to mentor new musicians



At Murray Middle School it has been a long tradition of ending the first semester with Activity Day, a day to have fun with classmates outside the classroom and free of class work. This year students were able to choose from several activities such as Green Acres snow tubing, bowling at the U of M, going to Maplewood Community Center, and Grand Slam.

With this annual tradition, the Murray Rock Band puts on a concert in the morning for the students before they board the buses going to activities.

For Murray rock stars, the excitement of being on stage is one thing, but to mentor students in how to make it look easy and have fun while you do it has been in the hands of three creative and selfless teachers over the past few years. Two of them are former Murray students who were in the same rock band six years ago. They have been working with Andy Rockwood, a long-standing Flipside Rock Band Teacher. While all of them mentor the rock stars from developing skills on the instruments including electric guitar, keyboards, drums, and of course voice, they teach them about stage presence and how to perform. Tyrin Anderson and Will Toney were members of the band back in their Murray Junior High days (when it was a Junior High School).

Those who have enjoyed the experience in the have come back to mentor the next generation.

Another former student with music skills, Erik Stoeckeler, had mentored the band for years as well. It is wonderful to watch the cycle of learning in the Murray community and how, for those that have been given such great experiences, they get a chance to return and give back to the students.

Other graduates from the program are taking their experience and making it a career choice. Keagan McCully and Gabriela Nesheim performed a sold-out show at Bryant Lake Bowl in Minneapolis last month. McCully's music is available on Spotify.

standing performance. Developed as part of Ace's long-term retail growth strategy, 20/20 Vision,

Pinnacle Performance Retailing is laser-focused on Ace's customers, helping to ensure that Ace stores deliver on its brand promise day in and day out. To achieve Pinnacle Performance Retailing, the team at Kendall's ACE Hardware completed some key performance drivers that will help them provide a better overall shopping experience in their local community.

Only a few hundred Ace retailers receive this distinction, out of 5,200 stores in more than 35 countries.

"The team at Kendall's ACE Hardware is incredibly pleased to have earned the status as a Pinnacle Performance Retailing store," said Kendall Crosby, Owner at Kendall's ACE Hardware. "What this means for our customers is that we are more committed than ever to providing our loyal shoppers with the best possible retail experience; from customer service to product offerings and more, we're taking 'Ace helpful' to a new level."

NAMI holds partner support group

NAMI Minnesota (National Alliance on Mental Illness) sponsors a support group specifically for partners or spouses of someone who lives with a mental illness. The Partners and Spouses Support Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm, at Falcon Heights United Church of Christ, 1795 Holton St. For more information, call Melissa at 651-354-0825 or Sara at 763-350-6502.

La Leche League meets Mar. 12

The monthly meeting of the La

Leche League will next be held on Tues., Mar. 12, 7-8:45pm at Hamline Church United Methodist, 1514 Englewood Ave.

The meeting is for pregnant and nursing mothers to discuss breastfeeding and related topics such as parenting, pregnancy, and weaning. Babies and support persons are welcome. Entrance is on the south side of the building, just off parking lot that is on the north side of Minnehaha Ave.

The April meeting will be Apr. 9, same place and time.

Ingathering planned Feb. 24 at Jehovah

Jehovah Lutheran Church, 1566 Thomas Ave., will host a light lunch and ingathering of items for homeless and others in need at noon Sun., Feb. 24. All are welcome.

The congregation's Caring Hearts event will be in the church nursery to the left indoors at the Thomas entry. The community is invited to donate and help pack items into kits for distribution.

Needed items include travel-size toiletries for the homeless and for just-released prisoners. HealthEast Care System's service for the homeless will distribute items to the homeless.

Other items will be packaged into "sock kits" for Crossing-HOME, a ministry to recently released prisoners. Crossing Home maintains an office at the church.

Donors may bring items the day of the luncheon. Or, before Feb. 24, items may be left at the church Donation Center, through the inner indoors and to the left at the Thomas St. entry. Drop off items before or after worship at 10:15am Sundays or call the church at 651-644-1421 to set up another time.

Needed items include socks, toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap,

deodorant, combs, shampoo, lotion, small first aid kits, children's vitamins, and other such items useful to people in transition. Large sizes are accepted as well. A complete list is at jehovahlutheran.org.

This year, the group will also assemble Tickets of Hope bags. Each gallon-size resealable bag will hold a ticket for a free meal at Union Gospel Mission in St. Paul, along with information on services for the homeless and a few immediately useful items such as bottled water, a snack bar, and socks.

Gala Fundraiser set for Irish Center

The Center for Irish Music will hold Éigse CIM, A Gaela Event-2019 at the Celtic Junction Arts Center, 836 Prior Ave. N., on Sat., Feb. 23, 5-10pm.

Éigse [eg-shuh] is an Irish word used for festivals celebrating traditional Irish arts and culture. It is in this spirit that we gather for an evening to raise funds for The Center for Irish Music, Minnesota's only traditional Irish music school, dedicated to handing down the tradition.

The event includes a traditional Irish dinner, a Celtic art-themed silent auction, raffle, and concert by the traditional Irish music of the Center for Irish Music instructors who boast recording, award-winning, and world touring artists among their number.

Cost is \$25 for silent auction and concert; \$85 with dinner.

Call the Center for Irish Music at 651-815-0083 for more information.

Family support group meets monthly

NAMI Minnesota (National Alliance on Mental Illness) sponsors free support groups for families and friends of individuals living with a mental illness. Led by trained facilitators who also have a family member with mental illness, the support groups help families develop better coping skills and find strength through sharing their experiences. A family support group meets at the Wilder Foundation, 451 Lexington Pkwy., on the fourth Monday of the month from 6:30-8pm. There is free parking in the ramp. For information, call Jennifer at 507-254-5524.

Events planned at Merriam Park Library

The Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave., is planning several events in the coming weeks.

Mary Jane LaVigne will discuss Katharine Tighe Fessenden, Fitzgerald's trusted childhood chum on Sun., Mar. 3, 3-4:30pm. Fitzgerald called her and "The Grammarian" and she was one of the few people Fitzgerald asked to review and comment on the manuscript version of "This Side of Paradise" before it made its way to Scribner's Publishing house. The event is part of the monthly FitzFirst discussion series coordinated by Fitzgerald in Saint Paul—an organization dedicated to celebrating the life and literature of F. Scott Fitzgerald in his hometown of Saint Paul.

The Merriam Park Book

Club meets Mon., Feb. 25, 6:30-7:30pm. The title they will discuss is "The Glass Castle" by Jeannette Walls.

Paw Pals with Katie and Kerry takes place Thur., Mar. 7, 6-7pm. Read to a friendly dog who loves to sit and listen to stories. This program is for ages 6-12. Please register by calling 651-642-0385 or stopping by the library's service desk.

There are Family Story-times at the library on Fridays, 10:30-11am. Spend time sharing stories, songs, and rhymes with your child while building a foundation for reading success. Preschoolers, toddlers, and babies are welcome.

Board at the Library will be held Wednesdays, 2-4:30pm. Join others for board games such as Apples to Apples Jr., Clue, Chess, Checkers, and more. Or, bring your own board games.

"You Can Make It!" takes place at the library on Mondays, 3-5pm, with hands-on crafts and activities for kids ages 7 to 11.

Open Lab for Writers meets every Thursday, 10:30am-noon. There is no instructor. This is an opportunity to meet, discuss, or work on whatever you're writing. All styles welcome!

Tech Help Clinics are set for Thursdays, 11:30-12:30pm, Fridays, noon-2pm, and Saturdays, 11:30am-12:30pm. The clinics are for all tablets and smartphones. Bring your questions and, problems, and concerns. If we can't answer the question, we'll find resources or organizations that can! No registration required.

CRWD presents annual awards

Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) presented its annual awards in January at the 2018 CRWD Recognition and Awards Ceremony.

Hamline Midway Coalition received the Watershed Project Award for Pierce Butler Meadows, a project that was a culmination of more than a decade of community interest for ecological and aesthetic improvements at the intersection of Pierce Butler Rte. and Snelling Ave. (See the Hamline Midway Column in this issue for more details.)

Twin Cities German Immersion School (TCGIS) was runner up for the Watershed Partner Award. The school completed stormwater management improvements as part of an expansion in 2013-2016, which included building four rain gardens, an underground treatment system, and a porous play surface to help absorb excess runoff on campus. TCGIS has also supported community efforts by providing space for a recent rain barrel workshop for Como residents.

Submit your news

If you are an organization located in the Midway Como Monitor delivery area, you can submit your event, special program, or noteworthy news to us for consideration. Submit your item by email to editorial@deruyternelson.com. The deadline for the next issue is Mon., Mar. 4 for the Mar. 14 issue.

Heritage Tea House & Cafe leads as community gathering place

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

The Heritage Tea House & Cafe, 360 University Ave. W., is one of the very few African American-owned businesses in the old Rondo Neighborhood these days.

Co-owner Rosemary Nevils-Williams said, "Since we opened in December 2017, we've been a gathering place for the community. It's important to run a successful business, but it's just as important to make a difference in people's lives. Our staff greets every person who walks through the door with the same greeting, 'Welcome to the Tea House!' because we want to extend a warm welcome to everyone. Given the climate of the US right now, with people so divided by race, age, and class—it's rare to find a place where all kinds of people can gather to eat, drink, and socialize. This is that place."

Most of the original Rondo Ave. and much of the historic Rondo neighborhood were destroyed when Interstate 94 was built in 1956-68. More than 600 African American families lost their homes, and many businesses also went under when their customer base was shattered. Nevils-Williams and her daughter/business partner Raeisha Williams come from a long line of female African American entrepreneurs, with several businesses to their credit. Still, Nevils-Williams said, it wasn't easy to get the Heritage Tea House & Cafe up and running.

"It's no secret that because of



Mother-daughter co-owners Rosemary Nevils-Williams (left) and Raeisha Williams (right). (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

St. Paul's Rondo neighborhood ran roughly between University Ave. on the north, Selby Ave. on the south, Rice St. on the east, and Lexington Ave. on the west. African American churches, businesses, and schools set down roots there in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, creating a strong community that the construction of I-94 destroyed.

systemic racism, African American entrepreneurs have difficulty getting bank loans," Nevils-Williams said. "When you don't have the capital to start a business, or you can't get the capital to maintain one, that's when businesses fail early on. We were lucky to receive assistance from the Aurora St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation (which bolsters redevelop-

ment in the Rondo neighborhood) and the Neighborhood Development Corporation. When we started working on our building, it was just a shell. The re-construction was challenging because some of the contractors were disrespectful toward us as African American women, but we got it done."

The business they created was just what the community needed. The Heritage Tea House & Café won a St. Paul Business Award last year: the People's Choice Award, which honors a business recognized for its excellence by St. Paul residents. The space is available for use for book clubs, community meetings, book signings, parties, or fundraisers. Contact the co-owners at 651-330-0171 or info@heritageteahouse.com for more information.

There are an impressive number of events happening monthly at the shop (check the Facebook page to stay current.) Just a few include the first Sunday of the month from 1-3pm with homeopath and healer Kinshasha Kambui; every third Saturday from 7-10pm features



Jayda Pounds helped a customer at the counter of the Heritage Tea House and Cafe. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

Black Cinema; Thursday night speakeasies have an open mic; Friday nights offer rhythm and blues and Chili Happy Hour; and, frequently there are Saturday night comedy performances.

Choose from more than two dozen teas available in the warm, Afro-centric space, a variety of coffee drinks, and a menu which, according to the mother-daughter team, is drawing raves. Stand-out comfort food menu items include chicken and waffles, toasted panini sandwiches, fresh mac and cheese, shrimp and grits, collard greens, chocolate cake and coconut cake, all of which can be chased down with a tall glass of hibiscus punch.

"We can see that the com-

munity is happy to have us here," Nevils-Williams said. "The neighbors have been our main customer base. We're proud to be an African American establishment doing business in the Rondo neighborhood, and we look forward to things getting better and better."

Plans include producing a bottled tea line, starting with Hibiscus Punch. The business owners also have their eye on being a future presence at the Minnesota State Fair. The Heritage Tea House & Café is located on University between Western and Virginia avenues. Open Tues.-Fri. 11am-6pm; Sat. 11am-4pm; Sun. 12-4pm, and open many evenings for special entertainment.

Talking Trash

Continued from page 3

in place for five years. Ellen Biales, who oversees special projects for the St. Paul Department of Public Works, said the contract does have an annual review. "But to make any changes requires agreement from both sides," she said.

Public Works is hearing complaints similar to those voiced to council members, Biales said.

In late 2018 the City Council approved changes to the agreements on billing. Some residents received bills demanding immediate payment before organized collection began. Others got letters threatening to turn the matter over to collection agencies. The City Council action changed the timing of quarterly bills for 2019. Some residents who paid their bills on time but were still hit with late fees or nonpayment notices had their fees waived or were to receive credit.

Petition drives started

The trash issue has sparked two petition drives to get the organized trash issue on the ballot. Both were rejected by the City Council. Now a group under the banner St. Paul Trash is trying to raise \$15,000 to retain legal counsel and sue the city.

January has launched the period in which residents can change trash cart size. But some at the meeting said they haven't been able to switch to a smaller size cart because their haulers said there is a shortage.

Several people at the Jan. 17 meeting said they no longer can share a trash cart with a neighbor and have had their costs rise sub-

stantially. "There's absolutely no incentive to recycle," one man said.

"There's just no coordination of responsibility," said Hamline-Midway resident Alice Williams. Her household got the wrong size cart. "We were told to call the city, so we did. Then we were told to call the hauler."

"I'm paying more for half of the service," said Hamline-Midway resident Rosie O'Brien. "I'm making it work, but I resent it a lot."

Others have seen much higher costs. "I'm just being gouged," said Merriam Park resident Paula Laudenbach. Hers is a single-income household where a small amount of trash is generated. "My neighbors are happy because they're paying less, but I am paying significantly more."

Owners of multi-family properties said they've had to pass along increased trash costs to their tenants. Joe Stinar owns fourplexes in area neighborhoods. "It costs me a lot more." His tenants, who shared a cart, are paying more for service and have lost off-street parking to make room for the carts.

In duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes, the current requirement is for every unit to have a cart. In neighborhoods where multi-family properties back up against each other, the number of carts crowds the alleys. "We have nine trash and recycling containers in our alley for six people," said Como resident Nick Davis.

Others said that the effort to retain smaller haulers hasn't worked, as the number of residential trash haulers has dropped from 14 to seven. Some haulers sold their routes to other haulers. "Half of those companies you were trying to protect are gone," said Stinar.

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