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Como bids adieu to Sparky V

Sibley Bike Depot 'peddles' bicycles, fosters community

By JAN WILLMS

A small sign identifies the shop at 712 University Ave. as Sibley Bike Depot. Open the door, walk down a hallway, and sounds of activity can be heard. It is a warm Wednesday evening, and a room is filled with people of various ages working on bikes in different stages of repair.

It is open shop day, and volunteers are working with neighborhood residents who may be fixing up a bike or building one for themselves. There is a sense of community in the shop that has been open at this location for the past year and a half.

"Moving here was like a rebirth of our organization," said Jason Tanzman, volunteer and youth coordinator. "We brought some bright new people on board."

The Sibley Bike Depot had been located in downtown St. Paul for several years. It started as a community hub of the Minnesota Bike and Pedestrian Alliance, a statewide advocacy group serving St. Paul commuters.

"People would ride to work,

and maybe leave their bike to be worked on during the day," he said. "We were serving people in the community. But the problem with the whole advocacy thing is that it was a lot of work, as well as the work of running a bike shop. We stopped doing the statewide advocacy and remained as just a community hub, doing affordable repairs."

"Moving here was like a rebirth of our organization."

- Jason Tanzman

Volunteer and youth coordinator

Tanzman said the shop is now open to anyone to use the stands and tools for free.

"We're a community bike resource shop, teaching people how to maintain their bikes for themselves," he said.

Sibley Bike Depot has a number of different programs. Tanzman said the shop sells used bikes for between \$80 and \$200.

"Our main source of funding is low-level grants, and we get contributions and earn some money teaching classes for organizations," he said.

He said the St. Paul Connection gets funding from the St. Paul Public Schools to pay for a number of bike maintenance classes for youth.

"What we do is try to make

bikes affordable," Tanzman said. He said people can volunteer to work at the Bike Depot and receive \$7 in credit towards bikes and parts for every hour worked.

"If they put in 120 hours, they can get a \$140 bike," he said. They record their volunteer hours in a binder.

"Youths come in, and homeless folks who can earn a bike



Sibley Bike Depot worker Kevin Kalla checks a bike wheel as he makes repairs to a bike at the Bike Depot. (Photo by Liberty Willms)

they can rely on," Tanzman said. "College students and all kinds of people come in."

He said Sibley Bike Depot has a nine-member working board of directors.

"Each board member staffs one shift per week at the shop," Tanzman said.

"We have board members directly involved, who teach classes and do all the work," he said. "There's not enough money to hire a full-time staff."

Tanzman was a board member from 2006-2008 before moving into a staff role this year.

He became involved with biking when his uncle gave him an Italian bike for his 16th birthday. He lived in Chicago, and he said the bike opened up new worlds for him.

"I could go farther and faster without bugging my parents for rides," Tanzman said. "I didn't get a driver's license until I was 22."

He got involved in bike activities as a social and political statement, connecting with the Sibley Bike Depot in 2000.

"I'm in the process of becoming a League of American Bicyclists safety instructor," Tanzman said. "We want to develop a safe riding curriculum."

Besides the earn-a-bike program and open shop, Sibley Bike Depot offers bike maintenance education for youth, bike recycling and bike donations.

The bike shop has several community partners. An example of one of those partners is the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT).

"We help them get bikes to clients," Tanzman said. Aug. 10 was fix a bike day for CVT.

"Volunteers fixed up bikes for CVT to give to their clients," he said, "getting as many bikes done as possible."



Sibley Bike Depot is a community bike resource shop, teaching people how to maintain their bikes for themselves. (Photo by Liberty Willms)

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Monitor in a Minute

Turf Club obtains café license

Chairs and tables are outside of the Turf Club, 1601 University Av. It's the latest area establishment to obtain a liquor outdoor service area/sidewalk café license. The St. Paul City Council voted unanimously July 15 to grant the license and to waive a 45-day waiting period.

Hamline-Midway Coalition recommended approval of the license and agreed to support waiver of the 45-day waiting period. No one contacted city officials to object to the license.

The Turf Club is the beneficiary of a city ordinance passed earlier this year that allows bar-restaurants to seek the licenses under changes to regulations. The previous regulations called for a consent petition signed by at least 90 percent of the residential property owners within a 300 foot radius of the business's proposed patio. Because of complaints that some property owners never responded to requests to review and sign the petitions, the City Council set new regulations that allow fewer consent petition signatures in exchange for meeting other conditions.

Turf Club employees were only about to get signatures from two of nine residential property owners, or 29 percent. The employees went door to door to obtain signatures and sent registered letters to some neighbors, but were unable to contact them. No negative feedback was received and no one requested that the license request go to a legislative hearing.

City Council members agreed that a good faith effort had been made to obtain signatures and approved the license with nine conditions. The conditions, which are standard for this type of license, include requirements to keep at least 48 inches of sidewalk space clear for

pedestrians, to stack tables and chairs when they are not in use, and to keep the tables, chairs and area in a clean and sanitary condition.

City to fight decision on billboards

St. Paul will fight a June court decision against the city's effort to regulate billboards. The St. Paul City Council voted unanimously July 22 to hire Briggs and Morgan to be special counsel representing the city in the case of Clear Channel Outdoor Inc. versus the City of St. Paul.

Briggs and Morgan was hired at the request of City Attorney John Choi.

Compensation of the outside counsel will not exceed \$260 per hour, in line with a city policy on attorneys' fees.

In June U.S. District Court Judge Donovan Frank ruled that the city didn't give reasons for approving a 2006 ordinance that bans billboard extensions. The council banned the extensions outright; the Planning Commission had recommended additional regulations for the extensions.

Some of the extensions cited as most distracting to motorists have been those on the billboards along I-94 in the Midway area.

In court documents Clear Channel called the city's actions arbitrary and capricious and a violation of state law and the equal protection and due process clauses in the United States Constitution. Frank agreed that the council's decision to adopt the ordinance was arbitrary and capricious and that it is unenforceable.

Billboard extensions typically consist of lettering or objects attached to the top, side or front of a billboard. Billboard extensions were studied by city planners and the Planning Commission in 2005-2006, and 2006 the city banned extensions that are letters, pic-

tures or objects.

After the ordinance was adopted, Clear Channel filed suit against the city in August 2006. The billboard company contended that St. Paul showed no reason to ban the extension. The ban is also seen as harmful to Clear Channel's ability to lease billboard space. Clear Channel has almost 400 St. Paul billboards, the most any billboard company has in the city.

No timelines for the appeal have been announced. It will go to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. The legal action is just the latest salvo in more than a decade's squabbles over billboards and billboard regulation in St. Paul.

City approves maintenance projects

Como Park facilities, Merriam Park Recreation Center and Fire Station 22 will get some needed improvements. The St. Paul City Council unanimously approved 2009 capital maintenance projects July 1, at a cost of \$1.832 million. That funding will cover 36 projects throughout the city at parks, recreation centers, libraries, fire stations, public works and police facilities.

Several Como facilities will be funded, with the largest project (\$175,000) for replacement of the air handler of the marine mammal facility. The large cat facility will get a new furnace, at a cost of \$142,000. Skylights will be replaced in the primate building, at a cost of \$120,000. Seven other smaller zoo, maintenance and conservatory projects were also funded.

Merriam Park Recreation Center will get new gym lights, at a cost of \$9,500. It is the only area recreation center funded this year.

Fire Station 22, at front and Marion, will received \$69,000 for new windows.

No area police facilities or libraries are slated for major capital maintenance this year.

Every year city departments submit capital maintenance requests, which are then reviewed and ranked by the CIB Committee. Committee recommendations then go to the mayor and City Council for approval. The capital maintenance program has been in place since 1986.

St. Paul seeks money for vacant houses

St. Paul is seeking \$45.86 million in federal economic recovery act funds to demolish or repair vacant houses. The St. Paul City Council unanimously approved the funding request July 8. The funds would be awarded through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

If the city receives the money it would be used for property acquisition, rehabilitation, redevelopment, land-banking and program administration. The funds would be directed toward the city's Invest St. Paul neighborhoods. Those areas include part of North End, Frogtown and Summit-University, in the Aurora-St. Anthony neighborhood.

Other Invest St. Paul neighborhoods are Dayton's Bluff, Payne-Phalen and part of the West End. The city was awarded federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds of \$10.5 million in a previous funding round. That money hasn't been received yet.

The federal government should announce a decision on the second round application in the fall. The application is due at U.S. Housing and urban Development (HUD) July 17.

For this second application, city officials estimate that they will be able to sell about 120 of the houses they purchase and put \$12 million back into the city's Invest St. Paul program. That would bring the total available for projects to \$58 million.

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Tide may be turning for replacing keenly missed Como Park Pool

By JANE MCCLURE

Is the tide turning for a replacement swimming pool at Como Park? As decision time for a pool approaches at City Hall, pool replacement has won two votes of support.

On July 15 the St. Paul Parks and Recreation Commission unanimously passed a resolution of support for a new pool. The Como (District 10) Community Council unanimously adopted its own resolution in support of a replacement pool July 21.

Replacement of the pool has been a topic of controversy for several months. Some neighborhood residents and the Como Park Alliance, a group that formed last year to organize around park issues, have raised questions about pool replacement. Some have opposed replaced outright, saying it would bring too much traffic to an already busy park area.

Now pool supporters are beginning to make their voices heard, calling for its replacement and saying that their families and others miss the pool. The pool was demolished this spring after it could no longer be repaired. Pool supporters say their concerns have been drowned out by a vocal minority.

The pool narrowly missed out on funding in the 2010-2011 Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) process. Mayor Chris Coleman, who wants to see the pool replaced, could put it back into his proposed budget. The 2010 city budget was to be unveiled Aug. 11, after this issue of the Monitor went to press.

The budget question has loomed over the recent debates and votes of support. "Until we know where the project is in the CIB process, it's hard to represent what will happen," said Parks and Recreation Director Mike Hahn.

"At this point we have a plan and no money," said Don Gagne, pool project manager for St. Paul Parks and Recreation. The pool has recently obtained about \$2 million in state funding but that won't even cover half of its budget.

Pool supporters and opponents packed the two July meetings, with more than two dozen people at the District 10 meeting. At the district council meeting neighborhood residents heard a review of the community task force process that resulted in a pool design including a series of three pools, a lazy river and space for lap swimming, diving and shallow depth water activities.

"It's not like the old 1965 Como Pool," Gagne said. But nor would the proposed pool be the large water park some neighbors have feared.

The old pool could accommodate a maximum of 33 bathers; the new could accommodate 540. The recently renovated Highland pool can hold up to 824.

Gagne said the planning

process has also given Parks and Recreation the opportunity to look at making the park work better, in the area around the pool. The pool site is near McMurray fields, the outdoor classroom and tennis courts, as well as the Humane Society for Companion Animals. Streets and parking areas would be redesigned. Pool improvements wouldn't be made without improving the streets and parking.

Part of the July 21 District 10 discussions centered on how pool impacts could be mitigated and whether the pool projects and related projects could be built in stages. But that also prompted some debate as some thought the pool and improvements should be built all at once and not in a piecemeal fashion.

District 10 Board member Ken Kunkle brought forward the resolution supporting a replacement pool. He said the resolution doesn't address pool size or features, just replacement.

"I personally like the design and don't have issues with it, but this resolution doesn't address that," he said.

Kunkle and other neighborhood residents said there is misinformation about the level of



Pool supporters are now beginning to make their voices heard, calling for its replacement and saying that their families and others miss the pool. The pool was demolished this spring after it could no longer be repaired. Pool supporters say their concerns have been drowned out by a vocal minority.

community support for the pool. He and other District 10 board members emphasized that before July 21, the council had taken no position. Kunkle noted the community task force voted

7-2 for the pool.

"People are getting the wrong impression of our position," he said. His family, which used the old pool, has a six-year-old child. "I don't think we

should have the city think the community does not want a facility." The Como Park Alliance's own online survey had 21 of 34 respondents say online that they want a pool at Como Park.

Other board members agreed. "I live in a neighborhood full of kids," said District 10 Board Member Barbara Clark. "Four of them are mine. There are members of the community who want a pool back in place – I want a pool back in place."

"Our neighborhood misses the pool," said Como resident Vicky Stewart, who served as the Ward Four representative on the task force. The project needs support "or it won't get replaced."

While admitting that there is "large support" for a pool at Como, park neighbor Chi Insook said the resolution could do more damage than good. He also said it is irresponsible to discuss the pool without doing more to address the traffic issues.

Neighborhood resident and Como Park Alliance activist Susan Janda agreed. "It seems strange to me that we would build a larger, more attractive pool in a location where we spend time going back and forth about traffic," she said.

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Como neighbors weigh merits of permit parking

By JANE MCCLURE

Residential permit parking could help home owners west of Como Park, who sometime must haul groceries or tote children long distances to and from their homes. But would allowing residents to set up a parking district and obtain permits cause problems elsewhere in the neighborhood?

That's a question St. Paul Public Works, neighborhood residents and Como Community Council must answer in the weeks ahead. The council's Neighborhood Relations Committee is working with city staff and neighborhood residents on permit parking issues and how those issues relate to the parking demand around Como Park. The committee will have an update for the council August, with more study likely in the months ahead.

How permit parking is scrutinized could be weighed in conjunction with results of this year's use of the Como Shuttle, which is meant to alleviate parking and traffic demand created by the park.

St. Paul has had residential permit parking districts for more

than two decades. There are more than 40 districts around colleges and universities, hospitals, the downtown area, places where bus commuters park and near busy shopping districts including Victoria Crossing and Highland Village.

Permit parking starts at the neighborhood level. Petitions to set up a district are obtained from public Works. Residential property owners must submit petitions, with at least 60 percent of the property owners on a block signing on. The requests then go to the neighborhood district council for review and to the St. Paul City Council for approval. A public hearing is held at the City Council and most district councils consider the requests at neighborhood meetings before making a recommendation to the city.

Once a district is approved signs go up and property owners have the right to buy permits for themselves and their guests. Vehicles parked on a street without a permit can get tickets for illegal parking.

Permits are not specific to an address or street but to a permit area. A permit for one area, such

as Victoria Crossing, cannot be used to park near United Hospital.

The complication west of Como Park is that much of the area is already covered by a separate set of parking restrictions that go into effect during the Minnesota State Fair. There are also unique parking restrictions that are used during the Hmong Soccer Festival.

Some Midway Parkway area residents have been seeking permit parking for more than a year. But there have been questions among city staff and some City Council members about the overall effectiveness of residential permit parking throughout St. Paul.

One issue is that in other areas, as parking gets pushed off of one street due to permits, the parking demand moves elsewhere – and more residents petition for the districts to expand. The district around the University of St. Thomas grew so large; residents in the Marshall Avenue area were using their permits to park south of Summit Avenue. The city broke that district into several smaller districts a few years ago.

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Residential permit parking could help home owners west of Como Park, who sometime must haul groceries or tote children long distances to and from their homes. (Photo by Andrew Fossbinder)

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St. Paul Council discusses allegations against Club Cancun

By JANE MCCLURE

Club Cancun may have had the latest allegations against it dismissed by the St. Paul City Council but that doesn't mean the longtime Rice Street nightclub is off of the hook.

Before dismissing a noise complaint July 15, City Council members scolded club owner Richard Defoe and said he must do more to address neighborhood issues.

Club Cancun is at 1638 Rice St. The building there has housed various bars and nightclubs for more than 40 years. Current owner Richard Defoe bought the property in 1997, sold it in 2007 and then got it back in 2008 from the previous owner.

One of the issues raised when Defoe reopened Club Cancun was noise. He took a number of measures to muffle music and other noise, but has still drawn complaints.

The issue went before an ad-

ministrative law judge in May. The judge recommended that the City Council dismiss the complaint. But what dismayed may North End activists and City Council members was how the judge used his report to single out one neighbor for raising concerns about the noise. They were further upset by newspaper coverage of the complaint.

The City Attorney's Office and Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) received the hearing testimony at length, and also recommend dismissal based on the judge's recommendation that evidence presented by Club Cancun outweighed the evidence from the city.

Council members reluctantly agreed with that recommendation. "The staff recommendation doesn't give us a lot of wiggle room," said Ward Five Council Member Lee Helgen. He said that at some point, the history of the club and its problems, rather than one incident, need to be

considered when setting penalties.

Helgen urged club owner Defoe to "come up with a new business model" that is less disruptive to neighbors and that will minimize impact on the surrounding community.

"It's very possible to run a good bar and not be a nightmare to the neighbors," said Ward Two Council Member Dave Thune. He and Ward Three Council Member Pat Harris said what is happening at the nightclub comes down to management issues. Harris said what is happening at Club Cancun is "unacceptable."

"We've been at this for too long," Harris added. "I think we're all just fed up with it."

"Figure it out - honestly," said Council President Kathy Lantry. She told Defoe he "ought to be ashamed of himself."

Defoe's attorney, Dennis

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



Ward Five Council Member Lee Helgen said that at some point, the history of Cancun Club and its problems, rather than one incident, need to be considered when setting penalties.

Bike Depot

Continued from page 1

One of those volunteers is board president John Carlson, who became involved with Sibley Bike Depot when he started commuting to work.

"I bought my first winter bike at the shop when it was located downtown," he said. "I liked the work they were doing and the community concept of the bike shop."

"One thing that always impressed me is the difference in people's backgrounds," Carlson said. "Kids are working next to women."

Another part of Sibley Bike Depot that Carlson likes is the recycling of bike parts.

"We're recycling good usable parts," he said.

Terry Hanson is a volunteer who started working in the downtown shop, first getting introduced to the Bike Depot as he began volunteering to earn a bike.

"I got my own bike and kept volunteering," he said. "I change flat tires and do simple things, but my skills have grown. There are only a few parts of a bike I'm not able to work on yet."

Hanson and his brother also have purchased a rickshaw bike to provide rides for people at various festivals in the area. Hanson gives people rides to and from their parked cars at festivals at Harriet Island and at the Minnesota State Fair.

Hanson, who does not drive, said a bicycle and bus are his main modes of transportation.

"I like helping out people who don't know how to repair their bikes, showing them things," Hanson said.

Reflecting once more on the mission of the Sibley Bike Depot, Tanzman said the shop has tried to create a space where people can get to know each other.

"We're building community and trying to empower people in the do-it-yourself ethic of maintaining their bikes," he said. "We're trying to do outreach and serve the folks who live closest to us. They can't pay \$400 for a bike and \$200 a year for bike repair."

By teaching people in the area to maintain their own bikes, and by donating 250 bikes last year, Sibley Bike Depot is fulfilling its mission.

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Como Zoo's oldest sea lion, and the second oldest sea lion in North America, passed away last week at the age of 31.

Como Zoo bids farewell to Sparky, its oldest sea lion

Como Zoo's oldest sea lion, and the second oldest sea lion in North America, passed away last week at the age of 31. The average life expectancy of a sea lion is 15-25 years. Millions of people, young and old, have been entertained by this California sea lion as he starred in the "Sparky Show" from 1981 up until his retirement in 2001. In 2001 both he and his trainer, Norm Byng decided 20 years in show business was enough and passed the beach ball on to the current, and sixth sea lion to take on the coveted Sparky role, Sealia (CC) The Sea Lion. While CC has assumed the stage name Sparky, the 20 year veteran performer was actually named Sparky V.

Even though Sparky V retired in 2001, he was still trained daily. Senior Zookeeper Allison Jungheim said "he was eager to please and incredibly patient which allowed us many opportunities we would not have had with a typical male sea lion. He would allow zookeepers to brush his teeth, put eye drops in his eyes, collect blood samples, per-

form physical therapy for his aging joints, x-rays, and even pull a loose tooth." In the 1990's, a difficult and dangerous surgical procedure was performed which would normally require putting the animal under using anesthesia. Zookeepers trained Sparky V to expose his belly, thus allowing injections of a local anesthetic and veterinarians performed the surgery at Como Zoo all while he was awake, thus minimizing the health risk. "It was an incredible accomplishment that illustrates the purpose in training these animals" said Michelle Furrer, Como Park Zoo & Conservatory Manager.

"Como Zoo is proud of the great work we do with our animals, and this animal's long life is a result of the amazing care by zoo keepers and veterinary staff, as well as the Zoo industry embracing and learning more about geriatric animals in captivity" said Furrer. "Great medical care, carefully formulated diets, and comfortable housing for all Como's animals contribute to the excellent health and lifespan of

our animals."

While many associate the "Sparky Show" with a seal, it has actually been a sea lion that has been the star of the educational performance and attraction at Como Zoo since 1956 when Archie Brand brought his traveling sea lion show permanently to Como Zoo. Sea lions, such as Sparky V and CC have external ear flaps, are able to rotate their hind flippers beneath them to walk on all four flippers, and use their front flippers to propel themselves through the water. By comparison, seals have no external ear flap, move on land much like an inchworm, and use their back flippers to swim.

As a performer, Sparky V wore many hats; among them he played a lifeguard, a trumpet player, a baseball player, and a lounge singer. Sparky V passed away peacefully on Monday, August 3, 2009, and will be deeply missed by all who knew and cared for him, including his fin footed friends Mystic, Max, CC, Chino & Ginger.

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LETTERS

A new Farmers' Market location?

As I read the recent article in the *Monitor* about SPROUT—"SPROUT" project germinates perfect union of soil, water and community partners"—I found myself once again wondering what would become of the vacant lot at University and Simpson Avenues. Now that the building is gone and grass is trying to grow there, I believe this would be an ideal location for a new farmers' market/community market.

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As I write this, the lot is now home to a new fence and some bags of garbage (it would have been nice if the fencing company had removed the garbage before putting up the fence). This space has the potential to offer locally-grown food to the Midway neighborhood, and, potentially, to future light rail travelers on University Avenue. The grass growing there inspired me to imagine a garden and trees, a community mural created by local kids and teens on the wall of the adjacent building, benches for resting and visiting, and seasonal farmers market stands overflowing with beans, onions, carrots, peas, and more. Why should we have to drive to the farmers market off of Lexington Avenue? Or downtown? Why should we have to drive at all, when this lot has possibilities.

Jenni Bowring
Hamline-Midway

Comments on Central Corridor under review as project chugs along path

By JANE MCCLURE

Comments on the Central Corridor final environment statement or FEIS, due July 27, are undergoing review as the light rail project moves along toward an August 19 deadline.

The comments become part of the public record and were gathered during a comment period that began in late June.

The Aug. 19 decision is key to the light rail project moving ahead. It is the final step in the FEIS process and allows Metropolitan Council to seek a final design agreement for the light rail project.

Several area groups did review the environmental studies, which stack up about one foot high in paper form. The documents are the result of 30 months' detailed planning and studies, said Mark Fuhrmann, project director for the proposed light rail project.

Fuhrmann jokes that the documents are "light summer reading."

The comment period is just one of many action steps needed for the 11-mile light rail line to become reality. The Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) published the FEIS June 26. The FEIS gives detailed descriptions of the light rail line's route, explains why it was chosen over alternatives and gives a history of the project itself.

Light rail in the Central Corridor has been discussed for more than two decades, with routes studied including University Av-

enue, the Interstate 94 median, railroad right-of-way and Pierce Butler Route. In the 1980s I-94 was chosen as the route through area neighborhoods. But those plans had to be shelved after state officials wouldn't provide needed funding.

The current study process got underway in 2001, led by Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority. When the draft EIS was done and University Avenue selected as much of the local project route, Central Corridor was turned over to Metropolitan Council.

The council has led the studies since then. The council voted to adopt the route as the locally preferred alternative on Sept. 3, 2008, following three public hearings.

The final EIS reviews the history of the previous studies and provides information on project changes made since 2006. One of the biggest changes made area groups and the St. Paul City Council lobbied hard for is that of adding infrastructure for three in-fill stations at Hamline, Victoria and Western. If there is contingency funding available during project construction, one of those stations could be built in conjunction with the project. The Central Corridor Management Committee reviewed scenarios in July that laid out costs and timelines for

when at least one of the stations can be added. No decisions were made.

The FEIS covers other aspects of the projects including station

whether more work is needed by the project staff.

Once design approval is obtained from the FTA, Central Corridor project staff will then seek what is called a full funding grant agreement. This provides the federal funds, which will pay for 50 percent of the \$914 million project. The grant agreement will be submitted to the FTA in 2010. That's when construction on Central Corridor will begin on University Avenue.

At this point project staff has a tentative ranking of "medium high" in hand from the FTA. The federal agency has been reviewing aspects of the FEIS throughout the studies.

Fuhrmann said that ranking was pushed by commitments of local and state funding. What has also aided the project in the eyes of the FTA is the City of St. Paul's detailed Central Corridor Development Strategy, which provides long-range plans for redevelopment along the rail route.

Concurrent with the FEIS comment period, Metropolitan Council is also seeking what is called a Letter of No Prejudice. That request was filed with the FTA June 30. The letter is another federal approval needed for the light rail project to move ahead. The FTA is expected to act on the letter at the same time it releases its decision on the FEIS.

While that is going on Metropolitan Council and its Transportation Committee will also review the comments received and determine if the FEIS is adequate or if more work is needed. The council's Transportation Committee will take up the issue Aug. 10, with the full council voting Aug. 12.

Yet another process going on at the same time is that of utility relocation in downtown St. Paul. Central Corridor project staff opened bids on utility relocation July 22, with the idea of having Metropolitan Council award the utility work contract at a special meeting Aug. 24. Most of the utility work slated for this summer and fall will take place in downtown St. Paul. The work has to be timed so that it doesn't interfere with District Energy's extensive heating and cooling system, which covers most of downtown St. Paul. Getting the downtown work done this year is critical to preserving the rest of the project schedule, said Fuhrmann. If all of the upcoming federal approvals fall into place, construction of the rail line would start in mid-2010 at its east end, with completion and operations getting underway in 2014.

Some initial downtown utility work was to get underway in early July but was postponed so that more information could be given to bus riders. The Fourth and Minnesota area was to be restricted starting July 6 but that has been postponed until late July.



tions, pedestrian safety, economic impacts, impacts on cultural and historic resources, pedestrian crossings, impacts on the area transit system and locations of various transmission stations and signal boxes needed for the rail line.

After the FEIS comment period closed, the FTA will review the comments and issue what is called a Record of Decision on the Central Corridor. This is expected Aug 19, according to Fuhrmann. The FTA could decide whether the project should move ahead or

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Tickets and treats are on us; bring the family! Use the coupons here.

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By DEBORAH BROTZ

On Saturday morning at 8 a.m. when most Como residents are asleep in bed, a dozen fitness-minded women are lined up in a circle in Como Park near the "Torpedo" standing in the yoga warrior pose. The women, who are of all ages standing in the warrior pose, look like if they had a shield and sword they would be ready to fight.

Sheila Burns, owner of Bliss Yoga Studio and teacher for Yoga in the Park, instructs her students in the warrior pose using a calm voice telling them where to put their body parts and when to take a breath. This challenging pose strengthens the entire body while improving mental capacity and self control.

District 10 Community Council and Bliss Yoga Studio, at 1563 Como Ave., are offering residents Yoga in the Park for five Saturdays, beginning July 25 and ending Aug. 22, from 8-8:45 a.m. The class is held on the grass near the "Torpedo" southwest of the pavilion and south parking lot off Lexington Avenue. Participants should bring a towel or mat and water, if needed. There will be no class if it is raining, and donations will be accepted.

Women come to the class for a variety of reasons, and Susan Janda is no exception. Janda, 44, who has two children, ages 2 and 5, and has been attending Yoga in the Park, is excited about the chance to do yoga again.

"I haven't done it for awhile," she said. "Laziness, children, everything gets in the way of going to an exercise class. The draw was

Yoga comes to Como Park



On Saturday morning at 8 a.m. when most Como residents are asleep in bed, a dozen fitness-minded women are lined up in a circle near the "Torpedo," taking steps toward the the yoga warrior pose. The women, who were of all ages, soon looked as if they had a shield and sword and were ready to fight. (Photo by Andrew Fossbinder)

doing it outside and walking to class. It was the perfect time, perfect place, and perfect setting."

Although yoga is different from other District 10 services, Janda is glad they are bringing it to Como.

"I was just thrilled," she said. "I had hoped that when they open

the Como Pool, Parks and Recreation will offer yoga there. I was thrilled District 10 took the initiative to offer this. It's really a delightful thing."

The way Janda feels after a yoga class is what makes the experience enjoyable for her.

"You have a feeling that you inhabit your body better after class," she said. "I was going on my own to a pretty high-powered yoga studio on the other side of town. I practiced a lot at home. This class fits in my busy schedule much better."

As a classical violinist with the Minnesota Opera Orchestra, Janda hopes yoga will get her moving.

"It's good for me," she said.

"It's good for the neighborhood to participate in something being offered. It's designed for people living immediately in the area. I love that it's something I can walk to instead of drive to. It fits my budget."

Janda hopes Yoga in the Park will continue.

"I would be a supporter to see this continue," she said. "The person who is doing it is donating her time. If you're a novice, it's easy to get started if you're new to it."

Burns says the idea for yoga at Como came from District 10.

"Rhonda DeBough, one of the community organizers for District 10, called me and asked me if I was interested in teaching Yoga

in the Park," said Burns. "That's how it got started."

The practice of yoga does many things for people.

"It calms the mind, it helps to open up the body, and if the body is tight, it can help relieve tension," said Burns. "It increases flexibility, can improve sleep, lower blood pressure, and increase a sense of balance and strength. It's wonderful. It can help a person feel calmer. That's just a really nice thing. It's really good for relieving mental and physical stress."

Burns says you can notice the benefits of yoga after the first yoga practice.

"Usually, people notice they're calmer, have a greater sense of well-being, are less stressed, are more flexible, and are more aware of being in their body," she said. "They become more present."

At Yoga in the Park, Burns teaches some very basic yoga poses that improve flexibility, strength, and balance. Participants do standing poses, seated poses, and lying down poses.

"It's been very wonderful," said Burns. "The first morning, we had 12 or more people there. Anybody can come. It was very serene. It was a really nice event."

According to Burns, yoga has grown in popularity in the last 10 years.

"It's definitely gone up," she said. "More people are practicing yoga than ever before."

Doing Yoga in the Park was an opportunity for Burns to teach yoga with her community in a beautiful setting.

"We all share the park," she said. "When Rhonda asked me, I thought it would be a great way to get together with neighbors and practice this wonderful thing in this beautiful summer we're having in a beautiful park."

For participants who can't make it to Yoga in the Park, Bliss Yoga Studio is offering free introductory yoga classes on Saturdays, at 11 a.m., in August.

Burns hopes more people will come to Yoga in the Park.

"I hope anybody who is even a little bit curious will come and give it a try and join us," she said. "Maybe, this will turn out to be something we do every summer. We're here to serve the community."

For further information, call 651-230-6510 or visit BlissYogaS-



"I was thrilled District 10 took the initiative to offer this. It's really a delightful thing."

- Susan Janda

Ramsey County's mobile collection truck for harmful household chemicals is coming to St. Paul in August



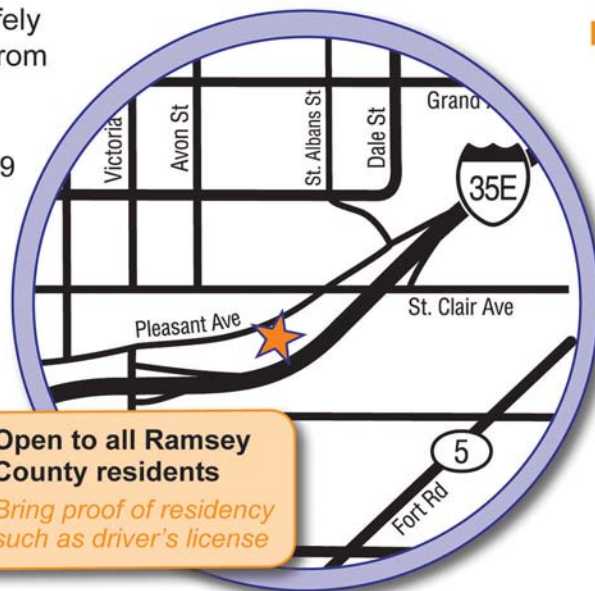
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Como Park's Japanese Lantern Lighting Fest aglow Aug. 16

Taiko drums, martial arts, Ikebana, delicious food and other aspects of Japanese culture will take center stage at the annual Como Park Japanese Lantern Lighting Festival, a family-friendly event, reminiscent of Japan's annual Obon holiday, on Sunday, August 16, 2009 on the grounds of the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory in Como Park.

Obon is an important Japanese cultural and family holiday, at which ancestral spirits are said to revisit their families for three days. Families pay their respects at gravesites and put out offerings of food and drink on a tray before household alters. They also light lanterns or small fires outside the house to symbolically guide the souls to the home. On the last evening of Obon, lanterns again guide the spirits back to their resting places.

The theme of this year's Japanese Lantern Lighting Festival is 'The Spirit of Music.' Japan has a rich musical history that features a variety of musical in-

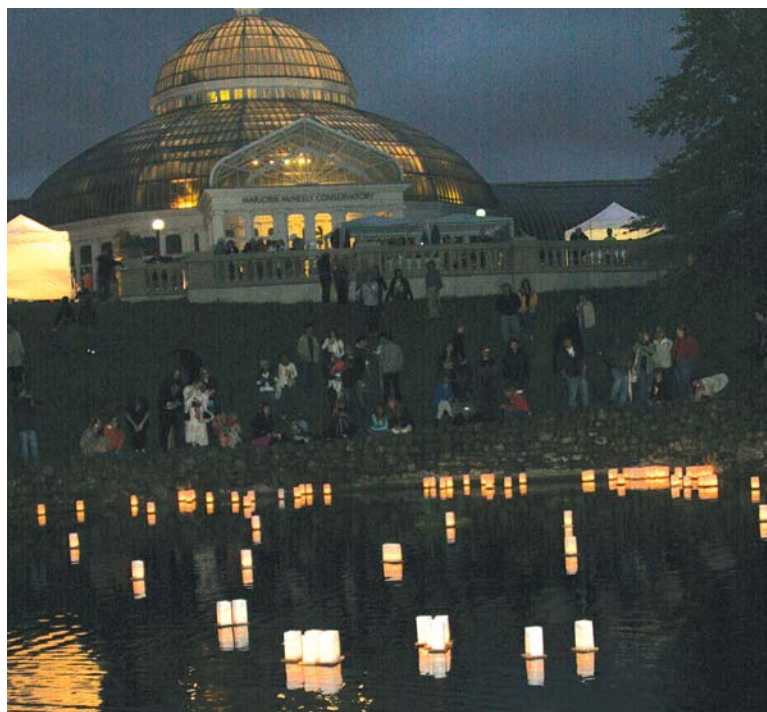
struments and genres of music. Guests will feel the beat of the taiko drum pulsing through the air as they explore the festival grounds, an ancient instrument dating back to at least the sixth or seventh century. Those strolling through the Japanese Garden will experience the soft melodies of the Shakuhachi, a bamboo flute, while others will find themselves surrounded by soothing songs played on the koto, a wooden stringed instrument considered Japan's national instrument.

The Lantern Lighting Festival encompasses Japanese tradition—through music, dance, crafts, martial arts and lanterns. The Marjorie McNeely Conservatory grounds will open at 3 p.m., and live entertainment in the Como Ordway Memorial Japanese Garden and on the main stage will begin at 3:30 p.m. Entertainment will include several taiko drumming groups, koto (Japanese sitar), shakuhachis (bamboo flutes), traditional and contemporary dance and singing. Martial arts, Ikebana (Japanese

flower arranging), origami demonstrations, and a host of other cultural exhibits and demonstrations will line several paths through the grounds. Savory Japanese food and dozens of culturally-related items will also be for sale.

The day will culminate at dusk with the main event—the lantern lighting. Stone lanterns as well as hundreds of floating paper lanterns throughout the Japanese Garden pond and the Frog Pond will create a vision of peacefulness and harmony to commemorate the dead.

The Como Park Japanese Lantern Lighting Festival, produced by Como Park Zoo and Conservatory, Japan America Society of Minnesota, and Saint Paul Nagasaki Sister City Committee will be held on Sunday, August 16, from 3 p.m.-9 p.m. Admission is \$5 per adult (13+), \$3 per child (3-12) and free for under 3 years of age. Free shuttle bus service will be available from the St. Paul Public School facility located at 1930 Como Avenue.



Taiko drums, martial arts, Ikebana, delicious food and other aspects of Japanese culture will take center stage at the annual Como Park Japanese Lantern Lighting Festival, a family-friendly event, reminiscent of Japan's annual Obon holiday, on Sunday, August 16, 2009 on the grounds of the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory in Como Park.

Club Cancun

Continued from page 5

Johnson, said his client agreed with the judge's report and recommendation that any adverse action be dismissed. Johnson said Defoe is willing to continue to work with the city and district council to address issues.

Johnson said his client was able to bring forward several witnesses to present his side of the noise dispute. Club Cancun ownership and staff will continue to work on noise issues and do what they can.

District 6 (North End-South Como) Planning Council and Patty Carlson, the neighbor sin-

gled out by the judge, said they are frustrated by the judge's report and recommendation, and the way the judge belittled Carlson's concerns. Carlson said the underlying message in the judge's recommendation will serve only to discourage others who try to make their neighborhoods better places to live. Neighbors have felt bullied by the club.

Club Cancun and its predecessors have caused problems in the North End for more than a decade, Carlson said. The recommendation to dismiss the complaint "is a slap in the face to the community," she said.

The administrative hearing on the complaint was incom-

"I have a feeling than in less than 18 months, we'll be back in this same room, having this same discussion."

- Kerry Antrim, District 6

plete, Carlson said. One concern she raised is that even though she provided names of others to testify, people weren't invited to speak. Nor was evidence allowed on previous complaints about

Club Cancun.

District 6 Community Organizer Kerri Antrim said the district council requested back in 2002 that licenses not be reissued for the club. Its crowds,

combined with those from a neighboring Maplewood nightclub, cause a number of problems in the Rice-Larpentour area.

"I don't know of other communities where streets have to be blocked off (by police) when a nightclub lets out," Antrim said.

Antrim also expressed frustration with the entire process used to deal with residents' complaints. "Residents are told to call, call, call," Antrim said. Yet the outcome of the hearing may mean people call less.

She expressed skepticism that things will change. "I have a feeling than in less than 18 months, we'll be back in this same room, having this same discussion."

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In Our Community

Events at the Hamline Midway Library

The summer fun continues at the Hamline Midway Library! Join us for Drop-in Craft Time every Friday from 3-5 pm until August 28th. Then come paint the library's sidewalk with chalk on Wednesday August 19th from 1-2:30, and enjoy a glass of refreshing lemonade (weather permitting).

The Mighty Midway Storytellers will present a special "Things That Go!" Storytime on Tuesday, August 25th at 6 p.m. Bring your kids to experience the joys of reading!

The Saints and Sinners Book Club will meet on Saturday September 12th from 1-3 p.m., and the Great Books Book Club will meet on Tuesday September 8th, from 7:15-8:45 p.m. to discuss Love in the Time of Cholera by Gabriel García Márquez.

Regular storytimes are offered every week. Storytimes are a wonderful way for children to experience the joys of reading. Bedtime Storytime is every Tuesday at 6 p.m. Toddler and Preschool Storytime is every Friday at 10:30 a.m.

The Hamline Midway Library is located at 1558 W Minnehaha Ave, Saint Paul, MN 55104 and can be contacted at 651-642-0293. Library events are free and open to the public.

Como Northtown holds book drive

Como Northtown Community Credit Union is organizing a book drive to collect new and gently used books for Como Elementary students ages 5-13. They are asking the community to help out in this event to give the children the resources to develop literacy skills and the opportunity to experience all the joy and imagination reading has to offer.

Beginning July 1st, a box will be placed in the lobby of Como Northtown Community Credit Union for you to drop off any books you wish to donate. If you do not have books to donate, you can ask our tellers how to purchase a book by making a donation. The book drive will run until August 31st and all proceeds will benefit Como Elementary to purchase books for their classroom libraries.

We collected more than 3,000 books last year and are asking for your help to expand that number this year. If you wish to make a donation or drop off a book, Como Northtown is located at 976 North Lexington Parkway in Saint Paul on the corner of Lexington and Front. Thank you and we appreciate your support of the community.

District 6 sponsors school drive

Once again it is that time of year, thinking about getting ready for school. When you are out shopping for supplies, please remember some of our families are having difficulty making ends meet and many teachers buy supplies out of their own pocket. District 6 is sponsoring a school supply drive so please drop off supplies to our office located at 213 Front Avenue or Mikes Complete Auto Care at 1174 Rice Street. Supplies will be sent to local schools and families.

Project Blue community building

Many of you have received information concerning Project Blue. If you are interested, at the next Community Building District 6 will be discussing the background of the projects as well as next steps. Community Building meets the third Wednesday of each month at 1021 Marion Street-Rice Street Recreation beginning at 6:30 p.m. Hope to see you on the 19th!

District 6 holds fall clean-up Sept. 12

Mark your calendar for the Fall Clean-up set for Saturday, September 12th. More information will be sent out.

Some of you know Marisa Gustafson has left District 6 to teach in Honduras. She will be missed by all of us! If you need to contact District 6 please use the following numbers: 651-488-4485 and district6@qwestoffice.net.

Drivers' classes offered in August

Plus 55 Driver Improvement Classes will be offered Thursday, August 20; Friday, August 21 and Thursday, August 27 beginning at 12:30 p.m. each day at Jehovah Lutheran Church, 1566 Thomas Avenue. The classes on the 20 and 21 are 8-hour classes; the class on the 27th is a 4-hour class. The classes are offered by the Minnesota Highway and Safety Department. For questions or to register call 1-888-234-1294. Participants should enter the church through the Thomas Avenue door.

Interactive Storytime at Hamline library

The Mighty Midway Storytellers will present a themed, interactive storytime for toddlers and preschoolers at 6 p.m. Tues-

day, August 25th at the Hamline Midway Library near the intersection of Minnehaha and Snelling streets.

Our theme this month is Things That Go. Join us as we race (small!!) cars and sing to tune of The Wheels on the Bus.

The storytellers present the themed story time at 6 p.m. the last Tuesday of each month. Themes to be announced.

Zion Church holds Open House August 29

A Sunday school open house will be held on Saturday, August 29th from 4 to 6 p.m. at Zion Lutheran Church, 1697 Lafond Avenue. Come and meet other parents of Sunday school kids and have preview of what the Sunday school education look like at Zion. There will be food, story telling, Music, craft and games. Come and have a fun.

Zion Lutheran holds Corn Feed August 20

Zion Lutheran Church, 1697 Lafond Ave. will hold a Corn Feed on Thursday, August 20th 5 to 7 p.m. There will be buttered roasting ears, beverages, and hot dogs with pickles onions, relish, mustard and Ketchup. Ticket prices are \$6 for ages 12 and up, \$3 for kids ages 7 to 11, free for ages and under. Tickets can be purchased at the event.

Knox Church sponsors benefit

A benefit fundraiser will be held for Knox member Ingrid Poerwantini and her seven year old daughter Jolanda Simbolon on August 23rd from 2-4 p.m. at Arnellia's, 1183 University Ave. Two live bands will perform, Maxx Band and Sli'je.

Ingrid is from Indonesia and is in the process of applying for asylum in the United States. Her immigration status is legal but does not allow her to receive public assistance for treating her Ovarian Cancer. Jolanda has Cerebral Palsy and cannot walk or talk.

The fundraiser includes a raffle for a week at a timeshare resort, an oil painting of the St. Paul skyline and a room makeover. There is also a silent auction and a separate raffle for smaller prizes every fifteen minutes. Contact persons: Joanne Mancha 651-675-9559 or Margie Johns 651-489-4092.

August activities at Rice St. Branch Library

The Rice Street Branch Library

has many fun and exciting programs planned. Please stop in and join us!

Family story times will be offered Tuesdays and Fridays from 10:30-11 a.m. Bedtime Stories will be read on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 7 p.m. Join Rice Street's storytelling experts for stories, finger plays, rhymes, and songs. All ages welcome.

Teen Time will be offered Wednesdays from 3:30-5 p.m. Join us for a rotating roster of activities each Wednesday! Book clubs, board games, video games, & crafts are just a few of the activities teens can do.

The Runescape Club will meet on Thursdays from 3:30-5 p.m. Each week it's nothin' but Runescape. Bring your friends!

Free Family Friendly Movie Matinees will be shown every Saturday at 2:00. Please stop in or call the library at 651-558-2223 to learn which movie will be shown each week.

The Saturday Sewing Circle will meet 10-11:30 on Saturdays. Bring your knitting, crocheting, embroidery or mending projects. Learn techniques and share tips with others.

Free Job Search Assistance will be offered Friday July 21 from 10:30-12:30. A consultant from Goodwill-Easter Seals will provide assistance with applications and resumes. No appointment necessary.

Senior Summer Social Time will feature the movies Casablanca on Thursday August 13 and Leatherheads on Thursday August 27. Scrabble and other board games will be offered on Thursday Aug 20. All activities begin at 1:00 pm. To register or for more information, please call Sandy at 651-293-8733. This group is offered in partnership with the Community Education Senior Program.

The North End Book Club will be discussing The Bean Trees by Barbara Kingsolver on Monday August 24, from 12:45-2:30. For more information or to register, please call Sandy at 651-293-8733. This group is also offered in partnership with the Community Education Senior Program.

A class on Purchasing or Upgrading a Computer will be offered on Tuesday, Aug. 18 from 10:15-12:15. For more information or to

register, please call Sandy at 651-293-8733. This class is offered in partnership with the Community Education Senior Program.

Free Foreclosure Counseling will be offered by the Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development on Wednesdays from 12:30-6:30. No appointment is necessary.

The Rice Street Library is located at 1011 Rice Street between Lawson and Hatch. Hours are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, 12:30-9 p.m.; Tuesday 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; and Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. The library will be closed Sept. 5, 6 & 7 in observance of Labor Day.

Help from an Ombudsman discussed Sept. 8

"How an Ombudsman Can Help," will be the topic at a luncheon for seniors on September 8 beginning at 11:30 at 1415 Englewood Avenue (lower level, Hamline Methodist Church). A representative from the Ombudsman Program of the MN Board on Aging will explain how the Office advocates for adults needing or receiving long term care. Call the office of Hamline Midway Elders 651-209-6542 to make reservations or request free transportation. A free will donation is asked for the meal. If you are a senior, caregiver or neighbor and would like information about our services or volunteer opportunities, visit www.blocknurse.org

Como-Midway Le Leche meets August 11

The next meeting of the Como-Midway La Leche Group will be on Tuesday, August 11 at 7 p.m. All expectant and nursing mothers are welcome to attend with their babies and toddlers. Call Heidi at 651-659-9527 for more information.

The September meeting of the Como-Midway La Leche Group will be on Tuesday, September 8 at 7 p.m. Call Heidi at 651-659-9527 for more information.

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St. Columba embroiled in parking fight

By JANE MCCLURE

Longstanding disagreements over parking at and around the Church of St. Columba could land before the St. Paul City Council in the weeks ahead. On a 5-2 vote July 27 the city's Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) approved two variances for the parish at 1327 Lafond Av. The variances would allow expansion of off-street parking off of Lafond.

A BZA motion to table the matter and send it back to the community for more discussion failed on a 3-4 vote. Some board members said there should be more time to discuss the plans, especially since the site plan was changed. But others said the plans should be approved.

Plans calls for expanding the parking area between the church and property to the east, which is owned by the Franciscan Brothers of Peace. The expanded lot will serve both facilities. But it needs a 16-foot setback variance along Lafond, as a well as a variance of the city's parking lot screening requirements. The city requires parking lots next to houses to be visually screened. Church officials want to put up a four-foot black vinyl fence and plantings, which also requires a variance.

What has frustrated neighbors as well as some St. Columba parishioners is what they see as a lack of communication over the parking issues and a lack of attention to solutions other than building more off-street parking. If the variances are appealed to the City Council, the appellants will have to argue that the BZA made errors in its findings.

Father Hoang Nguyen of St. Columba said more parking is needed to accommodate parishioners, especially senior citizens who cannot walk long distances. He said that people who come to services late often cannot find parking that is convenient to the church.

Nguyen was critical of neighbors who object to the parking lot plans. "Those who complain about parking (in the neighborhood) are the same ones who oppose the

"There's been a long-standing tension over parking in the neighborhood."

- Franciscan brother Paul O'Donnell

parking lot plans."

Paul O'Donnell, one of the Franciscan brothers, said the group bought the land from the parish in 1989. The group had planned to build a garage there but never did so. The Franciscans would share the parking lot and use it for their food shelf and other programs. Fifteen people currently live at the Queen of Peace Priory.

"There's been a longstanding tension over parking in the neighborhood," he said. O'Donnell and others said that's why more off-street parking is needed.

Some neighbors and parish members spoke for the expanded parking lot, saying it is needed to get vehicles off of neighborhood streets. They said the church has a growing Vietnamese membership that needs to be accommodated.

Peter Mihn, who owns three properties on Lafond, said his driveways are sometimes blocked on Sundays by church-goers and that more parking is needed.

Some church supporters objected to the district council's process of review of the variance. Hamline-Midway Coalition's executive committee recommended denial of the variances, overruling a recommendation from its land use committee to recommend approval. There was disagreement over communications about the variance and its review.

"We're well aware that parking is a major issue," said HMC Executive Director Michael Jon Olson. What concerns the district council and many neighbors is the size and configuration of the pro-

posed lot, as well as the need to design something that is more environmentally sensitive.

HMC is concerned that building such a large parking lot would change the look and feel of the neighborhood, with a loss of much green space and trees. The fence and proposed screening are another objection. Building a large parking lot is in conflict with the Hamline-Midway District 11 Plan

and the neighborhood's transportation plan.

The district council would like the opportunity to discuss other lot configurations and other ways to address the parish's parking needs.

There are longstanding conflicts in the area over parish parking, said HMC Board President Cheryl Gferer. "There is a parking problem in the neighborhood but we think there are other ways to address it."

Neighbors want the church to find other ways to meet its parking needs without simply paving more green space, and to not use a public alley as their private parking lot. They also question why some parishioners cannot park on neighborhood streets and walk up to a block to get to church. Another concern is the amount of paved area already on church property and the lack of attention to water runoff. Yet another issue raised is that St. Columba only plows half

of the alley and sometimes push snow onto private property.

Helen Zummer, a longtime St. Columba member who lives on Lafond near the church, said not all of the parishioners know about the lot plans. She also called for more discussion with the community before any new plan is approved. Zummer said the church doesn't consistently maintain its own off-street parking and handicapped-accessible parking.

Blair Avenue neighbors said they have trouble getting through the alley and even accessing their garages due to spillover parking. "The church has dealt with us in an indifferent fashion," said Blair Avenue resident Alexander Dixon. Parishioners use the alley for parking but block parking on Lafond in front of the church on Sundays.

"Putting up 'Thou shalt not park here' signs in front of the church does nothing for the parking problem in the alley," Dixon said.

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Parking

Continued from page 4

Parking around Como Park could bring its own issues. Elizabeth Stifler of Public Works said city officials from Public Works and Parks and Recreation would like to continue to study parking issues around the park as a whole before the district request goes forward. It's possible there could be studies over the winter. But that would mean not implementing a solution until 2010 at the earliest.

"We're trying to look at this as a whole neighborhood issue, rather than as a small area," Stifler said.

Stifler said not everyone likes permit parking. "Permit parking is not a perfect system," she said. "Some people hate it."

"But some people like it," said Dennis O'Rourke, who lives on Midway Parkway. He is among the neighbors wanting permits.

When Como residents sought permit parking last year city staff asked them to wait to see how implementation of the Como Shuttle would work before taking the permit request forward. The shuttle to

and from the park began operating this year. Public Works has been studying parking demand since the shuttle began operations.

Despite shuttle operations, some neighbors say they've seen more demand for parking. "This has been the worst," said O'Rourke. "It's been like the state fair, every other weekend."

O'Rourke said neighborhood residents are following the city's own process to obtain residential permit parking. He questioned whether the arguments over spillover parking are a "red herring."

But other neighbors said a study is needed. "We have our own parking issues," said Panod Klangtruantoke. His family lives on Arona and he would be concerned if permit parking were implemented without a discussion about the whole Como area. Residents of other streets, including Almond and Churchill, voiced similar concerns.

But Chi Insook, another Midway Parkway resident who wants residential permit parking, said that as more attractions are added to Como Park, the parking problems will get worse.

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Council adopts public art ordinance

By JANE MCCLURE

How public art is incorporated into city-funded and city-operated projects is going to change in St. Paul. Supporters say the policy change will make art more attractive and functional, not an add-on to projects. But opponents wonder why, in tight budget times, this type of expense is necessary.

On a 4-2 July 22 the St. Paul City Council adopted a public art ordinance that requires 1 percent of each project's budget to be devoted to public art. The policy laid out in the ordinance will affect all city-funded facilities and capital improvement projects, as well as community planning processes.

The public art policy ordinance won't include projects that receive city subsidy from the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) or Neighborhood Sales Tax revitalization (STAR) projects. But when a consulting team is hired for a major planning study, such as Central Corridor land use planning or Ford plant site reuse, a public artist will have to be part of the staff team. According to Planning Administrator Donna Drummond, the first study that will receive public artist involvement is the station area planning for Central Corridor's proposed Hamline, Victoria and Western stations.

Those planning studies start this fall.

The ordinance will also require that public art be incorporated into small area plans and district plans, as well as master plans for parks and redevelopment plans for sites more than 10 acres in size. The CIB Committee and district councils will be involved in review and selection of public art.

The art covered by the ordinance will include "permanent visual art, performances, installations, events and other temporary works." The ordinance also lays out an artist in residence program and sets up a city artist registry.

The most significant impacts of the ordinance could first be seen with the 2010-2011 Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) process. More than 150 projects went through a community review and committee ranking process earlier this year. Mayor Chris Coleman is expected to announce his CIB project selections August 11, when the 2010 city budget is unveiled. Budgets for each project, from sidewalks to recreation centers, will now have to include public art components. The ordinance lists any capital project paid for wholly or in part by the city as falling under the policy, including construction or remodeling

of any building, structure, park, utility, street, sidewalk or parking facility, located in St. Paul and operated by the city.

Council members Melvin Carter III, Lee Helgen, Russ Stark and Dave Thune voted for the ordinance; Pat Harris and Kathy Lantry voted against. Lantry and Harris cited tight budget times as well as problems with how the new public art policy will be applied.

"I've really struggled with this," said Lantry. "Who can be against public art?" But she questions applying the ordinance to all capital projects, such as street paving, where property owners are assessed part of the costs.

"I've had calls from people who cannot afford the assessments already," said Lantry. Having a "manhole cover with a cool design" isn't going to alleviate those concerns.

Harris criticized the methodology of the ordinance, saying it will cause confusion when the city issues contracts for capital projects. "This will create a level of bureaucracy that is very difficult to manage," he said.

Another objection Harris has to the ordinance is that it will take city general funds to support public art. He'd rather see Cultural Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) dollars directed to pay for public art. Those dollars were intended

for capital arts projects when the state statute for the half-cent sales tax was adopted in 1991. Instead, state law has been changed to funnel the money into arts group operating funds.

Supporters said the public art policy will ensure that art is incorporated as part of capital improvement projects, not added as an afterthought after a project is completed. "This moves us into the direction of moving public art into place-making," said Carter. By adding public art when a facility or infrastructure is designed, it can be less expensive than adding art later.

"These are tough times but I don't think that's a reason against this ordinance," Stark said. He and other supporters cited the funding spent to build the City Hall-Courthouse during the Great Depression. The building is on the National Register of Historic places and is hailed for its design and use of materials.

"Cities should aspire to be inspirational," said Thune. He said the public art policy has been discussed for several years and that it needs to be implemented.

One-half percent of the public art budget for each project will be set aside for maintenance. That was criticized by Lantry, who noted that no other city capital projects have maintenance

built in. "What a great idea - except that we don't do it for anything else." Money will be set aside to keep up public art, she said, but not for a library roof that is leaking.

More than a dozen people turned out for a July 15 public hearing on the ordinance. Downtown art gallery owner Bill Hosko opposed the ordinance, saying it needs more work. Hosko is critical of the way some current public art pieces have been selected, saying there is a lack of community input. He cites several examples of what he considers to be less-than-desirable public art, including the "Skygate" sculpture on Ecolab Plaza downtown, the onion-like sculpture in Lowertown. He was especially critical of some of the sculptures at Western Park in Summit-University neighborhood, saying "It's actually very depressing when you go up there."

The ordinance should be tabled for now, said Hosko. Its backers should make available pictures of the city's current inventory of public art. "Let us then open the ballot box and decide which should stay and which should go."

But more than half a dozen artists and representatives of the group Public Art St. Paul turned out to support the ordinance. Public Art St. Paul has been working with city officials on the new ordinance since 2004. Group president Christine Podas Larson, said that "virtually every city has a mandated set-aside policy for public art." St. Paul has had an ordinance and policy in place for about 20 years but it was voluntary.

Podas Larson said the new policy has had extensive input from a number of groups over the past few years and includes input from a survey that indicates strong support for public art in St. Paul.

Seitu Jones, a Frogtown resident and artist, is an artist in residence for the city of Minneapolis. He is also designing public art for Central Corridor light rail stations. Jones said his work for Minneapolis has included sidewalk patterns, bridge railings and project details that can add to infrastructure without adding a lot to costs.

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Residents brainstorm to save Hamline Midway Library, boost neighborhood

By JAN WILLMS

Once again the residents of Hamline Midway have rallied to try and save their library at 1558 W. Minnehaha. Although Mayor Chris Coleman has committed to keeping the Hamline-Midway Library open through the end of 2009, potential budget cuts signal the possibility of closure. The total budget for the branch library is \$350,000 per year.

In light of this, a 13-member Hamline Midway Library Task Force has been working to assess what current library services are critical and what services are lacking in the neighborhood. To that end, a public meeting was held Aug. 6 to gain further input from the community on what people are seeking from their library.

The meeting was crafted as a community brainstorming session, designed to come up with grassroots ideas. Because of this, Mayor Chris Coleman, Ward 4 Council Member Russ Stark and new St. Paul Public Library director Kit Hadley were asked not to attend.

Facilitator Roger Meyer presided over several tables of residents gathered at the Hamline University Law and Graduate Schools Building and conducted a brainstorming session of ideas about what the community is lacking, separate and distinct from the library's fate.

A bookstore, nutritional center, children's theater, dog park, wine bar, movie theater, organic



Although Mayor Chris Coleman has committed to keeping the Hamline-Midway Library open through the end of 2009, potential budget cuts signal the possibility of closure. The total budget for the branch library is \$350,000 per year.

restaurant, bakery, computer lab, food co-op, antique store and playground for adults and children were just some of the possibilities suggested by the meeting attendees.

From there, they were asked to come up with suggestions on how saving Hamline Library might tie into bringing one of these community dreams to fruition.

One participant said that it's important to maintain the in-

tegrity of the library.

Another said he would rather have the library open three days a week than not at all.

"If they are really going to gut the library building, then we need to look at another building," said another audience member, referring to possibilities. He suggested a combination library/coffee house/church, perhaps housed at Hamline United Methodist Church.

Some of the themes that

people seemed to be considering for the community were environmental, small business development, health and wellness, ecological or entertainment centers.

Community members also considered what could be used to raise revenue to keep the library going, such as office rentals, a daycare facility or restaurant or bakery. Although donations were also considered as a source of revenue, the library administration does not support

donation bins, citing them as a target for theft. Residents of St. Paul already support the library with property taxes, and can provide additional support through joining or donating to Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library.

Someone half jokingly suggested contacting Garrison Keillor for support, noting that science fiction author Ray Bradbury has been doing a lot of work for his local library system.

In another exercise, the residents chose what services they considered the most essential in the branch library. Having a collection of actual books on the shelf available for browsing rated the highest priority. Access to the Internet and children's programming were also deemed essential.

The Task Force is committed on coming up with a proposal in time for the city's September budget meeting, and Meyer said members would welcome ideas from community members on partners or sponsors that could work with the Hamline Midway Library.

He said the Task Force has been looking at the demographics of the community now and in the future as they contemplate possibilities for the library.

"We want to start moving to concrete ideas by Sept. 10," Meyer said. The Task Force is planning to come up with three viable options for the city to consider. "The more options, the more likely we can keep the library going," Meyer added.

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In a minute

Continued from page 2

About \$16 million of the second-round funding would be used to buy about 400 homes. Most of the second-round funding, or \$30 million, would be used to rehabilitate 300 of those houses. There

would be another \$1.5 million set aside to demolish the remaining 100 homes, \$4.5 million to provide incentives to home buyers and \$5 million for administrative costs. The smallest amount, \$600,000, would be used for land banking. In some cases city officials and neighborhood groups anticipate buying properties, demol-

ishing them and holding the land for future redevelopment when the economy improves.

The city has about 1,900 registered vacant buildings. Most are single-family homes swept up in the mortgage foreclosure crisis. City officials estimate that there are as many as 2,000 additional homes in foreclosure.

Merriam Park bakery OKed for new space

A proposed Merriam Park bakery can move into its new space, with St. Paul City Council approval of a needed rezoning request July 1. Following a public hearing the council unanimously approved a request from Theodore and Elaine Kvasnik to rezone 2032-2042 Marshall Av. from business to traditional neighborhoods or TN use.

The rezoning allows the vacant storefront at 2036 Marshall Av. to be occupied by Thuro Bread and its parent company, Bonus Vivus. Thuro Bread is a nutritious, low-sugar snack made of amaranth, spelt and oats. The company also makes and sells gluten-free snacks. The company has producing the bars for more than a decade.

Bonus Vivus needs a bakery, off-site sales and small retail space, which is why the zoning change is required. Most of the facility space at 2036 Marshall is for baking. Because the new business is one of "limited pro-

duction and processing" under city regulations, it would first be allowed in a TN zoning district.

The storefront at 2036 Marshall most recently housed Northern Exposure Imaging, a photo processing and digital imaging business. It is just one storefront in the property; the four other storefronts in the building would also be rezoned. The change in zoning wouldn't affect existing businesses Izzy's Ice Cream, A Fine Grind coffee house and Piisch Salon. Legacy Chocolates recently moved out of the fourth storefront.

Renovations at 2036 Marshall began earlier this summer. No opening date for the new bakery has been announced.

The St. Paul Planning Commission unanimously recommended support of the rezoning in May. Union Park District Council took no position on the request. No one appeared at Planning Commission or City Council public hearings to speak against the rezoning request.

- Compiled by Jane McClure



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Monitor Want Ads are now \$1 per word with a \$10 minimum. Send your remittance along with your ad to Monitor Classifieds, Iris Park Place, 1885 University Avenue, Ste. #110, St. Paul, MN 55104. Classifieds must be prepaid via cash, check, or credit card. Classified ads can be e-mailed to denisw@aplacetoremember.com. Want ads must be in the Monitor before August 28 for the September 10 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

BATHROOMS

Bathroom/kitchens!! Basement finishing. Bad water pressure? Sinks, toilets and tub/surrounds, etc. Ceramic tile. Basement bathrooms installed. Call 612-275-9815. 9-09

Need a handyman?? Any job, big or small plumbing? Remodeling? Decks? Etc. Call "Dynamo" Dave 612-701-2272. Competitive prices! 8-09

CARPET CLEANING

Two average size rooms \$49.95. Owner/operator - Dave. 612-721-5105, 612-636-3073. 9-09

COMMERCIAL SPACE

Professional Space for rent: MacGroveland/Snelling; 2 offices available; shared reception area; storage; in-space bathrooms; utilities (AC/heat); security system; convenient to both downtowns; visible, high-traffic location; newly remodeled, clean, quiet; ADA compliant; excellent for body-worker, therapist, consultant, or other professional. 651-699-7096. 8-09

ESTATE SALE

Estate Sale, 365 No. Finn St., St. Paul, Aug. 13 & 14, Thursday & Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; also Aug. 21 and 22, Friday and Saturday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 8-09

FOR SALE

For Sale: Vintage 1900-1949 lights, house hardware, doors, tubs, radiators, etc. Also furniture hardware. 651-644-9270. 20% off with ad. 12-09

HANDYMAN

Need a handyman?? One call does it all. Any job, big or small. Plumbing? Remodeling? Don't tell my wife, but keeping your house in tip-top condition is more important than my own! Call "Dynamo" Dave 612-701-2272. 8-09

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LANDSCAPES

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Quality affordable legal representation. Payment plans available. 651-270-1806. 10-09

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

Next deadline:
August 28

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GARY NIPPOLDT

ASST. MANAGER
GREG NIPPOLDT

Classifieds

Continued from page 15

PAINTING

Interior or Exterior w/power wash. 25 years experience. Butch BOS 651-308-3410. 8-09

Painting/Repair—Interior/Exterior. Best workmanship, price guaranteed. Insured. 651-699-2832. B-08

Painting – wallpaper removal. Average 3 room paint job - \$250. Average house \$650. Average garage \$250. Painter Jim 651-698-0840. B-08

Interior/exterior painting, enameling, plaster patching, free estimates. Bob. 651-633-5565. 12-09

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Wagner's Pet Sitting. Walking - Day and Overnight Care. 651-771-0421. 10-09

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Experienced Psychic/Tarot Readings. Individuals and events. Local resident. Appointments 651-587-0046(Kathy). 11-09

PIANO TUNING

Quality piano tuning and repair. Reasonable rates. Call Robert Clough @ 612-722-7586 or e-mail: robclough@aol.com. 11-09

Registered piano technician with the Piano Technician's Guild. Call Charles Fruhstuck at 651-489-3181 or e-mail at CharlesFruhstuck@mac.com. BB-09

REUNIONS

Washington High School Class of 1979 30 Year Reunion. Saturday, October 3, Minnesota Music Cafe. 5 p.m. until close. Food and drinks available for purchase. VickyL@bitstream.net or 651-776-7065 for more information. Check Classmates.com or Facebook.com also. 9-09

SERVICES

RAM Handyman Services LLC. Good service, reasonable rates, "no job too small." Rich - 651-485-9680 - or www.ramhandyman.com. 6-10

Chimney Repairs - Phil Larson Construction. Family business since 1957. 612-414-4612. B-08

Interior or Exterior w/powerwash. 25 years experience. Butch BOS. 651-308-3410. 8-09

Need a handyman?? Any job, big or small plumbing? Remodeling? Decks? Etc. Call Dave 612-701-2272. Competitive prices! 8-09

Professional Exterior and Interior Painting, wall repair and plastering; ceiling texturing, wallpaper-hanging, moderate prices; free estimates, licensed, bonded, insured; Merriam Park Painting, 651-224-3660, 651-552-2090. B-08

TUTORING

Help children learn to read. Wanted: caring adults (50+ yrs) to tutor K-3 students in St. Paul 4-15 hrs/wk Sept-June. Training provided. Small stipend available. Call now for fall placement: 612-617-7807. 8-09

Help children learn to read. Wanted: caring adults (50+ yrs) to tutor K-3 students in Mpls & St. Paul 4-15 hrs/wk Sep-June. Training provided. Small stipend available for those who qualify. Call now for placement this fall. 612-617-7807. 8-09

Tutoring elementary age, reading K-6 and math K-2, reasonable rates. Call 651-644-5941. 10-09

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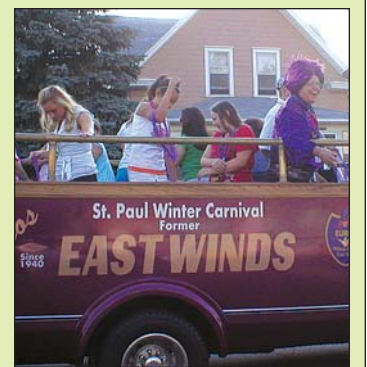
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WANTED TO BUY

Paying the most cash for your furniture, dishes, glassware, knicknacks, costume jewelry, antiques, pictures, lamps, household items etc. I make housecalls. Call Mary Anne 612-729-3110. 9-09

Rice Street Parade

Rice Street was alive with a colorful array of floats and royalty as the sights and sounds of the Rice Street Parade returned on Thursday, July 23. This year festival organizers changed the route of the parade to begin at Atwater and travel north to Ivy Street as a result of the closure of the Rice Street Bridge. (Photos courtesy of Kerry Antrim)



It's back to school time!



We will welcome students from our College of Liberal Arts, School of Business, School of Education, School of Law, and Graduate School of Liberal Studies back to classes in August and September.

Law students—August 14 and 19

Undergraduates—September 9

Graduate students—September 9

UPCOMING EVENTS

Hamline University at the Minnesota State Fair
Stop by the Hamline booth at the fair and say hello!

Dates: August 27-September 7

Location: Education Building

Contact: Tracy Sparby at 651-523-2707

or tsparby@hamline.edu



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