

# monitor

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## What's INSIDE

News.....3



**Riders struggle with bus stops**

News.....6



**Redistricting plan means voting changes**

Feature.....7



**Como Zoo has new baby Tamarin**



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# Urban garden blossoms big in the North End

By DEBORAH BROTZ

Frogstown resident Nate Schrecengost, who grew up in rural Iowa, has been farming for many years. As a child, he helped take care of his family's vegetable garden.

Living in St. Paul with his wife, Amy, and baby daughter, Schrecengost and his wife have turned their entire yard into a garden. Deciding to become a business this year, they were limited to doing either a farmer's market or be a CSA (community supported agriculture) farm. Then, another opportunity to grow vegetables on land in St. Paul came along, and now the Schrecengost's can do both.

A partnership of community organizations has come together to launch an innovative food production project at 425 W. Maryland Ave. Breaking ground on April 25, 2011, six local entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds will grow produce on three acres of vacant land owned by Sparc.

The North End Urban Farm will provide income-generating activity for the six entrepreneurs. This pilot project will showcase new ways to generate greater income from small-scale food production. Growers will market produce through an on-site produce stand, farmer's markets, an on-site U-Pick Farm, and CSA. Growers are also beginning to approach area restaurants and stores to carry their produce, and are investigating farm-to-school sales. The Farm is working to become WIC certified to increase affordability of the produce.

Wanting to expand his business, The North End Urban Farm presented the perfect opportunity for Schrecengost.

"My family farms," he said. "We've always had a large vegetable garden. This is the first year we're under a business model. We've always just grown it and given it to friends and neighbors."

While Schrecengost lived in rural Iowa before moving to Minnesota, Amy is from New Richland, a small town in southern Minnesota. Right now, they farm their entire property on Charles Avenue.

"We farm the front, back, and side yard," he said. "There's also a vacant yard down the street we farm and a vacant lot of another



The North End Urban Farm at 425 West Maryland Avenue will provide income-generating activity for the six entrepreneurs. This pilot project will showcase new ways to generate greater income from small-scale food production. Above, Frogstown resident Nate Schrecengost sets up a fence at the garden. (Photo by Stefanie Berres)

property plus the North End. That's four properties we farm on. It's just under one acre of farmable land. We're small scale but as local as you get."

While the Schrecengost's have a 20-member CSA that they supply food to, any excess they donate to the food shelf or Second Harvest. Their farmer's market is the Midtown Farmer's Market, at Lake and Hiawatha, about seven miles away in Minneapolis.

"We're trying to narrow our urban footprint," he said. "That's why we're farming in the City. All our produce is done using natural, sustainable practices. We don't use any chemicals or pesticides. We try to keep historic varieties of plants that will be around for future generations."

Schrecengost grows and sells about 10 to 15 different kinds of tomatoes, eight or nine different kinds of peppers, onions, lettuce, radishes, kale, Swiss chard, garlic, spinach, tomatillos (which are used to make green salsa), summer squash, zucchini, cucumbers, carrots, four kinds of winter squash, pumpkins, and gourds.

He also grows and sells parsley, rosemary, thyme, sage, and oregano.

All the growers at the North End Urban Farm will have a produce stand.

"People can come and buy food from them," said Schrecengost. "This will help get more healthy, locally grown food in that community. The stuff will be picked the day of sale. That's as fresh as you can get it."

The idea for the farm project

came from a series of community meetings with people who live around the immediate area.

"They wanted to leave a portion of the site as green space," said Allison M. Sharkey, Sparc Business Development Program Manager. "People wanted active green space even though we will at some point in the future need to build housing on the site."

The vacant land at 425 W. Maryland Ave. is where Sparc was going to put the Willow Reserve townhomes. Larson Greenhouse used to be there.

"We purchased it eight or 10 years ago," said Sharkey. "We got pretty far with that. Then, the market changed drastically. The land sat there for a few years. We wanted to do something good with the land."

The community partners in the project are Sparc; The Association for the Advancement of Hmong Women in Minnesota; Community Table Cooperative, an initiative to implement local food system pilot projects; Pig's Eye Urban Farm; and Holistic Health Farms. The farm project has several goals.

"One goal is to provide entrepreneurship opportunities," said Sharkey. "The biggest goal is to increase the amount of fresh food available in the neighborhood. There is not a large general service grocery store close to the area. There is not a farmer's market nearby. People have to travel pretty far right now to get fresh produce."

Another part of the project is also putting in a demonstration garden open to the community.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Frogstown resident Nate Schrecengost, who grew up in rural Iowa, has been farming for many years. (Photo by Stefanie Berres)

# monitor

1885 University Ave.  
St. Paul, MN 55104  
651-645-7045

**Publishers:**

Calvin deRuyter, Tim Nelson

**Managing Editor:**

Denis Woulfe

**Advertising:**

Denis Woulfe  
Dennis Stern (651-452-5324)

**Photographers:**

Liberty Willms  
Stefanie Berres

**Production/Illustrations:**

Bob Wasiluk

**Contributing Writers:**

Eric Nathanson, Deborah Brotz,  
Jane McClure, Jan Willms,  
Elizabeth McLister



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The Monitor is a monthly community publication in the Midway, Como and North End areas of St. Paul, owned and operated by deRuyter-Nelson Publications, Inc. All correspondence should be sent to the Monitor, 1885 University Ave., #110, St. Paul, MN 55104. Editorial and advertising offices can be reached at 651-645-7045. Our fax number is 651-645-4780.

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## Monitor in a Minute

### Hmong Soccer can exceed noise limits

The Hmong Soccer Festival can exceed city noise limits, with a sound level variance approved June 1 by the St. Paul City Council. The festival is at McMurray Fields, July 2-3. It is sponsored by Lao Family Community of Minnesota.

The variance is for amplified sound, 8 a.m.-9 p.m., both days of the festival. It is meant to cover noise from the public address system for the soccer games and for music offered at the festival.

A community meeting was held May 31 to discuss noise and other issues related to the annual festival, which has had noise and

parking impacts on the adjacent Como and South Como neighborhoods.

No one appeared at the public hearing to speak against the variance, which allows noise to reach 75 decibels for the public address system and 85 decibels for the music. The city and festival staff will monitor the noise. Bill Gunther of the city licensing staff said the biggest challenge is noise from music, not from the games.

Long Yang of Lao Family Community said efforts would be made to address noise. He noted this is the festival's 31st year.

### Brownfield sites earn \$1 million EPA grant

Brownfield sites along the Central

Corridor light rail line can tap into a \$1 million grant from the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The grant, announced by Mayor Chris Coleman and Sen. Amy Klobuchar May 13, is for local property owners to identify possible contamination in sites along the rail line.

Several sites have already been identified in past studies. The grant will be awarded in technical assistance for investigation of potential contamination and/or hazardous materials in structures, soil or groundwater along Central Corridor.

"Environmental investigation is the first step towards transforming underutilized sites into the type of transit-oriented development envisioned for Central Corridor. This program will enhance one of Saint Paul's most

iconic streets and strengthen the communities that surround it," said Coleman.

"Local, regional, state and federal partners are making Central Corridor Light Rail Transit a reality. Now, local, regional and federal partners are again coming together to help catalyze investment, redevelopment and reuse of land made more accessible by Light Rail Transit. We need these partnerships to create jobs, economic strength and opportunity for all of us," said Jon Commers, Metropolitan Council Member from District 14 and chair of the St. Paul Planning Commission. The Planning Commission has led land use and long-range redevelopment planning along the light rail line.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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# Riders on the move to keep up with changing bus stops

By JANE MCCLURE

Bus riders along University Avenue, in downtown St. Paul and through the University of Minnesota campus are hurrying to keep up with changing bus stops. Over the past several weeks many bus stops have been removed or relocated to accommodate Central Corridor light rail construction.

People trying to access businesses on and near University Avenue from the U of M campus to Hamline Avenue also feel the pain. How to help bus riders and businesses were topics May 11 for the Central Corridor's Corridor Management Committee, a group of area elected officials and Metropolitan Council members.

The Central Corridor Project Office and Metro Transit staffs are working to get the word out about bus route and street closure changes, said Robin Caufman, who leads community outreach efforts for the project office. She and Kelcie Stone, market development special at Metro Transit, gave the Central Corridor's Corridor Management Committee an overview of the changes May 11.

The reduced numbers of bus stops, coupled with the closings of many north-south residential streets along University Avenue, are concerns for members of the committee. Committee member and Midway area resident Reggie Aligada said it's become "incredibly complicated" to get around on University Avenue and to get to businesses there.

"I think there is room for improvement," Aligada said.

The changes that affect bus riders and business access are updated weekly on a map at <http://www.metrotransit.org/rail-construction.aspx>, said Caufman.



Over the past several weeks many bus stops have been removed or relocated to accommodate Central Corridor light rail construction. (Photo by Stefanie Berres)

Information is also available on buses and at bus stops, via the Internet and Twitter.

The moves mean longer distances for bus riders, especially those who work and shop in the Midway Center, Midway Marketplace and Midway Super Target area. Bus riders who used to utilize six stops between Fry Street and Hamline Avenue are now down to three stops at Fry, Simpson Street and Hamline. That means long walks for shoppers with bags of groceries and other goods.

The bus stop at Simpson includes a traffic signal, something that wasn't originally planned, said Dan Soler of the project office. But it was found that a signal made sense there for traffic control. "We're learning as we go along," he said.

Bus stops were maintained at

University's signalized intersections from Hamline Avenue west. Bus stop closings and shifts have been phased in this spring, said Caufman. Stops from Bedford to Aldine closed March 29; Aldine to Hamline stops closed April 26.

In some places bus shelters have been removed so that people don't wait for buses that won't stop there.

One change was recently made at Hampden Avenue to accommodate blind bus riders who work at the nearby State Services for the Blind. Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) technology was installed there and the crossing was made accessible for people with disabilities, Caufman said.

More bus detours began downtown and at the University of Minnesota the weekend of May 14-15. One of the biggest changes is the closing of part of Washing-

ton Avenue and the relocation of bus stops there. The long-range plan for Washington Avenue is to redevelop it as a transit-pedestrian mall. Changes at the U of M have meant detours for the buses that use the U's transit way. A specific brochure was prepared and distributed to bus riders around the U of M.

Updated material has also been distributed at events including at the University of Minnesota, where 5,000 fliers were given out this spring. Another means of outreach is to use listservs and email systems to disseminate information.

Bus access for customers and workers isn't the only worry University Avenue and downtown businesses have raised. Another issue is that of adequate business access signs and posted detours. While there isn't space for Metro-

politan Council to post every business on a detour sign, regulations are being eased to allow businesses to post larger signs of their own, on their buildings and on the construction fence along University.

Caufman said the project office is working business and has heard a lot of concerns from places including Midway Marketplace. Midway Marketplace has its Albert Street access blocked, so motorists can only get in from Pascal and Hamline. The project office is also working with the Midway and St. Paul chambers on sign issues.

Business access signs have been placed along University and on streets that have been closed, Caufman said. For example, Pascal Avenue has been closed at University, so motorists cannot go north beyond the Midway Center access points. But the street has signs posted indicating that there is access to Midway Center and Midway Marketplace businesses.

"We're using whatever directional signage we can use to get people to destinations near non-signalized intersections," said Soler.

Corridor management committee members asked for more information on how businesses are doing during construction. Caufman said Metropolitan Council, University Avenue Betterment Association, St. Paul and Midway Chambers met May 18 to discuss how they could track trends and share information. That information will not only provide a better understanding of how businesses are doing, it will also provide information requested by the Federation transportation Administration (FTA).

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# Wind turbines in St. Paul given a second chance

By JANE MCCLURE

A longtime North End property owner who wants to use wind turbines to provide energy for his Dale Street building will get a second chance. Tony Magnotta, owner of 1010 N. Dale St., goes back to the St. Paul Planning Commission Zoning Committee at 3:30 p.m. Thursday, June 16 to seek permission for his project.

The case is being heard at a time when the Planning Commission is studying alternative energy and developing new regulations for property owners. A solar energy study will be the topic of a Planning Commission public hearing in July. But a wind energy study isn't as far along and Magnotta's project is entering unfamiliar territory from a city regulatory perspective. It may be several months before wind energy regulations are adopted by the City Council and incorporated into the zoning code.

The Dale Street building houses Capitol Lien and Title and other businesses. Magnotta was initially seeking what is called a

determination of similar use for wind turbines, to see if four wind turbines can be placed at his property.

The Zoning Committee had recommended denial of Magnotta's request on a 4-3 vote, following a May 19 public hearing. But instead of voting on that recommendation May 27, the full Planning Commission sent the matter back to the Zoning Committee. The committee and planning staff will see if there are other ways the request can be accommodated, possibly through an interim use permit or other process.

"We are going to give this another hearing," said Zoning Committee Chairman Rich Kramer.

Magnotta told the Planning Commission committee that he hopes to use the state-of-the-art turbines to provide power for his building. He has discussed the concept with neighboring property owners and they are supportive. He urged the Planning Commission to think about wind energy and renewable resources.

"This is the future," he said.

City staff had recommended approval of Magnotta's request, drawing comparisons to the way the city regulates towers that hold cellular telephone transmission equipment. That is the land use determined to be similar to wind turbines.

The project also has the support of the District 6 (North End-South Como) Planning Council's Land Use Task Force and property neighbors.

But the issue is a complex one and there is disagreement among Planning Commission members as to whether or not the project should be allowed to go forward. Some commissioners see the request as a way to study the turbines and gather information for future zoning regulations. Others said that until more specific regulations are written, the request doesn't meet the standards for a determination of similar use. Yet another issue is that of precedent and whether or not wind turbines should be allowed on other St. Paul properties that have the same zoning classification as

Magnotta's building.

Zoning Committee members had many questions about potential noises as well as the precedent city staff might be setting. One challenge city staff pointed out is that calculating and regulating noise for wind turbines could be very complex.

But Magnotta noted that the wind turbines he wants to use are newer technology that would move with the wind, not against it. When wind speeds topped 33 miles per hour the turbines would shut down. The turbines are built to withstand wind speeds of 134 miles per hour.

Another issue the committee raised is whether or not birds would be harmed by the turbines. Project consultant Jay Nygaard of Orono said he has a wind turbine on his property and that there haven't been problems with birds or bats getting injured or killed.

Magnotta's property is zoned for commercial or business use. He'd like to place three building-mounted wind turbines and one turbine on a freestanding pole at

the property. The building itself is two stories tall; the wind turbines would extend 15.8 feet above the building roof. The pole-mounted turbine and the pole itself would be 31.4 feet high.

A determination of similar use is sought because St. Paul currently has no specific zoning code language on wind turbines. The most recent city approval for a wind turbine was in 2002-2005, for a pole-mounted wind turbine on the Macalester College athletic fields.

That project was approved on an interim basis and had a trial period before winning final approval in 2005. But that turbine has always been considered to be more experimental and less of a major source of power for the college. Xcel Energy was involved in its construction.

At the time the Macalester College project was being planning, city staff admitted that they really don't know how many wind turbines are in use in the city. If there are other turbines, they would be fairly small.

## Urban garden

Continued from page 1

"It will not be divided into individual plots," said Sharkey. "It's not a permanent garden. People in the community will be able to come as volunteers to learn about gardening and to help take care of the plot."

The details of the on-site produce stand have not been worked

out yet.

"We'd love to have the main farmer's market in late afternoon one day a week," said Sharkey. "We have not decided if it will be informal when the farmers are out working or more formal hours. The Association for the Advancement of Hmong Women will have a small U-Pick Farm. People can get out on the land, touch the plants, see how veggies grow and pick some themselves with some

directions."

While a couple of farmers have broken ground already, they're a little bit behind with planting.

"They've been slow to plant because of the weather," said Sharkey. "We're hoping to have some sort of celebration in July. Some produce will be available by the end of June."

It's important to Schreckengost to be involved in this project be-

cause it allows him to bring fresh produce to people in the neighborhood who otherwise wouldn't have it.

"We're guaranteeing people produce that is super, super fresh," he said. "We're allowing people access and the ability to have really fresh, local food."

In five to 10 years, Sparc plans to develop green housing on the site, reserving a third of the site for ongoing food production, edible

landscaping, and recreation that ties into the Willow Reserve. But, in the current economic situation, this project will get the land back into use, provide income-generating opportunities for entrepreneurs, and provide fresh produce in the neighborhood.

"We hope that the growers will be financially successful, and that people in the neighborhood will find it easier to get a hold of fresh vegetables," said Sharkey.

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# Old Embers location on University to become St. Paul Federal Credit Union

By JANE MCCLURE

Those who "remember the Embers" restaurant at 1644 University Av. may not recognize the former restaurant in the months ahead. The St. Paul Planning Commission voted unanimously May 13 to approve a needed conditional use permit and modification for the St. Paul Federal Credit Union to open a new location there.

The Planning Commission decision is final unless it is appealed to the St. Paul City Council within 10 days. As of last week no appeal had been filed. The project will need city staff site plan approval before work can get underway.

No one appeared at a May 5 Planning Commission Zoning Committee public hearing to speak against the credit union request. Union Park District Council took no position on the request.

The credit union property is on the south side of University Avenue, between Fry and Pierce streets.

The credit union plans to extensively remodel the former restaurant building, part of which was erected in 1966 as the original Embers. Embers closed in 2003 and the property was sold to the credit union, which leased the space to other restaurants. The most recent occupant was Kim Huoy Chor, a Chinese-Cambodian restaurant. The St. Paul City Council and city health inspectors shut that restaurant down in October 2010 after it racked up a slew of health code violations.

St. Paul Federal Credit Union currently has two East Side locations.

The credit union obtained a setback variance for its drive-through lane in 2008, from the city's Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). That variance has expired, as the credit union postponed its plans in a tough economy. At that time plans called for retaining and renovating the current building.

The credit union now plans to demolish the south part of the building and add a second story for its corporate offices. The new building will be about 12,000 square feet in size. The current building has a footprint of 5,810 square feet and square footage of 11,610 square feet.

According to project architect Dave Heller, the credit union will pull parking away from University Avenue a bit and will add landscaping along that street. "We plan to greatly improve the site and make it more attractive," he said.

He also noted that adding a second story to the building will add to its massing.

The property is zoned B-3 for business use and doesn't need a zoning change for conversion to a credit union. It does need a conditional use permit to allow a drive-through lane on the south side of the property, said City Planner Sarah Zorn. All drive-through lanes in St. Paul require the permits, so that conditions can be placed on everything from speaker noise to distance from residential property.

Because of the way the building will be configured after remodeling, the Planning Com-



The St. Paul Planning Commission voted unanimously May 13 to approve a needed conditional use permit and modification for the St. Paul Federal Credit Union to open a new location at the old Embers location at 1644 University Avenue. The building's most recent occupant was Kim Huoy Chor, a Chinese-Cambodian restaurant that the city shut down in October 2010 for health code violations.

mission also had to modify one condition for the drive-through lane. That condition is the required setback from residential property. The city requires a 60-foot separation between a drive-

through lane and residential property. The planned credit union drive-through lane is about 20 feet from the shared residential-commercial property line. There is no alley separating

the properties.

South of the property line is a vacant lot, and then an apartment building further south. The Planning Commission agreed to modify this condition.

The drive-through will not have an ATM machine, and will be open 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. - noon Saturday and closed Sunday. The credit union itself will be open 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, with an ATM accessible inside the building.

The property is within the Central Corridor zoning overlay district and in the Snelling Avenue light rail station area, said Zorn. It is the first project to come through the Planning Commission since the permanent zoning regulations were adopted earlier this spring.

Regulations tied to redevelopment along the light rail line also trigger the conditional use permit requirement and would limit any drive-through to no more than three lanes for a financial institution. St. Paul Federal Credit Union plans two drive-through lanes and a pass-

by lane next to the drive-through lanes.

Because the credit union is reusing the existing parking lot and much of the original building no other zoning overlay restrictions apply.

One curb cut on University Avenue will be removed and the size of another curb cut on Pierce Street will be reduced. The property will only be accessible view Pierce or Fry.

The Planning Commission is asking that there be a screening fence placed along the south side of the property, between the credit union and residential properties to the south. There is a fence in place now but it's not clear if that is one credit union property or the private residential properties to the south.

Planning Commissioner Barb Wencl asked if the credit union had considered putting the drive-through lanes in a different location. Heller said that putting the drive-through lanes in another site next to the building would put the drive-through traffic too close to University Avenue.

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# Changes afoot for voters with new redistricting plan

By JAN WILLMS

The redistricting plan adopted by the Charter Commission May 23 for the City of St. Paul will bring about some significant changes to Wards 1 and 5.

"Every 10 years, voting boundaries are redistricted to reflect population changes," said Triesta Brown, a long-time Hamline-Midway resident and one of the Charter Commission members.

Ward 1, currently under the representation of City Council Member Melvin Carter III, has lost 3,700 people over the past decade. And Ward 5 has grown in population.

"You can't equally divide the precincts," Brown said. However, the Charter Commission's task is to try and have the wards' population as balanced as possible.

After drawing up three potential city maps and having three public hearings, the vote at the final meeting added about 3,000 residents to Ward 1.

"At our first meeting, we went through all the various proposals," Brown explained. These were plans A, B and C.

"Nobody came up with any other plans," Brown said. "We later had a second public hearing and narrowed it down to one planned proposal going forward." She said the Charter Commission decided to go ahead with that proposal, as amended.

"We could have voted for it, or voted not to approve it," Brown

said.

She said that as charter members, the group had criteria for making its decision.

"We wanted to move the least number of people from one ward to another as possible," Brown noted. "We wanted to adhere to all the regulations and stipulations of the Voters Rights Act. We wanted to keep together communities of interest and take into account economic disparity."

Brown explained that communities of interest could include a neighborhood with a strong identification, a business community with a commercial strip or a traditional historic neighborhood.

"The recession and foreclosure played a big role in the loss of population to Ward 1," she added. "Houses weren't selling," she said.

Older residents may have stayed in their own homes until they died, and then the house was difficult to sell.

"The foreclosure crisis hit Ward 5, too, but there were a lot more families with kids moving in," Brown said. "There were a couple of housing developments in Ward 5, too."

Brown explained that redistricting is independent of what goes on in a community.

"It is based on voting and population, but has less to do with what an individual neighborhood is or what might be going on in a community," she said. "Because we have such a strong

neighborhood culture in St. Paul, people are concerned if they think that their neighborhood is going to be divided between one ward and another."

The adopted plan takes a highly populated section from Ward 5, represented on the Council by Lee Helgen, and transfers it to Ward 1. The northern edge of Council Member Dave Thune's second ward is moved to Ward 5. The southern edge of Council

and 5)," the letter reads in part.

Brown said she considers Rice Street a community of interest. But she said that by being split, now two council members have to care a lot about the area.

Brown said there is concern that not all people would have a good opportunity to run and get elected. "Racial makeup has to be a consideration," she said.

Brown said there have been a lot of things going on in Ward 1:



**"Years of work and effort, working with businesses and with issues on housing and vacant housing, and now that's out of the ward."**

- Councilmember Lee Helgen Ward 5

going through redistricting a few times, it is not as harsh as it first seemed. As the owner of a property management business since 1997, Brown has become accustomed to changes.

"When we went to the ward system, we became more provincial," she said. "There are all these things going on in the city, and it doesn't matter what ward it is in. It has gotten more difficult to look at the big picture."

Lee Helgen said that based on the population changes, he had expected a shift.

"We thought there would be some changes along the southern boundary," he said. "The plan they decided on was really a significant change."

He said he felt a little disappointed and heartbroken, given the work that has been put into the Ward 5 area.

"Years of work and effort, working with businesses and with issues on housing and vacant housing, and now that's out of the ward," he reflected. "Some of the development deals we have worked on are coming through, and we want to be able to celebrate some of these successes."

But he said he would do some transition planning for the changes and welcome the folks from Railroad Island, working with its task force.

"We want the community stakeholders to have a good feel for what's happening," Helgen claimed.

Member Pat Harris' Ward 3 is moved to Ward 2.

A letter in opposition to the amended Plan B was sent to the Charter Commission by District 6 Planning Council. The letter expressed concern that the move splits a precinct and will disenfranchise voters.

"It concentrates economically challenged residents, affordable housing and disinvestment, adding neighborhoods with the most needs into both Wards (1

ISP, NSP, light rail and the Promise Neighborhood. "How much more can Ward 1 be doing?" she asked. But she emphasized that having more than one council member caring about a specific area is a good thing.

"District 5 is represented by four council members," she noted, "because it is smack dab in the center of the city."

Brown said she realized that a lot of people don't want to see things change. She said that after

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A baby South American Emperor tamarin has been born at the Como Zoo. The baby arrived on Monday, May 13 and visitors can now see the new infant as it hangs tightly to its brother, Paulie, in the Primate Building at Como Park Zoo and Conservatory.

# Como Park Zoo welcomes new baby Emperor Tamarin

A baby South American Emperor tamarin has been born at the Como Zoo. The baby arrived on Monday, May 13 and visitors can now see the new infant as it hangs tightly to its brother, Paulie, in the Primate Building at Como Park Zoo and Conservatory.

After birth it is the male, usually father, who will carry the baby on his back. In this case, the brother is taking on the role because the infant's father, White Eyes, passed away on February 10, 2011. At the time of White Eyes passing at the age of 22, he was the oldest living Emperor

tamarin in North America. The life expectancy of an Emperor tamarin is 18 years old.

This is the 7th baby born to mother, Aries, and the 20th to father White Eyes. Besides Paulie (4 years old), the new baby is welcomed into the family by brother Roger (2 years old). Como Zoo also is home to a bachelor pair of Emperor tamarins, Rocky (2 years old) & John, who at the age of 19 now holds the distinction of being the oldest living Emperor tamarin in North America.

Typically, the gestation period lasts 140-145 days; yielding

usually two, sometimes 3 young. All of the males in the group, father or not, aid the mother during the birth and care for the young long after.

The gender of the baby Emperor tamarin is unknown at this time. Emperor tamarins are usually between 9-10.5 inches in body length with a tail length of around 15 inches. They are very light animals weighing only about 500 grams at mature age. Their most distinct physical feature is their long, white, drooping mustache.

For more information, visit [www.comozooconservatory.org](http://www.comozooconservatory.org)

## Summer Reading begins at Hamline Midway Library

Summer Reading Program begins this month! Stop by the library to pick up a calendar of our events and to register your child or teen for our reading incentive program. Read your way to free books!

On June 11 from 2:00-3:30 p.m. explore 3D bookmaking with an artist from Minnesota Center for Book Arts. Your own story can be made into a 3D pop-up book by paper engineering. Students will learn a variety of box pop-up techniques to construct a landscape scene and space for additional writing. This program is specifically designed for kids in grades 4-8. Please call the library to register for this event.

Does your child love dogs? Paw Pals will be at the library on Saturday, June 18 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Call the library to register your child for this opportunity to build reading skills while reading with a therapy dog. Open to ages 6-12.

Career Solutions, community-based nonprofit dedicated to providing hope and help to people in career transitions since 1974, will be in the library on Thursdays, June 9 and 23 from 11 a.m. to noon to provide drop-in cover letter and resume-writing assistance.

Our Summer Reading Program Performances kick off at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, June 21 with Magician Matt Dunn! Matt's show is filled with 35 minutes of magic that children and adults go wild

over. Audience participation is a major part of the show as is everyone's favorite rabbit, Houdini.

Bill the Juggler will be in the library on June 28 at 10:30 a.m. Join us for a morning of juggling fun.

Saints and Sinners Mystery Book Club meets July 2 from 1-3 p.m. E-mail [gerrib13@q.com](mailto:gerrib13@q.com) for information. Please include "Saints & Sinners" in the subject line.

On Wednesday, July 6, join Li-

brarian Sam as he performs family favorite songs outside on the front lawn at 6:30 p.m. Bring your own blankets and bug spray.

Toddler and preschool storytimes are offered every Friday at 10:30 a.m. Bring your child to

share in the joys of reading!

Call 651-642-0293 or stop by the library at 1558 W Minnehaha Ave, near the intersection of Snelling and Minnehaha, to sign up for events that require pre-registration. All events are free.

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## LETTERS

### Frustrated with University construction

When my daughter-in-law and my son and I came out of a celebratory supper at Patrick McGovern's on West 7th she asked me, "is there anywhere nearby we could buy diapers?" "There's a Walmart up on University Avenue," I told her, "but you don't want to get caught up in all that construction up there." "Oh, that's right, I get caught in that last week when I stopped for lunch, but still needed to get to a meeting. What a mess!"

We went to Cooper's on West 7th instead.

Elizabeth Ellis

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# Episcopal Homes weighs reuse of Porky's property

By JANE MCCLURE

Over the next few months Episcopal Homes officials, guided by a task force, will decide how to use the former Porky's restaurant site at 1890 University Av. The site will include some form of senior housing and/or senior care services, according to Episcopal Homes CEO Marvin Plakut.

The planned development got a boost May 25 from the St. Paul City council. Acting as the housing and redevelopment Authority (HRA), the council approved a \$500,000 loan for the project. The money is from federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.

The city funding will assist Episcopal Homes as it vies for a federal grant. Episcopal Homes will seek federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding for expansion, through the HUD 202 Program. This is a program the senior housing provider has used before to build its other St. Paul projects. It provides funding for affordable senior housing developments.

Episcopal Homes has its largest campus at University and

Fairview, and has also built housing near Lexington and University (Carty Homes) and at University and Dale (Kings Crossing).

The application for the HUD funds was due June 21, said St. Paul Planning and Economic Development (PED) Director Cecile Bedor. She said the funding process is "highly competitive."

If Episcopal Homes doesn't obtain the HUD funding, the city loan will be repaid within 30 days.

Because of tight project timelines, the city wasn't able to do the early notification that it typically does for economic development projects. But time was found for district council review. The project has support from Union Park District Council and its Land Use Committee. The district council voted unanimously June 1 to support the project. The building will be four stories without a variance but Plakut said they'd like to build six stories.

Bedor said Episcopal Homes is a proven, high-quality senior housing developer. The waiting to get into a unit is sometimes a decade long. The most recent

project filled up within 24 hour.

News of the HUD funding should be received later this summer.

Plakut said the only phase of the project that has been decided is that of building 50 units of independent living senior housing. The new building would be six stories high. Tentative plans call for the first four floors to be independent living, with 32 units of assisted living.

"Other than that we are considering options," he said. "We're still in the planning process."

Episcopal Homes has long wanted to add memory care housing and more services for people with Alzheimer's. Plakut said those are specialized housing options for which there is a lot of demand.

Other housing with services is also being considered. One idea is to even add a small retail component to any new development.

The new development would be built on the Porky's site, which is about .6 acres in size. Episcopal Homes bought Porky's earlier this year. The longtime drive-in restaurant building was sold and moved



Over the next few months Episcopal Homes officials, guided by a task force, will decide how to use the former Porky's restaurant site at 1890 University Av. The site will include some form of senior housing and/or senior care services. (Photo by Stefanie Berres)

this spring to a new location near Hastings, where it will be in a village with other historic buildings. Steve Bauer is adding Porky's to his Little Long House Pioneer Village.

Plakut said that site as well as open space between the current senior housing campus will be considered for redevelopment. The open space includes a fountain and plantings.



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<b>Downtown</b>	5th Ave and Wall St	Saturdays, 6am - 1pm • Sundays, 8am - 1pm
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## Rice Street Festival

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For a registration form or more information contact District 6 Planning Council at 651-488-4485, [district6ed@dist6pc.org](mailto:district6ed@dist6pc.org) or websites [www.district6stpaul.org](http://www.district6stpaul.org) or [www.ricestreetfestival.com](http://www.ricestreetfestival.com)

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# In Our Community

## Rice Street Festival 2011 needs volunteers

Volunteers are being sought to help out during the Festival. Volunteers are needed for Parade night, July 28th starting at 5 p.m. and Saturday events July 30th starting at 10 a.m. Call Louis Ryg at 612-386-5948, 612-861-3713 or District 6 at 651-488-4485, [district6ed@dist6pc.org](mailto:district6ed@dist6pc.org) to sign-up!

## City unveils new North End Teen Center

The City of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department, Mayor Chris Coleman and City Councilmember Lee Helgen will be unveiling the completion of renovations on the North End Teen Center with a ribbon cutting on June 20th at 11:15 a.m. The North End Teen Center is located at Rice Recreation Center at 1021 Marion, and will open its doors to youth on the north end. The Center will focus on serving all teens and will provide a safe and fun gathering spot throughout the summer months. The public is encouraged to attend and more information will be posted on the Parks and Recreation website at [www.stpaul.gov/parks](http://www.stpaul.gov/parks).

## Bethel Lutheran Rummage Sale June 15-18

Bethel Lutheran Church will hold its 10th Annual Rummage Sale benefiting the Children's Christian Education Fund on June 15 (PRE-SALE admission: \$3), June 16 and 17 at 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday June 18 at 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Bethel is located in St. Paul's Como Park neighborhood at 670 W. Wheelock Parkway.

We offer a wide range of items including books, furniture, tools, houseware items, dishes, glassware, stemware, crystal, collectibles of all kinds, arts & crafts, jewelry, office supplies, working electronics, sporting goods, gently used toys & clothing for the whole family. The church will be open to receive 'almost new' donations from anyone interested in supporting this fundraiser Saturday, June 11 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

For more information about Bethel Lutheran Church, its programs and ministries visit [www.bethelstpaul.com](http://www.bethelstpaul.com) or call 651-488-6681.

## St. Columba Church Fun Fest July 8, 9, 10

Saint Columba Church, 1327 Lafond Avenue, will expand their Annual Summer Fun Fest to include three days of food, fami-

ly, fun and fellowship. The Fun Fest gets underway Friday, July 8th from 6 p.m.-10 p.m., Saturday, July 9th from 1 p.m. - 10:30 p.m., and Sunday, July 10th from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. This expanded three-day Fun Fest will feature a wonderful blend of authentic Vietnamese food such as Egg Rolls and Pork Skewers and American classics such as BBQ Ribs, burgers and hotdogs. A variety of beverages will be served including ice-cold beer, soft drinks, shaved ice, and bottled water. There will be an all-cash raffle, games of chance, children's games, bingo, country store and musical entertainment. This event will be held rain or shine. Admission to this event is free of charge.

## Lions and tigers and bears loose in Como Park!

No, the zoo hasn't opened its gates because of funding cuts, Rosetown Playhouse is doing THE WIZARD OF OZ! With a cast of over 130 people, a full orchestra, and a real live dog as Toto, the North Suburbs' community theater brings the classic tale to life this July. Join Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man, the cowardly Lion, and all of your other favorite characters in this musical tale of adventure for the whole family.

THE WIZARD OF OZ performs July 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16 at 7 p.m. (ASL interpreted performance on Friday, July 8). Como Lakeside Pavilion, 360 North Lexington Parkway. Handicapped

accessible, \$8-\$10. For tickets: [rosetownlayhouse.org/tickets](http://rosetownlayhouse.org/tickets), or call 651-792-7414 x2.

## Breastfeeding discussed July 12 at Le Leche

The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties is the topic of the meeting of the Como-Midway La Leche Group on Tuesday, July 12. All expectant and nursing mothers are invited to attend with their babies and toddlers. Call Heidi at 651-659-9527 for more information.

## Free movies on the lawn

Friday nights in June North Como Church will host free movies on the lawn. Bring a picnic dinner and a blanket or lawn chair. The church is located at 965 Larpenteur Ave West (between Chatsworth and Victoria). Kid friendly art activities will start at 7:30 pm, movies will begin at dusk (around 8:30 pm). The movies will be: June 10 - Herbie the Love Bug, June 17 - Star Wars, June 24 - Kung Foo Panda. Free popcorn!

## Saints Baseball Package Deal

Baseball fans can purchase a Saints Baseball game ticket for June 12th, a soda and hot dog voucher and a Saints hat — all for only \$15 per person. Go to [SAINTSGROUPS.com](http://SAINTSGROUPS.com) online and

follow directions. Since this package will benefit Jehovah Lutheran Church (Snelling and Thomas) as well, the password to use online is "Jehovah." The package is a \$23 value. The game starts at 1:05 p.m. Sunday, June 12, and kids can run the bases and get autographs from the entire team after the game. The ticket package is also available by calling 651-644-6659, using the "Jehovah" password.

## St. Paul Schools offers drivers education

Community Education, St Paul Public Schools has an opportunity for people who are 18 or older who do not have their drivers permit. For \$150 a certified driver education instructor will facilitate two hours of intense classroom instruction and, after obtaining your permit, two hours of behind the wheel instruction. The summer schedule is Tuesday, June 21 or Thursday, July 14, 2011 from 6-8 p.m. at Central High School, 275 N Lexington Pkwy. For more information please contact the Community Education office at 651-632-6020.

## Hamline History Group on Facebook

Interested historians in the Hamline Midway neighborhood and beyond can now follow the Hamline Midway History Corps online on Facebook. Find a direct link to the group's Facebook page at [www.HamlineMidwayHistory.org](http://www.HamlineMidwayHistory.org) for up-to-the-minute updates, photos, upcoming events, and more.

## Staycation planned July 15, 16 & 17

Why travel far for a family vacation when you can staycation right in your own backyard? Mark your calendars for the second annual Como Neighborhood Staycation, set for Friday, July 15- Sunday, July 17.

The District 10 Como Community Council, Northwest Como Rec Center, Chelsea Heights PTO, the Coffee Grounds and the Living at Home Block Nurse Program are working together to bring you a fun-filled family weekend.

Events will include an outdoor movie night, flea market, games, music festival, talent show, garden tour, art crawl and a neighborhood bike ride.

Participants are needed for the talent show, as well vendors for the flea market. Or show off your garden this summer by participating in the Como Park Garden Tour. Please contact Jessica Bronk at [district10@district10comopark.org](mailto:district10@district10comopark.org) if you would like to get involved. Visit

[www.district10comopark.org/2011staycation.html](http://www.district10comopark.org/2011staycation.html) as more information becomes available on this great neighborhood event.

## Rain Barrel Workshop

Capital Region Watershed, District 6 Planning Council and Verde Strategies are sponsoring a Rain Barrel Workshop! The workshop will be June 29th, at North Emanuel Lutheran Church, 301 Hatch Avenue starting at 6:30 p.m. To be eligible to must live with the District 6 boundaries, space is limited to 40 participants and the cost is expected to be \$15-20 per participant. One barrel per household. Call District 6 at 651-488-4485 or [district6ed@dist6pc.org](mailto:district6ed@dist6pc.org) to register.

## Bugs' Night Out June 21

Join us for Bugs' Night Out on Tuesday, June 21, 6:00-7:30 p.m. Dip into Como Lake with bug expert Brandon Burns! We'll use dip nets to get a closer look at macroinvertebrates living in the lake, and learn about the effect pollution has on these tiny creatures.

For children ages 6 to 11. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Please register for this free event by contacting Kat at 651-644-8888 or [kathleen@capitolregionwd.org](mailto:kathleen@capitolregionwd.org). Meet at the dock area at Como Lakeside Pavilion, 1360 N Lexington Parkway, St. Paul. Sponsored by Capitol Region Watershed District.

## Midway teachers selected for grant

Over the next school year, a team of St. Paul teachers will learn how to use theater to strengthen classroom performance and achievement.

The Twin Cities German Immersion School has been awarded an ACE Theater grant from the Perpich Center for Arts Education. It is one of only seven schools selected to receive the grant, which will cover activities over the next two school years. (ACE stands for Arts Courses for Educators.)

The grant will fund a series of workshops that the German Immersion team will attend, and will also bring teaching artists into their school. The grant covers the cost of substitutes when the teachers are scheduled for their professional development work, and will also pay for their travel costs and expenses.

Based in Golden Valley, the Perpich Center for Arts Education is a state agency that strengthens classroom achievement by focusing on learning in and through the arts.



## Northwest Como has fun activities

Northwest Como Recreation Center has fun activities this summer for all ages. For preschool ages there is Princess, Fairies & Butterflies Art Camp, Multi Sport Camp, Science in Your Own Backyard Camp and Game on Camp. For elementary age youth there is Game on Camp, Jr. Scientist Camp, Multi Sport Camp, Life of an American Girl Camp, Sugar Coated Science Camp, Soccer Camp, Flag Football Camp, Lacrosse Camp, Forensic Lab Camp, Rocket Blast Off Camp, Ultimate Frisbee Camp, Blow It Up Camp, Tae Kwon Do Classes and Artist Workshop Classes.

For pre-teen and teens at Northwest Como Recreation Center you can register for; Ultimate Frisbee Camp, Volleyball Camp, Soccer Camp, Artist Workshop Classes and Tae Kwon Do Classes. For adults there will be open gym on Tuesdays for women's basketball, Wednesdays for co-ed volleyball and Thursdays for men's soccer. To register online go to [www.nwcrc.com](http://www.nwcrc.com) or call 651-298-5813.

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**In a minute**

Continued from page 2

The funds are seen as a catalyst to spur development at sites which otherwise might sit vacant. The funds will allow 10 property owners to identify levels of contamination, if any, and then move forward with development or begin site cleanup. Funds will be available to the first 10 qualifying applicants on a first come, first served basis. Additional applications will be accepted for a second round of funding in July and will be awarded on a competitive basis.

To be eligible for technical assistance, properties must be identified as a "brownfield property" by the EPA and located within a designated project area within St. Paul. To find out more about the grant, go to [www.stpaul.gov/brownfield](http://www.stpaul.gov/brownfield).

**Businesses get OK for new Corridor signage**

Businesses that need signs during Central Corridor light rail construction got a break May 18 from the St. Paul City Council. The council unanimously approved interim changes that will make it easier for businesses to obtain city permission for signs. Key changes include waiving the city's temporary signage application fee and extending the amount of time for signage to be in place.

The changes were brought forward by Ward Four Council Member Russ Stark, in response to business community concerns that struggling businesses need help getting through the city sign permit process. Many businesses in the construction zone have seen their sales drop due to difficulty in getting to their stores. The changes will make it easier for businesses to erect temporary signs.

Although the Central Corridor project has provided signs directing business patrons to use north-south cross streets for access those signs don't have space for individual businesses.

The changes are welcomed by businesses and business groups, including Midway Area Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber praised the changes and the city's willingness to be flexible during the construction period.

The council approved two other central Corridor-related measures June 1. The council accepted a \$70,000 Metropolitan Council grant for stormwater and green infrastructure planning along Central Corridor. Also approved was a \$400,000 grant for the emergency working capital loan fund, to help affected businesses.

**Parking meters along University disappear**

Parking meters along University Avenue have disappeared as a result of the Central Corridor light rail construction. But don't worry - they'll be back, along with many new meters.

The St. Paul City Council will hold a public hearing at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 15 on new parking meter zones along University Avenue. There currently are several small scattered zones, including the Raymond-University and Snelling-University areas. There are also meters on parts of Sherburne and Aurora avenues.

The change would put meters all along University from the west city limits to Marion Street. The meters would have two-hour or 30-minute limits. Fees would be \$1 per hour or 75 cents for 30 minutes.

The meters are meant to better regulate parking, and make sure that parking is used by University Avenue businesses and not commuters.

**City Council orders buildings demolished**

Most of a longtime Snelling-Hamline neighborhood industrial property will be demolished, the St. Paul City Council decided May 18. The council is asking property owner Concordia University to demolish all but one of the former Corning-Donohue buildings at 1407-1415 Marshall Av. A former showroom, warehouse and other buildings will come down within 90 days. The St. Paul Fire Department will use the buildings for training purposes before they are demolished.

The university will be granted 180 days to rehabilitate an old warehouse at the rear of the property.

The property has been vacant for about five years and the buildings are in a deteriorated condition inside and outside. The city has issued 17 summary abatement orders for property cleanup since 2008, for issues including trash cleanup and snow removal.

The property is at the north end of the planned Ayd Mill Road connection to Interstate 94. The main building at 1407 Marshall was built in 1922. The age of the other buildings wasn't known.

Concordia recently purchased the property, which is adjacent to other property the university owns. University officials gave the city documentation of property demolition and rehabilitation bids. It is estimated that it would cost more than \$200,000 to rehabilitate all of the buildings on-site.

No one appeared at the council public hearing to speak against the demolition order.

- Compiled by Jane McClure

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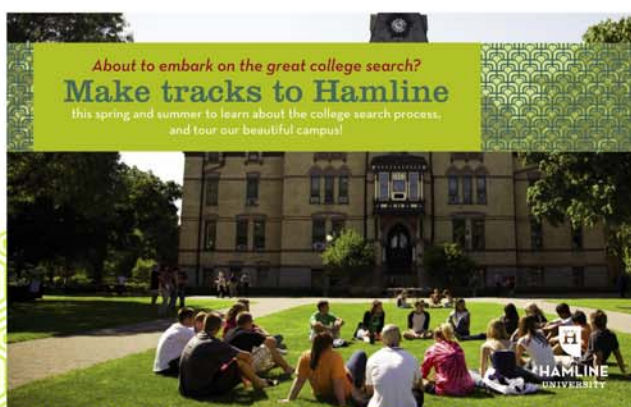
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For more information visit [www.hamline.edu/mpcw](http://www.hamline.edu/mpcw) or contact the Office of Undergraduate Admission at 651-523-2207 to make an appointment.



### Piper Golf Classic

Tuesday, June 28  
1 p.m.

The annual Hamline University Piper Classic Golf Tournament is sponsored by the Piper Athletic Association and will be held at the Oak Glen Country Club in Stillwater.

Register by June 24; contact Linda Carlson at 651-523-2811 or [lcarlson13@hamline.edu](mailto:lcarlson13@hamline.edu) for additional information.

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