



# monitor

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## Midway Y Christmas tree sales all about kids, community and commitment

By JAN WILLMS

It all depends on the weather. How late at night the lot stays open, how late in the season it stays open, how many hours Tom Reddy puts in—it all depends on the weather.

Reddy is the "major volunteer guy" at the Christmas tree lot at 1761 University Ave., operated by the Midway Y Service Club. The money from the tree sales goes to benefit the Midway YMCA at that location. It provides scholarships that help pay for Y memberships for youths, young adults and seniors.

"The Christmas tree sales help fund our membership and programs," said Dave Dominick, the director of the St. Paul Midway YMCA. "It can help a child take part in a swimming program, for example. Occasionally, we use the funding for needed equipment."

Dominick said he tries to help

the volunteers at the lot as much as possible, either by helping out with selling trees or bringing out a pot of his homemade chili for them to eat.

"I do whatever I can to be supportive," he said. "They contribute \$92,000 a year and are our biggest donor."

Reddy has been spending the past 20 years volunteering his time each holiday season, selling Christmas trees.

"My daughter was in daycare here when she was four months old, and I started volunteering a few years after that," Reddy said. "I wanted to participate."

He works at the lot every day, selling trees and giving buyers tips on how best to preserve and care for their Christmas trees.

He said that most of his knowledge on setting up the trees comes from a two-hour Martha Stewart special he watched. "Plus,

there are things you learn by just being and doing," he added.

The lot has been at this site since 1952, when the Y was first built. Before that, it operated out of the old Montgomery Ward's lot further up the street, starting in 1948.

"At that time, volunteers would go out to Hinckley, cut down a load of trees and bring them back here to sell for two or three dollars," he said. Today, the organization gets its trees from Wolcyn Tree Farms in Cambridge. "Prior to that, we got our trees from Keith Jacob, a grower in Hugo, until he died around the age of 90," Reddy said.

He said the group tries to order its trees in August. The lot features a perimeter fence and lighting, and they start setting up in late October.

"It's pretty labor-intensive to get this thing going," Reddy admit-

*The money from the Midway Y tree sales goes to benefit Midway Y programming. It provides scholarships that help pay for Y memberships for youths, young adults and seniors. (Photo by Liberty Willms)*

ted, "but it's a labor of love. We get to be outside, and it keeps us young."

The whole project is run by volunteers.

"To date this year, we have counted up 600 volunteer hours," Reddy said. "It doesn't take long to add up those hours. When we got trees in, we had about 60 people in the lot helping to unload. Most years, we have about 100 different volunteers, generating about 2,000 hours of volunteer time. They include high school kids, chaperones, Y staff and church members. The starting age is about 13."

He said the lot usually opens the day after Thanksgiving, but this year they almost held off opening because of the weather.

"A freezing rain would break the branches off the trees," he said.

The lot is open noon to 8 p.m. weekdays and 10 am to 8 p.m. weekends, weather permitting. Reddy is at the lot every day by 11 and stays until closing, again depending on the weather.

For the past 25 years, the lot has had a construction trailer donated from Hilltop Trailer Sales, and this has made the hours of duty much more pleasant.

"Before that, they had a canvas tent with hay bales inside and kerosene heaters," Reddy said. "You stunk when you got home, and you were really cold."

He said the weather is the toughest part of the job, and also the size of some of the trees. Some are 13 feet tall. "We call them church trees, because a lot of churches like to put them in their sanctuaries," he said. "I tell them just don't come and get them when I'm here alone. It takes about four guys to move those trees."



Tom Reddy (center) is the "major volunteer guy" at the Christmas tree lot at 1761 University Ave., operated by the Midway Y Service Club. Nate Kuhn (left) and Mark Larson (right) are volunteers, helping Reddy with sales. (Photo by Liberty Willms)

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# 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:

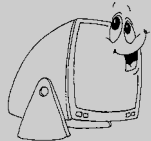
Liberty Willms  
Stefanie Berres

#### Production/Illustrations:

Bob Wasiluk

#### Contributing Writers:

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



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## Monitor in a Minute

### Rihm honored by St. Paul Council

A longtime Midway business owner was honored Nov. 10 by having a special day declared in his honor. John W. Rihm Day celebrated the life and accomplishments of the late John W. Rihm, longtime owner of Rihm Kenworth, 2180 University Av. A proclamation announcing the special day was passed by the St. Paul City Council, with Rihm family members and friends in attendance.

Rihm was the third generation owner of Rihm Kenworth, which has employed hundreds of people over the years. His grandfather founded the company in 1932, although the family has ties to the University Avenue automotive industry that date years before that.

Rihm was well-known for outstanding customer service and many years of community service and volunteer work in the Midway. He died in October. Family members continue to run the business.

Family members thanked the City Council for honoring Rihm. His widow Carrie Rihm introduced family members and spoke about the family's values and work ethic. She noted that her husband started out at the company washing trucks and doing janitorial chores.

The business is now 78 years old.

### Central Corridor gets two boosts for rail

The Central Corridor light rail project got two boosts in November, one from the Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority and the other from the Counties Transit Improvement Board or CTIP. The rail authority, which is made up

of county commissioners, voted Nov. 16 to allocate \$5.8 million to keep the project on track.

The unanimous vote to spend the money means that the county has allocated a total of \$15.8 million toward the project. The county's share of the \$957 million 11-mile rail line is \$67 million.

The funds will keep the project on track through early 2011.

County Commissioner Jim McDonough, who chairs the rail board, said that even though the light rail project hasn't received its final guarantees of federal funding, officials are confident the federal match will come through. A decision on federal funding is expected in March, with the Federal Transit Administration or FTA expected to cover half of the total construction cost.

What bolsters the county's case to allocate the funding is that the light rail project already has a number of what are called "letters of no prejudice." These documents are issued by the FTA for major construction projects, so that local funds can be spent on project design, planning and preliminary work. Ramsey County is using the letters to make its case for allocating money toward the project now.

On November 17 the CTIP allocated 148.9 million in grants awarded to regional transit projects including Central Corridor. Central Corridor was allocated \$106.7 million for portions of final design, right-of-way-acquisition, light rail vehicle design and fabrication, and construction. This is the third of four anticipated grants which fulfills 66 percent of the CTIP commitment to fund 30 percent of the total capital costs of the project.

Other grants were awarded to Southwest LRT, Cedar Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Northstar Commuter Rail Ramsey Station, Grant-Newport Transit Center and Red Rock Corridor.

Work on Central Corridor is

underway downtown and will start on west University Avenue next year. Trains are to be up and running in 2014.

### Judge to rule on Corridor lawsuit

A federal judge will rule in 60 days on a lawsuit centered on construction of the Central Corridor light rail line. Many area residents attended a November 12 court hearing on the lawsuit, which was held at the federal courthouse in St. Paul. Eleven area residents, business owners and organizations are taking legal action against the rail project, asking that it be stopped immediately. The plaintiffs include the St. Paul chapter of the NAACP, the Aurora/St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation, Community Stabilization Project, Pilgrim Baptist Church, Shear Pleasure and Arnellia's Bar, in addition to five individual residents. The group is evoking the memory of the old Rondo neighborhood, which was torn apart by the construction of Interstate 94 years ago.

The plaintiffs are alleging that there hasn't been adequate planning for the light rail light by the Metropolitan Council, Feder-

al Transit Administration and United States Department of Transportation, the Metropolitan Council. They are alleging failure to comply with the National Environmental Policy of 1969 (NEPA) and cite the potential short-term and long-term impacts on area residents, many of whom are low-income and people of color. They also claim that the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) is deficient. They are asking that the court to enjoin further construction of the CCLRT until the planning agencies fully complies with NEPA and prepares an adequate FEIS.

The Metropolitan Council and other defendants deny those claims and disagree that the rail line will have the long-term devastating impacts on the community that have been outlined. One of the arguments raised in court is that the council, city of St. Paul and private funders have worked to find resources for small businesses.

The lawsuit was filed in January. In September Metropolitan Council sought to have the case dismissed. Judge Donovan Frank indicated he would rule on the case in 60 days.

- Compiled by Jane McClure

### Northwest Como Recreation Center program and registration information

Registration at Northwest Como Recreation Center for winter classes begins soon. Most activities and classes have limited space and are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Register on line at <http://activenet.active.com/saintpaul> at all recreation centers in person, or through the mail for all classes and activities. No registration is complete until fee is paid. All refunds are subject to a \$10 administrative charge, unless program is cancelled. All refunds must be initiated through the Recreation Director.

Congratulations to the Northwest Como 14U Girls Soccer team for winning the 14U Girls Saint Paul City Championship in Soccer. Players include: Lily Brown, Alayna Carrier, Grace Clemens, Anika Gardner, Kennedy Gay, Taylor Koep, Angelika Martin, Mary Miles, Abigail Niemann, Juliet Rohde, Ellie Smith, Alyssa Wagner and coached by Josh Rohde and Michael Gay. Way to go players, coaches and families on their hard work and commitment.

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# Businesses weigh city ideas for Central Corridor parking

By JANE MCCLURE

The loss of 85 percent of University Avenue's on-street parking is an issue businesses and city officials have struggled to address for many months. Addressing the problem will take a variety of solutions, according to a report released by St. Paul Public Works and Planning and Economic Development. But the report, which the St. Paul City Council has sent to the Planning Commission for a public review and comment process, is already being criticized by some business owners.

Ideas including widespread residential permit parking, meters and more enforcement are among the ideas on the table.

University Avenue Betterment Association (UABA) met with city staff Nov. 30 to review the report. Business owners pressed for more of a focus on addressing short-term issues, especially during construction. Business owners between Hamline Avenue and Emerald Street are already under the gun as they nervously eye a March 2011 start date for construction. District councils are also starting to weigh in.

"There's a strong concern that we are not focused enough on short-term solutions and what will be done before there is a backhoe outside of someone's door," said Dr. Greg Hynan. The chiropractic clinic owner has been one of the UABA leaders on the parking issue. UABA is drafting its own set of recommendations, which will be sent to city officials.

UABA will hold a special meeting in February to discuss parking issues. No date has been announced. "People need to recognize the urgency of the situation and get involved, if they're not involved already," Hynan said.

District 7 Planning Council Director Tait Danielson-Castillo questions whether adding permit parking in neighborhoods along the Central Corridor light rail line will solve problems. Frogtown neighborhood had a permit parking district when the Hmong Funeral Home was in operation at Dale and LaFond. Danielson-Castillo called the district a "disaster." He said it was difficult to get enforcement due to tight police resources and not popular with residents. The district was eliminated when the funeral home moved.

"You're talking about 10 miles of permit parking," he said.

Ward 4 Council Member Russ Stark said area residents and business owners need to remember that the recommendations are draft and that nothing will be final until it is adopted by the City Council. "I'm anxious to see this get out into the community and have some good discussion," he said.

The challenge in any parking management strategy is how to deal with a wide variety of competing interests, including business customers, deliveries, residents' parking needs and the needs of business employees.

To him, the most immediate issues to be hashed out are the construction season parking issues. One is that of how north-south streets are to be used.

"Ideally we will have recommendations in place in the spring," said Stark, "before construction gets underway." Stark believes the report contains outlines



The loss of 85 percent of University Avenue's on-street parking is an issue businesses and city officials have struggled to address for many months. Addressing the problem will take a variety of solutions, according to a report released by St. Paul Public Works and Planning and Economic Development.

the right issues and gives perspective on most of the tools available. But there is a need for very widespread community outreach and involvement, so that people are not surprised when changes go into place. Some of the changes need to go into place in the spring of 2011.

He'd also like to see the city be as nimble as possible and work on solutions on a case-by-case basis.

There is more time to discuss the pros and cons of residential permit parking and the potential for commuter park-and-ride or "park-and-hide" in the neighborhoods.

Stark is aware that there are questions about how such a wide area of permit parking can be enforced. But the city is looking at new technologies to enforce the permit system. "We don't enforce as a system today and that needs to be changed."

City staff is trying to reach as many groups as possible to discuss the parking changes. According to City Planner Christina Morrison, the recommendations build on previous work on University Av-

enue, including the grants for off-street parking creation recently awarded to businesses. "It is intended to complement proposed zoning changes that are currently under review, and to address parking management recommendations in the Central Corridor Station Area Plans," she said.

The city also intends to hold several open house meetings to discuss parking issues, Morrison added. The public can contact her at christina.morrison@ci.stpaul.mn.us or at 651-266-6546 or Craig Blakely (craig.blakely@ci.stpaul.mn.us, 651-266-6697) to arrange a meeting time and/or format, or with any questions or comments.

The report is on the city's website under the Central Corridor tab. It is also attached to the November 24 City Council agenda on the website.

The report states that off-street parking in the corridor is inefficiently managed and poorly utilized and that limited commercial access on some blocks will put additional emphasis on alley circulation, safety, and maintenance.

Another conclusion is that an influx of commuter park-and-rid-

ers threatens availability of both residential and commercial parking. That assertion has been challenged by some area residents, who question whether commuters will indeed drive in from the suburbs to park and ride the train. But others say they are bracing themselves for a fight over parking in front of their homes, as has happened near Hiawatha Corridor light rail in Minneapolis.

Adopted station area plans and changes to zoning require that on-street parking be better managed, according to report. But some area residents and business owners have indicated at recent zoning hearings that they are not aware of some of the changes, such as increased vehicular circulation in the alleys north and south of University. (See related story.)

Here is a summary taken from the draft plan. The ideas for Immediate Implementation include:

- Increase parking enforcement in the Central Corridor. Use license plate recognition technology, install parking meters at all remaining spaces on University

Avenue, and ensure that all future purchasing decisions for parking enforcement technologies are compatible.

- Manage parking on the side streets. Manage the parking on the side streets a block north and south of University Avenue for commercial needs, and proactively establish corridor-wide permit parking in advance of LRT operations.

- Involve and educate stakeholders and the public. Solicit community feedback on the Central Corridor Parking Policy recommendations and conduct an informational campaign to educate the public about new parking management policies as they are adopted.

- Improve the residential-commercial alleys. Explore ways to improve ongoing maintenance and cleanup of both sides of the alleys in the Central Corridor, explore ways to centralize and share refuse and recycling services, purchase and reopen the partially vacated alley at Mackubin Street, and direct Public Works to maximize width when repaving alleys.

Recommendations for long-term implementation include:

- Remove snow at station areas. Identify the cost of removing snow at the station areas and identify potential new funding sources to pay for it. One worry businesses have is that they could be assessed for this work.

- Integrate parking data and information. Use the parking data developed with License Plate Recognition technologies to strategically target scarce parking enforcement resources to areas of greatest need.

- Monitor the effects of new parking regulations. Monitor the effects of zoning and enforcement changes on economic development and residential livability.

- Increase the competitiveness of transit. Improve parking management to maintain and improve the viability of transit service.

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# Central Corridor proposed zoning changes undergo close scrutiny

By JANE MCCLURE

Proposed changes to zoning along the planned Central Corridor light rail line are undergoing close scrutiny from the St. Paul Planning Commission in light of many objections from property owners, business groups, developers and area residents. Public hearings Nov. 19 and Dec. 3 drew crowds. More than 100 people attended the Nov. 19 public hearing alone, the largest turnout for a Planning Commission public hearing in recent memory.

The proposed changes would rezone much of University Avenue from Marion Street to Highway 280 from commercial and industrial uses to traditional neighborhoods use. While that would eventually bring about the mixed-use, denser, transit-oriented development envisioned in city land use studies, it would also make 98 properties or 118.3 acres non-conforming. Several Planning Commission members said they want to see more information before acting on any zoning changes. At a Nov. 30 Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting, commissioners asked staff for more data on everything from available industrial land in the city to more details

on small Mom-and-Pop auto repair businesses.

"I just think we need a lot more information on a lot of issues before we can act on the recommendations," said Commissioner Dave Wickiser.

The committee will continue to review recommendations through December and January. "There is a lot of fear out there about change," said Commissioner Tony Schertler. Although the zoning changes are meant to accommodate what is a long-term vision for the community, Schertler and other commissioners are questioning how long it would take for the market to eventually absorb such changes.

Schertler questioned whether the zoning changes should be voluntary rather than mandatory. Commissioner Rich Kramer suggested that the commission may need to be more directive and focused on smaller areas to be redeveloped.

But Planner Lucy Thompson said city staff wants the changes to go forward. While conceding that not everyone may agree with the city staff vision, Thompson said the hearing testimony didn't persuade staff to recommend any

changes. Rezoning is ultimately up to the Planning Commission and City Council.

"I'm just concerned that the market reality may not be there for major changes," Schertler said.

The proposed changes are in line with the Central Corridor Development

Strategy, which was adopted by the City Council a few years ago to guide long-term redevelopment, as well as station area plans for the neighborhoods around future rail stops. The plan does have its supporters, as well as

those who want to see more done to include affordable housing requirements.

But many property owners are objecting to the changes. In some cases, property uses such as long-standing auto repair businesses could become nonconforming uses. Owners of two third-generation auto business, Glasgow Automotive and Latuff Automotive, said they would be unable to obtain financing for any future business improvements if their properties become non-conforming uses.

Michael Glasgow's family has owned Glasgow Automotive for 65 years. If his business is made a nonconforming use, Glasgow said it would be more difficult to obtain financing and city approval for improvements. "We're going to have a heck of a time trying to do anything

with the business," he said.

Other small business owners said the zoning changes will tear apart small business areas. "We don't come here to weigh in on zoning, we're here to defend our livelihood," said George Younes, whose family has owned Williams Store, a uniform store at 908 University Av., for four generations.

In other cases, the St. Paul Port Authority and Midway and St. Paul Area Chambers of Commerce are objecting to the down-zoning of industrial land to TN status, saying it would be detrimental to the city's jobs and tax base. Both Chambers and the Port asked that the boundaries for the area to be rezoned be narrowed.

"We're concerned that over time the zoning changes will result in the loss of industrial enterprises and the loss of jobs," said Midway Chamber of Commerce Chairperson Julie Esch.

"We urge you to retain the industrial land in the West Midway," said Port Authority Vice President Lorrie Louder. The Port and the Chambers believe the area proposed for rezoning is too large and includes too much of the West Midway Industrial District.

Home owners fear gentrification and increased parking and traffic on their streets and in their alleys. Former City Council Member Debbie Montgomery raised the specter of high-rise buildings towering over small homes in the Summit-University and Aurora-St. Anthony neighborhoods.

Rev. Joy Johnson, senior pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, said many members of her congregation are afraid that the church will lose its historic home just southwest of University and Snelling. "We lost half of our membership when I-94 went through," she said. "We have members who are in their 70s and 80s and they are scared to death that they are going to be forced out."

Johnson said her church is already being approached by developers wanting to buy them out. The congregation is staying put but members are alarmed that homes in the adjacent Merriam Park neighborhood are being sold. "We need to be concerned about the people who are being pushed out," she said.


Construction of light rail from Hamline Avenue west to the city limits begins next year. The line is expected to be up and running in 2014.

St. Paul city officials have spent several years planning for future redevelopment along University Avenue. The zoning regulations that are ultimately approved will replace an interim Central Corridor zoning overlay which expires in June 2011.

The proposed zoning changes along University would have different impacts in different areas. Where there are residential areas within close proximity to University, the recommendation is to have buildings that are a lower height of two or three stories, as opposed to the taller buildings that would be allowed in areas that are already largely commercial or are a mix of commercial and industrial zoning.

Detailed information on the zoning study and proposed zoning regulations can be found at [www.stpaul.gov/centralcorridor](http://www.stpaul.gov/centralcorridor) or. Click on Central Corridor Zoning Study.





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# Neighbors shoot down parking ramp in Como Park

By JANE MCCLURE

Addressing parking issues in Como Park will be done in many ways. But adding a 480-space parking structure won't be one of them. That was good news to the 50-plus Como neighborhood residents who packed a St. Paul City Council public hearing Nov. 17 on the Como Park Transportation Implementation Plan.

The possibility of a parking structure, at Hamline and Arlington, had generated vehement protests from many park neighbors. But prior to the hearing, Parks and Recreation Director Mike Hahm announced that the parking structure idea would be removed from the plan. That pleased opponents, who contended that such a structure would take valuable green space and be detrimental to the park's character.

"That specific recommendation will be removed," said Hahm.

Hahm and Michelle Furrer, who oversees operations at Como Park, reviewed the transportation plan. The plan got rolling after the City Council voted earlier this year to establish a residential permit parking district for the neighborhood west of the park. The implementation of the district and sale of permits to residents went on hold until the plan was completed. The parking district is to be implemented in May 2011.

Como Park is a unique asset to the city, which creates its own set of complexities, said Hahm. He described the park, which is often depicted as a symbol of St. Paul, as the "quintessential regional park." Of park visitors, 84 percent come from outside of the city.

"Transportation and access have been problems for a long time," Hahm said. The plan outlines potential ways to address the issues.

The council took no action



The possibility of a parking structure, at Hamline and Arlington, had generated vehement protests from many park neighbors, as evidenced by this rally which was held Oct. 30 and drew elected officials such as State Representative Alice Hausman, pictured above. (Photo by Stefanie Berres)

on the plan Nov. 17. The hearing was intended as an update. The plan will continue to be worked on, and the community and stakeholder engagement process will continue.

City Council members said they appreciated the work on the plan and looked forward to acting on recommendations in the future. Ward Five Council Member Lee Helgen said he'd like to see more done to manage parking demand, especially when larger events are scheduled at the park. He'd also like to see an advisory committee set up, for the long term, to deal with park transportation and parking issues.

"I would agree with the need for a long-term advisory structure," said Ward Four Council Member Russ Stark. "These issues will be with us for a long time and the solutions will be complicated." Some of the neighborhood residents who spoke Nov. 17 agreed with the idea of an advisory committee.

Stark agreed with the recommendation to pull the parking structure out of the park. He said it's not realistic for the city to

consider spending as much as \$20 million to build something that would be only used 30 to 60 days a year.

Furrer said there are many parking and transportation strategies in the plan because there is no one solution to the issues centered on the park. The study found that the park more often than not isn't at its capacity in terms of parking space usage. It's not economical for the city to build parking facilities only to accommodate peak demand times, she said.

But relying on off-site parking and the Como Shuttle is only part of the solution. The plan outlines ideas that include more promotion and a permanent location for the shuttle, more drop-off space for visitors, more parking in the park and developing and promoting ways to get to the park other than by automobile.

Not only will the parking and transportation plan continue to evolve, the park itself could see changes that affect parking and transportation demand. Hahm noted that one question is the ultimate fate of the golf course at Como Park. An ongoing parks

system plan study indicates that the city may be better off operating two golf courses rather than three. If one golf course is shut down that could mean a different use for the golf course property currently at Como Park.

Most people who testified Nov. 17 expressed appreciation for the dropping of the parking structure plan. Neighborhood resident John McCormick said he was "very, very grateful" that the plan had been dropped. He and other neighbors recently rallied against the structure.

"Neighbors want to save the green space," he said.

McCormick and others said they want to continue to be involved in the transportation plan discussion and to offer their own ideas. "As a neighborhood we're not here to shoot anything down," he said.

Several other speakers also said they appreciated the action of taking the parking structure off of the table. "I think we need to find other alternatives," said St. Anthony Park neighborhood resident Les Everett. He suggested more use of parking spaces at the state fairgrounds.

District 6 and District 10 spoke in support of many recommendations in the plan and the idea of an ongoing advisory committee. Both district councils opposed the idea of a parking structure.

But there were mixed feelings on the start of residential permit parking. Dennis O'Rourke, one of the petitioners, said neighborhood residents have waited patiently for permit parking to be implemented. He said the parking pressures have gotten worse as attractions have been added at Como, and described the parking demand last summer as "relentless."

However, Como Town co-owner Kathryn Holum, co-owner of Como Town, said visitors are often very frustrated by the lack of parking and that losing parking could hamper the amusement park. She said the council needs to consider the people who will be inconvenienced when residential permit parking is implemented in the spring. "I think you need to consider how to make more parking available for visitors before permit parking is implemented," she said.



The recently drafted transportation plan outlines ideas that include more promotion and a permanent location for the shuttle, more dropoff space for visitors, more parking in the park and developing and promoting ways to get to the park other than by automobile. (Photo by Stefanie Berres)

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# Neighbors hatch idea for business group at block party

By JAN WILLMS

Midway Independent Businesses (MIB) hatched as an idea at a block party in the Hamline area.

Nancy Antenucci, a creative strategist and tarot reader, was talking to a neighbor who is a massage therapist.

"I wondered how many sole proprietor businesses there were just in the area," she said, "and like me, they have fulfilling work but seldom get a chance to talk shop."

She decided to try and gather these people together, and formed MIB, a group that meets the first Monday of every month in the Hamline Park Building at 1564 Lafond Ave.

"It's open to anyone who either lives in the Midway and is

the sole proprietor of a business, or who has a sole proprietor business in the area," Antenucci said. She said the group also welcomes anyone who is considering opening up a business.

MIB recently had Allison Sharkey of SPARC as a guest speaker.

"She talked to us about help with business plans, how to utilize social media and even how to get small business loans," Antenucci said.

Another speaker, Mary Ann Berglund from Rondo Library, addressed the group about the small business resource center available at the library.

"Just in the short time we've been together, we have seen from different angles how many organizations there are that are just



Midway Independent Businesses (MIB) hatched as an idea at a block party in the Hamline Midway neighborhood. Above, left to right: Kristin Pickering, Nancy Antenucci, Colleen Dooley, and Lauren N. Nelson. (Photo courtesy of Michael Jon Olson)

trying to keep small businesses alive," Antenucci said.

She said she sees MIB as having a two-pronged goal: creating

a stronger presence in the Midway and members bringing their own businesses up to the next level.

"Everybody is in a different place with the current economy," Antenucci said. "No one that I know of is going under, but people are in transitions. For example, one business owner is expecting a baby. Will she be able to work from home? Another takes aerial photos, and may not be aware of all the marketing that needs to be done to promote his business."

She said important questions for sole-proprietor businesses are to determine how to market their services and how to let people know where they are. In that vein, she is hoping to start an MIB business directory for self-employed individuals.

"Everybody is in a different place with the current economy. No one that I know of is going under, but people are in transitions."

- Nancy Antenucci

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"One of our members proposed that we have T-shirts with our organization's name, and wear them while doing a service for the community," Antenucci said.

She stressed the importance of the group working together.

"It's hard to be a lone ranger out there," she said.

She said that for most of the businesses, having a business plan is not a new concept. But she felt having another set of eyes looking at it, and sharing ideas about marketing, are important factors.

Antenucci said the December meeting of the group may involve planning for a holiday event. She encouraged anyone who is interested in being a part of MIB or a part of the directory contact her at [nucc50@gmail.com](mailto:nucc50@gmail.com).



## Page 7



Grand Opening planned soon...

# Hamernick's new store on Rice Street a 'family affair'

By JAN WILLMS

When Ted Natus was driving through St. Paul in 1966 and his car broke down, he decided to stay for awhile. Almost 45 years later, he celebrates his good fortune in making that decision as he and his wife Lynn, owners of Hamernick's Decorating Center, open a new store on Rice Street.

The new 22,500 square foot building at 1392 Rice houses carpet, tile and vinyl and a commercial showroom. It is right across the street from the building that is home to their corporate offices, paint stock, design center and residential showroom.

"I've been very blessed to be a part of Rice Street," Ted said. "Rice Street has been good to me, and I would have never considered building anywhere else."

"We have had a lot of support in building the new store," Lynn added. "It gives Rice Street a fresh look again. One of the reasons we stayed here is that Ted has had loyal customers for a long time, and we try to give back to the community. One way of doing it was by staying here on Rice Street."

Hamernick's Decorating has been a part of the community since starting as a union paint contractor in 1946. When Ted first arrived in St. Paul, he recalled that times were difficult. On his own since he was 15 and his mother died, he had been working in Butte, MT, as a miner before the copper mines closed.

"I had holes in my shoes when I came here," he said. "But I got a job working for Fred Bolt Paints on Rice Street for a dollar an hour. Then I heard Ed Hamernick was thinking of closing his store, and I talked him into letting me run the store for a year. I was now earning \$1.75 an hour,



The new 22,500 square foot building at 1392 Rice houses carpet, tile and vinyl and a commercial showroom. It is right across the street from the building that is home to their corporate offices, paint stock, design center and residential showroom. Above, Ted and Lynn Natus show off their new headquarters. (Photo by Liberty Willms)

and I got my chance."

In 2000, the Natuses bought the business from Hamernick.

"I managed Hamernick's for 30 years, and I decided I liked it, so I bought the place," Ted joked.

During an economic period that has seen many businesses

shut their doors and lay off employees, Hamernick's Decorating is rare in its growth.

"We're so multifaceted," Ted said. "We have a retail paint operation, commercial paint contracting, commercial flooring, a decorating center and a mill direct store. We have over 90,000



Some of the staff at Hamernick's: left to right, Neil Hunter, Ed Blaaser, Troy Natus, Ted Natus, Lynn Natus, Julie Pirie, and Justin Varhalla. (Photo by Liberty Willms)

square feet of carpet in stock."

He said the company, which has about 100 employees, is one of the largest multi-housing contractors in the city. "We work with many apartment owner and manager accounts," he related.

"We have grown in spite of the recession," Ted said. He admitted that the current times have resulted in much less foot traffic in the store, but Hamernick's has grown in other ways.

"If we had been a single-featured store, Lynn and I would be looking for jobs today," he said. "But we work in areas where maybe other companies haven't gone that much."

He said much of the company's success has been a direct result of the quality of his employees. "They care about the company and the customers," he said. He also attributes the company's growth to a number of loyal customers.

"My customers are my

friends," Ted said. "By far, that's the most rewarding part of this business." As he is speaking, an 86-year-old contractor who is still working stops by. He has been ill, and he wants Ted to know that he is all right and back at work.

Lynn, who was born and raised in Frogtown, agreed that a lot of Ted's customers keep coming back over the years. She serves as president of the company, handling the office personnel. Ted is the CEO, handling sales.

"He still sells directly to customers," Lynn added.

She said the company has also been one of the first to recycle carpet and pads instead of sending them to landfills. "We have led the way in recycling carpet for Minnesota," she stated.

The business is a family affair.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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By JAN WILLMS

Combining the best of two worlds in one location, North End Elementary and Franklin Music Magnet have joined forces at 27 East Geranium in St. Paul.

"We are looking at the next school year to merge as one school," said School Principal Barbara Evangelist. "We already share the same building, as Franklin was co-located to the North End in the fall of 2010." The school was previously located at 690 Jackson St.

As a part of the merger, a new name will be chosen to select the school's vision, according to Evangelist.

"We're asking families and community partners to help us choose a new name on Dec. 16," Evangelist said. She said the Site Council will take input from a selection of names students and staff have submitted and narrow it down to four or five which the public will vote on. Voting will be held at the school's location from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on that day. Voting will be done at a booth in the hallway, inside the main doors.

"We have been doing some things together this year," Evangelist said, "building a music program and sharing resources between the two schools."

The North End School was historically called Smith School, according to Linda Jungwirth, an area resident who attended kindergarten there.

"If you were standing on the east side and looking toward the North End, the Smith School stood out," she said. "I believe it was built in the late 1800s or early 1900s."

Jungwirth recalled that the building was torn down in the early 1970s, and the North End School was built on that location.

John Jungwirth sat in on the North End site council when Hamilton Bell had been appointed principal of the school.

"I sat in as a link to the

## North End Elementary and Franklin Music Magnet will merge to form new school



Combining the best of two worlds in one location, North End Elementary and Franklin Music Magnet have joined forces at 27 East Geranium in St. Paul.

neighborhood," Jungwirth said. "Bell wanted the school to stay aware of community and business concerns. He wanted to have the school more integrated into life in the community."

Jungwirth said that about a

year after Bell was installed as principal, he visited a school program in New York that was successful in promoting individual pride and learning.

He put in place at North End Elementary the uniform concept and the separation of boys and

"We were looking at how best to serve families in one building, providing more access to more resources."

- Principal Barbara Evangelist

girls by classes.

"Research in some ways showed this to be very valid," said Jungwirth. "If segregated by gender, the students were less distracted. It is perhaps a valid way of learning for some kids."

But in spite of higher test scores, the North End, like other St. Paul schools, had to contend with budget cuts and dwindling numbers.

"A combination of things caused the North End to lose numbers," Jungwirth said. "Charter schools bled off certain segments of the population and magnet schools drew students. It essentially becomes harder for an inner city school to compete against a French immersion school, for example."

He added that the more owner-occupied housing decreases, the more you have movement within the system.

"There is also more of an aging population," Jungwirth said. "There was a whole push where everyone got married and moved to the suburbs. With more ethnic groups, some preferred their own schools, and it all takes away from the neighborhood school."

With the North End having a population of 390 and Franklin 340, the schools' co-location seemed like a good solution.

The music program Franklin featured has been expanded. This year the music program was opened to the North End kindergarten, and other grades have been participating on a rotating process.

Evangelist said music pro-

grams have been available for the North End After School Program.

"Music will continue to be a focus in the combined school," Evangelist said.

"We have a partnership with the St. Paul Conservatory of Music," she said. This school year students from K-2nd grade are receiving violin lessons for a half hour each week, with instructors from the Conservatory.

The North End School has an Achievement Plus program that it brings to the table for the two schools to share.

"With Achievement Plus, we have a partnership with East Side Learning for tutoring before and after school," Evangelist stated. "We also have a dental clinic and Wilder is here, providing services for families and children. Good Will/Easter Seals offers assistance with jobs for parents and for housing with families."

"We were looking at how best to serve families in one building, providing more access to more resources," Evangelist said, as she explained the decision for the two schools to merge. She said the combined schools have a population of 620 students and will maintain the staff from both Franklin Magnet and North End.

"As far as uniforms and gender-specific classes, we continue to get input from stakeholders on what that will look like for next year," Evangelist said.

"We have a wide diversity of children," she added, "and our goal is to really reach families. We're excited we're coming together as one school."

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# In Our Community

## Hamline University hosts baseball training

Hamline University will host a six-week Spring Training 2011 baseball program for players in grades 1 through 12 from January 15 to February 19. Hamline University head coach Jason Verdugo will direct the program in conjunction with U.S. Baseball Academy. Sessions are offered in advanced hitting, pitching and catching at a cost as low as \$99 for six weeks. Space is limited. Registration is now under way. For more information call toll-free 866-622-4487.

## Jehovah Ladies Christmas Tea December 12

Neighbors and friends are cordially invited to the Ladies Christmas Tea at Jehovah Lutheran Church, 1566 Thomas Avenue at Snelling, on Sunday noon, December 12, in the church fellowship hall. Tickets: \$7 adults; \$5 children ages 5-12. Non-perishable food items will also be collected and donated to an area food shelf. Hats and gloves are optional. The speaker will be Eleanor Ostman, former food columnist for the St. Paul Pioneer Press and author of "Always on Sunday Revisited: Eleanor Ostman's Best Tested Recipes." Reservations, please; call Dawn at the church office: 651-644-1421.

## Independent Businesses meeting January 3

Midway Independent Businesses, formerly known as Midway Entrepreneurs, will be meeting Monday, January 3, 2011, from 10-11 a.m. at the Hamline Park Building (1564 Lafond Avenue; SE corner of Snelling & Lafond). Independent business owners who live and/or work in the Midway are invited to join. Our purpose is to bring our businesses to the next level by developing exposure in the Midway, discussing goals and strategies, and being a source of support for growth. For more information, contact Nancy at .

## Public hearing for parks system plan January 10

In response to community feedback, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation has removed the Systems Plan agenda item from the December 8th Parks and Recreation Commission meeting. A special public hearing, called by the Parks and Recreation Commissioners, has been added for the following date: January 10, 2011 from 6:30-8 p.m. at the Phalen Golf Course Clubhouse. This meeting will be a public hearing exclusive to the Park's System Plan. Residents who wish to bring comments to the Commission's attention should do so at that time. See the draft system plan at [www.tinyurl.com/systemplan](http://www.tinyurl.com/systemplan).

## Senior Luncheon & International Folk Dance December 14

A luncheon for seniors will be held on Sunday, December 14 at 11:30 a.m. at 1415 Englewood Avenue. Instructor Caren Grantz will discuss what comprises international folk dance in the United States and some of the history of where and when it started. A registered nurse will also be available to take blood pressures. A free will donation is asked for the meal. Anyone who would like to come for just the presentation should arrive at 12:10 p.m. Looking ahead, The History of the Railroads in St. Paul will be the topic for the luncheon on January 11. Call the office of Hamline Midway Elders 651-209-6542 to make reservations, or to request free transportation for medical appointments, errands or grocery shopping.

## Donate winter gear for LEAP High students

Gently used winter coats, hats, mittens, and scarves needed for students! LEAP High School (631 N. Albert St.) is looking for appropriate winter gear to donate to students and their families, many of whom are experiencing winter for the very first time. If you have any winter gear that is in good condition, but is not being used, please consider donating it. Any questions, please contact Annie at [astrupeck@gmail.com](mailto:astrupeck@gmail.com).

## Child care co-operative accepting applications

Midway Munchkins is a parent-run co-operative child care alternative located in the Hamline Midway neighborhood for children aged 6 months to 3 years. Parents who are seeking relationships with other families, an alternative to traditional daycare, and meaningful involvement in their child's care are encouraged to apply for February openings. Only four slots remain. For more information or to apply, go to [www.midwaymunchkins.com](http://www.midwaymunchkins.com) or email [info@midwaymunchkins.com](mailto:info@midwaymunchkins.com).

## Toys for Car Care

The local owners of the 14 Twin Cities Car-X Auto Service stations are proud to act as Toys for Tots drop off locations for the 2010 holiday season.

Bring a new, unwrapped toy donation to any Twin Cities Car-X Auto Service location by December 14 and receive an oil change for \$14.99 or 10% off any service.

Any person who makes a toy donation totaling more than \$50 in retail value will receive a FREE oil change as a thank you from your local Car-X owner (Toy purchase receipts required.)

To find the Car-X location nearest you, please visit [www.carxtwincities.com](http://www.carxtwincities.com)

## FREE Community Breakfast

Due to this being the Christmas month, we are changing to the 3rd Sunday this month December 19, 8-9 a.m., and future

months will be the 4th Sunday, 8-9 a.m. FREE to the community of the North End. Come one, come all to our fellowship hall.

North Emanuel Lutheran Church is located at 301 Hatch Ave. at Matilda Street. Directions to North Emanuel are easy when you know where the Rice Street Library is located. Then go 5 block west on Hatch Ave. and stop at Matilda Street.

For more information call the Church at 651-489-5611, Larry at 651-373-5797 or Sandy at 651-283-1681.

## Breastfeeding discussed at Jan. 11 La Leche

The Advantages of Breastfeeding is the topic of the meeting of the Como-Midway La Leche Group on Tuesday, January 11, 2011. All expectant and nursing mothers are invited to attend with their babies and toddlers. Call Heidi at 651-659-9527 for more information.

## Sale held at Nettie & Friends thru Dec. 31

Nettie & Friends Sale - Irresistible handcrafted goods! Sale continues through December 31 at Egg and I East Restaurant, 2550 University Ave. (Open for breakfast and lunch.) The sale benefits students with special education needs at Maxfield Learning Center. Do a little shopping. Do a little good. Stop by and see us! Visit us at : [www.nettieandfriends.blogspot.com](http://www.nettieandfriends.blogspot.com).

# Hamline University hosts 1990 International Trans-Antarctica Expedition explorers Dec. 11

Twenty years since the first time, Hamline University will again host the members of the 1990 International Trans-Antarctica Expedition. This time, instead of packing up their gear at Hamline, the explorers will unpack memories, reflecting on their journey and its impact felt around the world by everyone from lawmakers to school children.

The 1990 expedition team is comprised of Minnesotan and renowned polar explorer Will Steger and accomplished adventurers from France, United Kingdom, China, Japan, and Russia.

The event will be held on Saturday, December 11 from 3-5 p.m. at Anne Simley Theater at Hamline University.

As a result of the success of the 1990 expedition's adventure learning program, Hamline University launched the Center for Global Environmental Education, which creates environmental education programs for K-12 teachers. Leading up to and fol-

lowing the expedition, Hamline hosted a series of summer institutes for teachers, bringing together leading Antarctic scientists with K-12 educators from around the world.

"The expedition literally changed the direction of my life, my teaching, and in many cases the lives of my students," said Louise Huffman, a teacher from Naperville, Illinois, who attended the Antarctic Institutes.

The effects of the expedition were felt around the globe. Following the journey, the team members met with the heads of state in France, China, Russia, Japan and the U.S., calling for the ratification of the 1961 Antarctic Treaty; the Treaty involves 39 countries that cooperatively manage Antarctica for scientific purposes only.

Free tickets for this reunion event are available at The North Face Stores in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, as well as at the Center for Global Environmental Ed-



Twenty years since the first time, Hamline University will again host the members of the 1990 International Trans-Antarctica Expedition. The event will be held on Saturday, December 11 from 3-5 p.m. at Anne Simley Theater at Hamline University.

ucation at Hamline University, located at 1467 Hewitt Avenue. Lot parking at Hamline is free on Saturdays.

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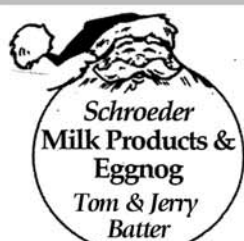
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# Parks and Rec Commission holds Jan. 10 meeting to review St. Paul parks plan

By JANE MCCLURE

More time is needed for city staff and consultants to complete work on St. Paul's Parks and Recreation System Plan, given the high volume of comments received at public meetings last month. The city's Parks and Recreation Commission has postponed a December 8 plan review and instead will hold a special public hearing 6:30- 8 p.m. Monday, January 10 at Phalen Park Golf Course, 1615 Phalen Drive.

"We had many good comments on the plan and need more time to thoroughly review and respond to those," said Parks and Recreation Director Mike Hahm. Another consideration was timing and the holiday season.

The one-month delay in the commission's review won't impact the timeline for the system plan review and implementation, Hahm said. The plan goes to the City Council for final approval sometime in early 2011.

A series of systems plan public hearings, including hearings at North Dale and Oxford Community Center, drew hundreds of people. More than 300 comments were submitted, with more than 60 comments submitted at the Hillcrest meeting alone. People could weigh in on specific parts of the plan or simply make general comments about the parks and recreation

system.

The draft was developed by consultants from Hoisington Koegler Group, city staff and community members who participated in a series of meetings earlier this year. The plan recommendations include improved access to nature and trail, sports field enhancements, more off-leash dog parks and closing of some recreation centers. Plan recommendations would affect several area parks and recreation centers.

One focus is to create a parks and recreation system that better meets the needs of community members. The city's shifting demographics, declining resources

whose centers would be closed, turned over to nonprofit groups or partnered with schools. Several buildings already rented out would be fully turned over to tenants, including Desnoyer Park, Griggs, Dunning and South St. Anthony. Orchard is one of the buildings that could ultimately be torn down.

Many comments were made in protest of closing two East Side centers, Hayden Heights and Duluth/Case. A smaller number of comments were made in support of the idea of repurposing recreation centers and trying to meet a wider range of community needs.

The issue of off-leash dog

**"We had many good comments on the plan and need more time to thoroughly review and respond to those."**

**- Parks and Recreation Director Mike Hahm**

and aging facilities are one of the biggest challenges the plan must address. Converting St. Paul's 23 remaining recreation centers into 19 community centers that would serve residents of all ages is one suggestion. But that has brought protests from people

parks drew many comments. The idea of a dog park at Newell Park in Hamline-Midway neighborhood has drawn a very mixed reaction from that neighborhood, with supporters as well as opponents.

Many people commented in



The idea of a dog park at Newell Park in Hamline-Midway neighborhood has drawn a very mixed reaction from that neighborhood, with supporters as well as opponents.

favor of a dog park along the Mississippi River. The plan also identifies a large area along the Mississippi River in Desnoyer Park, Macalester-Groveland and Highland Park neighborhoods as a search area for an off-leash dog park. The irregularly shaped area extends to Ford and Cleveland, and south roughly along part of St. Paul Avenue.

A few commenters questioned why the city would do more for dogs than it would for young people. "Children – our next generation, not dogs" one person wrote.

Others wrote comments calling for more off-leash areas for dogs to exercise. "Dog parks make parks relevant," another person wrote.

Many people commented in favor of more access to nature in parks and for more trails and better connections between the city's parks.

Fewer comments were logged about other recreation fa-

cilities. The systems plan looks at all aspects of the parks and recreation system, including the city's golf courses. One hint of what is being considered came at a public hearing last month on Como Park parking issues, when Hahm indicated that the Como golf course property could be repurposed if golf is dropped there. The plan recommends examining the city's ownership of three golf courses. The plan recommends the city only own and operates two courses, which would mean Highland and Phalen.

Comments from the five community meetings, along with submitted content through the Systems Plan web site, will be available for public review at: [www.tinyurl.com/systemplan](http://www.tinyurl.com/systemplan). The public can continue to review and comment on the draft copy of the systems plan at the Parks and Recreation System Plan web-site ([www.tinyurl.com/systemplan](http://www.tinyurl.com/systemplan)). There is also contact information on that site for additional questions.

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# Culver's restaurant proposed for Midway Commons redevelopment project

By JANE MCCLURE

A Culver's restaurant would be part of the Midway Commons redevelopment project on University Avenue between Pascal and Simpson streets. The project is undergoing review by city staff and will go to the Paul Planning Commission for review and approval this winter. A commission vote is final unless it is appealed to the St. Paul City Council.

The property slated for redevelopment is 1461-91 University Av. It is owned by longtime Twin Cities auto sales executive Rick Kline. The property includes two one-story buildings and a parking lot. Various auto repair and auto parts businesses have occupied the University-Pascal building over the years. Currently the only tenant at University and Pascal is a Sprint communications store.

A Spin Cycle Laundromat is in the building at the northeast corner of University and Simpson.

At this point city officials and the developer aren't hearing any opposition to the project. The project needs two approvals from the Planning Commission. One is

a conditional use permit to allow Culver's, a popular fast-food restaurant, to have a drive-through window. All drive-through service windows in the city, for restaurants, banks, pharmacies or other businesses, require conditional use permits. The permits regulate placement of drive-through lanes, screening from neighbors, sound levels of speaker boxes and other features of the drive-through.

The other Planning Commission approval required is for the project site plan itself. The site plan calls for renovation of two existing commercial buildings at each corner, reconfiguration of the parking lot areas and the addition of the drive-through lane.

Sheldon Berg of DJR Architecture is designing the project. He said the development has been through several iterations with city staff. "We've been reviewing various suggestions staff has had and we have also met with the district council (Hamline Midway Coalition) land use committee."

Berg has worked on transit-

oriented development projects before although this is his first effort along Central Corridor. He believes the project as it is being designed will meet the design objectives the city wants to promote. He said the developer has done a lot to ensure that the project will fit in along University Avenue and will be compatible with other area land uses.

The entire block face up for redevelopment is zoned B-3, the most intensive type of business or commercial rezoning in St. Paul. The Planning Commission action won't change the underlying zoning. The block is in an area proposed for rezoning later this year as part of the Central Corridor planning process but the new land uses would be able to remain even if the underlying zoning does change.

The project is one of the first in the area to be developed under interim zoning guidelines meant to promote transit-oriented development. Transit-oriented development is being promoted along University Avenue in anticipation of the Central Corridor light rail

line. Construction of the line on University west of Hamline Avenue starts in 2011, with work east of Hamline in 2012. Trains are to be running in 2014.

The interim guidelines have been in place since 2008 but a slow economy means there has been little new development along University in recent years.

The Planning Commission is working to make transit-oriented development regulations along University Avenue more permanent. The commission hosted a public hearing on the Central Corridor zoning and the move to more traditional neighborhoods or mixed-use zoning Nov. 19. Zoning changes for individual University Avenue properties will be heard by the Planning Commission in December.

The current redevelopment plan for 1461-91 University call for rehabilitation of the Laundromat and retail buildings. The Laundromat building, which is less than 20 years old, would become the Culver's restaurant. The other building would be rehabilitated for retail use. The University-

Pascal building would have a small parking lot to the rear, accessible from Pascal. There would be a lot with about two dozen parking spots between the two buildings, as well as parking north of Culver's. The site plan shows more than 40 parking spaces on the property in three parking lots.

There would be no alley access from the business parking areas. Instead, parking would be accessed from driveways on Pascal, Simpson or University. The redevelopment would eliminate one of two current vehicle access points along University. The site plan shows traffic entering the site from eastbound University and accessing the Culver's drive-through and parking that way.

If Culver's does come to University Avenue, it would be the chain's eleventh outlet in the Twin Cities. The only other Culver's restaurant in St. Paul is near Sun-Ray Shopping Center on the East Side. The Wisconsin-based chain began in 1984 in the Sauk Prairie, Wisconsin area. There are currently more than 400 Culver's restaurants in 17 states.

## Midway Y

Continued from page 1

Reddy said the lot carries white pine, Fraser fir, Canaan fir and Balsam fir. They come in a range of sizes and prices, from table-top 3-foot trees to the larger ones at 8-10 feet and the "church trees."

He smiled as he remembered Christmas from his childhood and his dad getting a tree from a YMCA lot in Pittsburgh.

"My dad was so cheap, he would wait until Dec. 24 about 9 p.m. when they were ready to close for the season, and he would pick out a Scotch pine, which was pretty gnarly. He could get an 8-foot tree for about \$3, and then he would ask for extra branches," Reddy recalled. "At home, he would take out his drill and drill holes into the tree trunk, and stick the extra branches in. Then he would cover the tree with so much tinsel, it could have been a barber pole and you couldn't tell the difference."

He said that over the years, there have been many touching moments at the tree lot.

"A couple years ago, we had about a hundred trees left on the lot. It was Dec. 22nd, and we wondered if we would sell them. A woman stopped by and asked me how many trees I had left. I told her, and she offered to buy them all for \$20 apiece."

Reddy said he sold her all the trees and asked if she was bringing a truck to pick them up. She replied that she wanted to donate the trees to others, and told him to just put up a free sign and give the trees away.

"We did that," Reddy said, "and some people took the trees, but left a donation as well. That was a very emotional moment for me."

He recalled another experience at the lot, when a woman came in and looked for a long time around the lot. "You get a feel

for this, and I knew she wanted a nice tree but probably couldn't afford it. She finally picked out a nice \$40 tree and asked if I could sell it for a little less. Her son was coming home from college, and she knew he would be disappointed if they didn't have a tree," Reddy said.

He asked her how much she could afford, and she said about

\$20.

"I told her to keep that \$20, and take the tree. I told her to use that money to buy a gift for her son," he said. "But the story doesn't end there. Someone nearby heard what was going on and realized I had given away a \$40 tree. He said he wanted to pay \$40 for the tree I had given away."

Reddy said the Service group

will give away trees to someone who has a real need, in the spirit of Christmas.

"But if someone is just trying to get a free tree, I come down on them like Scrooge," he added.

He said the best part of working at the lot is the people, the volunteers and customers.

"We have families who come here with their babies, and you see

them come again when the kids are 5 and 10 and teens and college students," Reddy said. "It's the circle of life."

He stopped to visit with a customer, advising her to put her tree in hot tap water when she got it home. He said that keeps the pets from drinking the water.

"That's one of Martha's tips," he explained.

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# Alleys encouraged as 'secondary circulation routes'

By JANE MCCLURE

A recommendation that encourages the use of University Avenue alleys as "secondary circulation routes" when Central Corridor light rail begins operations is something many business owners and neighborhood residents want to put the brakes on. Business owners and neighborhood residents objected to the idea at a November 19 public hearing on proposed Central Corridor zoning changes.

But some Planning Commission members were surprised to learn November 30 that the idea of funneling more traffic from University into the shared east-west alleys has been part of city policy since the Central Corridor Development Strategy was adopted three years ago. Individual station area plans encourage use of alleys to access parking and businesses, said City Planner Christina Morrison.

The notion of more traffic in shared alleys has residents, business owners and some Planning

Commission members wondering if the idea should be curbed.

"To use the alleyways for delivery we've got a problem," said George Younes of Williams Supply, a uniform supply at 908 University. His family's business has no off-street parking and will lose

**"Homeowners haven't been informed of these zoning amendments, which will have a great effect on them."**

- Frogtown Neighborhood Association Executive Director Tait Danielson-Castillo.

its on-street parking when light rail construction starts in two years in front of his building.

Home owners on the north and south sides of the alleys haven't been informed of the proposal, said Frogtown Neighborhood Association Executive Director Tait Danielson-Castillo. He said the city needs to contact property owners by certified letter if necessary to let them know about the alley issues.

"Homeowners haven't been informed of these zoning amendments, which will have a great effect on them," he said.

University Avenue will lose 85 percent of its on-street parking when light rail is built and starts operating. This is expected to cre-

ate a huge hardship for businesses that have no off-street parking, and no space to load and unload delivery vehicles. The street will retain two lanes of traffic in each direction; some neighborhood activists said city officials should look at having only one lane of traffic in each direction to preserve parking and help small businesses.

In reviewing the public hearing testimony, some Planning

Commission members also questioned the notion of promoting more motor vehicle traffic in alleys. Commissioner Barb Wencil questioned how that would be possible. "My concern with the alleys is I read this and think, how are we going to do this? In some areas these are older built homes and business buildings. There isn't a lot of room."

The city's intent isn't to widen existing alleys. But Morrison conceded that there are places where fences, shrubs and possibly buildings may be encroaching on what is legally city right-of-way. Those will have to be removed.

But more use of alleys could create a unique experience for people who visit the businesses, said Commissioner Dave Wickiser. He said the increased of alleys shouldn't necessarily be looked at as a bad thing.

But the notion of more traffic in alleys raises a variety of economic and land use challenges. What will especially be a challenge is in areas that never had al-

leys or where alleys were vacated. That's especially true in the Summit-University neighborhood near Western Avenue. Commissioner Richard Kramer said that raises the possibility of the city having to buy private property to create new alleys. In some cases the city would be buying back property it sold to business and residential property owners when alleys were originally vacated.

Another issue commissioners raised is whether stating that alleys are a raises the issue of how maintenance is paid for. St. Paul doesn't plow snow out of alleys and does little if any maintenance. Special assessment districts may have to be created to cover those costs.

"At the end of the day when light rail is built there is going to be increased use of alleys," said Commissioner Tony Schertler. "That's going to have to be disclosed to home owners." Home owners will also have to decide if they will opt in to paying for increased alley maintenance.



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## Hamernick's

Continued from page 8

"My son, Troy, manages the mill direct portion, and he has been with me for 11 years," Ted said. "My son-in-law, Garth, is in commercial sales and has been with me for 18 years. My daughter, Brenda, works in the office."

Lynn said a grand opening of the new store is planned for the future, probably after the holidays.

"The new location used to be the old United Rental, which had some old buildings on the property that had been vacant for two or three years," Lynn said. "We bought the land, tore down two old buildings and built the new one. It was a long, long process. We had hoped to be in the new building last January, but we just moved in September. It took about a year to do it and plan it."

Ted reiterated his love of the business and of the Rice Street neighborhood. He also praised Western Bank. "Without Western Bank, none of this would have been possible," he said. "They put their trust in us, and invested with me in a new project. And we have more than tripled the business in the last 10 years."

One of his long-time goals was reached recently.

"Focus Floor Covering has a yearly list of the top 100 floor covering companies in the United States," he said. "Home Depot is usually at the top of the list because of the number of stores they have. We made the list this year. It's been a goal of mine for 30 years, and we finally achieved it."

Ted said that business today is a continuous challenge. Despite being nearly 73, he still works six full days a week. One of the things he said he has a hard time with is what he sees as a lot of false advertising and dishonesty in business today.

"To survive, you feel you almost have to become a part of it. I don't want to see us ever do that," he said.

It has been many years since his car broke down, and Rice Street beckoned. But Ted and his wife Lynn have demonstrated that whatever the changing times may bring, hard work and perseverance pay off.

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## WINDOWS/SCREENS

Custom making/repairs. Thermal windows; fix frames, glazing. Kendall's—651-489-3210, 651-776-6996. BB-10

## Take a break and relax at Hamline Midway Library

Take a break from the hustle and bustle of the holiday season to relax in the library. We offer great books and programming all season long!

Our last yoga class for the year is on Monday, December 13. Join instructor Colleen Dooley, CMT-RYI, for a free yoga class at the library.

On Tuesday, December 14, join the MacPhail Center for Music's early childhood music specialists as we explore the magic of music and play. Through hands-on musical play activities families will experience music's impact on learning and reading readiness. Together we will sing, rhyme, read, move and create! Space is limited; please call 651-642-0293 to register.

Paw Pals is now in session every third Saturday of the month. Call the library to sign your child up for a reading session with our favorite library dog, Toby, on December 18. Slots are available from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Open to kids ages 6-12.

The library continues to offer toddler and pre-school storytimes on Fridays at 10:30 p.m. Share the joys of reading and build literacy skills with your child at our storytimes.

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 registration. All events are free.

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# Holiday Flower Show runs to Jan. 23 at Como Conservatory

The Holiday Flower Show, beginning December 4, 2010 in the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory, is a visual sensation to behold featuring hundreds of poinsettias.

This year the Sunken Garden will showcase a sizzling floral spectrum of traditional reds complimented with touches of soft pinks. Red Poinsettia cultivars Chianti, Freedom Fireworks, Prestige Maroon, and Cortez Burgundy will be featured with Poinsettia 'Premium Apricot' and Coleus Pink Ruffles.

The Holiday Flower Show tradition began in 1925 and continues to be the most anticipated and visited flower at-

traction at the Conservatory to-day.

The Holiday Flower Show will run from December 4, 2010 to January 23, 2011.

*This year the Sunken Garden will showcase a sizzling floral spectrum of traditional reds complimented with touches of soft pinks. Red Poinsettia cultivars Chianti, Freedom Fireworks, Prestige Maroon, and Cortez Burgundy will be featured with Poinsettia 'Premium Apricot' and Coleus Pink Ruffles.*



# Two historic Rice Street buildings face troubles

By JANE MCCLURE

Two historic Rice Street buildings face uncertain futures. The former Caron-Fabre store and a grocery store with apartments above are being monitored closely by city officials. Both were the topics of public hearings before the council and action November 17.

The former Caron-Fabre store, an imposing brick landmark for more than a century, was condemned despite an appeal by owner Jean O'Brien. O'Brien's aunts ran the store of eclectic home furnitures and decor for many years. Both women are now deceased. One

final clearance store was held recently.

O'Brien is trying to sell the building but like many other property owners, is dealing with a difficult real estate market. Various developers have looked at the property but nothing has materialized. O'Brien had to shut off utilities to the building recently to in turn cut her own costs. She said it will be much harder to sell if the building is condemned.

Ward Five Council Member Lee Helgen said he sympathizes with O'Brien. He too wants to see the handsome old building sold and rehabilitated. But Helgen noted that the building already

has some deterioration and that shutting off utilities could make those problems worse.

The building dates from the 1880s and was built as a grocery store and residents. Sisters Juanita and Bernice Caron operated their unique furniture store there for 53 years. Community members want to see the building saved. Sparc held a workshop to discuss ideas for the building this summer.

The second building, at 520 Rice St., was ordered vacated Nov. 19, two days after a council hearing on its condition. This structure dates from 1889. More than a dozen tenants and a cor-

ner grocery store were ordered it because the property code violations couldn't all be repaired in time. Property owner Jeffrey DeLisle must rehabilitate the three-story structure or it will be ordered torn down. DeLisle had appealed a city staff condemnation order.

The safety issues in the building include electrical problems, damaged walls, windows that couldn't be opened, a rickety stairway at the rear and floor problems. Attorney Chad Lemmons told the council DeLisle would make the repairs and that many had been made before the hearing. He, almost a dozen resi-

dents and an attorney from Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services pleaded to let the tenants stay, saying people were being forced out of their homes during the holiday season. Several residents said they had nowhere else to go.

But council members said the number of serious violations was putting the residents at risk. Council Member Melvin Carter III expressed concern for the residents but said he was shocked at the conditions. He called the situation "a recipe for disaster" and observed the final inspection before the occupants were asked to move out.

## EVENTS at Hamline University DECEMBER 11

### Meet 1990 Trans-Antarctica Expedition Team

Join the Hamline University School of Education's Center for Global Environmental Education (CGEE) as it hosts the six team members of the 1990 Trans-Antarctica Expedition as they are reunited for the first time in 20 years. The international team members will recount their experiences, share how the adventure has impacted their lives and the global environment, and show video clips from the journey. The adventure learning program created for the expedition, which reached 25 million children worldwide, was the inspiration for the founding of Hamline's Center for Global Environmental Education.

**Date and time:** Saturday, December 11, 3 to 5 p.m.

**Location:** Anne Simley Theater, Drew Fine Arts, Taylor Avenue

**Cost:** Free and open to all. Tickets (to reserve your seat) must be picked up in advance at the CGEE office, located at 1467 Hewitt Avenue.



### Hamline Basketball Row of Honor Celebration

You're invited to attend the celebration as 10 Hamline basketball greats, along with members of the university's three national championship basketball teams from 1942, 1949, and 1951, return to campus for an honorary ceremony. Those recognized will include, among others, NBA hall-of-famer Vern Mikkelsen and legendary basketball coaches Don Meyer and Joe Hutton, Sr. In all, 10 past players and coaches will be inducted into the newly-created Row of Honor in Hamline's historic Hutton Arena.

**Date and time:** Installation of Row of Honor is at 1 p.m. on Saturday, December 11. The Hamline University Pipers will then host St. Thomas in a men's basketball game at 3 p.m.

**Location:** All of the festivities take place at Hutton Arena, located at 1569 Hewitt Avenue

**Cost:** The induction ceremony is free. The basketball game is free for those with a Hamline ID card. Game tickets for the general public are \$6/adults, \$5/college students, and \$4/kids 4-17. Children under four are free.

