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'What's Cookin' at Mama's Pizza?

Brendmoen pulls off victory in Ward 5

By JAN WILLMS

The Ward 5 race was neck and neck from the beginning, when neither Amy Brendmoen nor Lee Helgen was able to pull off a DFL endorsement, to the very end, when Brendmoen pulled ahead by only 36 votes.

Looking back on the race, Brendmoen said the first thing she was able to do was block the DFL endorsement for incumbent Helgen.

"Lee has never had the DFL endorsement," she noted, "but most people assumed he had." She said preventing his endorsement for his third run gave her an advantage.

"In addition, I was very focused and created a very broad focus of support," Brendmoen said. "There was so much help from people doing their part. On election night, everybody felt like they played a role in getting the vote out, and they did."

She said she had first heard rumors that Helgen was not going to run, and several people encouraged her to seek the Ward 5 council office. When she later heard he was planning to run, her reasons for pursuing the position had not changed.



"I felt the ward needed more representation," she said. "And I am one of the most energetic, go-go people I know."

Brendmoen, originally from Stillwater, has lived in St. Paul all of her adult life. She earned a B.A. in political science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and began her professional career in the Minnesota Attorney General's office, where she spent 11 years as a mediator for citizens and small businesses from across the state. She worked for North

"There was so much help from people doing their part. On election night, everybody felt like they played a role in getting the vote out, and they did."

- Amy Brendmoen

Thunder Advertising, which she described as a "rogue political advertising agency." She is now the director of communications at Children's Home Society and Family Services, a St. Paul-based nonprofit.

"All those experiences add up to a candidate who understands politics and understands how to communicate," Brendmoen stated.

She believes communications will be a big part of her job as Ward 5 council member.

"I don't have to know everything, but I have to be effective at talking to people and engaging them," she said. She added that she has to move through research and get information, and bring it to life.

"The elected person has the responsibility to build relationships," Brendmoen explained.

Relaxing a bit after the campaign, she said the hardest part was trying to balance the singular focus the race demanded with the commitment to her family. She and her husband have three young sons.

As she prepares to take office, Brendmoen said she feels like she has a lot of learning and listening to do.

"I am focused on strengthening our local economy and getting people engaged with decision-making and problem solving," she said. "The budget and foreclosure problems seem so big; it is easy to feel disempowered. I want to work on ways to get ordinary people to be a part of the solution."

One way she hopes to do that is by having office hours in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Lee Helgen loses reelection bid for Council

By JAN WILLMS

With just a difference of 36 votes, two-term Ward 5 council member Lee Helgen lost his bid for a third term of service.

There is an automatic recount if the difference falls within nine votes, but 36 votes requires a candidate to pay for the recount.

"Historically Ramsey County elections are very accurate," Helgen said. "At this point we decided it was better to accept the results."

"We expected it would be a close race in this ward," Helgen continued. "The last two elections were close. It felt good going in, and we were running a good campaign and getting the vote out. But it was a hard year for reelection, generally. The turnout was down, and there were issues like the state shutdown, the federal debt crisis and property tax changes."

Helgen said there was a lot of voter apathy out there that his campaign hoped could be turned in a positive direction.

"Amy did a good job of trying to connect with people and getting the voters to turn out," Helgen said, referring to Amy Brend-

moen who won the election.

It will be a change for Helgen, who has been in the political mix most of his career. He grew up in Bemidji and graduated from North Dakota State University with a degree in political science. He did an internship for former Sen. Byron Dorgan in the Fargo district office.

He wanted to move back to Minnesota and took a job at the State Capitol as a page for Sen. Dick Cohen. "That put me on the path working for the senate for nine years as a legislative assistant," Helgen said. He also completed a master's in public administration from Hamline University.

Helgen served as Property Tax and Local Government Committee administrator, worked for Public Health and was on the District 6 Planning Council. His experiences gave him the opportunity to work with larger land areas, planning and data.

"I could see how the city impacted neighborhoods, business development and service delivery," Helgen commented. "I felt like at that time Ward 5 needed more of an active council member



to get the community and city staff working on redevelopment. So I made my first run for public office in 2003."

He said parts of the City Council job were what he expected, such as the city budget process and mix of city services. "I was a little surprised at how the ward system works," he added, "and the amount of influence you have over the redevelopment of a ward. It really mattered, and the Council office engaged with the city

"The last two elections were close. It felt good going in, and we were running a good campaign and getting the vote out. But it was a hard year for reelection, generally."

- Lee Helgen

staff and district councils."

Helgen said he also was surprised by the complexity of some of the issues. He said that in improving the structure of public housing, results sometimes come through the police department, sometimes code enforcement through the Department of Safety and Inspections and sometimes by the city attorney filing a nuisance action.

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Cupcake seeks alternate location for popular bakery

By JANE MCCLURE

Battered by Central Corridor light rail construction, the popular University Avenue restaurant and bakery Cupcake wants to open a second location at 949 Grand Av. Cupcake owner Kevin Vanderaa said the loss of customers due to construction and the permanent elimination of as many as 20 on-street University Avenue parking spaces there could doom his business at 3338 University Av. if a second location cannot open soon.

But without a parking variance from St. Paul's Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA), Cupcake cannot open on Grand. For the third time in two months, the BZA laid over a decision on Vanderaa's request for a seven-space variance November 28. He is to return to the BZA in December with more information on possible employee parking at the Grand-Victoria ramp and any other parking solu-

tion he can come up with.

City staff and the Summit Hill Association (SHA) recommend denial of the variance, saying that adding a popular business would compound the area's chronic parking problems. Staff notes that with only five parking spaces behind the building, most Cupcake customers would resort to on-street parking. Staff recently found that Cupcake cannot share space in the Grand-Victoria Grand place parking ramp, as those spaces are allocated to other businesses. But that option and other ideas are still being explored.

Vanderaa said he is anxious to open on Grand. "We've tried very hard to find the perfect second location because the light rail construction is killing our business now. Without another location, we would be forced to close and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



Battered by Central Corridor light rail construction, the popular University Avenue restaurant and bakery Cupcake wants to open a second location at 949 Grand Av. (Photo by Stefanie Berres)

Conservatory Flower Show continues through January 22

The Holiday Flower Show, which began Dec. 4, in the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory, is a visual sensation to behold featuring hundreds of poinsettias that have all been grown on-site. This year the Sunken Garden features an ice and frost theme showcasing the cultivars Ice Punch, Ice Crystals, Ruby Frost, Red Glitter. The Conservatory is also proud to display 5 red poinsettia cultivars that are new to the market: Protégé Dark Red, Viking Red, Encore, Bravo Bright Red and Jubilee Red. Dusty Miller plants, which often resemble snowflakes, will be interspersed to add to the seasonal menagerie.

The Holiday Flower Show tradition began in 1925 and continues to be the most anticipated and visited flower attraction at the Conservatory today. The Holiday Flower Show will run through January 22, 2012 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Como Park Zoo & Conservatory is open 365 days a year.



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MIDWAY/COMO/NORTH END Monitor in a Minute

Reuse of Hamline Park building considered

Reuse of the Hamline Park Playground building is being studied by community members and St. Paul Parks and Recreation. The Parks and Recreation Commission discussed the potential reuse last month but took no action. That discussion followed a community meeting this fall at the building.

The historic building was designed by Clarence Wigington, the nation's first African-American municipal architect. It was built during the WPA era and used as community recreation space for decades. More than 20 years ago community members worked hard to save and rehabilitate the space.

The building was used in recent years as office space by Hamline Midway Coalition and by other groups. But the district council moved to the Hamline Library this fall. The building also needs repairs and rehabilitation.

If the building is sold, the city would sell it through a formal request for proposals process. But any sale would involve the parks commission, as sale would fall under a city ordinance that tightly restricts sale of park land.

The one party that has indicated interest in the building is the business Mosaic on a Stick, which is currently located at Snelling and Thomas avenues.

City adopts liquor ordinance amendment

An amendment to the city's recently enacted college liquor ordinance was adopted unanimously November 9 by the St. Paul City Council. The amendment exempts colleges that want to serve liquor outdoors from any kind of petition process.

No one appeared at a November 2 public to testify against the amendment.

The 2001 Minnesota legislature changed state law to allow private colleges and universities to seek city liquor licenses. The University of St. Thomas is in the process of seeking such a license.

When alcohol is served outside of a restaurant, the restaurant must go through a neighborhood consent petition process. The city has a series of set percentage of signatures that a business must reach before its request for outdoor service can be considered by city licensing staff and the City Council for approval.

The City Attorney office has indicated that the petition requirement was not meant to be part of the college liquor licensing regulations. But a mistake was made in the final draft of the ordinance adopted last summer.



Reuse of the Hamline Park Playground building is being studied by community members and St. Paul Parks and Recreation. (Photo by Stefanie Berres)

UST's request for a campus liquor license is pending with a legislative hearing officer, who conducted public hearings in September. One of the sticking points in the debate between

neighborhood residents and UST officials is outdoor service, which many neighbors wanting it limited. UST contends it can adequately police outdoor liquor service.

At the legislative hearings

neighbors questioned why there wasn't a consent petition for outdoor liquor service. UST officials indicated that their understanding was that there wasn't to be a consent petition because campuses are self-contained. That prompted the review of the ordinance and the newly passed ordinance amendment.

Midway Liquor gets OK to move

Midway Liquor Store has received St. Paul City Council permission to move from the Zimmerman Building to space at the northeast corner of University and Prior avenues. The transfer of the liquor license was approved in Novem-

ber by the St. Paul City Council.

The move required review and approval from the council because the liquor store would be less than 350 feet from a religious facility, a mosque in the same block. Hamline Midway Coalition and city staff recommended transfer of the license and there were no community objections raised.

The liquor store is one of the last businesses to move out of the Zimmerman Building, which is at the southeast corner of University and Prior. Other businesses have already moved out; longtime tenant David's Print Shop has closed. The building is being sold to Habitat for Humanity, which will raze the building and erect a new office there.

- Compiled by Jane McClure

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Central Corridor construction on track to meet deadline

By JANE MCCLURE

Long workdays and favorable weather have helped the Central Corridor light rail project meet its November 30 deadline. The heightened pace of work meant most of the work planned for 2011 will be done on time, light rail project staff told the Central Corridor Management Committee November 9. Not everything slated for the 2011 construction season will be done but crews have been able to complete some work slated for 2012, so project officials are feeling good about the construction progress.

"We couldn't have a better fall than we have had," said Dan Soler of the Central Corridor Project Office. "We just would like a little bit more (good weather)."

"I guess it's a benefit of global warming," quipped Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin.

Central Corridor project staff, lead contractor Walsh Construction and subcontractors have been under fire for the past few months as they scrambled to get work done on the \$957 million project. University Avenue between Emerald Street and Hamline Avenue has drawn the most scrutiny, but concerns have also been raised about work in downtown St. Paul, the capitol area and the University of Minnesota West Bank.

Business leaders and elected officials, led by St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman, have been especially vocal in questioning whether work would get done before winter weather hit.

But construction crews have

worked weekends and late into the evening to complete work. A Fifth Street skyway connection reopened November 1, on time. The St. Paul City Council approved a noise variance November 16 to allow for more late-night downtown work on the project. And Coleman's senior policy advisor, Nancy Homans, brought cookies to the project staff to show the city's gratitude for the work that has been done.

"The city of St. Paul has been a little cranky about the schedule and we wanted to show our appreciation," Homans said.

Metropolitan Council Member Jon Commers said he has been fielding many questions from business owners who are concerned about construction wrapping up by November 30. But he has also been asked if the work could continue beyond November 30, if the weather cooperates.

Soler indicated that plans call for finishing up what is scheduled to be done by month's end. "We're not going to dig any more big holes, if you will," he said. Some work could continue in the University of Minnesota West Bank area and in the University Avenue area between Prior and Cleveland.

The most recent developments include the Nov. 30 reopening of University from Emerald to Hamline on Nov. 30. Some temporary lane closures will occur into December as crews complete finishing work and clean up. Snelling at University reopened Nov. 30 to two lanes in each direction and turn lanes.

This was preceded by the Nov.

28 reopening of the Cleveland/Transfer Road intersection on the north side of University.

Sidewalk work on University between Prior and Cleveland was expected to continue into December, as the walks were closed on both the north and south side. Pedestrians have had to use marked temporary sidewalk in the middle of University until sidewalk on south reopens.

Beginning in December utility crews will be working on water valves at Hamline and Lexington. Through traffic maintained; watch for short term lane closures and shifts. Once this work is complete crews will proceed to work at Syndicate, Griggs and Dunlap.

Bus stops and routes will be restored to final locations and shelters will be added over the next few weeks; check www.metrotransit.org/construction for updates.

Construction crews could deal with precipitation, "unless we get 20 inches of snow," said Soler. It's bitterly cold weather that could have shut work down earlier than desired, especially when water mains, sewer lines and any underground work is needed.

Soler said project staff are pleased with the progress in recent weeks. Throughout the work areas, track is being embedded and streets paved. Sidewalks and streetscape improvements have been installed in most areas. The westbound lanes of University between Hamline and Snelling were paved earlier this month, as were eastbound lanes along the western



Long workdays and favorable weather have helped the Central Corridor light rail project meet its November 30 deadline. (Photo by Stefanie Berres)

stretch of University. "We've had a lot of paving going on on University," Soler said. The street must be open for traffic, two lanes in each direction, by the November 30 deadline. Two of the last areas to be completed will be in the Cleveland and Cretin-Vandalia area.

Stations have taken shape at locations including in front of Union Depot, Snelling, Fairview, Raymond and Westgate, and on the University of Minnesota East and West Bank campuses. The bridge over Highway 280 has been reconstructed and is mostly complete. In Lowertown, work is well underway on the operations and maintenance facility.

As November drew to a close work continued on Cedar Street utility work, laying of track from Emerald to Cleveland, retaining walls along Robert Street and sidewalks and streetscape work on the north side of University. One ongoing issue Soler noted is that of having the contractors to do more

to provide temporary access to businesses.

There have been changes to the work plans, Soler said. Some work planned for 2011 will be pushed back until next year. Some 2012 work will be wrapped up this fall.

One aspect of the project that won't be completed until next year is work in the area between Cleveland and Prior avenues, including work on the north retaining wall, utilities, the street and rail track. The Minnesota Transfer Railroad Bridge crosses University there, so the road bed had to be lowered to accommodate rail trains. That work has taken longer than expected.

But crews were able to accelerate some other aspects of the project set for next year in the West Bank area including paving, construction on the Huron Boulevard bypass and work on one of the power substations near the TCF Bank Stadium.

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Bus route changes with Central Corridor

By JANE MCCLURE

Getting to and from the planned Central Corridor light rail line will mean developing a network of connecting bus routes. Existing routes would be modified and new ones added if initial ideas are implemented. In early 2012 Metro Transit will start meeting with community groups to discuss possible changes. The plan would take shape next year with Metropolitan Council action in fall 2012. Changes would be implemented in 2013-2014, before the rail line is up and running.

The Central Corridor Management Committee discussed the study November 9.

"We will be taking a close look at changes to the frequency and span of service," said John Levin, director service development for Metro transit. Data collection for the study began in 2010. Evaluation of existing conditions is underway.

The study is not only sought by transit advocates and community groups, it is also required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

"This line, more than any other rail line, will rely on bus lines." Levin noted a large number of transfers from buses to the rail line are anticipated. Levin said it is hoped that bus riders who may not benefit directly from Central Corridor would still gain from improvements to the area bus service.

Changes are anticipated to the frequency and span of service. Some existing routes and stops could be modified. The route system itself would be easier for riders to understand, said Levin, and would be more cost-effective for Metro Transit to operate.

"We've heard time and time again that there is interest in bus service improvements," Levin said. There is community interest especially in adding more north-south service. Metro Transit would like to have north-south routes spaced no more than one-half mile apart.

The transit study area for Central Corridor includes many St. Paul and Minneapolis neighborhoods. Hennepin and Larpentuer avenues are the north boundary, with Interstate 35E and the Mississippi River to the east. The river to Lake Street makes up the southern and part of the western boundary. Lake Street to Hiawatha Avenue and then to Interstate 94 are western boundaries. Both downtown St. Paul and Minneapolis are in the study area.

The area would include scrutiny of existing north-south lines including Dale Street, Snelling Avenue and Prior Avenue. But there is potential for new service along Lexington Parkway and Fairview Avenue, as well as circulator service through area neighborhoods. Levin said one goal is to make sure no one has no more than a one-quarter mile walk to a bus line.

Over the past decade Metro Transit has done four major regional or sector studies, including a study of transit in neighborhoods north and northeast of the planned rail line in 2000 and 2001. Proposed changes to bus lines serving the North End and Como neighborhoods prompted protests, picketing and petition

drive to retain services or to object to changes that sent buses down residential streets.

This study will be reviewed during the planning for Central Corridor bus service.

A 2004 study was used to plan bus route changes tied to the Hiawatha Line.

Area district councils and their transportation and committee have discussed the potential bus route impacts for several months, as has the District Councils Collaborative (DCC), a group of district councils and community groups. While some groups have expressed support for ex-

panded service and circulator routes tied to Central Corridor, some objections to a Lexington Parkway bus have been heard from Summit Hill neighborhood residents.

Lexington could be one of the challenges in adding service. A route on Lexington was added as a

result of the 2000-2001 studies. It served an area between Central High School and Como Park. The route met objections from some city officials and required an additional level of city review because Lexington is classified as a parkway. Some residents of the Como, Hamline-Midway, Frogtown and Summit-University neighborhoods wanted the services; others opposed it. The route only lasted a few years when low ridership doomed it during a round of transit budget cuts.

Another challenge could be in reaching transit users that don't typically get involved in community processes. Jill Hentges, Metro Transit community outreach coordinator, said there will be a concerted effort to involve the diverse groups that will be served by bus and rail transit. A pilot project that gets people involved as "transit advocates" will be tried, through funding from the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative and the DCC.

An outreach project is also planned to develop kiosks for the rail stations, to identify and provide information about key sites in each area. The Raymond Avenue station will be the pilot project for this process.



In early 2012 Metro Transit will start meeting with community groups to discuss possible changes. The plan would take shape next year with Metropolitan Council action in fall 2012. Changes would be implemented in 2013-2014, before the rail line is up and running.

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Plans for new Walgreens at Lexington and Larpenteur move ahead

By JANE MCCLURE

Plans to build a new Walgreens at Lexington Parkway and Larpenteur Avenue are moving ahead, as a result of two St. Paul Planning Commission votes December 2. The commission approved a modified conditional use permit for the store's drive-through window, and also recommended approval or rezoning adjacent properties along California Avenue. The rezoning would allow properties south of the store site to be reconfigured and the existing alley to be vacated and relocated.

The St. Paul City Council will have the final say on the rezoning request and will hold a final hearing before voting on the matter. The Planning Commission decision on the conditional use permit is final unless it is appealed to the City Council in 10 days.

The development project involves properties at 1102-1124 Larpenteur Avenue, which are currently occupied by MGM Liquors, and the northern portions of residential properties at 1105-1125 California Avenue. Minneapolis-based Semper Development, which works with Walgreens to site and build new stores, has worked for more than 10 years with the Como Community Council and neighbors on redevelopment plans. No one appeared before the Planning Commission Zoning Committee November 22 to speak against the Walgreens request.

The Lexington and Larpenteur neighborhood has been the focus of redevelopment discussions and debate for several years. A redevelopment workshop in 2008 focused on ways the area could be transformed.



Plans to build a new Walgreens at Lexington Parkway and Larpenteur Avenue are moving ahead, as a result of two St. Paul Planning Commission votes December 2.

There was also a lengthy fight during 2007-2009 between MGM and the city and neighborhood residents, over MGM's removal of an alley screening fence. That dispute wound up before the Minnesota Court of Appeals at one point.

But months of neighborhood discussion meant a much smoother Planning Commission review process for the Walgreens request. The Planning Commission received four letters of support, as well as project support from Como Community Council. Only one letter was received in opposition. John Kohler of Semper Development said that company officials worked hard to address concerns raised by community members and the district council.

"I think it was a very good process," Kohler said.

Como Community Council

asked for several conditions to be placed on the project. One is that the Walgreen's be closed by 10 p.m. Another is that the screening fence south of the property be built of "substantial" material, such as brick or steel, rather than wood. Some neighbors also objected to the idea of a wooden fence.

Another condition sought by the district council is that deliveries not occur at peak times, such as not before 7 a.m. or not after 2 p.m.

A letter from Jon Knox, district council board chair, noted that there are community concerns about traffic. Neighbors also want assurances that the California properties currently owned by MGM Liquors be sold as single-family owner-occupied homes. Some Planning Commission members noted that while they understand those concerns,

the traffic issues need to be handled by St. Paul Public Works. They also noted that the city cannot dictate how the residential properties are sold.

Another concern raised by the Zoning Committee is that while it can place conditions on the conditional use permit, some of the conditions, such as hours of store operation and delivery hours, also need to be addressed as part of licensing for the business. Zoning Committee Chair Rich Kramer noted that the requested conditional use permit is for the drive-through window only and not for the entire store.

Conditions the Planning Commission placed on the conditional use permit request include:

- *Application for adjustment of the site boundaries needs to be approved.

- *The City Council needs to approve the rezoning request.

- *The site plan needs city staff approval.

- *The City Council must approve the alley vacation.

- *The drive-through window must close by 10 p.m.

- *The fence along the southern property line and the alley turnaround at the westerly end of the property shall be composed of substantial materials, such as brick, masonry or metal, and not be made of wood.

- *Deliveries shall not be made prior to 7 a.m. or after 2 p.m.

As part of the permit the Planning Commission modified the distance requirement related to site egress. The egress point is to be located at least 60 feet from adjacent residential properties. It will be located as close as 24.73 feet to the south residential prop-

erty line. The commission agreed to this modification.

No conditions could be attached to the rezoning request itself. City policy is that rezoning requests are simply voted up or down. The rezoning request is an unusual one as it only involves a portion of the California Avenue properties between Lexington and Dunlap.

Plans call for a 14,820 square foot Walgreens pharmacy and general merchandise store, with 47 off-street parking spaces. The total development site is 48,519 square feet, comprised of the lots at Lexington and Larpenteur, and the north part of the five California lots. The rezoning for the California properties involves areas ranging from 35.4 to 35.71 feet deep. The lots will be reconfigured to result in four single-family parcels, each with a minimum of 5,000 square feet. One house on California will be demolished and garages will be reconstructed with access off of California. These houses currently use the alley for garage access. Once the existing alley is vacated and the properties reconfigured, a T-turnaround will be built for the properties at the western end of the block.

The alley issues were raised by residential and commercial neighbors, in letters to the Planning Commission. Vehicles speeding in the alley and using it as a cut-through have been issues in the Como residential neighborhood for many years. That is why some neighbors welcome the changes to the alley. But at least one commercial property owner along Larpenteur, has raised concerns about the maintenance of the turnaround and the loss of alley access.

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Brendmoen

Continued from page 1

the community. "It makes problem-solving more accessible to people," Brendmoen claimed. "When I was door knocking, people loved the idea of office hours. Will they show up? I don't know, but they will have the opportunity."

She said property taxes, crime and public safety seemed to be issues across the board that she discovered as she campaigned. "The budget will proba-

bly be the toughest challenge," she admitted. "We all have to learn to do more with less."

She said she found that people loved the services the city provides, but don't want to pay higher taxes.

"I am interested in strengthening our local economy," she said. "People love having a vibrant St. Paul. I really feel if we strengthen our local economy, it's a step in the right direction."

"One thing I noticed as I went door-to-door," Brendmoen noted, "is that the community is very engaged and connected to

where they live—there is a great passion and pride. In the Rice Street area, some are working very hard to energize the community."

"On the Como side there is a lot of strong community organizing."

She said she would like to take any lessons learned from the Central Corridor and apply them to Ward 5. "The Central Corridor will impact our neighborhood a lot," she said. She also hopes to collaborate with Dan Bostrum, Council member on the East Side.

When Brendmoen talks about supporting the local economy, she puts her words into action.

"I decided this season to invest in my local economy by pushing goods made in St. Paul or the metro," she said. "I just feel like the holiday season is the perfect time for consumers to input a local economy."

She is planning a Made in Minnesota holiday, inviting people to join her.

"Change will start with one person at a time, so I'll do it with a party. I'll put it on Facebook

and send a letter to the editor," Brendmoen said.

She said that if people shifted even 50 per cent of their shopping to their local stores, it would be a big boost to the economy.

As she gets set to begin work with Ward 5, Brendmoen recalls growing up with a teen-age mom in a single-parent family.

"I know what it's like to struggle and work hard for an education," she said. "I want to make sure everyone has an opportunity for success."

Helgen

Continued from page 1

Helgen said that St. Paul is such a big city, it can impact public policy across the region and the state. During his two terms, he said that work on public policy really mattered, with issues such as the smoking ban, green building design standards and great programs on efficiency of buildings that had a ripple effect across the whole region.

Helgen cited work on public art policy, the Polar Bear Odyssey, Como Pool and the Primate Forest in Como Park as things that he was proud of during his tenure. He said he was able to help retain businesses along Rice Street and help fill vacant spaces.

"I really enjoyed working with community groups to identify what the problems in the ward are, and developing a strategy that would make a difference," Helgen said.

"The work is local enough that you can see the progress you are making, but the scope is long enough that you can feel like you are making a real difference in the community," he stated.

"I will miss being in the mix of public policy discussions," Helgen admitted. "I love doing that research." He said he didn't mind that he was considered by some to be a policy wonk.

He did not necessarily agree with some critics who felt he needed to work on his people skills.

"I never claimed to be a Paul Wellstone who gets the crowd

roiled up," he said with a smile. "I am too much of a stoic Norwegian for that."

For now, he has started his job search. "I am taking some time," he noted. "I have so many areas of interest, and I want to be able to work at a level where it will have some significance in a region."

He said budgets will continue to be a challenge for St. Paul, and the legislative environment is not as supportive of a large urban center as it has been in the past.

Helgen said that as a St. Paul resident, he will continue to care about the city and be engaged in the process of making it better.

"But I can feel the burden of making some of those decisions lifting, and I can focus a little more on having a normal life," he said.

Bus route changes

Continued from page 5

The coordinating committee was also told November 10 that at the request of two groups, some station names have been changed, said Central Corridor Project Director Mark Fuhrmann. The Capitol Area Architectural and Planning (CAAP) Board asked that the Rice Street and Capitol East stations be renamed the Rice/Capitol and Robert Street stations. This was done to provide more direction to riders as those who stop at what was

Capitol East would have had an uphill trek to get to the statehouse.

The Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority and Prospect Park/East River Road Improvement Association asked that Minneapolis' 29th Street Station be renamed the Prospect Park Station.

The project staff renamed downtown St. Paul's Fourth and Cedar Station the Central Station.

Committee member Reggie Aligada asked if there would be any opportunities to change other station names. "That window has pretty much closed," Fuhrman replied. Signs for the stations are already being fabricated.



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Major update to District 6 plan in the works

By JANE MCCLURE

Months of discussion about future land uses and redevelopment in the North End and South Como neighborhoods has resulted in a major update to the district plan. The revised plan will be the topic of a public hearing before the St. Paul Planning Commission at 8:30 a.m. Friday, January 13 at City Hall.

It has been several years since the North End-South Como district plan was approved, back in 2004. This proposal will provide an update to that document, and will become part of the city's comprehensive plan once it is adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council in 2012.

The city uses district plans to guide redevelopment, shape zoning and land use decisions and allocate resources such as Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) dollars.

The draft plan focus on the entire District 6 area, said City

Planner Penny Simison. Two key groups were involved in preparing the plan. One is the land use committee of the District 6 Planning Council. This group reviewed sections of the draft plan pertaining to previously adopted plans and policies.

There was also an industrial task force that included representatives from area industries, businesses, residents, agencies including the St. Paul Port Authority, and Ward Five Council Member Lee Helgen's office. This task force included a member of the Planning Commission and a District 6 representative. This group also looked carefully at past plans as well as current and future land uses.

One longstanding issue in the North End is older industrial uses that are in or near residential and commercial areas. District 6 has industrial areas along most of its south border with District 7/Frog-town, as well as industry in areas along railroads. There are three in-

dustrial parks developed over the past two decades by the Port Authority.

But some industrial sites are older and don't meet current zoning and building codes. Some are right next to residential areas and cause problems ranging from spillover noise and pollution to traffic issues. How those sites are eventually redeveloped will have long-term implications for the entire community.

The draft plan covers three key topics. One is the industrially zoned land southeast of the Como/Dale/Front intersection, particularly the conflict between industrial and residential uses in that area.

Como/Dale/Front is just north of the old Dale Street Shops/Maxson Street heavy industrial area, which was extensively redeveloped in the 1990s into a light industrial park. To the north of that in District 6 is a mix of industrial, commercial and residen-

tial uses. It's an area where there are sometimes conflicts between the industrial area and residential neighborhoods.

A second focus is Como/Dale/Front, and how that commercial area can be improved. While several businesses there have renovated or expanded their buildings, others haven't had improvements for many years. Some businesses have closed including Abetto's restaurant, which had served the neighborhood for many years. This neighborhood was recently the focus of a design workshop led by the University of Minnesota's Metropolitan Design Center.

A third focus for the draft plan is past neighborhood and small area plans. There have been numerous neighborhood and city-led planning efforts in the North End and South Como area over the past two decades. While many of the plans had extensive neighborhood input, there has some-

times been frustration that the ideas proposed aren't implemented.

These documents include plans for the neighborhood around Loeb Lake, the Arlington-Jackson industrial area and the Rice Street plan. There was also a re-examination of a proposed 2004 District 6 plan update that was never adopted by the city.

While the City of St. Paul has decertified and shelved many of its older plans, the existing plans in District 6 aren't considered candidates for decertification. Instead, city staff and the district council decided it would be better to look at all of the existing plans and put them in the district plan.

Other ideas covered in the draft include proposals to study land use and redevelopment ideas around Oakland Cemetery, improvements to neighborhood parks and trails, and ways to improve Rice Street. The draft plan is on the City of St. Paul website.

DFL endorsements still make a difference in St. Paul School Board races

By JAN WILLMS

The 2011 St. Paul elections are now history, but as the winning candidates prepare to take office, a look back at the results is warranted.

Four school board members were elected. Incumbents Ann Carroll and Keith Hardy and newcomers Louise Seeba and Mary Doran were the top vote-getters.

Carroll was the top vote-getter, with 15,093 votes. She was followed in order by Seeba, Doran and Hardy.

Although the DFL endorsements for governor have not proven successful in recent elections, the school board endorsements seem to matter. All four winners were endorsed by the DFL.

Pat Igo followed, with 8.73 per cent of the vote. Former school board member Al Oertwig came in sixth. The remaining candidates, in order of votes collected, were Lizz Paulson, Kevin Huepenbecker, Devin Miller and Tiffany Fearing.

It was a surprisingly low showing for Miller, who identified himself as a Green party member, based on his compelling performance at some of the candidate forums.

Ranked voting was introduced to the city council election process and did not seem to be problematic for voters.

In ranked choice voting, candidates are ranked by voters in order of preference, indicating their first choice, second choice, and so forth. When the ballots are counted, if one candidate takes a majority of the vote, a winner is declared. If no candidates take a majority, the ranked choice ballots are used to hold an instant runoff.

The only council race affected by this process was in Ward 2,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

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Holiday Flower Show and other events

The Holiday Flower Show, beginning December 3, 2011 in the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory, is a visual sensation to behold featuring hundreds of poinsettias that have all been grown on-site. This year the Sunken Garden features an ice and frost theme showcasing the cultivars Ice Punch, Ice Crystals, Ruby Frost, Red Glitter. The Conservatory is also proud to display 5 red poinsettia cultivars that are new to the market: Protégé Dark Red, Viking Red, Encore, Bravo Bright Red and Jubilee Red. Dusty Miller plants, which often resemble snowflakes, will be interspersed to add to the seasonal menagerie.

On December 4th from 8 a.m.-10 a.m., the Conservatory will be open for individuals and families to use the beautiful setting as a backdrop for photos before hours. For \$5 per person guests are welcome to bring in their own camera and find the perfect spot for their holiday photo.

The Holiday Flower Show tradition began in 1925 and continues to be the most anticipated and visited flower attraction at the Conservatory today. The Holiday Flower Show will run from December 3, 2011 to January 22, 2012 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Como Park Zoo & Conservatory is open 365 days a year.

Gospel of Mark at Jehovah Lutheran

Jehovah Lutheran Church is hosting a sequence of Bible studies on "The Gospels and the Jesus Story According to Mark" Sundays at 9:30 a.m. The sessions, which continue through Feb. 26, are based on DVD presentations by Luke Timothy Johnson of Emory University in Atlanta. Coffee and treats are provided and all are welcome to the free sessions. Jehovah Lutheran is at 1566 Thomas in St. Paul.

Breastfeeding discussed January 10

The Advantages of Breastfeeding is the topic of the meeting of the Como-Midway La Leche Group on Tuesday, January 10. All expectant and nursing mothers are invited to attend with their babies and toddlers. Call Heidi at 651-659-9527 for more information.

Family Fun Saturday at Knox Church Dec. 24

Join us on December 24th from 3

- 5 p.m. We will go caroling in the neighborhood and return to the church basement to make a craft to take home. 1536 Minnehaha Ave. West (next to Hamline Library). 651-645-6488. We meet on the fourth Saturday of every month.

Central Orchestra Winter Concert December 7

The Central Orchestra, under the direction of Mr. Matthew Oyen, presents its annual Winter Concert on Dec. 7th in the Central auditorium, 275 No. Lexington Parkway, at 7 p.m. The concert features the Central Orchestra performing the music of Greig, Bizet, Mozart, Dvorak, Rimsky-Korsakov and two contemporary pieces. The concert opens with two numbers by the Central Jazz Band.

The Central Band, under the direction of Mr. Matthew Oyen, presents its annual Winter Concert on Dec. 8th in the Central auditorium, 275 No. Lexington Parkway, at 7 p.m. The concert will feature the Central Jazz Band, Varsity Band and the Symphonic Band playing classical and contemporary numbers.

The Central Choral Music Department presents its annual Winter Concert, The Pursuit of Happiness, on Dec. 15 at 7 p.m. in the Central auditorium 275 No. Lexington Parkway. The concert features the music of the Central Women's choir, the Central Men's choir, the Central Singers, and the Central Concert Choir under the direction of Mrs. Martha Graber. The choirs will present a variety of holiday and ethnic music from around the world.

Women's Drop-in Drum Circle December 17

Announcing a Women's Drop-in Drum Circle on Saturday, Dec. 17, 6:30 p.m. Percussion, rhythm and freedom of expression will be explored. All levels of experience are welcomed and encouraged. Women's Drum Center, 2242 University Ave. W., St. Paul. \$10 at the door. Drums provided. Info and registration at www.womensdrumcenter.org.

'Paper Cutting' demonstrated at senior luncheon

"The Art of Paper Cutting" will be discussed and demonstrated during a luncheon for seniors on Tues., Jan. 10 at 1514 Englewood Ave at 11:30 p.m. The presenter will be by award winning local artist Andrea Martin. A \$4 free will donation is asked for the meal but there is no cost to attend the program which begins at 12:15 p.m. Reservations pre-

ferred but not required. (651) 209-6542.

Como Park Ski Center opening soon

Pending snow and weather conditions, the Como Park Ski Center will open for pre-season hours on Saturday and Sunday, December 17 and 18, and open for holiday hours on Monday, December 26. The Como Park Ski Center is a convenient in-town ski area featuring 1.7 K of lighted cross country ski trails for beginner-level skiing and 5K of intermediate/advanced level groomed classic and skate style cross country trails. Fresh powder is almost always in the forecast thanks to the ski center's snow machines, and four lighted tow ropes keep twilight winter activities safe.

The Como Ski Center chalet offers food service, downhill and cross country ski/snowboard rentals and affordable lessons taught by professional instructors. In addition to Como Park, cross country ski trails are groomed at the Highland 9 and Phalen Golf Courses (cross country skiing is not allowed on the Highland National Golf Course).

Regular Como Park Ski Chalet hours begin January 6, 2012 and are: Saturdays, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Sundays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m., and Tuesdays -Wednesdays, 3-9 p.m., and Fridays, 5-9 p.m. The Ski Chalet is closed Mondays and Thursdays.

The Como Park Ski Chalet also has extended holiday hours December 26 through January 3, which can be found online at stpaul.gov/parks.

To register online or for information about snowboard, cross country and downhill ski lessons, equipment rental, trail conditions, group rates or chalet rentals, please visit our website at www.stpaul.gov/parks or contact 651-266-6400. Beginning

December 17, residents can contact the Como Park Ski Center Chalet at 651-488-9673.

New congregation sets roots in Warrendale neighborhood

On Friday evening, November 18, a gathering of congregants and friends marked a historic transition in the Warrendale neighborhood near Como Park. With music, reflection, prayer, and fellowship, the group asked for blessing and committed itself to service of the surrounding community. This was the building dedication for Mission Orthodox Presbyterian Church, which purchased 1040 Como Avenue from Warrendale Presbyterian Church earlier in 2011.

In a year that saw the closing

of two congregations on the same block of Como Avenue, neighbors are happy to see the old Warrendale building bustling. The church was host to the National Night Out gathering for the neighborhood and members are assisting some neighbors with yardwork and maintenance. A ministry directed to Asian women who have recently moved to the United States is busy two days a week with quilting classes and lessons for English Language Learners. There are also several fellowship groups that meet at the church.

Mission Orthodox Presbyterian Church began in early 2005 with just a few families meeting on Sunday evenings in the Fireside Room of Warrendale Presbyterian Church. As the congregation grew in size, they moved to the fellowship hall, and eventually the sanctuary. They added a full-time pastor in 2006 and continued to grow steadily.

As Warrendale Presbyterian Church made the decision to close its congregation, Mission OPC was a natural choice to take over operation of the building. They have maintained close ties with many of the former Warrendale members and are providing pastoral care now that the church has disbanded.

Mission OPC is now home to a diverse congregation ranging from young families and singles to elderly retirees, and members from four continents.

Cozy up at Hamline Library

Join our Kids Book Club on December 10 at 1 p.m. as they discuss books, participate in reading activities, and eat treats. Open to readers ages 8-12. New members are welcome!

Teen Book Club meets on December 10 at 2 p.m. Call or ask at the desk for the latest selection.

Does your child love dogs?

Paw Pals will be at the library on Saturday, December 17 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.

The Teen Writing Club meets December 10 at 3 p.m. Join to share your work in a supportive environment. No sign-up necessary; all are welcome regardless of skill level. Open to ages 11-17.

Career Solutions, community-based nonprofit dedicated to providing hope and help to people in career transitions since 1974, will be in the library on Tuesday December 13 from 10 to 11 a.m. to provide drop-in cover letter and resume-writing assistance.

Join Colleen Dooley, CMT-RYI, for a yoga class at the library on Tuesday, December 13 at 11 a.m. Beginners are welcome! This free class is open to the public and there is no registration required.

Neighborhood Voices returns to the library on Wednesday, December 14 at 6:30 p.m. Local cookbook author Kimberly Johnson shares food history and recipes. Sponsored by the Hamline Midway Library Association.

Saturday Club meets December 17 from 1:30 to 3:30. Join the crafting fun as we learn (or re-learn) knitting!

The library will host an open lab on Wednesdays December 21 and January 11 from 4-5:30. Patrons will be able to ask questions, get one-on-one computer help, and assistance with basic computer operations. This is a drop-in lab and patrons will be helped on a first-come, first-served basis.

Toddler and preschool story-time is 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.

DFL endorsements

Continued from page 8

where Dave Thune was ahead in the voting, but did not collect 50 per cent of the vote. He did prevail, however, in a runoff to return to his council seat.

Voter education on the use of ranked voting by FairVote Minnesota and Ramsey County was credited with the relatively smooth operation in the St. Paul elections.

Ramsey County Elections Manager Joe Mansky said he was very happy with the way

things went.

"We heard very few complaints from either voters or election judges," he said. "It's been a very positive experience."

In the Monitor readership area, incumbent Melvin Carter had several candidates running against him in Ward 1. He earned over 50 per cent of the vote to defeat Johnny Howard, Anthony Fernandez and James McEiver.

Russ Stark in Ward 4 easily won reelection against Curtis Stock.

But in Ward 5, a close race between incumbent Lee Helgen against opponent Amy Brendmoen continued to be close all the way to the election, with Brendmoen squeaking by with 36 votes.

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NO Programs - December 21 and 28
Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24, 11:00 p.m.
 Candlelight Carol Sing

Christmas Day, Sunday, December 25, 10:30 a.m. Worship
New Year's Eve, Saturday, December 31, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
 Old Fashioned Potluck, Games and Praise Service
New Year's Day, Sunday, January 1, 10:30 a.m. Worship

What's Cookin' ...
 By COLETTE MULLENMASTER

Mama's Pizza Tony Mudzinski

These days, foodyism is an easy trend to become a part of, cuz hey, we all gotta eat, right? If you aren't someone whose kitchen comes standard with a TV to watch the latest cooking shows, (or "Dancing with the Stars™") as well as a library of cookbooks and some pretty cool gadgets, you probably know somebody who does. WHAT'S COOKIN' is our way of acknowledging our community restaurants and those who run them, while providing you, our readers, a glimpse into the kitchen, along with a recipe from the chef to try for yourself. Bon Appetit!

CM: Where did you grow up?
 JH: I grew up on the East Side of Saint Paul and am one of three children.

CM: How did you get your start in the restaurant business?
 JH: I got started in the business when I was 15 because a pizza cook called in sick.

CM: What's your favorite dish?
 JH: Mostaccioli with melted cheese.

CM: How did you happen to choose Mama's Pizza?
 JH: Mama's was founded by my late Uncle Tony Mangini in 1964.

MONSTER COOKIES

We like sweets around Mama's when we aren't eating pasta or pizza, so here's a great monster cookie recipe.

- 3 eggs
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon corn syrup
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup (4 ounces, or 1 stick) unsalted butter, melted
- 1 1/2 cups chunky peanut butter
- 4 1/2 cups rolled oats
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup chocolate chips
- 3/4 cup Reese's Pieces
- 3/4 cup M&M's

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line three baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats.
2. In a large mixing bowl, stir together the eggs, both sugars, vanilla extract, corn syrup, baking soda and salt. Then stir in the melted butter and peanut butter, followed by the oats and flour. Lastly, stir in the chocolate chips, Reese's pieces and M&M's. Let the dough rest for 30 minutes.
3. Bake for 10-12 minutes, or until the cookies are a light golden brown. Cool on a rack and then store in an airtight container at room temperature.



Tony Mudzinski

Go to www.MonitorSaintPaul.com to see video of Tony making a pepperoni pizza!

Join us for a visit with Santa!

Skip the lines at the mall!
 Join us at Keller Williams Roseville
 on Saturday, December 10th from 12:00 pm - 3:00 pm
 Have your photo taken with Santa while enjoying activities & refreshments!
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KW will also be collecting new toy donations for Toys for Tots.

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Cupcake

Continued from page 2

lay off 40 people. I have nothing but orange cones in front of my business now and full construction isn't going to start there until next year."

Cupcake's restaurant/wine bar/bakery concept would fit in 'seamlessly' on Grand, Vanderaa said. He signed a five-year lease for the Grand Avenue space, but only learned of his need for a parking variance when he applied for business licenses.

BZA members said it's unfortunate that a lease was signed without knowledge of the need for variances. "Your problem is not unique but it could have been avoided," said BZA Member Daniel Ward.

SHA Executive Director Jeff Roy said that while district council members believe Cupcake would be a good business to have on Grand, the recommendation for denial was unanimous. "We're very concerned about parking on Grand Avenue and how commercial parking can affect the neighborhood," he said. SHA is also concerned about the city's granting of parking variances over time and how those affect properties as well as the surrounding neighborhood.

But the district council isn't aware of the possible shared parking agreement at Grand Place and would want to look into that.

The building at 949 Grand was the longtime home of Puvogel Florists and later, Stems and Vines. The building was extensively damaged in a fire and recon-

structed in 2005. The building has 4,354 square feet and is on a 40 by 150-foot lot.

The previous building had five off-street parking spaces, as does the current structure. These spaces are considered nonconforming.

In 2009 an office use which occupied 1,240 square feet on the first floor moved out and a retail business, Picky Girl, moved in. This resulted in a two-space parking shortfall, which the BZA granted in 2009.

The building is already occupied on its second floor by The Retreat, an outpatient drug and alcohol treatment program. Picky Girl, which has gone out of business this fall, was in the other first-floor space. Cupcake is required to have 10 parking spaces; it has three, requiring a seven-space variance.

In 2010 the St. Paul City Council adopted new parking regulations. Retail uses require parking at a rate of one space per 400 square feet. Restaurants with beer and wine licenses require one space for each 125 square feet of floor area. The retail uses currently in the building require 11 street parking spaces under the new code; five spaces exist for a deficit of six spaces.


Cupcake intends to move into the former Wonderment children's store space, of 1,240 square feet. Wonderment, which had three of the five parking spaces, closed in May. The restaurant would have 37 seats. It requires an additional seven off-street spaces.

By November 15, Vanderaa, his landlord Mark Prokop and city zoning staff must sort out a

number of issues. Vanderaa has a verbal agreement with Exeter Realty to lease seven to 10 employee parking spaces in the Grand Place parking ramp at Grand and Victoria. Zoning Administrator Wendy Lane said that if the ramp spaces are required for Grand Places' retail and clinic tenants, Cupcake cannot lease them. The 2010 parking requirement changes haven't been calculated by the city for the ramp. And if the ramp spaces are more than 500 feet from Cupcake, they cannot be counted toward the parking shortfall.

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Lunch with...Mussorgsky: Pictures at an Exhibition
Monday, December 5 at 12 p.m.
Pianist Anton Melnichenko, a graduate of Hamline's International Piano Institute, performs the original piano version of this musical walk through an art gallery.
Free and open to the public.

University Women's Chorale and Hamline Winds Concert
Saturday, December 10 at 2 p.m.
Kathy Thomsen and Janet Greene will direct this holiday performance.
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Saturday, December 10 at 8 p.m.
Violinist Marc Destrube and Oboist Debra Nagy join the orchestra for performances of Johann Sebastian.
For tickets, call 1-800-595-4849

Hamline Orchestra Concert
Sunday, December 11 at 3 p.m.
The Hamline Orchestra, conducted by Yali You, will present its fall concert.
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The concerts all take place at Sundin Music Hall on Hamline University's Saint Paul Campus, located at 1536 Hewitt Avenue.


HAMLINE UNIVERSITY