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Five-story, 230-unit apartment building with grocery planned at Cretin-Ford Pkwy.

Ryan Companies requests five variances for project

By JANE MCCLURE

A five-story building with a 50,000 square-foot supermarket on the main floor and four levels of apartments above will anchor the southeast corner of Ford Parkway and Cretin Avenue if five zoning variances are approved on June 29 by the St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA).

All five variances have been recommended for approval by the Community Development Committee of the Highland District Council (HDC). Though the committee had more praise than criticism for the proposed building at 2170 Ford Pkwy., its chair, Tim Morehead, cautioned Ryan Companies about seeking so many variances. "Ryan has worked so hard to develop trust in the neighborhood," he told company representatives. "That's a trust you don't want to lose."

The local advocacy group Neighbors for a Livable St. Paul opposes the variances. In a statement, it said "the project is barely underway, but already we're seeing a determination by the developers to chip away at restrictions on building heights, further increase density, and further diminish the minimal open space provided by the (master plan)."

The master plan for the 122-acre site of Ford Motor Company's former assembly plant was adopted by the St. Paul City Council in 2017. Two sets of amendments to that plan have since been approved at the request of Ryan.

FORD-CRETIN PROJECT ▶2



A drumbeat for healing in the heart of the Twin Cities

Benita Buckner and husband "Baba Jesse" Buckner led a dozen youngsters (left) from their Heart and Soul Drum Academy in a drum circle on June 14 in the parking lot of the former Walmart store on University Avenue. The interactive performance was intended to bring healing to the Midway business district damaged in the riots of May 28-29.

PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

Police reform debated at local, state and federal levels

City Council is divided over best approach in St. Paul

By JANE MCCLURE

Police reform will be taken up by the St. Paul City Council in a policy session beginning at 10 a.m. Thursday, June 25. While a majority of Minneapolis City Council members have called for disbanding that city's police department, that is not the case in St. Paul.

In Ward 6, City Council member Nelsie Yang supports disbanding the St. Paul police force, but Ward 4's Mitra Jalali has spoken for a more gradual shift of resources to community-based alternatives.

Other City Council members would rather see the city step up its ongoing efforts at police reform, a move supported by Police Chief Todd Axtell.

Ward 2 City Council member Rebecca Noecker joined District 65 Senator Sandy Pappas and District 65B Representative Carlos Mariani in an online forum on police reform on June 11. The new push comes in the wake of the killing of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police on May 25, a death that has led to worldwide outrage over police brutality, especially when it comes to black suspects.

The St. Paul Police Department has already made changes in its use of force and K-9 policies. Social workers now accompany police when responding to calls for people in crisis. So-called community ambassadors are being hired to reach out to young people, and restorative justice is being pursued

for nonviolent offenders. St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter also pushed through a \$1.7 million Community First Public Safety initiative as part of the city's 2020 budget. Much of that program has yet to be implemented, and that has frustrated City Council members who would like to see the program up and running.

The advocacy group Root and Restore St. Paul has called on the City Council to cut the Police Department's \$105 million budget by \$20 million and redirect that money elsewhere. An online petition by that group is getting thousands of signatures. "Now in Minneapolis and around the nation, we're seeing a broad uprising of people and politicians who are acknowledging that our system of policing is not

POLICE REFORM ▶4

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Affordable senior housing planned west of Highland Village Center

By JANE MCCLURE

CommonBond Communities' plan to build a five-story, 60-unit apartment building for low-income seniors at 830 S. Cretin Ave. will be reviewed by the St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) on Monday, June 29. It would be among the first buildings constructed on the 122-acre site of Ford Motor Company's former assembly plant in Highland Park. Three variances have been requested for the project, and all have the support of the Community Development Committee of the Highland District Council (HDC).

The building would be located just west of the Highland Village Center and just south of the five-story mixed-use market-rate apartment building and grocery store that Ryan Companies has proposed (see the story on page 1).

Established in St. Paul in 1971, the nonprofit CommonBond Communities has developed affordable housing in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and South Dakota, some of them with support services. It currently manages close to

8,000 units with a total of more than 13,000 residents.

The proposed building would be open to seniors age 55 and older with household incomes at or below 30 percent of the Twin Cities' median. Under current levels set by the Metropolitan Council, monthly rents would be \$562 for a one-bedroom and \$675 for a two-bedroom apartment.

The building would have 48 one-bedroom units and 12 two-bedroom units. Seven apartments would be earmarked for residents who have been homeless. A community room, rooms for crafts and computers and other amenities will be provided for residents. There will also be an enclosed porch along Bohland Avenue. The building will have 29 parking spaces for residents, guests and staff. All of the spaces would be in an above-ground parking lot.

What generated the most debate among HDC committee members was the proposed setback variance for the north property line, between the CommonBond building and the larger mixed-use building to the north. A

four-foot setback is required and a two-foot setback is proposed. The committee vote was 6-2, with dissenting members calling for more open space between the two buildings.

CommonBond senior program manager Justin Eilers said the setback is needed to accommodate the parking lot's driveway, so that vehicles entering and exiting do not have to make tight turns. "A wider driveway would serve the residents better," he said.

Committee member Jim Schoettler disagreed: "The wider the driveway is, the less careful people will be." He argued that if people cannot make a tighter turn, perhaps they should not be driving.

CommonBond is trying to accommodate the building's older residents, whose needs will no doubt change over time, according to Cecile Bedor, CommonBond's vice president for real estate. A wider driveway would be easier for some residents to use, she said.

According to Bedor and Anthony Adams, a civil engineer for Ryan Companies, the Ford site's master developer, CommonBond and Ryan will work together to extensively land-

scape the space between the two buildings.

A second variance is tied to the open space requirement for each parcel on the Ford site. A minimum lot coverage of 25 percent is required for open space, and 16 percent is proposed to accommodate parking.

HDC committee members asked why underground parking was not considered. Bedor and Brita Carlson, the project's architect from the firm LHB, said that the cost of underground parking is prohibitive for an affordable housing development. Bedor cited the lot's small size as another challenge. "We thought (at-grade parking) was the best solution," she said.

A third variance requested by CommonBond would eliminate the requirement of one parking space with an electric vehicle (EV) charging station. The Ford site's master plan requires that EV charging stations be installed in parking facilities. With 29 parking spaces, one EV parking space is required. CommonBond representatives said that they would be willing to configure one parking space to accommodate EV charging in the future.

1◀ FORD-CRETIN PROJECT

"We're happy to be here after many years of work," said Maureen Michalski, vice president for development at Ryan. She emphasized that the building is consistent with the master plan and the underlying mixed-use commercial and residential zoning. No park or other open space will be lost, she said.

Plans for 2170 Ford Pkwy. call for an unnamed grocer on the first floor and 230 apartments above. A residential lobby will include meeting rooms, a fitness center and co-working spaces. The rent for three of the apartments will be affordable to households making 60 percent of the Twin Cities' median household income. The rest of the apartments will be market-rate.

The building will have 210 parking spaces for residents underground and 226 spaces for customers on the ground floor. Access to the parking will be off of Cretin Avenue and a one-way alley on the east side of the building. A loading dock will face the alley, which will be separated from the adjacent Highland Village Center by a grade change.

The building's design draws on two other local structures—the Vintage on Selby, another Ryan development on the northeast corner of Selby and Snelling avenues, and the historic Dakotah on the southeast corner of Western and Selby avenues, according to Joe Peris, real



A rendering of Ryan Companies' proposed mixed-use building at Ford Parkway and Cretin Avenue.

estate development manager for Ryan.

Ryan is seeking a variance for lot coverage. The master plan limits new buildings in that zone to 70 percent lot coverage. Ryan would like the building to cover 90.3 percent of the lot. According to Ryan, the variance is needed to accommodate the grocery store and its parking. As a comparison, Peris said, the Vintage on Selby covers 87 percent of its lot.

Other variances relate to design. The master plan requires buildings in the "urban center" of the Ford site to have at least 65 percent

transparent glazing on the bottom 12 feet of the building. Ryan is proposing glazing or windows on 34 percent of the bottom 12 feet. The variance is needed to accommodate the building's design and the lot's grade change, which slopes to the west, Michalski said.

Having a grocery store as a tenant is one factor in the requested height variance. Under the master plan, building heights are limited to 65 feet unless the building meets setback requirements. Ryan is seeking a 75-foot height to give the grocery store a higher ceiling. Ryan

would also like a decorative corner tower on the building rising 90 feet above the intersection of Ford Parkway and Cretin.

The HDC committee questioned Ryan representatives about traffic, building setbacks and other design issues, but it was the fifth variance for car-sharing facilities that drew the most debate. HDC board member Mathews Hollinshead said he does not want to see the required eight car-sharing spaces eliminated, as requested by Ryan. "That tells me it's going to be a long time before we have car-sharing at the Ford site," he said.

The master plan for the Ford site requires that some buildings have dedicated spaces for vehicles in car-sharing programs. Two car-sharing spaces are required in buildings of at least 201 apartments, with one additional space for every 200 apartments over 200. Two car-sharing spaces are required in parking lots with at least 50 spaces for non-residential use, with an additional car-sharing space required for every 40 spaces over 50.

Car-sharing is still planned for the Ford site, Michalski said. Ryan is proposing a total of 436 parking spaces at 2170 Ford Pkwy. However, instead of providing the required car-sharing spaces at each of its buildings, Ryan would like to provide car-sharing hubs with enough spaces to meet the requirements for several buildings, along with space at the front of the grocery store for scooter parking.

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Editors

Dale Mischke • John Wadell
news@myvillager.com

Letters to the Editor
letters@myvillager.com

Display Advertising Sales

Tim Carroll • Gary Ball
displayads@myvillager.com

Classified Ads & Legal Notices

Jennifer Gordon
wantads@myvillager.com

Graphic Designers

Craig Schuster • Jennifer Gordon

Administration

Jennifer Gordon
jgordon@myvillager.com

Publisher

Michael Mischke
mmischke@myvillager.com

Subscriptions

subscriptions@myvillager.com

CONTRIBUTORS: Roger Barr, Matthew Davis, Casey Ek, Janet Lunder Hanafin, Anne Hauth, Brian Johnson, Frank Jossi, Mary Maguire Lerman, Jane McClure, Lou Michaels, Steve Michaels, Anne Murphy, Melenie Soucheray, Brad Stauffer, Jennifer Stewart, Bill Wagner, Carolyn Walkup, Leslie Walters, Tilly Wilson, Dave Wright.

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VILLAGER

YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSPAPER SINCE 1953

Getting back to business as usual

Area merchants rebuild, reopen in the wake of May 28 and 29 riot

BY CAROLYN WALKUP

Businesses across the area served by the *Villager* are reopening or rebuilding in the wake of the vandalism, arson and looting that spread throughout the Twin Cities following the initial peaceful protests over the killing of George Floyd on May 25 while in the custody of four Minneapolis police officers.

In St. Paul's Midway area, on Grand Avenue and in Highland Village, business owners are repairing everything from broken windows and damaged interior fixtures to walls and ceilings destroyed by fire. The damages were incurred on May 28 and 29 before the Minnesota National Guard and state police were successfully deployed to reinforce local police and fire departments overwhelmed by the rioting.

An estimated 700 buildings were reported damaged in Minneapolis.

In St. Paul, the buildings of 45 businesses were totally destroyed or suffered major damage, according to Suzanne Donovan of the city's Department of Safety and Inspections. Early estimates of the property damage to those 45 establishments total \$73.2 million, Donovan said. Another 235 St. Paul establishments suffered some damage or looting. However, that number continues to grow as properties are assessed and additional reports are obtained, Donovan said.

University Avenue was the hardest hit business district in St. Paul. All that remains of Bole Ethiopian Cuisine at the corner of University and Syndicate Street is a huge pile of rubble. Many neighboring businesses were also torched, some of them to the ground.

"We'll rebuild and continue to serve our community for years to come," said Bole owners Solomon Hailie and Rekik Abaineh on the restaurant's Facebook page. They thanked the individuals and organizations that have contributed to their rebuilding fund.

Nancy Rosenberg, second-generation co-owner of Big Top Wine & Spirits at 1544 University Ave., is uncertain about the future of the store cofounded by her father, Sidney Applebaum. Big Top was looted in broad daylight on May 28 and set on fire in the middle of that night.

"We grieve for the family of George Floyd," Rosenberg said in a written statement. "We grieve for the Midway community. We grieve for our nation. The Applebaum family has been providing food and beverages to the St.

Paul community for over 100 years. We remain committed to doing what is best for St. Paul."

Other Midway businesses destroyed or badly damaged by arson included NAPA Auto Parts, O'Reilly Auto Parts, Sports Dome, Enterprise Rent-a-Car, Furniture Barn, T.J. Maxx, Maxx It Pawn, Boost Mobile, Springboard for the Arts, Great Clips, Foot Locker, GameStop and To New York.

SuperTarget at 1300 University Ave. was looted before noon on May 28 and closed briefly. In a statement, Target management pledged to help small businesses suffering from property damage to rebuild.

Thieves and arsonists appeared to target pharmacies, liquor stores and convenience stores. Many of the Speedway gas stations and Holiday Station Stores that were broken into and damaged remain closed. The Speedway at 2051 Grand Ave. was badly burned. A spokesperson for the Ohio-based corporation would not comment on the future of specific Speedway locations, saying only that they are still assessing the damages in rioting nationwide.

Several local Walgreens and CVS pharmacies were hit along with some of the few remaining independent drug stores. "Walgreens is continuing to work as quickly as possible to reopen impacted stores," said Alexandra Brown, a spokesperson in the pharmacy's corporate office.

Security cameras at the Walgreens at 734 Grand Ave. recorded a large group of masked thieves breaking through windows and even a wall with a hacksaw and stealing drugs and other merchandise, according to an unidentified sales clerk. The looters returned several times, the clerk said. The video recording also showed police entering the Walgreens and making some arrests, she said.

Looters broke a window and stole drugs and cash at West Seventh Pharmacy, 1106 W. Seventh St., according to owner Jeff Johnson. He boarded up all of the pharmacy's windows for several days as a precaution, but did not close the century-old drug store.

Another independent pharmacy, St. Paul Corner Drug at Snelling and St. Clair avenues, escaped damage when the owner's daughter, Lucie Hoeschen, confronted a group of young adults armed with baseball bats preparing to break in just before closing time. Owner John Hoeschen and friends boarded the windows shortly thereafter and "sat vigil" for the next 10 nights without incident, he said.



Siblings and Big Top Wine & Spirits co-owners Jay Applebaum and Nancy Rosenberg surveyed the damage to their store and other Midway Center businesses last week. At right, St. Paul firefighters secured the burned-out hulk of Big Top on May 29. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

First Grand Avenue Liquors, 918 Grand Ave., lost \$7,000 worth of liquor to about 20 people who roamed through the store for six minutes with the alarm blaring. "Everybody was wearing masks, but we think they were local," said owner Nick Nadeau. "We recognized two people."

The thieves primarily stole high-end whiskeys, cognacs and tequilas—all of the pints and half-pints they could carry, according to Nadeau. "We cleaned up and opened the next day," he said.

International Wines & Liquors, 710 S. Cleveland Ave. closed for four days after it was broken into. Thieves smashed windows and destroyed a computer as well as the video cameras that would have recorded the incident before walking away with an unspecified amount of liquor, a manager said.

A block away, the Fixery at 760 S. Cleveland Ave. was burglarized in what manager Mark Wilsey described as a "smash and grab." The burglars smashed windows and glass display cabinets and ran off with watches and an entire case of watch bands. The whole episode lasted about a minute as the alarm was sounding. The group fled in trucks without license plates, Wilsey said. The watch, clock



and jewelry repair shop closed for several days, but is back in business now.

Robert Moeller, second-generation co-owner of R.F. Moeller Jeweler, 2065 Ford Pkwy., said a "roving gang" of some 20 people broke in to his store during the afternoon of May 28 by throwing a rock through a window. "We got everyone out and boarded up," he said. In spite of that, the burglars came back three times and took an unspecified amount of jewelry, he said.

Moeller said he saw a total of 18 cars of looters roving through Highland Village and heard five gunshots. "It was like nothing I'd ever seen," he said. "It was like another dimension."

Moeller closed the jewelry store for about a week.

The federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives is offering a reward for information leading to the arrest of those who set any of the 135 fires during the unrest. For more information, call 888-283-8477 or email ATFTips@atf.gov.

14 POLICE REFORM

reformable," Root & Restore said in statement.

Complicating the police funding issue is the COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused losses in city property and sales tax revenue. The city could be saddled with a deficit of \$34 million or more as a result, and that would likely mean program and service cuts in every city department.

Carter and City Council members have been following the current efforts at police reform by the state and federal governments. The Minnesota Legislature debated the issue last week in a special session, but had not reached agreement on any legislation as of the *Villager's* deadline. Among the proposals at the Capitol were additional police officer training, more background checks on prospective police officers, new methods for ad-

Mayor Melvin Carter spoke of the racial disparities that he and other people of color have experienced all of their lives and the distrust that creates. He also emphasized the need for police officers to understand the communities they serve.

addressing mental health crises and changes in use of force policies.

According to Mariani, people need to keep talking about what happened to Floyd and others at the hands of law enforcement. "When we stop talking about what happened to George Floyd, we start losing this fight," he said. Mariani, Pappas and Noecker all said

that it is crucial to put citizens and their ideas at the center of discussions if society is to reform the police and address systemic racism.

President Donald Trump signed an executive order on June 16 establishing a federal database to track police officers with a history of complaints for the use of excessive force. The executive order encourages law enforcement agencies to use best practices and creates financial incentives for doing so. The president also wants more programs that assign mental health professionals and social workers to assist law enforcement in emergency calls involving people who are homeless, mentally ill or chemically dependent.

Mayor Carter addressed police reform before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee via video link on June 16. He told the committee of his background as the son of a St. Paul police officer and testified in support of the proposed

Justice in Policing Act. That act includes provisions to streamline the prosecution of officers accused of using excessive force. It would also set national standards for law enforcement, require more data collection and tracking, and provide more money for community-based policing and alternative policing.

Carter spoke of the racial disparities that he and other people of color have experienced all of their lives and the distrust that creates. He also emphasized the need for police officers to understand the communities they serve. Police officers who get to know the people they come across on patrol can "come up with a whole lot of reasons not to shoot someone," Carter said.

To watch the St. Paul City Council's policy session on police reform, visit <https://stpaul.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

Salons reopen with safeguards in place

BY FRANK JOSSI

New Art Salon owner Roger Tschida had grand plans to open in early June after being closed for two and a half months due to the COVID-19 pandemic that shuttered or greatly curtailed businesses throughout Minnesota.

He waited a few weeks after peaceful protests over the death of George Floyd while in the custody of Minneapolis police led to looting and break-ins along Snelling Avenue, home to his salon. When New Art finally reopened with a host of health precautions in place and six stylists ready to get back to work, his customers quickly filled the appointment calendar.

Salons and barbershops were allowed to reopen at 25 percent capacity on June 1 and then at 50 percent on June 10. Local shops have deep cleaned their stores from the chairs and floors to the mirrors and product bottles. Waiting areas have been removed, along with magazines, coffee makers and water dispensers. Patrons wait in their cars or on the sidewalk before receiving a call or a text notifying them to come in.

New Art Salon, 655 S. Snelling Ave., uses a touchless thermometer to check both workers and clients to see if they are running a temperature above 100.4, Tschida said. Both clients and stylists are required to wear masks. All chairs, clippers, scissors and other equipment get sanitized immediately after use.

And wet hair will remain wet, since stylists cannot use hair dryers because of the potential to spread

the virus. At least New Art's interior design affords enough room for six stylists to work at the same time because of the spacing of the chairs.

"Our stations—very, very, fortunately—are six feet apart on center," Tschida said. "How perfect is that? That was my design from day one and it worked out to be COVID-ready. But it was a complete guess because I originally did it for comfort. There's plenty of elbow space for clients and stylists."

Being able to reopen has been met with a rush of business from people who have been growing shaggy and seeing their roots show over the past months. "It's been very busy," Tschida said. "Cuts and colors are definitely needed."

Bee Peterson, owner of Urban Village Salon at 134 N. Western Ave., opened a second shop in the North Loop neighborhood in Minneapolis in early March. Two weeks later, she had to shut it down. Stress-induced hair loss ensued as she grew nervous about the large investment in leasing a space her stylists could no longer use.

Today both locations are open. Stylists maintain a strict cleaning regimen after serving each client, Peterson said, and masks remain a requirement.

Peterson recently read an article where two stylists tested positive for COVID-19 after cutting the hair of dozens of people in a southern state, but did not transfer the virus.

"That's good news for us, because they really work," Peterson said of the safety precautions taken by salons. "We don't want to get anyone

sick and we don't want to be sick."

The hardest transition for Peterson has been wearing a mask for up to 12 hours a day. Along with being uncomfortable, she said the inability to read clients' expressions causes the loss of nonverbal communication in social interaction.

Brad Schlaeger, owner of Accolades Salon Spa at 2065 Randolph Ave. and two Minneapolis shops, reopened at the beginning of June with many changes to the operation. He installed plexiglass barriers between stations, at the front desk, between shampoo bowls and even above the heads of clients "so there's no possibility of a service provider breathing down or a client breathing up," he said.

More plexiglass was installed for pedicure and manicure stations. "No one can breathe on anybody and it looks pretty cool," Schlaeger said. His salons use three forms of sanitation, from a hospital grade disinfectant to alcohol to a plexiglass cleaner.

Hair care professionals are taught in school to maintain a high level of sanitation in their salons and must continue to do so to meet their licensure requirements, so keeping things clean is "old school to us," Schlaeger said. "I did go above and beyond (the regulations) because I wanted to make sure the clients felt safe and my staff felt safe."

Rita Ambourn once had 60 people working in her sprawling hair and day spa at 464 S. Snelling Ave. The salon's size has helped during the pandemic because she has just six stylists working today.



New Art Salon owner Roger Tschida checks the length of Michele Nozel's hair before styling it last week. It was her first time back to the salon since mid-February due to the coronavirus pandemic. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Ambourn said staff wipe everything down when customers are present, so they can see the salon's attention to detail and best practices. Other salon owners have struggled because they have much smaller spaces and cannot serve many customers at once, an issue she does not face. "I'm lucky in that way," Ambourn said.

How long the salons will have to

operate with the extra precautions remains uncertain and that worries the salon owners who were interviewed for this story. For two years after the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic, hairdressers and their clients wore masks, according to Schlaeger.

For now, he and other salon owners believe the safety protocols they have adopted will be the new normal for the foreseeable future.

Council amends new rules for protecting tenants as hearing nears

BY JANE MCCLURE

A controversial ordinance meant to protect tenants from unfair rental practices will have its long-awaited public hearing before the St. Paul City Council at 10 a.m. Wednesday, June 24. The council could vote on the ordinance at 3:30 p.m. that day or make further amendments and lay it over for final action in July.

The proposed SAFE (Stable, Accessible, Fair and Equitable) Housing Tenant Protections Ordinance would amend many of the city's rental housing rules, including uniformity to lease provisions and leasing practices. Landlords would have to provide detailed information about renters' rights and responsibilities before leases are signed. No more than one month's rent could be charged as a security deposit. Tenants and the city would have to be alerted when a rental property goes on the real estate market. Standardized criteria would have to be used to check a prospective

tenant's credit, criminal and rental history.

The measures were introduced earlier this year, but council action has been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

After heated debate on June 17, council members voted on a series of amendments to the ordinance. Some council members pushed back against the amendments, citing the months of public process and comments. However, council member Rebecca Noecker said she found it "disturbing" that anyone would expect an original version of the ordinance to move ahead as is. "We're elected to hear from our constituents," she said.

Tenant advocacy groups, housing providers and landlords have suggested several amendments to the ordinance over the past several weeks. One major change would push the ordinance's starting date from January 1 to March 1 of 2021. Council member Dai Thao sought a July 1 start date, but offered March 1 as a compromise. That change passed on a 4-3 vote. Thao said he wants to ensure there

is plenty of time for the measures to be vetted and implemented properly.

Another key change exempts rental properties with four or fewer units from a requirement that there be a 90-day advance notice to the city and tenants of an upcoming sale.

Council member Mitra Jalali strongly opposed that change, calling it a "huge erosion in policy." She said it would affect as many as 18,000 apartment units in some of the city's poorest neighborhoods. The change passed 5-2, with Jalali and Nelsie Yang opposed.

Several other amendments also won approval, including technical changes, a change spelling out how the measures would be paid for by the city, and changes to the ordinance's implementation and evaluation processes. One change spells out the need to have people of color involved in those processes.

Other changes create uniform background check periods and clarify that only evictions where there is a court judgment should be considered in rental history.

The proposed ordinance is likely to pass this summer because it has support of a majority of council members and Mayor Melvin Carter. The council has received dozens of comments for and against the ordinance. Housing and rental advocacy, civil rights, faith-based and low-income advocacy groups have pushed for the ordinance, citing the city's low-income housing shortage, and housing and eviction concerns spurred by the pandemic.

Landlords and groups such as the St. Paul Area Association of Realtors oppose the ordinance. They contend the measures will add costs and in some cases put tenants at risk due to changes in tenant screening policies.

Both sides in the debate have brought forward amendments for council members to consider.

"The landlords we are hearing from are pretty conscientious," said council member Jane Prince. "We're not hearing from the landlords who are running their properties into the ground."

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A maker's dream

Fellowship gives Yang-Best the means to expand her concept of co-retailing

BY ANNE HAUTH

Rowzat Shipchandler shops at Seasoned Specialty Foods for two reasons. The first is that she and her family are social justice advocates who “want people to be fairly paid for what they produce,” she said. The second is the shop’s delicious, locally sourced foods. Shipchandler’s favorites include portabella mushroom jerky, small-batch Bloody Mary mix and the pho handmade by store owner Kayla Yang-Best.

Yang-Best, a resident of Summit Hill, opened Seasoned Specialty Foods at 1136 Grand Ave. in 2017. The grocery store represents a new model of retailing called “co-retailing”—a concept Yang-Best developed and hopes to expand. In co-retailing, the producers take home 100 percent of their sales in exchange for a small fee paid to the store to keep their products on the shelves. “If you buy a co-retail product for \$7, all \$7 goes back to the maker,” Yang-Best said.

Yang-Best was one of 24 entrepreneurs from the Upper Midwest to receive a fellowship earlier this month from the Bush Foundation. The \$100,000 grants went to civic leaders committed to shaping a better future for their communities. Yang-Best will use her grant to further her knowledge of business and finance and seek out professionals who can advise her on how to expand her vision of a more equitable food economy.

Co-retailing was born out of Yang-Best’s desire to bring greater equity to the food supply chain where she saw many inefficiencies and a significant underrepresentation of people of color. Yang-Best faced many obstacles herself in the 18 months she tried to get her Asian meal kits onto local grocery shelves. When she finally succeeded, she was disheartened by the low profit margins and the realization that she and so many others could not make a living selling the food they loved to make.

“How can we sustain a locally produced food economy if producers can’t make a living?” she asked. If we cannot figure that out, she added, we will be left with mass production only, “and we’re really vulnerable when we do that.”

Yang-Best said her store reflects the diversi-

ty of the Twin Cities. It offers space for small-batch food makers to dream. When Charles Lovejoy began making his own Bloody Mary mix two years ago, Seasoned Specialty Foods was his first retail outlet. “Seeing my product on a shelf right away is what motivated me to keep going,” Lovejoy said. “I’m an African-American maker, and I know most of the people in Kayla’s shop are either women or minorities. It’s a great resource for our community, and I feel good about sending people there.”

At Seasoned Specialty Foods, 90 percent of the food producers are women and 50 percent are people of color.

Summit Hill resident Stephanie Lonetti and her sisters make an authentic Italian meatball mix that Yang-Best helped them launch in 2018. “It went straight from our kitchen to Kayla’s shelves and immediately sold,” Lonetti said. “We wouldn’t have gotten to where we are now without knowing that once we created this product, it had a place to go.”

Lovejoy and Lonetti both credit Yang-Best for providing the guidance and resources to help their businesses grow. She assisted them in setting prices, marketing and expanding their products to other stores.

“Kayla has been a great mentor and guide, not only for me but for all the makers in the store,” Lovejoy said. “She’s always there, always open and willing to work with us.”

With the Bush Fellowship, Yang-Best intends to further develop these leadership qualities. “The money is for personal and professional growth, so that I can continue to energize and be a thoughtful and equitable leader,” she said.

She plans to immerse herself in researching other communities that are ahead of Minnesota in how they support local producers. She will use the money to conduct the research, connect with leaders who are bringing about change and compensate those who help her learn. She hopes to figure out how to scale co-retailing and develop a viable financial model.

“I want to see a more inclusive system of how food gets into the grocery stores and how it’s displayed,” Yang-Best said. “Co-retailing is not meant to take over, but we can build a parallel system for local producers where we



Kayla Yang-Best has introduced a new model of retailing at her Seasoned Specialty Foods store, 1136 Grand Ave. Producers pay a small fee to place their goods on the shelves, but receive 100 percent of their sales.

PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER.

minimize the logistics and hurdles. I have a vision that in three to five years we can really change our food system to help local producers succeed. When they succeed, we all do.”

Yang-Best applied for the Bush Fellowship before the coronavirus pandemic created unprecedented challenges for food producers. Most small producers are struggling now, and many have gone out of business. Yang-Best’s store now carries products from 15 local makers, down from 30 before COVID-19. When she learned she had won the fellowship, she felt an even greater sense of responsibility.

“I have a platform to make change,” she said. “What will that change look like now? How will I approach this in a new world? What an amazing opportunity to figure that out.”

Yang-Best said it was the support of the local community that helped her get to this point and will be essential to her moving forward. “I would love to see more people from



our neighborhood come and support the local makers in the store,” she said. “We’re new and we’re under-resourced, but we’re open. Come in and ask what we’re all about.”

“To visit us is about equity and inclusivity and knowing who else is in this community,” Yang-Best said. Plus, she added, the products are tasty and of high quality. Cold-pressed elderberry concentrate has been “selling like crazy lately,” she said, thanks to its immune-boosting properties. Kombucha brewed in St. Paul has been the store’s most popular beverage. Patrons also love the low-sugar, gluten-free scones, the frozen sambusa made by a local Somali-American woman and the deli counter that serves up a fresh banh mi.

For information, visit seasonedspecialtyfoods.com.



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Sharing soil, spreading peace. On a day when unrest was happening elsewhere in the city in late May, 18-year-old Aries Valliant was busy helping his mother, Erica, gather topsoil from the Victoria Community Garden on Victoria Street and Concordia Avenue. They were taking it to the Aurora/St. Anthony Peace Sanctuary Garden, also known as the Children's Garden, just a few blocks to the north. A 2020 grad of Central High, Valliant plans to attend St. Paul College this fall. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

News Briefs

Council approves \$9.5 million in assessments for Ford Plant site

Another step was taken on June 17 in the redevelopment of the Ford Motor Company's former assembly plant in Highland Park. The St. Paul City council unanimously approved site infrastructure improvements and related assessments to extend the street grid into the 122-acre property and make sanitary sewer, water main, storm sewer, traffic signal, landscaping and streetlighting improvements.

The assessments, totaling \$9.5 million, cover 45 parcels on the site. Ford site master developer Ryan Companies has been selling and transferring ownership of parcels to its development partners in recent months. One new owner, Highland Ball, has asked the city for a 20-year payback period on the assessments for its two ballfields, rather than 10 years.

That property, long known as the Ford Little League Fields, was owned by Ford Motor Company for many years. One field is being lost to development, but two fields remain.

St. Paul says conversion therapy is illegal for anyone under 18

Conversion or reparative therapy for minors is now banned in St. Paul, with the unanimous approval on June 17 of the City Council. The controversial practice, meant to change a person's sexual identity or gender expression, has been compared to torture by opponents. The practice has support from conservative groups but is opposed by many medical organizations, including the American Medical Association, American Psychological Association and American Academy of Pediatrics.

The hearing marked the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began that the council could hear speakers testify rather than reading written testimony. In-person hearings ended in March with the onset of the pandemic, so testimony was presented electronically.

Council members heard support for the ban from mental health professionals, a parent and a person who is a survivor of such therapy. Opponents of the therapy contend that it can have a lasting psychological impact. No one spoke in opposition to the ban.

St. Paul city leaders have called for a state-wide ban, but that effort stalled during the regular session of the 2020 Minnesota Legislature. St. Paul joins many other cities and states with bans in place, including Minne-

apolis and Duluth.

It is not known how many conversion-therapy practices exist in St. Paul. The LGBTQ advocacy group OutFront Minnesota has indicated there are several around the state.

The council's action prohibits licensed medical and mental health professionals from practicing conversion therapy on anyone under age 18. The ban will be enforced by the city's Human Rights and Equal Economic Opportunity Department. Violators could incur fines of up to \$1,000.

Cyclists on Fairview Ave. will see added bike lanes later this year

The St. Paul City Council voted on June 17 to approved bike lanes on Fairview Avenue from University to Minnehaha avenues. That will provide a connection for bicyclists who already use Fairview to the south.

The work will be done later this year in conjunction with a street surfacing project. Fairview is designated in the city's Bicycle Plan as a major north-south bike route. The project received more than half a dozen emails in support and none in opposition.

Parking bans are proposed for the west side of Fairview Avenue from 240 feet north of Charles Avenue to Minnehaha. For the rest of the affected area, six-foot northbound and southbound bike lanes will be added, with four-foot buffer lanes. Traffic lanes will be 10 feet wide.

The Public Works Department conducted parking counts before recommending the changes. Fairview in that area carries about 7,750 vehicles per day.

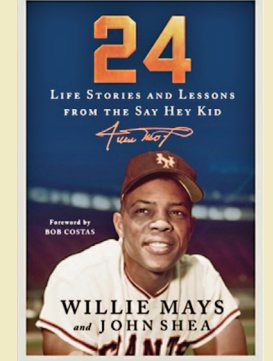
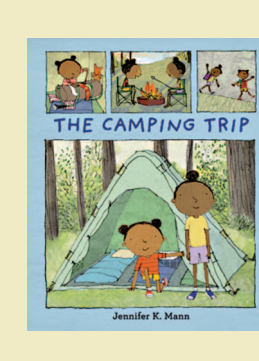
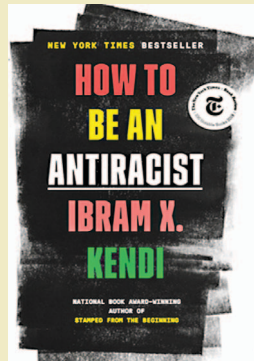
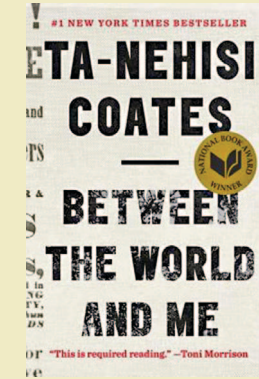
Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, public open houses on the project were not held. Affected property owners were notified by mail and were asked to contact city staff if there were concerns. The project was recommended for approval by the St. Paul Planning Commission's Transportation Committee.

News Briefs were compiled by Jane McClure.

Correction

Contrary to a story in the May 27 *Villager*, Heidi Schallberg is a former member of the Highland District Council's Transportation Committee and a current member of the St. Paul Planning Commission's Transportation Committee.

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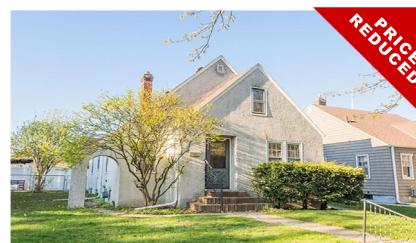
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VIEWPOINT

A protest and a riot: Villager coverage of events explained

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

— The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

BY DALE MISCHKE

We saw the best of the Twin Cities and the worst of the Twin Cities in the days following George Floyd's death while in the custody of four Minneapolis police officers. The best was the universal outrage and peaceful protests over the killing of a black man who was arrested for allegedly passing a counterfeit \$20 bill but appeared to be cooperating with the police. The worst was the widespread vandalism, arson and looting that came on the heels of the initial peaceful protests.

Minnesota has been down this road before with the questionable killing of black men by police: Jamar Clark in North Minneapolis in 2015 and Philando Castile in Falcon Heights in 2016. The protests of Floyd's killing were larger and more vociferous than the protests following those other killings, due perhaps to the graphic video recorded by a bystander that left little doubt about the injustice and cold-bloodedness of Floyd's death.

The rioting was also much worse than anything the Twin Cities has seen before. It began in South Minneapolis on May 27 and spread to St. Paul and other nearby cities on May 28 and 29. The *Villager* posted a story on the destruction in St. Paul on its website on May 29. We followed that up with a front-page story in our June 10 print edition.

The story in the June 10 issue has been criticized by readers for promoting racism by focusing on the vandalism and looting and



A peaceful protest against police brutality and the prejudicial treatment of black people marches past the governor's mansion on Summit Avenue on June 1—the one-week anniversary of the killing of George Floyd while in the custody of four Minneapolis police officers. PHOTO BY CASEY EK

not “the dominant reality” of the peaceful protests (see the *Villager* Inbox below). The headline over the story erred, according to one reader, by associating the “protests” with “widespread rioting.” Another reader objected to the photo of the peaceful protest in front of the governor's mansion with its image of a passionate black man directly beneath the headline about widespread rioting.

Another reader objected to the photo on page 4 where the story continued. The photo shows two neighbors who turned out on University Avenue on the day after the riots with brooms to help clean up the destruction. The neighbors were white. Why didn't the *Villager* include any photos of the black

neighbors who turned out to help clean up the destruction? the reader asks. Our choice of photos and their placement beside certain headlines, the reader maintains, suggests that black protesters were largely responsible for the rioting and white people for cleaning up after it.

We thank readers for expressing their opinions and take them to heart, but we respectfully disagree with their conclusions. Our coverage was nothing but honest journalism. What some readers may not appreciate is the editorial focus of the *Villager*. We are devoted almost exclusively to covering the southwest quarter of St. Paul, the adjacent Longfellow and Nokomis neighborhoods of Minneapolis, Mendota,

Mendota Heights and Lilydale. Floyd's death at 38th Street and Chicago Avenue in the Powderhorn neighborhood of Minneapolis was senseless and a grave injustice, but the big story in our area was the senseless vandalism, arson and looting that followed.

The June 10 story by *Villager* reporter Jane McClure on the widespread destruction of commercial property was remarkable for its breadth. The story didn't dig deeply into the suffering caused by that destruction. Nor did it elaborate on the ardent feelings of those who were protesting Floyd's death. It did include photos of peaceful protesters in front of the governor's mansion and on the state Capitol mall.

We chose the front-page photo of the peaceful protest for how it illustrated the feelings of those who took part in the protest. The black man in the foreground may look angry to some people. He certainly is passionate. And why wouldn't he be, considering the injustice of George Floyd's death? According to our photographer, the man is shown leading fellow protesters in a chant: “Hands up!” he is shouting. “Don't shoot!” they respond as they march past the governor's mansion.

We as a nation are mired in problems stemming from our racist past. Our police departments are in need of reform. Without it, black people will continue to suffer the injustice of prejudice. In addition to that reform, we look forward to the day when the impassioned protester pictured on page 1 of the last *Villager* and the two neighbors with brooms pictured on page 4 are valued not for the blackness or whiteness of their skin but for the content of their character.

Dale Mischke is co-editor of the *Villager*.

INBOX

Dominant reality overlooked

I was stunned by the headline in the latest issue: “Floyd protests break out into widespread rioting” (*Villager*, June 10). I do not believe that is the dominant reality of what occurred. Rather widespread peaceful protests have dominated. Your editorial choices further shocked me when comparing the page 1 photo of a young black man voicing his emotions at a protest in front of the governor's mansion to the photo on page 4: Under the headline, “Volunteers rally to help secure and restore neighborhoods,” is a photo of a young white man carrying a broom. Can you explain the choices you made?

Anne B. Parker
Lexington-Hamline

White-washing Floyd story

I pulled my latest issue of the *Villager* out of its plastic sleeve and instantly I'm hit with the connection of the words “protests” and “widespread rioting” in the front page headline and the words “vandalized and looted” in the sub-headline before any mention of “black man's death.” What a glaring example of cultural bias in our news media.

Whoever it was who wrote the headline is guilty of bad editorial judgment. Millions of people around the globe have left their homes in the midst of a pandemic to scream and chant and protest and plead for change following the murder of another black man at the hands, or in this case the knee, of police. In the Highland area, a couple of windows were broken and a number of white-owned businesses hastily boarded up their shops. In Midway, where a number of businesses were damaged and destroyed, there will be more of a long-lasting impact on the community. But the story is not rioting and looting. That is a byproduct of the continued systemic racism too many people experience at the hands of law enforcement and the pent-up anger sparked by the video that has now impacted the world.

The words you choose to use in a headline shape the

narrative. As for the story itself, I understand why reporter Jane McClure described in the first paragraph “George Floyd's death” and not “the murder of George Floyd,” as the police officer has not been found guilty in a court of law. But the headline says so much, and in this case the *Villager* white-washed the story. By focusing on the words “widespread rioting” when that is not really the long-term story, the *Villager* is catering to a culture that needs to grow up.

I agree that rioting and looting are part of the story, especially at the local level, but by making it the headline you are downplaying the significance of what has been sparked by yet another terrible example of police brutality and the negative consequences of racism in our society.

D.J. Johnston
Lexington-Hamline

Racist subtext to your reporting

I was disgusted by the front page of the June 10 *Villager*. It was bad enough that you thought the most important story of the past few weeks was not about the murder of George Floyd or the repeated instances of racist police violence that continue to plague both St. Paul and Minneapolis over many decades. You barely mention the dominant response to the killing, which was peaceful protest, and then slander those protests by suggesting they turned to violence. In fact, nearly all violence broke out after protests had ended and involved only a small portion of participants in a small number of the protests. Nor do you mention the movement that has emerged to shift our resources toward more effective means of addressing crime and violence.

Instead, you write a headline that screamed, “George Floyd protests break out into widespread vandalism and looting,” and claimed without evidence that the violence in our community had spread “from South Minneapolis.” In case anyone doubted the racist subtext of your reporting, you illustrated the story with a photo of an African-American man who was screaming and flexing his muscles while marching

in one of those protests. He was clearly one of the thousands of citizens who channeled their outrage into peaceful protests and marches. He walked alongside white neighbors who share his anger and frustration with the patterns of racist policing that are hardly limited to Minneapolis. By centering him below your misleading headline, you clearly intended to associate him and other black citizens with the violence that you falsely believe had “spread from Minneapolis” and become the most important aspect of this story.

I hope that you find a way to report more accurately on the real problems facing our diverse and deeply troubled community and stop spreading the racist fearmongering that lies at the root of the crisis we face today. In the meantime, you owe us all an apology.

Will Jones
Macalester-Groveland

Racial stereotypes perpetuated

As a white woman in a multiracial family, I was troubled by some of the racially insensitive coverage of the protest and its aftermath in the June 10 issue of the *Villager*. The front page headline reads “Floyd protests break out into widespread rioting” with a large photo of a peaceful protest featuring a black man who appears to be passionately shouting. Note the man was not rioting, vandalizing or looting. But rather, as the smaller caption under the photo describes, he is part of a peaceful protest parading past the governor's mansion on Summit Avenue. But the large headline connecting the photo of the black man to “widespread rioting” was mischaracterized.

The reporting continues on page 4 with three photos of white people with a bolded headline: “Volunteers rally to help secure and restore neighborhoods.” There are no photos of black people on this page even though they widely participated in cleanup efforts.

We have all heard the saying, “a picture is worth 1,000

84 INBOX

words.” What message do the photos communicate? While I doubt that the editor’s choices were malicious, such reporting perpetuates stereotypes and fuels systemic racism in our community. We can do better. We must do better.

*Kristine McKinney
Highland Park*

Villager missed an opportunity

I am disappointed by your article “Floyd protests break out into widespread rioting.” You are a voice in our community, and you missed a prime opportunity to report on the real issues our city and country are grappling with. You chose to make your front-page headline about rioting instead of racism. You spent half a page listing businesses that were vandalized instead of reporting on police brutality and racial inequalities. You presented us with quotes from people of power—the police chief, politicians, business owners—but left out the voices of activists, community organizers and protesters.

Language is important. By focusing on property over people and leading with damage to businesses over a black man’s life, you are missing an opportunity to contribute to a meaningful dialogue that is desperately needed in the neighborhoods you serve.

*Phil Wacker
Macalester-Groveland*

Black voices oppressed

After the Minneapolis police murdered George Floyd, thousands of Minnesotans took to the streets to call for justice in an expression of grief and anguish. A chorus of George Floyd’s last words, “I can’t breathe,” rang through the air as protesters urged people everywhere to “say his name.” Protest signs called for the officers involved in the murder of George Floyd to be arrested. Protesters called for recognition that black lives matter and for the dismantling of racist policies that oppress black, indigenous and other people of color.

The Minneapolis protests sparked a global movement spanning all 50 states and 18 countries. People called for justice, not just for George Floyd, but for the countless other black men, women, and children needlessly killed by police. This uprising brought heightened awareness of the work of local organizations such as MPD150, Reclaim the Block, and Black Visions Collective among others who have long been fighting to defund police and invest in local communities.

Yet, the front-page headline in the June 10 *Villager* would suggest a different story. The words highlight not the demands of the movement, but the actions of a few rioters and looters. The image captures not the violence of the police against masses of peaceful protesters, but the stereotypical depiction of an angry black man. The article mourns not the loss of lives, but the destruction of capitalist enterprises.

This coverage oppresses black voices and allows violence against people of color to continue unchecked. I urge the *Villager* to rethink their coverage of this movement. You have the opportunity and the responsibility to pull the curtain back and look beyond the surface level narrative. Include

the demands of protesters and the accomplishments of the movement. Include the displays of art and community in the wake of George Floyd’s death. Uplift the voices of local black leadership. Let them tell their story.

*Rachel Adley
Highland Park*

No more than a business flyer

I was distressed to see the racist front cover of the June 10 *Villager*. This protest was about the death of George Floyd and the rage it and the hundreds of other deaths at the hands of police have inspired. The violence and looting appeared to be from groups who were taking advantage of the chaos and had nothing to do with the demands for justice for Floyd and all the others who have killed by police. You are not a newspaper, just a business flyer.

*Virginia Martin
Summit-University*

Better hang on to that plywood

St. Paul business owners may want to hang on to the plywood that was covering their windows for a while. Just think what may happen if the president gets re-elected or the jury in the George Floyd case comes back with the wrong verdict.

*Gary Fischbach
Mendota Heights*

Grateful for the mayor we have

Thank goodness St. Paul has somebody so sane, balanced, thoughtful, ethical and intelligent as its mayor during these challenging times. As the crisis has played out through multiple news conferences, he was a welcome voice of compassion, empathy and reason, speaking eloquently and showing leadership throughout.

If you are unfamiliar with what Mayor Carter is about, I recommend watching his interview with Conan O’Brien on YouTube. Mayor Carter has inherited a complex societal problem that has been festering for centuries, dating back to the original sin of slave owning. We need leaders who will help us, to quote Al Sharpton, “make America good for the first time.” Finally! It is long overdue.

*Heidi Burris
Macalester-Groveland*

Get rid of police unions

The unrest across our community due to the killing of George Floyd is a direct result of the police unions that have shielded their officers from accountability. It is good to see that the governor is calling a special session to address reforms. However, the legislative proposal from the People of Color & Indigenous Caucus does not go far enough. Its proposal would leave the police unions intact and merely reform how arbitration is handled for law enforcement terminations.

The union that represents the Minneapolis Police Department has sewn much discord in our community and

stood in the way of accountability and reform for decades. That discord has led populations to lose faith in the police department. The way to restore the faith of the people is to get rid of the police union by passing legislation that would ban collective bargaining in Minnesota. Leaving the union of the Minneapolis Police Department intact will only be kicking this can further down the road.

*Gary Wilson
Mendota Heights*

Save our single-family homes

The article on a proposed 60-unit apartment building at Lexington Parkway and James Avenue mentions that this project would require the demolition of six houses. How many homes have been lost in the last four years to new multi-family housing? I’m guessing maybe 30 or more. St. Paul has a huge need for affordable homes for large families, so why wouldn’t the city show a little creativity and adopt a no-teardown policy. Developers who build market-rate apartment buildings on the site of single-family homes should be responsible to move and preserve those homes or contribute to a housing trust fund.

It costs about \$100,000 to move a home and place it on a new foundation. If the city kicks in \$50,000 for rehab, St. Paul has an entry-level home available for a large family at quite the savings over building a new one for over \$300,000. In this instance, the additional cost of doing business to the market rate developer would be about \$10,000 or \$50 a month. We all know that these old homes are built better than most new starter homes. I’m sure the folks at the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation could suggest vacant lots where the homes would fit into the neighborhood.

This approach is more cost-effective than a contribution to the housing trust fund because the numbers work better for the city and taxpayers. In the case of the Lexington and James project, St. Paul gets six units of affordable family housing for about \$300,000 rather than building six new units for over \$1.8 million.

If we’re going to let developers gobble up land and tear down homes and create developments that impact our neighborhoods, there should be at least some public good that comes out of it.

*Julian Loscalzo
Lexington-Hamline*

A plea for civility

At 3:15 p.m. on Sunday, June 7, I had an unfortunate interaction with a bicyclist on Otis Avenue. After crossing the intersection at Marshall Avenue going south, on a green light, I saw a bicyclist ahead of me and I slowed down as he was about to pass a parked car on our right. As I approached, he pulled straight out ahead of me, right in front of my car and I had to swerve to miss him. I’d given him way more room than necessary, and he had a lot of room to continue his ride. I slowed down even more, pulled next to him, and asked what just happened. I got the middle finger and a tirade about cars not respecting bicyclists.

Wow! I’m in my 70s, and I really don’t have the fire to push

INBOX ►10



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94 INBOX

back as I did in my 60s. But I did. I made the attempt to talk to him, without a raised voice, to calm him down. That didn't work and we got into a shouting match, which I'm sorry I engaged in.

We moved on and I thought maybe I could interact with him in my front yard, which he was going to pass. Well, that didn't happen. As he approached on his bike, I waved at him and asked if he would like to discuss what just happened. I was actually going to offer him water. He just ignored me and kept on going.

What's wrong with our society? We're engaged in a pandemic, and we've just come through riots and looting that unfortunately destroyed my business. What happened to civility? I make a point of giving bikers the right of way, but they don't care and blow through stop signs. In some cases, I have to slam on my brakes to avoid their illegal actions.

No one wants anybody to get hurt. Please be kind to one another. We'll all be better for it.

*Dana Rose
Highland Park*

Ford developer misleads public

Whether it is intentional or not, Ryan Companies and CommonBond Communities recently submitted applications for zoning variances at the Ford site that are misleading the public. At issue is their reporting of how much "variance" they are requesting.

For example, CommonBond asks the Planning Commission for permission to reduce the open space around its building from 25 percent as required by the Ford site master plan to 16 percent. They report this as a "variance of 9 percent." Nine percent doesn't sound like much. But what would actually happen is that the amount of open space would be reduced by more than one third. The resulting open space would be less than two-thirds of what the master plan requires.

For years, Highland neighbors have decried the failure to plan for sufficient open and recreational space at the Ford site. CommonBond's proposal would make a bad situation even worse. Its variance application should be rejected. Providing the public with deceptive statistics adds insult to injury. It should not be allowed.

*Charles Hathaway
Highland Park*

Breach of good faith at Ford site

I oppose the zoning variances for the Ford site as requested by Ryan Companies. This latest set of zoning changes would increase density and decrease open space. Building heights would increase from 65 to 75 feet with 90-foot towers. Current zoning requires a minimum of 25 percent of the lot be open space. Ryan has requested six percent open space.

The percentage changes Ryan has requested are misleading — they obscure and minimize the impact on the space. For example, Ryan wants to increase the lot coverage of a building from 70 percent to 90 percent. On a 10-acre lot that means that where there was once three acres of open space now there is only one acre of open space. It is misleading to say it is a change of 20 percent. In fact, two-thirds of the originally zoned open space has been eliminated.

With the Ford site development barely underway, the people of Highland Park have watched the original agreed-upon restrictions and guarantees disappear one by one. Some people are calling Ryan's latest zoning changes a bait and switch. I call it a breach of good faith with the community.

*Kate M. Hunt
Highland Park*

Ford site needs car-sharing

How green and how affordable will the Ford site be for seniors? Let's say you recently retired on a fixed income. You want to move to the Ford site, and you need as much as possible from the sale of your family home to supplement your Social Security. One way to afford the rent or mortgage is to replace your own vehicle with a membership in the HourCar car-sharing program. AAA puts the cost of personal vehicle ownership at approximately \$10,000 per year. An HourCar membership will save you half or more of that.

Ryan Companies, master developer of the Ford site, has applied for five variances to build a mixed-use, multi-unit structure at 2170 Ford Pkwy. I support the project and the variances except for the variance that would waive the requirement for eight car-sharing parking spaces.

HourCar calculates that it needs 40-plus subscriber-members to make one HourCar car-sharing space viable. To make eight car-sharing spaces viable would therefore require 320 subscribers. The total units in Ryan's proposed building are 230, so a car-share hub of eight vehicles inside a secure

parking ramp there would not be viable, even if every one of those units was occupied by a member of HourCar.

It's not yet known how many of the proposed building's 436 parking spaces will be open to the public, but it seems certain that half or more will be, given that the ground floor will have a supermarket. So why is Ryan asking to zero out car-sharing at the site? The city of St. Paul and Ryan both embrace the concepts of sustainability, safety, walkability and affordability at the Ford site, yet after a decade of dialogue, there is no plan in place for car-sharing. The proposed building at 2170 Ford Pkwy. would be a great start.

The St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals will consider Ryan's requests at 3 p.m. Monday, June 29. (Public comments may be submitted to matthew.graybar@ci.stpaul.mn.us.) Given the concerns about local traffic, local and state climate change plans, baby-boomer demand for real estate downsizing, the reduced income of retiring seniors, the dual shocks of reduced government revenue and increased taxes stemming from COVID-19, and the destruction of small businesses in the recent riots, a robust car-sharing program for the Ford site is a top priority. We cannot afford to wait.

*Mathews Hollinshead
Highland Park*

Editor's note: The writer is a member of the Metropolitan Council's Transportation Advisory Board.

Our bodies, our responsibilities

A recent letter stated that women are second-class citizens without access to legal abortion, whereas men are first-class citizens because "they have this control" over their own bodies and destinies (*Villager* Inbox, June 10). It seems to me that any man who truly has control over his own body would certainly not impregnate a woman and then fail in his responsibility to care for her and the newly conceived child (and yes, it is a child). Such a man is hardly a first-class citizen by any stretch of the imagination.

*Anne Collopy
St. Anthony*

The Villager welcomes letters to the editor. They must be signed and indicate the neighborhood in which the letter writer lives. Send yours to the Villager at 757 S. Snelling Ave., St. Paul, MN 55116 or email letters@myvillager.com.

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Highland reservoir's removal to provide space for soccer fields & fill for Ford site

By JANE McCLURE

Demolition of Highland Park's decommissioned southern water reservoir just south of Ford Parkway and Snelling Avenue is moving ahead this construction season. The 4.3-acre site is expected to eventually be converted to fields for youth soccer and other sports.

The St. Paul Board of Water Commissioners was to vote on the demolition in May, but delayed action until June 9 at the request of Ward 3 City Council member Chris Tolbert, who wanted to make sure all needed agreements were in place first. Tolbert added language to the demolition resolution calling for St. Paul Regional Water Services staff to continue to work with the city on a long-term lease for park and recreation facilities on the site.

"This has the potential to be a win-win for everyone, but we have to make sure all of the pieces fall into place," Tolbert said.

The 18-million-gallon reservoir was built in 1926, but has not been used for more than five years. It is made of reinforced concrete, is 430 feet long by 322 feet wide by 21 feet deep, and has more than 350 interior columns supporting its roof. Demolition costs have been estimated at \$1.1 million.

Water Services staff will meet this summer with the Highland District Council to discuss the timing of the project and the measures that will be taken to reduce the potential impact of the demolition on neighbors.

The reservoir's demolition this year will precede a 2021 Ramsey County project to reconstruct and expand its parking lot at the adjacent Charles M. Schulz-Highland Arena. That work also will include upgraded lighting and landscaping. The county has allocated \$275,000 this year for design work and \$1.9 million in 2021 for construction.

Dirt and crushed concrete from the reservoir's demolition will be used as fill for the

redevelopment of Ford Motor Company's former assembly plant. Construction at the Ford site is now getting underway.

The water utility has been looking at the reuse of the reservoir property since 2017. Eleven proposals were originally reviewed, including a greenhouse, solar garden, Hy-Vee supermarket and housing. In March 2018, the water board shelved all private-sector proposals and asked the St. Paul and Ramsey County parks and recreation departments to jointly develop ideas for the property.

The city presented two conceptual plans. One would create three youth soccer fields and a lacrosse field. The other would provide two youth soccer fields and two baseball fields. The costs for the city proposals were expected to top \$2 million at that time.

County officials brought up such ideas as expanding the ice arena and sharing parking and field space with the city. The county has since dropped any plans other than parking lot work.

Funding for the fields project would likely come through the city's Capital Improvement Budget. There is also a chance of funding through the state's 2020 bonding bill. In January, Governor Tim Walz recommended approval of \$329,000 to develop a plan for a regional sports center in St. Paul. The request came from the Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission (MASC).

The request is for a four-field complex that could accommodate soccer, rugby, lacrosse and other sports. The facility would have a total cost of \$8.9 million. One site that city officials have been eyeing for those new fields is the water reservoir after its removal.

MASC does not select sites, but works with local governments to choose sites and develop sports facilities. The commission has been seeking funding for a sports facility in the eastern metro area for several years without success.

Committee members have mixed reactions to CIB review process caused by pandemic

By JANE McCLURE

Sixty-five submissions from St. Paul individuals and neighborhood groups have made the first cut for the second phase of St. Paul's redesigned Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) process. The projects are vying for a share of \$1 million that will be awarded as part of the 2021 city budget.

City staff will crunch the numbers and have cost estimates for the projects ready by the end of July. The CIB Committee will review the projects starting in August, make its rankings in September and present its recommendations to Mayor Melvin Carter and the City Council by September 30.

The CIB Committee recommendations have been pushed three months past the city-mandated June 30 deadline due to the coronavirus pandemic. The committee already has tentative recommendations for projects seeking federal Community Development Block Grants, Municipal-State Aid, street reconstruction bonds, and other state and federal grants. Its review of those projects is expected to be completed by the end of June.

The city launched its new streamlined CIB process last year to replace a system that had been in place for more than three decades. Under the new process, city departments submitted projects in 2019 for construction beginning this year, while all others submitted requests this year for funding in 2021. One impetus for the change was to give smaller projects a better chance to be funded.

The mayor announced a focus on "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design" for the 2020 submissions. Most of the nearly

100 proposals submitted before a March 4 deadline were for pedestrian and traffic safety. Only a handful asked for ShotSpotter technology, improved lighting and other public safety-related items.

Extensive public outreach and workshops for CIB proposals were planned for this past spring, but they had to be shelved due to the coronavirus. Only two workshops for proposals were held in February.

CIB Committee members expressed mixed reactions to the changes. "I'm extremely uncomfortable with the way the process is moving forward or not moving forward," said CIB Committee member Jack Fei.

He and other committee members noted the challenges of having to hold online meetings and of getting proposals in and selections made within a short time frame.

"I think this has been a hard process and very isolating for a lot of us," said committee chair Amy Huerta.

Fei asked if there would be time for district councils to weigh in on the proposals. A typical CIB process includes district councils reviewing and ranking all projects in their neighborhoods, but many councils do not meet in August.

Committee member Mary Morse Marti said it is important to have other project review options, in that district councils are not always representative of their neighborhoods. "Councils tend to be exclusive, closed organizations of homeowners," she said.

Other committee members agreed that additional ways for the public to weigh in on the projects should be sought.

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BOOMERS & BEYOND *Living on the upside of 55*

A career devoted to lifting up others

From tenants rights to civil rights to families in crisis, Lee has taken a lead in helping the marginalized

BY ANNE MURPHY

Being in the right place at the right time to make a difference has happened more than once for Mary Pat Lee. A Highland Park resident and executive director of the Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery, Lee said she has been fortunate to be able to devote her career to organizations dedicated to the values that inspire her.

Lee, 64, recently marked her 14th anniversary at the Crisis Nursery, and she said she is motivated more than ever to help Twin Cities families manage the stress of daily living, especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Married to former St. Paul Mayor James Scheibel, she said, "Jim and I share similar convictions in the areas of social justice. We really believe in the need to stay engaged if you want to make change." Though the Twin Cities have made improvements over the years for the poor and marginalized, she added, "there's a lot left to do."

The Crisis Nursery serves families in Minneapolis and St. Paul who are suffering hardships related to financial stress and domestic abuse among other situations. In addition to counseling, education and meals, the Nursery provides short-term overnight stays for the children of parents seeking respite child care.

The Crisis Nursery is now pursuing new programs in the area of childhood development, and Lee is excited to be a part of those efforts. These include a partnership with the University of Minnesota and Harvard University to study how trauma affects childhood development. The results will be used to help children and families served by the Crisis Nursery, she said.

Lee's concern for families in strife comes in part from knowing how fortunate she was growing up. "My childhood was a pretty

classic St. Paul, white, Catholic middle-class childhood," she said, "so different from so many childhoods today. I'm the oldest of eight children. When I was young, a small family had one to four children, a medium five to nine and a large family was in the double digits."

Lee and her siblings attended the former St. Mark's Grade School in Merriam Park. Most mothers at the time worked at home. "We always said that if your mom didn't catch you doing something, another mom would," she said. She then attended all-girl Derham Hall

High School where, she said, there were many strong role models for young women interested in future careers. The same was true at the College of St. Catherine where, she said, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet had a great impact on her dedication to social justice.

Lee's initial plan was to major in political science and then go to law school. However, she changed her major to English with a minor in political science because it allowed her to focus her studies at St. Catherine rather than taking most of her classes at the neighboring College of St. Thomas.

Upon graduation, Lee volunteered for a year with the St. Paul Tenants Union. "There I was introduced to the difference race makes in where you live and how you can live," she said. "It was an eye-opening experience."

That experience dissuaded her from attending law school. "Law seemed reactive to me," she said. "I wanted to be proactive." So she remained on the staff at the Tenants Union, eventually becoming its director.

That was during a time of gentrification in St. Paul's Summit-University neighborhood. "It was in the early '80s," she said. "African-American families were being pushed out by developers. But back then there were better

"Part of what has happened during my tenure at Crisis Nursery is getting a better understanding of what trauma does to children socially and emotionally and how we can help with that. Trauma can impede the development of neurons and the size and function of the brain if left unattended. We're working to change that."



Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery executive director Mary Pat Lee is pictured in the office of the non-profit agency with Americorps staff member Rebekah Reason. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

options for families being evicted. They could become eligible for new housing and even furnished housing in 48 hours with rent based on household income."

In the mid-80s, Lee bumped into an employee in the Alumni Affairs Office at St. Catherine who told her the college had an opening in fundraising. "It was an important time at St. Kate's," she said. "The college had its first lay president (Anita Pampusch), and she was an extraordinary, visionary leader."

Lee left St. Catherine in 1994 and moved to Washington, D.C., where Scheibel had accepted a position as deputy director of Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA). There, Lee again found herself in the right place at the right time. "I ran into someone who suggested I look at the Center for Community Change," she said. The civil rights organization was created in Senator Robert F. Kennedy's name following his assassination in 1968.

Lee and Scheibel returned to St. Paul about five years later, and she joined Habitat for Humanity as the director of development and communication. She remained there for six years before moving on to the Crisis Nursery.

"Part of what has happened during my tenure at Crisis Nursery is getting a better understanding of what trauma does to children socially and emotionally and how we can help with that," she said. "Trauma can impede the development of neurons and the size and function of the brain if left unattended. We're working to change that. We're beginning to help children come to grips with what's happening to them. We're working on helping them recognize triggers and self-soothing techniques."

Lee has enormous respect for parents who call the Crisis Nursery for help. "Think how scary it is to call strangers and say, 'Please take care of my kids,'" she said. "In return for their courage, we try to give parents resources, help them understand development and create bonds."

"Parents today have so many stresses," Lee said. "My mother didn't go back to work (outside the home) until my youngest sibling was in school. It's overwhelming to have to work and take care of young children. There must be a greater awareness of how struggling parents need support."

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Rezoning would make way for 60 apartments at Lexington and James

By JANE McCLURE

A proposed rezoning of the southeast corner of James Avenue and Lexington Parkway from single-family residential to multi-family residential to make way for a new 60-unit apartment building will be reviewed by the St. Paul Planning Commission on June 26. The rezoning of 1074-1096 James Ave. has the unanimous support of the commission's Zoning Committee. A final decision rests in the hands of the St. Paul City Council.



A preliminary sketch of the 60-unit apartment building planned for the southeast corner of Lexington Parkway and James Avenue, on the site of six single-family homes.

Developers Chet Funk, Nathan James and Erich Leidel met on June 10 with the Macalester-Groveland Community Council Housing and Land Use Committee. The committee is expected to make a recommendation on the rezoning on June 24 following a second virtual meeting with the developers. (For a link to the Zoom meeting, email mgcc@macgrovel.org.)

Preliminary plans unveiled at the June 10 meeting show three to four levels of apartments above two levels of parking. The building would have 60 studio, one- and two-bedroom units. Eighty off-street parking spaces are proposed with 20 in a surface lot and 60 within the structure. According to the development team, a study has shown that market-rate apartments are in strong demand in the area. Six houses would be removed to make way for the building.

A second phase of the project is also being planned. It includes a second apartment building on the northeast corner of Lexington and Randolph Avenue. That building would mean the removal of four dwellings, including a mixed-use building. Funk said the development team controls the James property. There is another owner to work with on the Randolph property.

The two projects are in anticipation of changes to the city's residential multifamily (RM) zoning districts. The St. Paul Planning Commission is considering provisions to allow more density in RM districts. A public hearing on the RM zoning changes was held this spring. They are expected to be brought back to the Planning Commission later this summer and then sent on to the City Council for final approval. Those changes could influence how many apartments are built at the James-Lexington site. Construction is expected to begin in 2021.

At both the district council and Zoning Committee meeting, there were calls for the project to have some level of affordable housing. However, the Zoning Committee's focus was on the rezoning itself and not the development plans, as those could change. Whether the property falls under the old or new RM zoning standards depends upon when the city's site plan review gets underway, according to principal city planner Bill Dermody. Site plan reviews are typically handled by city staff, but in this case the Zoning Committee asked that it conduct the site plan review.

Four neighbors raised objections to the developers' plans at James and Lexington. One major issue is traffic. Backups are a regular occurrence on Lexington and Randolph, which is near the entrance and exit ramps to I-35E, and neighbors are worried that they could become worse. Motorists can use eastbound James Avenue to get to I-35E, and some do to avoid the traffic backups.

Another concern is how icy James Avenue can get in winter on the block being eyed for development. "Most of us cannot even drive up James on a snow day," said neighbor Laura LeBlanc. Neighbors asked about the possibility of making James a one-way street. The developers said they would consider the idea.

Another neighborhood concern is parking congestion. Local streets are already used as parking by employees at the Trader Joe's market at Randolph and Lexington.

"Parking is one of the biggest challenges and we're very sensitive to it," Funk said. The developers plan to accommodate their parking needs on their property.

Senior News

The Pillars of Highland Park, 1925 Norfolk Ave., has hired Marissa Rudd as manager of its Dimensions memory care program. Rudd has more than a decade of experience in health care, most of it in memory care.



Help at Your Door, a nonprofit organization serving senior citizens, is in need of volunteer drivers in the St. Paul area to transport clients to weekday appointments and errands using their personal vehicle. Most drivers give a couple of rides each month on a schedule and in the geographic locations of their choosing. For information, contact Carolyn Swenson at 651-642-1892 or visit helpatyourdoor.org.

Nokomis Healthy Seniors can arrange rides by volunteers to grocery stores and to pick up prescriptions and other transportation needs, along with some yardwork and friendly phone

visitors. Leave a message at 612-729-5499 and a staff member will return the call. Sister organizations serving other parts of Minneapolis are the Longfellow-Seward Healthy Seniors and Southeast Healthy Seniors.

Kim Webster has been named the chief operating officer at Our Lady of Peace, a hospice and home health care service in Merriam Park. Webster has 40 years of experience in the senior health services field, most recently as the chief operating officer for Vista Prairie Senior Living Communities. She also served as vice president of healthcare for A'viands food service and regional director of senior living for StuartCo, which operates facilities in Highland Park. For the past two years, Webster has served as vice chair of the Our Lady of Peace board of directors.



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Speed limit reminders—The Highland District Council has lawn signs that residents can place to remind motorists of speed limits. Contact Kathy Carruth at 651-695-4005 or kathy@highlanddistrictcouncil.org to pick up the signs.

Food shelf and PPE fundraiser—The Macalester-Groveland Community Council, HDC and Highland Business Association are teaming up to host a fundraiser to support the volunteers and organizations responding to food shortages and ongoing COVID-19 efforts in the Twin Cities. All of the funds raised will go to purchase personal protective equipment for food drive volunteers and others, as well as food and hygiene products. Donate at givemn.org/story/Fundcommunity.

Upcoming meetings—Transportation Committee, 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 14; board of directors, 7 p.m. Thursday, July 16; Community Development Committee, 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 21; and Community Engagement Committee, 7 p.m. Monday, July 27. All meetings of the council are being held online. Links to access the meetings are posted on the HDC's website.

Macalester-Groveland

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Support the Twin Cities—The Macalester-Groveland and Highland community councils and the Highland Business Association are seeking donations to help provide personal protective equipment and funding to local groups and organizations working to address food insecurities. For information, visit givemn.org/story/fundcommunity.

Get your gardens ready—Judging for the annual Alley Garden Awards in Macalester-Groveland will take place from July 16-23. Volunteers will walk all alleys in the neighborhood and award gardens that have attractive and well-kept plantings, both in the ground or in pots. Visit macgrove.org/aga.

James and Lexington project—Join the community council's Housing and Land Use Committee for an online meeting

at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 24, to discuss plans for rezoning and redevelopment at James Avenue and Lexington Parkway. Visit macgrove.org/development for more details, and email alexa@macgrove.org for meeting information.

Annual meeting and elections—The community council's annual meeting and board elections will be held online in July and August. Check macgrove.org/annualmeeting for updates.

COVID-19 resources—Visit macgrove.org/2020resources for an updated list of current offers, activities and ways to support one another during this uncertain time. Those who have something to add may email mgcc@macgrove.org.

Get involved—The community council has three standing committees that meet once a month on different aspects of making Macalester-Groveland a great place to live, work, learn and play. See more at macgrove.org/committees.

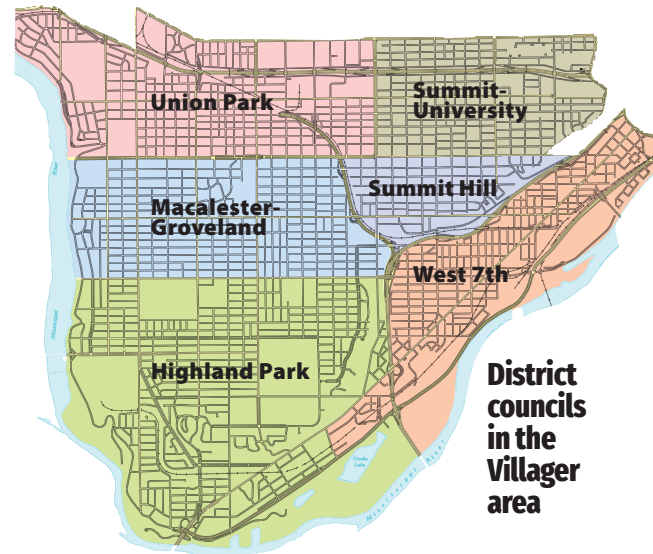
Office closed—The Macalester-Groveland Community Council office remains closed. Email mgcc@macgrove.org for information.

West Seventh

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Board update—At the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation meeting on June 15, board members learned about myDog, a proposed dog daycare business at 1324 W. Seventh St. It proposes to care for 30-40 dogs per day, with boarding for 10 dogs overnight. The overnight boarding is not allowed in the current Traditional Neighborhoods 2 zoning and myDog was requesting support for changing the zoning to T3. The board took no action at the meeting.

Election results—Board elections were moved online this year due to COVID-19. The 2020-21 board officers are president Dana DeMaster, first vice president Wendy Underwood, second vice president Tracy Farr and treasurer Nicole Loran. The secretary position remains vacant. Area coordinators are: Area 1—Jessica Callahan, Casey Carmody and Elyse Jensen; Area 2—Kelsey Peterson; Area 3—Tanya Fabyanske Beck and Meghan Redmond. There are still two vacant seats in Area 2



District councils in the Villager area

and one in Area 3 (reserved for a renter). The board will fill the vacant positions at its July 13 meeting. For information, visit fortroadfederation.org/board-of-directors-and-staff.

Upcoming virtual meetings—Transportation and Land Use Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 1; board of directors, 7 p.m. Monday, July 13; and Community Engagement and Outreach Committee on Thursday, July 16, at a time to be determined. Information on connecting to the Zoom meetings can be found by visiting fortroadfederation.org/calendar.html.

Committees—The Fort Road Federation has three standing committees: Transportation and Land Use, Fundraising and Development, and Community Engagement and Outreach. Those who would like to join a committee or learn more about one should call the office or email emily@fortroadfederation.org.

Stay in touch—Neighbors are encouraged to "like" the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation on Facebook and subscribe to its e-newsletter on its website.

Keystone proposes new \$5.8M food shelf to meet growing demand

By JANE MCCLURE

The Union Park District Council's Land Use Committee voted unanimously on June 15 to support Keystone Community Services' plan to build a new \$5.8 million facility to replace aging food shelf sites in St. Paul's Merriam Park and North End neighborhoods.

Earlier that day, the Metropolitan Council's Community Development Committee recommended approval of a pre-development grant of \$100,000 for Keystone's project. That recommendation will go to the full Met Council for its consideration and then to the city of St. Paul to accept and disburse the money.

Keystone also is seeking \$1.5 million in state funding to acquire property along University Avenue and do pre-design work.

The second phase of the project would be to construct the facility. Keystone reportedly is looking at a potential site with about 20,000 square feet of space near the Lexington Parkway light-rail station.

During a recent planning and community engagement process, Keystone officials have said the need for an improved food shelf site was heard over and over again. "Our two sites are bursting at the seams," said Keystone president and CEO Mary McKeown.

Its food shelf at 1916 University Ave. is in a former retail store. It opened in the mid-1980s after moving from the Merriam Park Community Center. The one at Rice and Arlington streets occupies part of a former heating and air conditioning business. Both buildings are showing their age and lack private space to meet with clients. Neither food shelf can accommodate more than half a

dozen volunteers at a time.

A new facility would allow Keystone to serve more than 43,000 people each year with food, emergency assistance and connections to other resources.

Keystone operates the largest food distribution program in the East Metro area. Along with food shelves, it operates two Foodmobiles that stop at more than 30 high-demand locations.

In 2019, Keystone helped almost 12,000 low-income households with food shelf and crisis assistance support. That breaks down to the equivalent of 166,080 bags of groceries. It provided 27,000 people with food shelf support last year and 37,544 people overall through its facilities in the West Seventh and Merriam Park community centers and a bike shop on Selby Avenue.

On average, food shelf clients come in only

three to four times a year when they run short of money, McKeown said. The pandemic and the loss of some food markets due to property damage and vandalism in late May has resulted in more demand for food in recent weeks.

Low-income adults across Minnesota also could lose their benefits as a result of changes to the 2020 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. That is expected to create even more demand for food shelves.

Keystone is anticipating an increase in food shelf demand of 20-40 percent in 2020 and 2021. On June 12 it held a food package giveaway near Allianz Field. The food was gone very quickly, and traffic was backed up for miles around.

"We weren't expecting that kind of outpouring of need," McKeown said.

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Committee ponders plan to add sidewalks on part of Edgcumbe

By JANE McCLURE

Plans to pave new sidewalks along a stretch of Edgcumbe Road as part of the city of St. Paul's Griggs-Scheffer street paving project next year dominated the discussion of the Highland District Council's Transportation Committee on June 9. Some homeowners along the street are pushing back against the idea, though city policy requires sidewalks to be installed where none exist whenever streets are rebuilt.

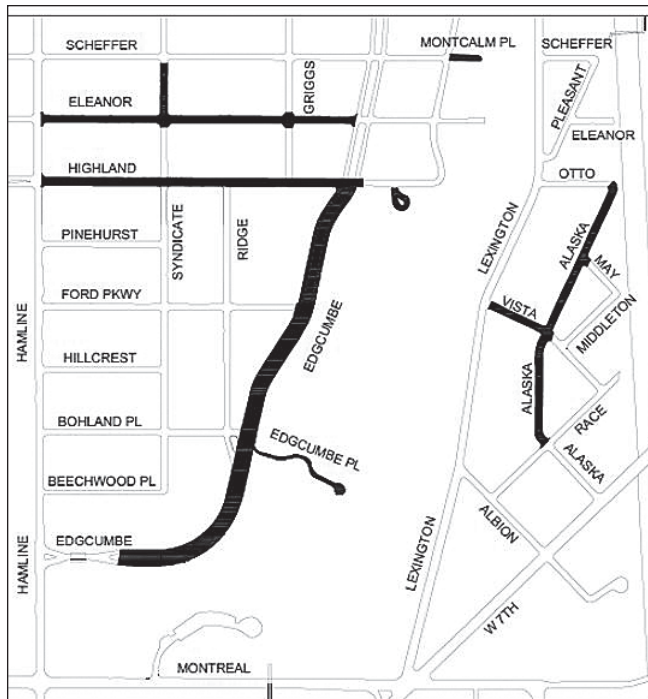
Before 2017, homeowners could petition to opt out of new sidewalks during street projects, as was done on Woodlawn Avenue when that street was rebuilt. That led to long and contentious City Council meetings. Council members were frustrated when neighborhoods turned over and new residents complained that their streets did not have sidewalks.

City Council members changed the policy that year, stating that it was being applied inconsistently. Bolstering the new policy mandating new sidewalks was the city's Pedestrian Plan that was adopted in 2019.

The first phase of the Griggs-Scheffer project includes stretches of Syndicate Street and Juno, Watson, Hartford, Bayard and Scheffer avenues between Hamline and Edgcumbe Road during this construction season. Work is scheduled to end in November. It will include new pavement, curbs and gutters, driveway aprons, sidewalks, street lighting, boulevard trees, sewer and water main replacement or repair, storm sewer catch basins, public art and ADA-compliant corner ramps.

Streets in the second phase next year will include stretches of Eleanor Avenue, Highland Parkway, Syndicate, Edgcumbe Road, Edgcumbe Place, and Alaska and Vista avenues. Edgcumbe is to be rebuilt from Highland Parkway to just east of Hamline where there currently are no sidewalks.

Chris Engelmann, project manager for the city's Department of Public Works, said the design for the second phase will be wrapped up by the end of this year. Discussions with affected property owners are expected to get underway this summer. Public Works typically hosts public meetings, but with the



Phase II of the Griggs-Scheffer street repaving project will take place in 2021 and will include the roads indicated by a heavy black line.

COVID-19 pandemic the meetings are likely to be online.

HDC committee member Lyn Varco asked why a sidewalk could not be placed in the center medians of Edgcumbe, rather than in front of houses. Engelmann said that design does not provide the same level of access and safety that sidewalks in front of homes can. The city also relies on abutting property owners to remove snow on sidewalks.

"People can be very passionate about their neighborhoods, but the city has to balance all needs and wants," Engelmann said.

Ward 3 council member Chris Tolbert favors installing the sidewalks, according to his legislative aide Melanie McMahon. "Right now, we have people pushing strollers in the street," she said. She added that efforts will be made to save mature trees when the sidewalks are built.

HDC board president Michelle Doyle raised the issue of sidewalk design. Some Highland sidewalks in Highland Park butt up to the streets, making snow removal more difficult and creating a more hazardous environment for pedestrians.

Engelmann said mandatory sidewalk construction is only waived in unusual cases when streets are rebuilt, such as narrow rights-of-way or issues with drainage or terrain. That could be the case on Edgcumbe Place, a short, narrow, dead-end street that branches off from Edgcumbe Road.

School Notes

Henry Sibley High School principal Ron Monson was recently named the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals Capitol Division Principal of the Year. He has served as the Sibley principal since 2014.

Iris Carroll of Macalester-Groveland had her National History Day documentary, *Penumbra Theater: Presenting African American Narratives through Performance*, selected to be showcased in the Smithsonian Learning Lab of the National Museum of African American History and Culture as part of the National History Day competition. Her documentary is one of 35 student films being shown in the museum's digital showcase through June 24. Visit s.si.edu/NHDSshowcase2020.

Sara Dziuk has been named president and CEO of Junior Achievement of the Upper Midwest (JAUM), 1745 University Ave., effective July 1. She succeeds Gina Blayney, who announced her retirement last summer after

15 years as CEO. Dziuk was most recently the chief advancement officer for College Possible, overseeing the organization's fundraising, communications and external relations at the national level. JAUM has been serving students in the Upper Midwest since 1949. During the 2018-2019 school year, it reached nearly 170,000 students in grades K-12. Learn more at jaum.org.

World Without Genocide, a human rights organization at Mitchell Hamline School of Law, will host its annual Summer Institute for High School and College Students. This year's topic is "Politics, Propaganda, the Pandemic, and Genocide: The Holocaust, American Indians, and Guatemala." Because of COVID-19, the 2020 Summer Institute will be held online from 10 a.m.-noon, 1:30-4 p.m. and 7-9 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, August 4-6. The deadline to register is July 26. Visit worldwithoutgenocide.org or call 952-693-5206.

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Crime Report

The following crime incidents were compiled from St. Paul and Mendota Heights police department reports and other sources.

Highland Park

Robbery—Robberies at gunpoint occurred on the 1300 block of West Maynard Drive at 11:50 p.m. Sunday, June 7, and on the 1300 block of East Maynard Drive at 2:20 p.m. Tuesday, June 9.

Burglary—More than 30 incidents of burglary and criminal damage to property were reported on the 1500-2100 blocks of Ford Parkway and on the 700 block of South Cleveland Avenue between May 28-30. Burglaries also were reported on the 400-500 blocks of South Snelling Avenue on May 28-29. The incidents were attributed to part of the civil unrest that took place following the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police on May 25.

—Burglaries at commercial establishments were reported on the 1200 block of Homer Street on May 30, the 1500 block of Ford Parkway on June 4, and the 800 block of South Snelling Avenue and 2400 block of West Seventh Street on June 7.

—A residential break-in was reported on the 1100 block of St. Paul Avenue at noon Wednesday, June 10.

Theft—Vehicles were stolen on the 2100 block of Eleanor Avenue and the 2300 block of Youngman Avenue on May 28, on Inner Drive on May 29, the 1300 block of Davern Street on May 31, the 1500 block of Scheffer Avenue on June 1, the 1800 block of Highland Parkway on June 3, the 2200 block of Benson Avenue on June 5 and the 800 block of South Cleveland Avenue on June 8.

Weapons—Gunfire erupted on Inner Drive and on the 1700 block of Graham Avenue during the early mornings of May 29 and 30.

Lexington-Hamline

Burglary—Several burglaries were reported on the 1300 block of Marshall Avenue and the 200-400 blocks of North Lexington Parkway on May 28, the 400 block of North Syndicate Street on May 29 and the 400 block of North Dunlap Street on May 30.

—A commercial burglary was reported on the 1200 block of University Avenue at 6:51 p.m. Friday, June 5.

Theft—A vehicle was stolen on the 1300 block of University Avenue at 1 p.m. Thursday, May 28.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported on the 1100 block of Central Avenue on June 2 and 3, and on the 1100 block of Ashland Avenue on June 5.

Macalester-Groveland

Robbery—A strong-arm robbery was reported on the 1500 block of Grand Avenue at 1:43 p.m. Thursday, June 4.

Burglary—Multiple burglaries took place

on May 28-29 on the 1500 block of Randolph Avenue, the 0-200 blocks of South Fairview Avenue and the 1200-2000 blocks of Grand Avenue. Burglaries also were reported on Cleveland and St. Clair avenues on May 30, on St. Clair near Ayd Mill Road on May 31 and on the 300 block of South Snelling Avenue on June 2.

—Residential burglaries were reported on the 1200 block of Jefferson Avenue on May 30, two on the 1300 block of Sargent Avenue on June 1 and on the 1200 block of Lincoln Avenue on June 8.

Theft—A vehicle was reported stolen on the 1500 block of Grand Avenue at 6:13 p.m. Tuesday, June 9.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported nearly a dozen times in the Macalester-Groveland neighborhood between May 28-June 2.

Mendota Heights

Burglary—A commercial break-in was reported on the 700 block of Highway 62 at 3:43 a.m. Friday, May 29.

Theft—Catalytic converters were stolen from vehicles on the 700 block of South Plaza Drive and the 2300 block of Pilot Knob Road on May 28-29.

—A tree was stolen from the yard of a residence on the 2200 block of Alice Lane during the evening of June 6-7.

—A vehicle was stolen on the 1300 block of Northland Drive during the evening of June 10-11.

Miscellaneous—Police responded to a report of a motorist driving the wrong way in the southbound lanes of I-35E at 5:07 p.m. Saturday, May 30. A female under the influence of alcohol was seen throwing bottles at other vehicles from her car. The driver was arrested and charged with DWI.

—A man was arrested for violating a restraining order when he admitted to spraying another male with a garden hose and yelling at him on the 1800 block of Dodd Road at 8:56 p.m. Friday, June 5. The suspect resisted arrest and was booked into the Dakota County jail.

—A driver cited for a traffic offense was subsequently arrested for DWI after he started driving the wrong way on I-35E and Highway 62 at 11:34 p.m. Friday, June 5.

Merriam Park

Robbery—A strong-arm robbery was reported on the 1800 block of Marshall Avenue at 2:45 a.m. Saturday, June 6.

Burglary—Several burglaries and criminal damage to property were reported on the 2000-2100 blocks of Marshall Avenue on May 28-29. Burglaries also were reported on the 300 block of Pierce Street on May 28, the 500 block of North Prior Avenue on May 30 and the 1800 block of Feronia Avenue on June 1.

—A commercial break-in was reported on the 1600 block of University Avenue at 3:52 a.m. Thursday, June 4.

—A home break-in was reported on the 1700 block of Ashland Avenue at noon Saturday, June 6.

Theft—Vehicles were stolen on the 1900 block of University Avenue on May 29, the 1800 block of University and 400 block of West Lynnhurst Avenue on June 2, and the 2000 block of Marshall Avenue on June 3.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported more than a dozen times in the Merriam Park neighborhood on May 28-29.

Snelling-Hamline

Burglary—Multiple burglaries were reported on the 1300-1600 blocks of University Avenue, the 0-400 blocks of North Snelling Avenue and the 1400 block of Concordia Avenue on May 28. Burglaries also were reported on the 1400 block of Marshall Avenue on May 29 and the 1400 block of Hague Avenue on May 30.

—Three commercial break-ins were reported on Snelling and Ashland avenues between 1:30-3:09 a.m. Friday, June 5.

Thefts—Vehicles were stolen on the 1500 block of Selby Avenue on June 4 and the 1400 block of University Avenue on June 8.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported on the 200 block of North Snelling Avenue and the 1500 block of Iglehart Avenue on May 29, and on Marshall and Hamline avenues on June 1.

Summit Hill

Robbery—Strong-arm robberies were reported on the 900 block of Grand Avenue at 11:05 a.m. Saturday, June 6, and the 700 block of Grand at 10:53 p.m. Wednesday, June 10.

—Strong-arm robberies also were reported on St. Albans Street and Summit Avenue at 4:53 p.m. Saturday, June 6, and on Goodrich Avenue and Lexington Parkway at 10:39 p.m. Monday, June 8.

Burglary—Nearly two dozen incidents of burglary and criminal damage to property were reported on the 600-1000 blocks of Grand Avenue on May 28-29.

—A burglary was reported on the 1000 block of Grand Avenue at 9:19 a.m. Friday, June 5.

Theft—A vehicle was reported stolen on Chatsworth Street and Osceola Avenue at 8:31 p.m. Friday, June 5.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported on the 900 block of Fairmount Avenue on the evenings of May 31 and June 2.

Summit-University

Robbery—A strong-arm robbery was reported on Holly Avenue and Kent Street at 12:34 a.m. Monday, June 8.

—A robbery at gunpoint was reported on Oxford Street and Selby Avenue at 9:30 p.m. Monday, June 8.

Burglary—Multiple cases of burglary and criminal damage to property were reported on the 200-900 blocks of University Avenue

on May 28-29. Break-ins also were reported on the 600-800 blocks of Selby Avenue, the 300-400 blocks of North Lexington Parkway and the 100 block of North Dale Street during that time.

Theft—Vehicles were stolen on the 300 block of Laurel Avenue on May 28, on Milton Street and Portland Avenue on June 1, the 600 block of Ashland Avenue on June 1, the 400 block of Marshall Avenue on June 4 and the 200 block of Marshall on June 5.

Assault—An aggravated assault with a gun was reported on Selby Avenue and Dale Street at 8:22 p.m. Sunday, June 7.

Weapons—Around two dozen reports of gunfire were made in the Summit-University neighborhood between May 28-June 8.

West End

Robbery—A strong-arm robbery was reported on the 100 block of West Seventh Street at 12:30 p.m. Monday, June 8.

Burglary—More than a dozen cases of burglary and criminal damage to property were reported on the 200-1400 blocks of West Seventh Street between May 28-June 2. Burglaries also were reported on the 300 block of Sherman Street and the 800 block of Randolph Avenue during that time.

—Burglaries were reported on the 1000 block of West Seventh Street on June 4, on Irvine Park on June 4 and on the 300 block of South Exchange Street on June 10.

Theft—Vehicles were stolen on West Seventh Street and St. Clair Avenue on May 29, on Jefferson Avenue and Webster Street on June 1, the 400 block of Clifton Street on June 2 and the 1500 block of West Seventh on June 2.

Assault—An aggravated assault with a gun was reported on the 200 block of West Seventh Street at 1:24 p.m. Thursday, June 4.

Weapons—Gunfire was reported 17 times in the West End neighborhood between May 28-June 8.

Fire Calls

The following local calls were gathered from recent reports by the St. Paul Police Department and other sources.

Highland Park—A vehicle was reported on fire on the 2000 block of Shepard Road at 1:46 a.m. Sunday, May 17. Arson is suspected.

—An arson fire was reported in a structure on the 2000 block of Ford Parkway at 6:07 a.m. Tuesday, May 19.

Summit-University—Arson is suspected in a vehicle fire that was reported at 3:40 a.m. Wednesday, June 10, on the 1000 block of Carroll Avenue.

West End—An arson fire was reported on the 300 block of West Seventh Street at 3:48 p.m. Friday, June 5.

Names in the News

About 50 people from the Highland Park office of Coldwell Banker Realty turned out once again in the wee hours of June 14 to plant American flags on the boulevards of the major arterial streets of Highland in celebration of Flag Day. The real estate office has been marking Flag Day the same way for more than 30 years. Flag Day commemorates the adoption of the flag of the United States on June 14, 1777, by a resolution of the Second Continental Congress. The flag was designed by Francis Hopkinson, a Continental Congressman from New Jersey. In 1916 President Woodrow Wilson recognized the anniversary of that decree by establishing June 14 as Flag Day.

Alexandra Kotze of Merriam Park has been named Ramsey County's chief financial officer and director of finance. She began work on March 2, leading a team of 40 and overseeing an operating budget of \$1.5 billion. She succeeds Lee Mehrkens,

who served for 10 years prior to his retirement. Kotze had been the CFO of the Minnesota Department of Human Services since October 2013.

Judge Leonardo Castro has been elected to serve as the next chief judge of Ramsey County District Court. On July 1, he will assume responsibility from Chief Judge John Guthmann, who will have served two consecutive two-year terms. Castro, who is an adjunct professor at the University of St. Thomas School of Law, is believed to be the first Hispanic judicial district chief judge in Minnesota. He was chosen to serve as assistant chief judge from May 13-June 30 following Judge Jennifer Frisch's appointment to the Minnesota Court of Appeals. Judge Sara Grewing, a former St. Paul city attorney, will take over as assistant chief judge on July 1 when Castro moves up to chief judge.

Stuart Mednick has been re-elected as commander of Jewish War Veterans Post 354, which meets at the St. Paul Jewish Community Center. Lou Michaels is serving as the JWV department commander of Minnesota. The installation of officers for JWV Posts 354, 162 and 331 and auxiliary will be held on July 19 at the Arcade-Phalen Legion Post 577, 1129 Arcade St.

The Arbor Day Foundation has a book that helps people identify trees in a simple, step-by-step process. The book, *What Tree Is That?*, is available for a \$5 donation. It is a fun, easy-to-use tree identification guide that features hand-drawn botanical illustrations highlighting the distinctive characteristics of many tree species. To obtain the full color guide, visit arbor.org or send your name, address, and \$5 for each guide to: *What Tree Is That?*, Arbor Day Foundation, 100 Arbor Ave., Nebraska City, NE 68410.

ON THE TOWN

Soft reopening

Restaurant patrons embrace return of sit-down service—outdoors anyway

BY CAROLYN WALKUP

Spray bottles of disinfectant and bleach sit on the bar next to the beer taps. Uniformed bartenders and wait staff are clad in facemasks of various styles and colors. Old recordings of NBA basketball games, with the bleachers full of fans, stream from wide-screen TVs on the wall.

This was the new normal in eating and drinking establishments across the *Villager* area in the days following Governor Tim Walz's relaxation of restrictions on indoor

dining and drinking in Minnesota's bars and restaurants. Last week during happy hour at Bennett's Chop & Railhouse, 1305 W. Seventh St., about a dozen patrons spaced themselves around the bar, leaving plenty of empty stools as the new law requires to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Several people, apparently Bennett's regulars, greeted each other with smiles but without the usual handshakes.

The temperature was 90 degrees outside, so the air conditioning made Bennett's ultra-clean bar a welcome retreat for enjoying a drink or two along with a serving of meatloaf or walleye sliders. Business at Bennett's during the previous weekend—the first one with indoor dining—was nearly nonexistent, according to the manager. Many of Bennett's vendors had trouble early on providing the usual supply of foods and beverages, which they had cut back on when the restaurant was limited to takeout only.

Further down West Seventh, Tom Reid's Hockey City Pub has been filling its 50 patio seats, but few patrons are venturing inside where another 80 seats are available, according to general manager Kathy Gosiger. Patrons are enthusiastic about being able to eat out again, she said, but the lack of televised sports is "really hurting" the business, she said. Tom Reid's has a new limited menu, which has helped to hold down labor costs. Gosiger expects business to pick up once professional hockey and other live sports return.

Across the street from Tom Reid's, Patrick McGovern's Pub is holding its own with a total of 400 seats indoors and outdoors under the state's current mandate of 50 percent capacity. Owner Patrick Boemer reports sales running about \$600,000 behind last year at this time.

"I was concerned about what kind of re-

sponse we'd get when we reopened," Boemer said. "We've been pleasantly surprised. The majority of our employees are back to work. The only thing missing is the Xcel Energy Center business."

Boemer installed a brick-paved patio with a retractable roof over a former parking lot 16 years ago. "That has been the best extension of my business," he said. He recently added more outdoor seating in the back of the building over another former parking lot.

W.A.Frost at the corner of Selby and Western avenues has reopened with a limited small

plates and beverage menu. Known for its flower-filled garden patio in season, it has reduced its hours from 3-8:30 p.m. daily. Owners John and Stephanie Laitala Rupp could not be reached for comment; however, a recorded phone message informs patrons that they must make a reservation and secure it with a credit card charge of \$25.

Francois Paradeise, general manager of French Meadow Bakery and Cafe, 1662 Grand Ave., outlined

the challenges of running a restaurant in the year of COVID-19. One of the more difficult problems has been finding a place indoors where customers would like to sit, he said.

The restaurant, which has become a destination for vegetarians and others who crave organic and locally produced food, has a quiet patio in back that seats about 40. The patio and the few tables on the sidewalk in front are customer favorites in nice weather, Paradeise

Paradeise estimates that his business is down about 50 percent this month, although that is better than the 80 percent drop he was experiencing with takeout only before the governor allowed outdoor dining beginning June 1.



Haley Pedersen, Dan Whelan and pooch Star enjoyed dinner on the sidewalk cafe outside Bennett's Chop & Railhouse during happy hour on the evening of June 19. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

said, but problems arise when it rains.

Paradeise estimates that his business is down about 50 percent this month, although that is better than the 80 percent drop he was experiencing with takeout only before the governor allowed outdoor dining beginning June 1.

Some French Meadow patrons have asked Paradeise why he does not lower menu prices in hopes of attracting more business. To that, he responds, "If you find a landlord that will

give me free rent, let me know." Many of his costs are fixed, he reminds them.

The managers of other Grand Avenue restaurants report similar experiences. It seems everybody wants to sit outdoors in the summer. Among the restaurants faced with this dilemma are Iron Ranger, Colossal Cafe and Dixie's on Grand.

Dixie's and the adjacent Emmett's Public House share some of the same owners, and to reduce labor costs they have closed Emmett's kitchen and moved some of its favorite dishes to Dixie's menu, according to partner John Wolf. Wolf has moved tables and chairs from Emmett's sidewalk cafe to Dixie's parking lot to expand his outdoor seating. While business has improved from when Dixie's could do only takeout, "it's still not enough," Wolf said. "We operate on such small margins."

Highland Bakery and Cafe, 2012 Ford Pkwy., has no outdoor seating and is experiencing extremely slow business indoors, according to owner Deb Narusiewicz. To reduce costs, the restaurant is now open for breakfast and lunch only. Narusiewicz remodeled the cafe late last year with improved ventilation and air filtration and is following all of the rules for safe indoor dining.

"I'm doing everything I can to make people feel comfortable," she said. Still, she added, the future looks "scary."



Bennett's Chop & Railhouse co-owner Meghan Bennett confers with servers Cory Bonte and Grace Forster as business picked up during happy hour on June 19.

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ON THE TOWN *Briefly*

Theater

Sweetland: The Musical is being streamed online through June 25 by the History Theatre. Written by Perrin Post and Laurie Flanigan Hegge with music by Dina Maccabee and choreography by Joe Chvala, the prerecorded production tells of a German woman who immigrates to America to marry a bachelor farmer sight unseen in the years following World War I. It is based on a film by that name by Ali Selim and Will Weaver's short story "A Gravestone Made of Wheat." For tickets to the streaming, visit historytheatre.org.

Theater Thursday, free video replays of historical dramas produced at Landmark Center in previous years, may be viewed on Thursdays, June 25 and July 2. The plays feature prominent members of the Twin Cities legal community in historical roles. A different production is posted each week. Visit landmarkcenter.org.

Exhibits

The Minnesota Museum of American Art is offering online tours through its M at Home page at mmaa.org. Among the current offerings are "A Choice of Weapons: Honor and Dignity," featuring the photographs of Jamel Shabazz and the late Gordon Parks; and "Gordon Parks: A Homecoming," featuring the work of the former staff photographer for the African American-owned Twin Cities newspapers the *St. Paul Recorder* and the *Minneapolis Spokesman*.

Twenty-nine artists who recently earned bachelor's degrees in the Department of Art at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities are exhibiting their works online through March 31, 2021. Among the media are animation, ceramics, drawing, mixed-media, painting, photography, sculpture and game design. Visit umnart-here29.com.

The AZ Gallery, located in Suite 130 of the Northern Warehouse Building, 308 Prince St. has reopened to the public from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. All members have new work on display. Social distancing and the wearing of facemasks are required in the gallery. Surfaces are also being cleaned between each shift for the safety of guests and staff. A virtual art show is also available. Visit theazgallery.org.



Clay Man Soo and Alessandra Bongiardina star in Park Square Theatre's 2015 production of *Romeo and Juliet*. The Shakespearean tragedy about a love between teens from opposite sides of an age-old family feud is available for streaming through June 30. To get the password to stream the video online, email education@parksquaretheatre.org. PHOTO BY FLOREDELINO LAGUNDINO

"Public Art: The Permanent Collection of Landmark Center" is on view now through August 8 at landmarkcenter.org. Each week another piece from Landmark Center's extensive collection will be added to the website along with links to learn more about the artists, their art forms and how to create art in the spirit of these artists.

Books

Indian immigrant author Alka Joshi will discuss her new novel, *The Henna Artist*, in a free online program at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 24. The free event is sponsored by SubText Books, 6 W. Fifth St. To register to receive the link, call 651-493-2791 or visit subtextbooks.com.

Minnesota's Geologist: The Life of Newton Horace Winchell will be discussed by its author, Sue Leaf, in free online programs at 7 p.m. Thursday, June 25 (to access the link, visit zenithbookstore.com); and at 7 p.m. Monday, July 6 (to access the link, visit nextchapterbooksellers.com).

"Writing the Hard Books for Hard Times" will be discussed by St. Paul author Kao Kalia Yang and Minneapolis author John Coy at 2

p.m. Thursday, June 25, in a virtual program sponsored by the Loft Literary Center. Yang will read from her new children's book, *The Shared Room*, in which a family struggles to move forward following the loss of a child. Coy will read from his book, *If We Were Gone*, which imagines a world without people. The cost for the hour-long program is \$10 or whatever you can afford. Visit loft.org/events/upcoming-events.

St. Paul author Eric Holthaus will discuss his new book, *The Future Earth: A Radical Vision for What's Possible in the Age of Warming*, in an online Zoom program at 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 30. The free program is sponsored by Next Chapter Booksellers, 38 S. Snelling Ave. To register for the link, visit nextchapterbooksellers.com or call 651-225-8989 for more information.

Music

The Minnesota Opera is offering a series of past performances as audio recordings that can be streamed online. The schedule includes Wagner's *Das Rheingold* now through June 28; Paul Moravec and Mark Campbell's *The Shining*, based on the

novel by Stephen King, now through July 5; Massenet's sensual and melodic *Thais*, now through July 12; Joel Puckett and Eric Simonson's *The Fix*, an epic tale set against the backdrop of America's favorite pastime, now through July 19; and Mozart's timeless comedy of errors, *The Marriage of Figaro*, from July 11-26. Visit mnopera.org.

Film

The Science Museum of Minnesota is temporarily closed due to the coronavirus pandemic, but several Omnitheater films are available for streaming. Visit smm.org/omnifest/ and sit back and enjoy a big-screen adventure at home. The choices include *America's Musical Journey*; *Coral Reef Adventure*; *Dinosaurs Alive!*; *Dolphins*; *Dream Big: Engineering Our World*; *The Living Sea*; *Mummies: Secrets of the Pharaohs*; *National Parks Adventure*; and *Wild Ocean*. A few of the films require payment.

Et cetera

Union Depot's Train Days event has moved online this year. The virtual experience will feature a six-part video miniseries highlighting memories of St. Paul's magnificent train station, the history of locomotives, interviews with railroading experts and more. The first two videos are now available at uniondepot.org/traindays. There, artists of all ages may register for a coloring contest and the chance to win up to \$250 in prizes.

"2020 Elections: Protected or Infected?" will be presented by the League of Women Voters St. Paul from 6:30-8 p.m. Tuesday, June 30, on the league's Facebook page as well as the St. Paul Neighborhood Network's cable television Channel 19. The free program will address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on Minnesota's 2020 primary and general elections and current legislation regarding voting and elections. Nick Harper, civic engagement director for the League of Women Voters Minnesota, and Junior Alvados of Minnesota Voice, a coalition of nonprofit organizations working for permanent changes in racial, social and economic justice by increasing civic engagement and voter participation across the state, will speak. Registration is required to participate in the program. Visit lwvsp.org.



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SPORTS



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

Bremer has literary fix for Twins fans

As this column was being written, it was looking more and more likely that there won't be a Major League Baseball season in town this year. Oh, we'll still make room for baseball this summer—it just likely won't be at Target Field. It's easy to lay the blame at the feet of MLB commissioner Rob Manfred, but it takes two to tangle. And the fact is that the players have been just as inconsistent in their stance as Manfred. As they used to say on "The People's Court," the two sides are at loggerheads.

In this era of social media, it's easy to be out of sight, out of mind. However, for Twins' fans there's another way to stay connected to their team. For three-plus decades, Dick Bremer has been their television link to the team. Through good years and bad, he's been the play-by-play announcer, working alongside a dizzying total of 20 colleagues.

Bremer discusses all that and a lot more in a book that recently came out titled, "Game Used: My Life In Stitches with the Minnesota Twins."

Bremer comes from an old-school background. He started out on the radio in St. Cloud, worked his way through Iowa and first came to local attention while working at then WTCN-TV (now KARE). "I wrote my own scripts for TV," he recalled. "I wanted them to be my words."

With the help of local author Jim Burton, Bremer weaves a narrative in 108 chapters—one for each stitch in a baseball. As with just about every announcer who goes that route, there are great tales of small-town radio and television adventures. They range from sticking a sock over a microphone to block out the noise of the wind during a St. Cloud State football game from the roof of the press box to talking his way out of a ticket for running a red light to get a tape to the Cedar Rapids TV station in time for that night's sportscast.

Bremer takes us through several twists and turns at Channel 11, which was just starting to make inroads in the Twin Cities television sports market. Cable TV came along in the early '80s. In those days, over-the-air TV stations usually did 40-50 games. The advent of Spectrum Sports offered the possibility for more telecasts with somebody other than the KMSP pair of Bob Kurtz and Ted Robinson. Bremer paired up with Pat Hughes that first year. When Hughes moved to the Milwaukee Brewers radio booth the next season, Harmon Killebrew was brought in to do the color commentary.

Bremer's tales of the Twins range from the first game he attended as a kid—a 1964 win over Boston—to a night in June 1967 when a storm swept over Met Stadium, nearly flooding the place and damaging the light poles and scoreboard.

Baseball announcers have a different connection with their audience than do other sports announcers. To last as long as Bremer has meant adjusting to how the game is presented.

"When I started out, there wasn't as much information available as we have now," he said. "All you could do was read the boxscores from the night before, talk to some folks around the batting cage, check out the updated stats and look at a couple of pages of notes. If I had a game today, I probably would've already spent an hour on the Internet," said Bremer during our conversation at 10:15 a.m.

The modern fan demands a lot more of announcers. "The viewers can see the stats for themselves," Bremer said. "What they want is the inside stuff. The challenge is using the analytics and then explaining what they mean."

The lengthy baseball season is such that the audience often forges a bond of sorts with the announcers. After doing games here for so long, one might think the audience knows the announcers well. Bremer's book often surprises in this regard, not the least of which is the discovery that Bremer's father was a Lutheran pastor who specialized in working with deaf congregates. "He wasn't deaf himself," Bremer said. "That was just who he worked with."

Like a lot of fans, Bremer was caught off-guard by the sudden halt to the 2020 baseball season. "Each year, we have an annual meeting of the local baseball play-by-play guys," he said. "A lot of them always say they can't believe how short

WRIGHT CALL ►20



Mendota Heights Mayor Neil Garlock is shown with the plaque dedicated to Officer Scott Patrick in the Village at Mendota Heights, where the 15th annual Memorial 5K Run/Walk begins and ends.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Keeping the torch burning: 15th annual 5K honors fallen officer, aids Special Olympics

BY BILL WAGNER

Sharon Bruestle is not one to let age slow her down. The 72-year-old Mendota resident said she has lost count of the times she has won the Officer Scott Patrick Memorial 5K Run/Walk in the 50-and-older category. She has only missed one of the races in the event's 15-year history when she had to sit it out with a bad leg.

"It's right in my backyard practically and it's for a good cause," said Bruestle, who works as a rental property manager. "I try to run three or four times a week. I'm too impatient to walk."

Mendota Heights Mayor Neil Garlock, the longtime race director, agreed with that assessment. "She's a full-blown runner," he said. "She's not a walker."

The event is named for the Mendota Heights police officer who was shot to death during a traffic stop six years ago. This year's 5K is scheduled for 9 a.m. Saturday, July 11, beginning and ending at the Officer Patrick memorial at the intersection of Main and Market streets in the Village at Mendota Heights.

Although the event is promoted as

a full day's worth of fun for all, the big winners will be the more than 8,200 athletes involved in Special Olympics Minnesota. All proceeds raised from the event will help provide them with year-round training and competition.

Like a lot of athletic events, this year's 5K had to be rescheduled due to the coronavirus pandemic. Now organizers are planning to hold it by staggering start times for the runners and walkers to promote social distancing and safety for all.

The race was originally called the Mendota Heights Gateway 5K, but was changed to memorialize the fallen officer. Garlock, who served with Patrick on the Mendota Heights Police Department, said remembering his comrade and supporting the Special Olympics make the run/walk a worthwhile and joyful day.

"Scott was very low-key," Garlock said, "but he'd really feel good if he were here to see this. He'd feel honored."

The 47-year-old Patrick was the most senior officer in the department with 19 years of service to the city when he was killed by Brian Fitch Sr. in July 2014 on

Dodd Road in West St. Paul. Fitch, 39, was arrested after a massive manhunt and gunfight with police.

Patrick was the city's first police officer to be killed in the line of duty. He is survived by his wife, Michelle, a longtime Mendota Heights resident who Garlock said attends the race every year. He also is survived by daughters Erin and Amy. Amy, their youngest, was recently sworn in as a Mendota Heights firefighter.

Garlock said the event draws some 400 participants and raises between \$10,000-\$15,000 annually. Gateway Bank is the main sponsor, along with Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union.

Awards are given for the top three male and female runners in these categories: 19 and younger, 20-49 (open division) and 50 and older (master division). This year, winners will be announced on social media and the city's website.

Registration is \$25 by July 10 and \$30 on race day. Prizes will be drawn later on race day and gifts will be mailed to the winners, where possible. For more information or to register, visit tinyurl.com/yc7y6qxc.

Mac/UST hoop coaches named among DIII best

BY DAVE WRIGHT

They work just a mile apart. One of them has coached a national championship team and boasts the highest winning percentage of any current Division III men's college basketball coach. The other has taken on the task of rebuilding a college basketball program from the bottom up.

But Abe Woldelessie, the head coach at Macalester College, and Johnny Tauer, the head coach at the University of St. Thomas, have one thing in common. Both were recently named among the Top 50 Impactful Coaches in Division III Men's Basketball by Silver Waves Media.

Woldelessie, a St. Thomas Academy graduate, played two years for Macal-

ester after transferring from UST. After serving as an assistant coach out East for a decade, he returned home two years ago to take over a Mac program that hasn't had a winning season since 2003-04.

"He's an outstanding person," Tauer said of his coaching rival. "Any program that rebuilds has to go in steps. The metrics are different. He's in a great situation there."

The Scots finished 7-18 during the first season with Woldelessie at the helm and upped that to 8-17 last season. However, he looks at different numbers to measure progress.

"Look how much more competitive we were than the year before," Woldelessie said. That included a win over

Hamline for the first time since 2014, a win over Gustavus Adolphus and a sweep of Concordia.

Macalester athletic director Donnie Brooks also sees the progress being made. "By the end of the season, they weren't just competing," he said. "Abe has installed a strong work ethic in them."

With the top five scorers returning—forward Jackson Henningfield is one of the best in the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC)—and seven newcomers, Woldelessie is hoping to use a word that hasn't been heard for a while around Robertson Center—depth.

For a role model on building up a program, Woldelessie looks at Swarth-

MAC/UST HOOP COACHES ►20

Tommies still waiting for decision on making jump to Division I

By Dave Wright

The University of St. Thomas will have to wait until next year to learn whether it can move its athletic programs from Division III to Division I. UST officials were hoping to get an immediate clearance for the move on June 17. The NCAA Division I Council received a proposal that day to allow the move, but decided to schedule the vote for next April. Meanwhile, it indicated it would be “receptive” to a request from St. Thomas to push the time up a bit.

In 2011, the NCAA outlawed a provision that would allow schools to make the two-level jump that St. Thomas is seeking. A Division III school typically needs to spend at least five years in Division II, where partial scholarships are allowed, before even being considered to move up to the top rung. The current format makes Division III schools wait a dozen years for the entire process to be completed.

While several colleges have memberships in sports conferences at all three levels of competition, St. Thomas would be the first school in NCAA history ever granted the ability to make the complete jump at once.

“We’ll immediately begin work with (Summit League) commissioner Tom Douple and

the NCAA to formally submit our waiver request,” said Phil Esten, St. Thomas vice president and director of athletics. “While I know all of us are anxiously awaiting definitive word on where we’ll be competing starting with the 2021-22 season, we must remain patient for just a little while longer.”

The upcoming 2020-21 athletic season is St. Thomas’ last in the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference. In May 2019, the conference voted the Tommies out, citing the lack of competitive parity as its main concern. In other words, St. Thomas’ sports programs were perceived as too strong relative to the rest of the teams in the conference.

Should the NCAA sign off on the leap, St. Thomas has a deal in place to join the Division I Summit League for athletics. The Summit, which recently rejected Augustana’s bid to join its ranks, currently has nine members, including North Dakota, North Dakota State, South Dakota and South Dakota State. However, the Summit League does not have football or hockey programs.

As a result, St. Thomas would need to spread its wings. For football, it is looking at the non-scholarship Pioneer League. That league currently has nine members spread out all over the country, ranging from Kentucky to

California. Jacksonville pulled the plug on its football program last December, which created an opening in the league.

St. Thomas also would need a conference for hockey. The Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA) will be undergoing a major reshuffling in 2020-21. Seven of its 10 men’s programs are leaving after the upcoming season to join the Central Collegiate Hockey Association (CCHA), which recently hired former Gopher hockey coach Don Lucia as its commissioner. Lucia has said that the CCHA currently has seven members to start play in 2021-22 and that St. Thomas would be a “nice candidate” for the new league.

The women’s WCHA is one of the best hockey leagues in the country and has seven members, including five based in Minnesota. Adding St. Thomas would be an easy fit.

However, one drawback to Division I hockey for St. Thomas is that its current home ice, St. Thomas Arena in Mendota Heights, has a seating capacity of only 1,100. There aren’t many other options available for UST among the arenas around town.

Hockey is not the only sport in which St. Thomas would likely have to make moves regarding a place to play if it jumps to Division I. Its volleyball and basketball teams play at

the Anderson Athletic Complex, which has about 2,000 seats and some standing room. O’Shaughnessy Stadium, the Tommies’ football home for the last 75 years, has 5,000 seats but considerable space for spectators who are willing to stand.

The South Field, located on the corner of Cretin and Grand avenues, is where St. Thomas plays soccer and softball. It has a capacity for about 500 spectators, but there’s standing room for more. Baseball has been played on the North Field for as long as anybody can remember. A small bleacher is located behind home plate and there’s some room to stand down the base lines.

St. Thomas currently has no outdoor home courts for tennis. All of that will come into play when making a move such as this.

There are other issues as well that the NCAA will need to be satisfied with before approving St. Thomas’ jump. For example, St. Thomas will have to increase its athletic budgets, hire more assistant coaches, and hire more staff in its media relations department to compete at the Division I level.

So there’s a lot that still needs doing before the NCAA signs off on St. Thomas’ application. This was just one hurdle down, with many more to follow.



Johnny Tauer of the University of St. Thomas (shown at left during a game at U.S. Bank Stadium in 2018 in a photo by Liam Doyle) and Abe Woldeslassie of Macalester College (at home last December in a photo by Alex Conover) were named among the Top 50 Impactful Coaches in Division III Men’s Basketball.

19◀ MAC/UST HOOP COACHES

more College in Pennsylvania. Landry Kosmalski, the head coach there, started out with the same records Woldeslassie has. However, by his fourth season, Swarthmore went 22-8. This past winter, that team went 28-1 and was one of the favorites for the Division III title before the NCAA brought things to a screeching halt because of the coronavirus pandemic.

“Some people look at Mac and say it’s too hard academically,” Woldeslassie said. “We can’t use that as a crutch. We need to embrace it and use it to our advantage.”

Tauer has extended the tradition of his pre-

decessor, Steve Fritz, and has kept St. Thomas as one of the top Division III programs in the country. The Tommies, ranked fourth in the nation in one poll, were 26-3 overall and headed for a Sweet 16 date at St. John’s on March 14 when their season was derailed.

Though telling his players was hard to do, Tauer reminded them of two positives. The Tommies’ season ended with a big 73-70 win at No. 8 Wisconsin-Platteville. It was the first time in 26 years that they had gained consecutive berths in the Sweet 16.

“Part of the job is to embrace the joy,” Tauer said. “I hope the memory of the win at Platteville sticks with them for a long time to come.”

With a national championship in 2016 and a winning percentage of over .800, Tauer has plenty of fond memories as a head coach at St. Thomas. He also was an assistant coach on a national championship team there and had a terrific playing career with the Tommies that included UST’s first Final Four trip.

In addition to coaching, Tauer is a tenured psychology professor at St. Thomas who studies the factors that affect athletic and academic motivation. That background came into play as he helped his players work their way through the sudden end of their season. For the team’s four seniors, it was an abrupt finish to their college basketball careers.

“What they went through (at the end) was something nobody could be prepared for,” Tauer said. “You try to train their bodies and their minds. You see the growth during the year. It turned out to be a special season.”

Tauer now has to deal with more than just the unusual end to the past season. The 2020-21 school year will be the last one for St. Thomas in the MIAC. While there is great hope that the NCAA will let the Tommies make the rare leap from Division III to Division I for the following season (see the story at the top of this page), nobody knows for sure what the future holds.

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the off-season is. I’ve always been the opposite. I can’t believe how long it is. My appreciation for the game grows each year.”

That love for the game—and his craft—is part of what will draw Bremer back to the ballpark whenever MLB restarts. He also looks forward to teaming up with such analysts as Bert Blyleven, Jack Morris, Justin Morneau and Roy Smalley when he gets back to work.

“They all bring different perspectives,” Bremer said. “It’s a matter of getting your comfort level established. What amazed me is how Justin (who had no prior television experience) adjusted to being on the air.”

Until MLB and the players figure it out, Bremer will be talking about his book. “Tony Oliva said it was the first book he read cover to cover,” Bremer said. “My high school and college English teachers said they liked it, too.”

Until we can once again see games on the field, inside stories about games from the past will have to do.

Highland golf gets back to a type of normal

Two months after Governor Tim Walz declared it was safe to go back to playing golf, the Highland National 18-hole course is rounding into form. Meanwhile, the Highland 9-Hole officially opened for business on June 15. Club pro John Shimpach said golfers have already adjusted to the new normal. “It’s going well,” he said. “We’re continually adjusting, but folks understand.”

The Highland National clubhouse is still not open, but a stationary beverage stand has now been added near the 1st and 10th tees. Gas carts are back on the course and portable bathrooms are being deployed. One thing that players apparently are still adjusting to is how to make reservations online with a credit card.

This is prime time for charity and business golf tournaments, but shotgun starts are still off the table. “They just have to tee off following each other,” Shimpach said.

Assembling in large groups in close quarters still violates

the governor’s dictum, but it’s a small price to pay for four hours or so of golf.

Saints to play ball—just not here

The St. Paul Saints will play baseball this summer, though we may not be able to see it in person. The Saints recently announced a 60-game schedule that will run from July 3 through September 10. However, the defending American Association champs will not be at CHS Field. The governor’s edict limiting outdoor gatherings put the kibosh on that.

As a result, the Saints are currently slated to play all of their games in either Sioux Falls, Milwaukee or Fargo. The team does have a plan in place for seating fans with proper social distancing for games at CHS if the restrictions change. But for now, those fans will have to either travel or follow the team on radio.

Dave Wright can be reached at dwright53@msn.com.

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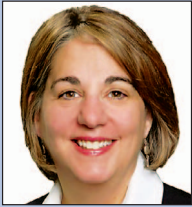
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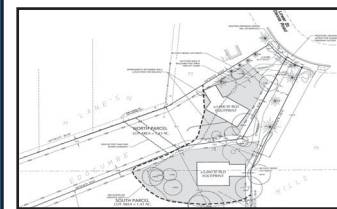
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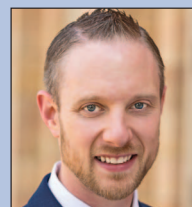
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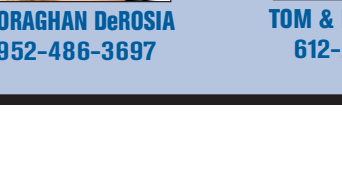
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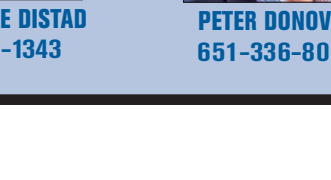
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