

# VILLAGER

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## Police chief touts his department's efforts at reform

Asks council to consult crime victims before any defunding

By JANE MCCLURE

While Minneapolis and other cities consider defunding their police departments, St. Paul is implementing several new public safety programs and policies that address some of the same reforms for which public safety activists are calling, according to St. Paul Police Chief Todd Axtell.

Axtell outlined those measures in a virtual policy session with the St. Paul City Council on June 25. He acknowledged that the May 25 death of George Floyd while in the custody of Minneapolis police sent shock waves throughout the Twin Cities and sparked a robust debate over the role of law enforcement. However, he asked the City Council to consider what the victims of crime might think of demands to defund the police.

As of July 1, St. Paul had had 17 homicides in 2020, five more than in the first six months of 2019. A recent spate of car-jackings and strong-arm robberies have left people shaken. One huge challenge St. Paul faces is the increase in gun violence, according to Axtell. Police calls about shots fired are up 130 percent, he said, and in two instances last month—one on the East Side and one in Frogtown—police officers were shot at. Another challenge was the rioting in the wake of Floyd's death, with scores of buildings across the city being

POLICE REFORM IN ST. PAUL ▶2



Former dean Dr. Yohuru Williams is hoping to humbly drive lasting reform as the founding director of the University of St. Thomas' new Racial Justice Initiative. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

## Williams answers call to foster racial justice

Highland scholar hopes to spark crucial conversations for change

By ANNE MURPHY

As he takes his new position at the University of St. Thomas, Highland Park resident, author and scholar Dr. Yohuru Williams has much on his mind. Uppermost is the idea that we all must live humbly for justice. It comes, he said, from a favorite quote of his found in J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*: "The mark of the immature man is that he wants to die nobly for a cause, while the mark of the mature man is that he wants to live humbly for one."

Previously dean of St. Thomas' College of Arts and Sciences, Williams started work this month as the founding director of the university's new Racial Justice Initiative. The brainchild of Williams and St. Thomas

president Dr. Julie Sullivan as well as others, the initiative will encompass research, public engagement and partnerships to address racial justice. There will be an external and internal focus, including students who will be equipped to act as agents for change while on campus as well as following graduation.

Before the death of George Floyd, Williams was planning to head back to the East Coast, where he grew up, to take a position at St. John's University in New York City. However, the tragic killing of Floyd on May 25 became a moment of clarity for Williams about St. Thomas' mission—and his own.

"A lot of people had a vitriolic reaction to George Floyd's murder," Williams said. "It really calls on us to think about and talk about what can make the greatest impact."

For Sullivan and Williams that meant creating the new initiative and his acceptance of the new position

RACIAL JUSTICE ▶7

## St. Paul police are given the boot as resource officers in schools

School Board votes to form Climate and Safety Groups as an alternative to police

By CASEY EK

The St. Paul School Board voted on June 23 to cut its ties with the St. Paul Police Department, ending the decades-old practice of employing St. Paul cops as school resource officers in the St. Paul Public Schools' seven high schools. The vote was 5-1, with board member John Brodrick dissenting. It came just a week before the district's

current contract with the police department was to expire.

Instead of school resource officers, the district will create what it calls School Climate and Safety Groups to develop building-specific climate and safety plans that address the conditions in each school. The groups will work with a new School Climate and Safety Implementation Committee made up of district and school administrators, staff bargaining units, students and up to two School Board members. An interim School Climate and Safety plan will be considered by the School Board at its meeting on August 18.

The school district received more than 1,000 emails regarding its contract with the St. Paul Police

Department, according to Superintendent Joseph Gothard. Most of the emails urged the district to end the school resource officer program and divert the funds to other district programs, he said. Most of the emails came from St. Paul residents, including current and former students, he said, but other emails came from elsewhere in Minnesota and even out of state.

The school district had budgeted \$775,000 for its seven school resource officers in the 2019-20 school year. However, the closing of the schools and the implementation of distance learning this spring due to the coronavirus pandemic reduced

POLICE IN SCHOOLS ▶2

### CITY BEAT

BZA grants some variances, denies others for 2 Ford site projects ▶5

### MIGRATORY ROYALTY



Venture works to save stately monarch ▶6

### BIG SCREEN IS BACK

Grandview and Highland theatres reopen with new safeguards ▶10

### ON THE TOWN



A climate for change ▶13

### SPORTS



It's a whole new ballgame for local teams this summer ▶15

VIEWPOINT.....8  
 NEWS BRIEFS..... 11  
 CRIME REPORT ..... 12  
 ARTS CALENDAR ..... 14  
 DISTRICT COUNCILS..... 16  
 CLASSIFIEDS ..... 17

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**14 POLICE IN SCHOOLS**

those costs to \$550,000. The district paid \$700,000 for the seven officers in the 2018-19 school year and \$884,499 for nine officers in the 2016-17 school year.

The program came under fire in 2016 when school resource officer Bill Kraus was accused of using excessive force in arresting 19-year-old Darion Bell, who was reportedly trespassing at Central High School. The district then instituted a host of changes aimed at improving the program.

Gothard acknowledged that the proposed School Safety and Climate program may or may not be more costly than the school resource officers. "Some of the recommendations that come to us could be a reinvestment, an investment of even more dollars in some of this work," he said. "I'm not going into this thinking we have a fixed amount to work with. I'm going into this thinking we have a blank slate for us to start with for what we need to make it better."

According to School Board member Chauntyll Allen, the costs of the new program will be worth the outcome. The decision to cut the school district's ties with the St. Paul Police was a long time coming, she said. The presence of the police had a negative impact on the achievement of students of color, she added.

"When somebody is traumatized there is



School resource officer Jermaine Davis made the rounds at Central High School in February 2017, greeting students along the way. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

no learning going on," Allen said. "If we're putting the traumatic person or the traumatic situation inside the school, how do we expect to increase achievement? We're struggling in those areas, especially with our black and brown kids."

Allen applauded the board members who joined her in voting to end the contract with the police, saying they were "on the right side of history. Overall, our students are going to

be safer, they're going to feel safer."

The School Board vote runs counter to the position of the district's seven high school principals, who all supported renewing the contract with the St. Paul Police Department. Brodrick argued that the school resource officers often served as mentors for the high school students. He also cited a 2019 Minnesota Student Survey administered by the state Department of Education, which found

that 94 percent of the 11th-grade students surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that having a police officer in their school was a good idea.

However, Como Park High School 11th-grader Kalid Ali told the School Board on June 17 that many of his classmates feel unsafe in the presence of the resource officers. "Nobody sees an officer as a positive tool for his life or his future," Ali said. "If you see an officer with a gun, it's a threat that you might be the next one on his hit list."

Board member Zuki Ellis praised the performance of the individual police officers who served as resource officers, but said she did not believe police belong in the schools.

Board member Jessica Kopp said the vote to end the resource officer program is a step toward reaching the district's goals for equity in the schools. "But it would be a mistake to think this is the only thing we need to do," Kopp said.

The School Board's decision to cut ties with the police department represents a growing trend of governmental institutions pulling back from their collaborations with law enforcement amid protests over the death of George Floyd on May 25 while in the custody of four Minneapolis police officers. On June 2, the Minneapolis Public Schools ended its decades-old contract with the Minneapolis Police Department. The Minneapolis Park Board has done the same.

**14 POLICE REFORM IN ST. PAUL**

vandalized, looted or burned. Axtell said his officers were treated during the civil unrest in ways that were "dehumanizing."

City Council president Amy Brendmoen asked if the violence in the wake of Floyd's death had skewed crime statistics upward.

Axtell responded that with few exceptions, the incidence of most crimes was already up in 2020. Among those were 889 residential and commercial burglaries, 86 sexual assaults, 421 aggravated assaults, 297 robberies, 928 shots fired and 2,375 domestic assaults. St. Paul has had more than 34,000 911 calls this year, Axtell said, and robberies are up 30 percent over 2019.

City Council members Mitra Jalali and Nelsie Yang have supported calls for defunding the police. They said they appreciated the discussion with Axtell, but simply discussing reform is not enough. Axtell said any discussion of defunding the police needs to include St. Paul residents, especially crime victims.

Ward 7 City Council member Jane Prince agreed. "When we're talking about potential cuts to our police department, we really do

*City Council members asked Axtell and his officers to continue working to bridge the divide between the police and people of color.*

need to speak to the people who live in areas where they are victimized at much higher rates than other parts of the city," she said.

Axtell discussed the many initiatives underway through the city's new Community First public safety program and other policies and procedures that have been implemented over the past few years. He described his department's efforts to increase transparency, including the four-year practice of posting race-related data with traffic incidents.

The St. Paul Police work every day to build trust with members of the community, Axtell said. He encouraged City Council members to ride along with police officers on patrol and attend officer training sessions to see what the job is like.

Council members asked Axtell and his officers to continue working to bridge the di-

vide between the police and people of color. Ward 2 City Council member Rebecca Noecker said she often hears from constituents of color who believe they are treated differently than whites. One woman told her of how her 11-year-old son has twice had the police draw guns on him, she said. Axtell urged citizens to let him know if they witness or hear of any incidents of officer misconduct.

St. Paul's Community First initiative includes expedited DNA testing, a new gun crimes intelligence center and efforts to increase youth employment, improve pedestrian safety, assign mental health professionals to accompany police on certain calls and employ new community ambassadors to work in the area of public safety.

The city has earmarked \$350,000 to create a new downtown center in 2020 where law enforcement, private security firms and social service agencies can share information and collaborate on issues. The St. Paul Downtown Alliance is petitioning property owners in the city's core to pay for an improvement district that would help fund the center, new community ambassadors and related programming.

The city's work to rewrite the police depart-

ment's K-9 and use-of-force policies were also cited by Axtell, as were efforts to diversify the department. The diversity of police department staff has increased 30 percent, according to the chief. That includes 68 officers of Asian, 40 officers of African-American and 29 officers of Hispanic descent.

St. Paul's was the first police department in Minnesota to ban "warrior training," a controversial method that is said to encourage officers to take violent action against suspects. St. Paul also trains police officers to be aware of implicit biases and to understand stereotypes and how they affect policing.

Axtell disputed contentions that St. Paul has the deadliest police department in the nation. St. Paul has had four fatal officer-involved shootings in the past four years. That compares to five in Minneapolis and 24 in St. Louis during that same period.

Public safety activists are also calling for police to reside in the cities where they serve. Currently, only 13.3 percent of St. Paul police officers live in the city. However, state law prohibits cities from imposing residency requirements on police. If he could, Axtell said, he would have all of his officers live in the city.





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**EQUAL HOUSING LENDER**

# Council amends new rules to protect tenants

## Change delays vote, requires all landlords to give 90-day notice of an impending sale

By JANE MCCLURE

The St. Paul City Council voted 5-2 on July 1 to approve a significant amendment to the controversial SAFE (Stable, Accessible, Fair and Equitable) Housing Tenant Protections Ordinance. As a result, the ordinance will not be acted on by the council until at least July 8.

The amendment extended the requirement on advance notice of an impending sale to all types of residential rental properties. Previous versions of the ordinance had exempted duplexes and single-family homes from the requirement. Under the amended ordinance, all owners of rented housing in the city will have to provide a 90-day advance notice to the city and to their tenants of an upcoming sale.

By including single-family homes and duplexes, some council members said the notice of sale could give tenants the chance to purchase the property.

Council member Chris Tolbert, who joined Jane Prince in voting against the amendment, raised concerns that the owners of smaller rental properties may not have followed the tenant protection debate as closely as landlords of larger-scale rental properties. Tolbert urged that landlord education be considered before the ordinance takes effect on March 1, 2021.

Prince agreed and questioned adopt-

ing such a change. "I'm just concerned that this is going into a level of analysis and detail that we haven't done," she said.

Council member Rebecca Noecker brought forward the amendment. She was joined in supporting it by Amy Brendmoen, Mitra Jalali, Dai Thao and Nelsie Yang. Brendmoen expressed concern about such a "dramatic change" coming so late in the ordinance adoption process, but said there was time for the city to educate landlords.

Council members had hoped to vote on the ordinance on June 24, but other amendments brought in at that time forced the vote's postponement.

The SAFE Housing ordinance makes significant changes to how St. Paul landlords are allowed to operate. It requires a "just cause" statement when a lease is not renewed, limits the use of credit and criminal history in screening tenants, and changes how past evictions are considered when a rental application is reviewed.

The just cause and criminal background checks raised the most red flags for landlords early on. Landlords would not be able to deny leasing to a prospective tenant if that person had a misdemeanor more than three years ago or a felony more than seven years ago. Renters could still be turned down if they were on the lifetime sexual offender registry, were convicted of distributing or manufacturing controlled substances, or had been convicted of murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, arson, assault or robbery.

The ordinance has been in the works for months, but the council's vote was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The

council received dozens of written comments on both sides of the issue. Twelve people spoke in favor of the ordinance on June 24, and 12 spoke in opposition.

Proponents contended that the changes will increase equity for renters and provide them with more protections. Landlords argued that the changes will add more cost and complexity to their work, and put other tenants at risk of living in the same building as people with criminal backgrounds.

Opponents of the ordinance raised concerns about the just cause provision, which would require landlords to provide written reasons why they are terminating a lease. And if new owners of affordable housing refuse to renew any leases without cause, they will be required to pay relocation costs for the tenants.

Looming over the debate of the ordinance has been the pandemic. Some small landlords said the new regulations would come at a time when they are losing tenants due to COVID-19. Advocates of the ordinance said the pandemic demands more protections as tenants who are out of work and unable to pay rent are threatened with eviction.

Many property owners have said their concerns have been ignored during the ordinance adoption process and that they fear it will put their other tenants in an unsafe position. The costs of paying for tenant relocation, fixing up damaged units and housing court fees would only drive up rental costs for tenants in the future, they said.

Renters and their advocates argued that the ordinance will protect low-income tenants and people of color. More than half of St. Paul residents are renters.

# St. Paul's 2021 brick-and-mortar budget takes shape

By JANE MCCLURE

St. Paul's Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) Committee has recommended approval of \$66.2 million for projects submitted by city departments. The decision came prior to a June 30 deadline and represents a \$665,000 increase over what was penciled in for city projects last year.

The recommendations are now in the hands of Mayor Melvin Carter, who will decide which ones to include in his 2021 city budget. Carter is expected to release his city operating and capital budgets in August. The City Council will take final action on those budgets by the end of the year.

The coronavirus pandemic has forced CIB Committee meetings online and has drastically changed what is typically an inclusive public review process. That worried some committee members, including West End resident Darren Tobolt.

Under the new CIB process, projects submitted by city departments are reviewed and selected in odd-numbered years. The projects are in a two-year cycle, with a second approval in even-numbered years. Requests from nonprofit community development corporations are also considered in odd-numbered years.

Earlier in June, Tobolt asked that a vote on the city department projects be delayed until more information could be received. That was done prior to the June 22 vote.

"Projects can change over a year," Tobolt said. "We need updates before we can act because we haven't seen these for months."

His main focus was on requests submitted by the Department of Public Works, including one to replace the eastbound Kellogg Boulevard bridge adjacent to the RiverCentre parking ramp. The city's 2020 state legislative agenda included seeking \$10 million for the bridge's replacement. However, the state funding request is in limbo since lawmakers did not pass a bonding bill during the June special session.

Tobolt and other committee members asked if it made sense to allocate CIB funds for the project when the state's share is uncertain. State lawmakers are expected to meet again in mid-July to take up the bonding bill and other matters.

The Kellogg bridge dates from 1936. St. Paul's proposed capital budget calls for spending \$2.5 million in city bonds, \$7 million in federal funds and \$2.7 million in Municipal-State Aid (MSA) funds on the project.

Committee members also raised concerns over the reconstruction of Wabasha Street between Fourth and Sixth streets at a cost of \$3 million in MSA dollars. Another \$750,000 in MSA funds would cover the cost of replacing traffic signals. Committee members wanted to ensure that the work included bike and pedestrian safety measures, as well as ties to the downtown bike loop.

Larger CIB projects recommended for funding citywide in 2021 include the replacement of Fire Station 7 on the city's East Side, the creation of a multi-use trail on Johnson Parkway, improvements to McMurray Fields, and work on the Rice Recreation Center and Hayden Heights Library.

Local projects recommended for CIB

funding include \$61,000 in city and \$61,000 in county dollars for sidewalks on the north side of Randolph Avenue between Toronto Street and Shepard Road. The project is intended to fill a gap in sidewalks on the West End.

Traffic signals on Snelling Avenue and Lexington Parkway are also slated for improvements. The \$2.5 million cost would be covered by a mix of federal, county and MSA dollars.

Also recommended for 2021 is \$1 million in MSA funds toward the ongoing work to realign the West Seventh Street-Montreal Avenue-Lexington Parkway intersection.

The recommended 2021 capital budget also includes \$3.3 million in federal Community Development Block Grant allocations, with most of those dollars going to neighborhood-based community development corporations or specific city programs. Restore St. Paul, a program of the nonprofit Historic St. Paul, is recommended for \$135,000 for its commercial facade improvement program.

The Rondo Community Land Trust, which works on developing affordable housing, is in line for \$180,000. NeighborWorks' Green Line home improvement loan fund for neighborhoods along the light-rail Green Line is in for \$125,000.

The CIB Committee will soon start work on reviewing 65 submissions from St. Paul individuals and neighborhood groups that are in line to share \$1 million in CIB funding as part of the 2021 city budget. Recommendations on those projects will be sent to the mayor and City Council by fall.

# Ryan Cos. is denied lot coverage variance for Ford site project

By JANE MCCLURE

Ryan Companies' plan for a five-story mixed-use building at 2170 Ford Pkwy. received a mixed response from the St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals on June 29. The BZA approved only three of the five variances Ryan had requested for the building. The structure would feature four levels of apartments above a 50,000-square-foot grocery on the first floor.

Variances for the building's height and an even taller corner tower were approved along with a variance that reduces the required percentage of window glazing on the lower portion of the building. Variances to exceed the maximum allowed lot coverage and to eliminate the requirement for car-sharing spaces were rejected.

The project is one of the first on the 122-acre site of the former Ford Motor Company assembly plant. Ryan's plans call for 227 market-rate apartments and three apartments that are affordable to households making 60 percent of the Twin Cities' median income. A residential lobby will provide such amenities as a meeting room, fitness center and co-working spaces.

The building will have 210 underground parking spaces for tenants and 226 first-floor parking spaces for customers and employees. The parking ramp's entrances 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.

BZA members maintained that Ryan was not able to make a case for all five variances.



An artist's rendering of Ryan Companies' plan for a 75-foot-high mixed-use building at 2170 Ford Pkwy.

The maximum lot coverage for the building is 70 percent, and 90.3 percent is proposed. Board members Robert Clarksen, Joyce Maddox, Luis Rangel Morales and Diane Trout-Oertel voted to deny the variance. Thomas Saylor opposed denial.

"I don't think the applicant has proven that the building footprint needs to be this large," said Trout-Oertel. "I think that is a matter of design."

The variances were requested to provide "the best possible project" for the space, said Maureen Michalski, Ryan's vice president for development. The variances would not change the density nor the amount of open space recommended by the Ford site's master plan as adopted in 2017 and later amended by the City Council, she said. The building's design was driven by the desire to have a super-market similar to the Vintage on Selby.

The Vintage is an apartment building at the corner of Selby and Snelling avenues with a Whole Foods Market on the first floor. The prospective grocery at 2170 Ford Pkwy. has not been named.

Included in the master plan for the Ford site is a requirement that larger buildings have dedicated spaces for car-sharing vehicles. Two such parking spaces must be provided in buildings with more than 200 units. An additional car-sharing space is required for every 200 units over 200. Additionally, two car-sharing spaces are required in parking lots with more than 50 spaces for non-residential uses, with one additional car-sharing space for every 40 such spaces over 50.

With 230 apartments and 226 parking spaces for non-residents, Ryan would need eight car-sharing spaces at 2170 Ford Pkwy. In lieu of those spaces, Ryan has asked the city

to consider a future "hub" for car-sharing vehicles elsewhere on the Ford site. According to Michalski, that is the model vehicle-sharing companies are pursuing.

Mayor Melvin Carter's staff have been working on a new model for car-sharing hubs, according to Tia Anderson, who oversees site plan reviews for the city. She said such hubs would likely be placed on public property. That would require an amendment to the Ford site's master plan in the future.

Rangel Morales pointed out that if the BZA approved the car-sharing variance, it would be acting preemptively on something that may or may not happen. It voted 5-0 to reject the variance.

The two height variances the BZA approved for the building will provide for a height of 75 feet and a decorative tower that rises 90 feet at the northwest corner of the parcel. The lot is otherwise zoned for a maximum height of 65 feet.

The BZA also approved a variance from the requirement that the lower 12 feet of the building be faced with at least 65 percent transparent glazing. The lower portion of the proposed building would have 34 percent transparent glazing.

The Highland District Council had recommended the approval of all five variances, as had city staff. Seven letters were received by the city in support of the variances, and 166 were received in opposition. Much of the opposition came from the local group Neighbors for a Livable St. Paul.

BZA decisions are final unless they are appealed to the City Council within 10 days. As of the *Villager's* deadline, no appeal had been filed.

# Open space variance denied for affordable senior housing project

By JANE MCCLURE

CommonBond Communities' plan to construct a five-story apartment building for low-income seniors was met with both skepticism and partial rejection from the St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals on June 29. Though a 2-foot setback variance was approved for the proposed building at 830 S. Cretin Ave., the BZA voted 5-1 to deny a variance to an open space requirement.

The vote was a blow to one of the first developments proposed for the site of Ford Motor Company's former assembly plant in Highland Park. CommonBond is working with master developer Ryan Companies on the building, which would provide 60 of the 760 low-income housing units planned for the 122-acre Ford site.

The building would have a surface parking lot with 29 spaces and some open space around the building. The Ford site's master plan requires that a minimum of 25 percent of the parcel be devoted to open space. CommonBond had sought to reduce that amount to 16 percent.

BZA member Diane Trout-Oertel objected to the lack of open space. "I'll acknowledge that it's a very small site," she said. "But green space is important."

Board members Robert Clarksen, Joyce Maddox, Daniel Miller and Luis Rangel Morales joined Trout-Oertel in voting down the variance. Thomas Saylor cast the sole vote against denial.

The BZA approved the 2-foot setback along the north side of the building, where a 4-foot setback is normally required. The smaller setback was tied to the location of the building's off-street parking. The request for a third variance to waive a required parking space for an electric vehicle was dropped by CommonBond before the BZA meeting.

The Highland District Council (HDC) and city staff had recommended the approval of all three variances. Seven letters were received in support of the variances; 166 letters were received in opposition.

Some BZA members pushed for underground parking as a way to add open space on the site. At the HDC meeting in June, CommonBond representatives said the high cost

of underground parking would make it more difficult to provide affordable housing. Another suggestion was that CommonBond convert some of the surface parking lot to open space, but that would have required a parking variance.

"I do think this project is suffering from a lack of open space," said Clarksen. He suggested CommonBond consider a rooftop patio or other ways to provide open space for tenants.

Representatives of CommonBond and Ryan Companies testified that the variance for open space does not reduce the 55 acres of parks and open space planned for the Ford site. Justin Eilers, senior project manager for CommonBond, and project architect Britta Carlson from the firm LHB said the building includes a porch and outdoor patios for residents along with community rooms inside. A park is also planned just a short distance away, they said.

Rangel Morales, who chairs the St. Paul Planning Commission and is the commission's representative on the BZA, said he was concerned about the placement of affordable housing on the Ford site and the large number

of units planned for low-income seniors. "We may lose the forest for the individual trees here," he said. "We may lose what the Ford site master plan was intended to do," which is to blend affordable housing into the entire development.

According to Eilers, the master plan's intent is being met. The CommonBond project is just one of about 10 buildings for low-income residents planned for the Ford site. The low-income apartment buildings are pegged to various income levels and household sizes.

CommonBond's building will be limited to residents age 55 and older who make no more than 30 percent of the Twin Cities area's median household income. The building would have 48 one-bedroom and 12 two-bedroom units. Under levels set by the Metropolitan Council, rents would be \$562 for a one-bedroom and \$675 for a two-bedroom apartment. Seven apartments would be earmarked for people who have been homeless.

BZA decisions are final unless they are appealed to the City Council within 10 days. As this issue of the *Villager* went to press, no appeal had been filed.

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# Migratory royalty

## Local venture works to save the stately monarch butterfly

By Carolyn Walkup

People who think they're seeing fewer monarchs this summer than they used to aren't imagining things. The population of the beautiful orange-and-black butterflies is in serious decline, both here and across the country.

Monarchs are now on the nation's endangered species list after having declined an astonishing 99 percent since 1997, according to Ann Hobbie of St. Paul's Lexington-Hamline neighborhood. Hobbie is the board chair of Monarch Joint Venture, a national nonprofit organization headquartered at 2161 University Ave. that is dedicated to promoting monarch migration, largely through increasing their habitat.

Although the number of monarchs has declined, millions still migrate annually from their breeding grounds in North America when the days get shorter in late August and September. Those monarchs west of the Rocky Mountains often head to the California coast. Migrants that leave Minnesota and its neighboring states make the up to 3,000-mile trip to Michoacán, Mexico. They winter there before making the return trip north, arriving here in the spring.

Loss of habitat is one of the main reasons for the monarchs' population decline, along with agricultural expansion and the increasing use of herbicides and insecticides that kill milkweed, which monarch caterpillars eat and where female monarchs lay their eggs. Runoff from lawn chemicals also pollutes water that monarchs and other pollinators need.

For the past 11 years, Monarch Joint Venture has served as a clearinghouse for about 100 partner organizations across the United States. Those partners include the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, state departments, other nonprofit organizations, academic programs and businesses.



Monarch Joint Venture board chair Ann Hobbie with the monarch's favorite plant—blooming common milkweed. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

"This avoids reinventing wheels," Hobbie said. One example of a joint project is working with state departments of transportation to use roadside plants to promote monarch habitat.

Education is another key component of the organization's mission. "We provide professional development workshops—virtually this year—to help get students and teachers out in nature doing scientific inquiries," said Monarch Joint Venture director Wendy Caldwell. Educational materials are posted on its website at monarchjointventure.org.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, Monarch Joint Venture had to cancel its annual summer institute this year that trains from 40-60 teachers from all over North America, Hobbie said. The institute previously has been held at the University of Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The organization's annual Monarch Festival at Lake Nokomis also had to be canceled.

Amateur gardeners who would like information on how to attract monarchs to nectar-rich flowering plants in their yards can consult Monarch Joint Venture's website. In addition to milkweed, gardeners can plant



A featured guest gets a preflight inspection during a previous Monarch Festival at Lake Nokomis.

rennials, should be able to attract monarchs, Hobbie said. Some annuals, such as sweet alyssum, also attract them.

Local garden centers with milkweed and Liatris in stock include Highland Nursery, 1742 W. Seventh St.; Lilydale Garden Center, 941 Highway 13; and Mother Earth Gardens, 3738 42nd Ave. S., Minneapolis. Small Liatris planted now probably will not bloom until next summer.

Hobbie stressed the importance of keeping monarchs in the ecosystem. "They're a bellwether for the health of our outdoors," she said. "Moreover, their massive fall and spring migration makes their life cycle story exceptional, spanning an entire continent—north to south. And their easily observable summer life cycle captivates so many. They connect humans to the natural world."

Monarch Joint Venture is tentatively planning a monarch viewing event in late August with Minnesota Native Landscapes in Foley, Minnesota, a native plant nursery that has fields full of blooming Liatris. "Thousands of butterflies will be there," Caldwell promised.

For updates on that event, contact Ella Phillips at ephillips@monarchjointventure.org.

native perennial Liatris (blazing star) that monarchs feed on as they prepare for their long fall migration. These plants thrive in full sun and grow to heights between four and six feet. Two varieties have either purple or white blooms that also attract bees.

Gardeners who plan to have some plants blooming all summer, especially native pe-

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Through the new St. Thomas initiative, Williams hopes there will be a reimagining of what can be and should be done in the areas of social and racial justice. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

**1◀ RACIAL JUSTICE**

as its founding director.

Williams said that for him, Floyd's murder was an intense call to action that was reminiscent and analogous to what happened in 1963 when four black schoolgirls were killed in the bombing of a Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. That tragedy also served as an awakening that immediately moved people to seek racial justice.

"The interesting thing is that Julie (Sullivan) has been my mentor since I arrived here in 2017," Williams said. The two of them began work on the initiative immediately after Memorial Day weekend when Floyd was killed. "A text came from her asking, 'Is it too late?'" he said. It was not.

Williams said he knew he needed to be a part of what the university could do to foster racial justice in the Twin Cities and, eventually, beyond. "We've been kindred spirits on the mission of Catholic education and the mission of St. Thomas," he said. "Suddenly, in one instant, it all became clear."

"It's part of our Catholic heritage, tradition and mission to respect and promote every individual," Sullivan said. "We need to create a society here where every person is treated with dignity and respect."

"We now need to ask, 'Why are we in this place today? Why do we feel such inequities and disparity? Why are there such gaps and inequities in education, healthcare, housing?'" she continued. "We can't understand how we got here without first going back several centuries to see how there have been different opportunities for people based on race. You have to understand the past to develop empathy and work across race for a better future."

That is where Williams will play a crucial role, Sullivan said, noting that he is a historian as well as an educator who is devoted to the Catholic mission of social justice. "I'm not Catholic, but I went to Catholic schools and I'm a believer that Catholic social teaching is a great equalizer," Williams said.

With bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Scranton and a Ph.D. from Howard University, Williams is a nationally known author, editor or co-editor of several books, including *Rethinking the Black Freedom Movement* and *The Black Panthers: Portraits of an Unfinished Revolution*. He has also served as associate vice president for academic affairs at Fairfield University, a Jesuit school in Connecticut, and vice president for public education and research at the Jackie Robinson Foundation in New York City.

Officially, Williams' new title is distinguished university chair, professor and founding director of the initiative with a joint appointment in St. Thomas' history department and school of law.

Williams emphasized the importance of the law school's involvement. He said much of the immediate work to address inequities is related to changing laws that have been barriers to fair housing and fair treatment. He said second- and third-year law students will be of

**Getting a read on the historical perspective**

As the Racial Justice Initiative unfolds, Williams said, there will be information available on how to be involved and contribute. Meanwhile, to help create a solid historical perspective and understanding, he suggests the following reading list:

- *Citizen: An American Lyric* by Claudia Rankine.
- *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present* by Harriet A. Washington.
- *Waiting 'Til The Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* by Peniel Joseph.
- *The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin.
- *Creating Black Americans: African-American History and Its Meanings, 1619 to the Present* by Nell Irvin Painter.
- *The African American Odyssey* by Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine and Stanley Harrold.
- *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates.
- *Stamped From the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas* by Ibram X Kendi.
- *Rethinking the Black Freedom Movement* by Yohuru Williams.

great assistance with research and other undertakings in that area.

In initiating crucial conversations that can lead to better understanding and efforts to end racism, Williams said plans are being formulated for them to also occur off campus and involve the general public.

"I'm not thinking that these will be twice-a-year events at the Woulfe auditorium on our campus; I'm thinking they will take place at Cristo Rey, community libraries, corporate headquarters, other college campuses," he said. "And these will not be lectures. We want to listen and not just come in with answers. We want to talk with people, not talk past people. When you can first build relationships with people (you) can have uncomfortable conversations—and change results."

Williams emphasized that people cannot keep their opinions and passions hidden away. "We can't afford to exist in silos," he said. "A lot of people in the Twin Cities share this view and have a passion for social justice and want put an end to racism."

Through the initiative, Williams said, it is hoped there will be a reimagining of what should be and can be done in the areas of social and racial justice, with St. Thomas being the conduit for change here and eventually in other locales.

"This will be hard work and long work," Sullivan said. "Things are not going to change in a month or a year. First people need to learn more, listen more and understand each other better."

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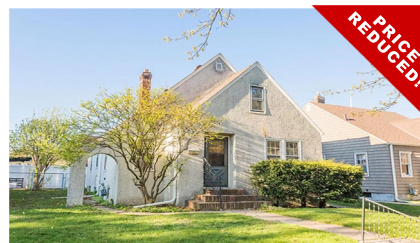
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# VIEWPOINT

## INBOX

### A variance too far

I am so disgusted by Ryan Companies constantly whining to the city potentates that it needs variances for height, width and multiple whatevers to each building plan it submits for approval. Ryan knows before the architects ever begin any project what St. Paul's regulations are for building size and setbacks.

If we want to keep anything of the character of this city, which has already lost so much daylight and green space to granted variances, we'll demand a halt to this nonsense, as well as require fewer parking places per building and more car-sharing hubs to force people out of their cars. Everything built at this point in history ought to be built with "greener" in mind.

The plan for the building at 2170 Ford Pkwy. is just more of the same-old, same-old, built right up to the sidewalk, edge to edge, topped off with the ridiculous witch's hat, and providing fewer than 1 percent of units as affordable housing. I don't know what the deal is between Ryan and the city of St. Paul, but it's way past time to hold to the building rules already in place. If we want a better future, it starts with action now.

*Kathleen Deming  
Macalester-Groveland*

### Using police as private security

While out shopping last week, I was struck that as businesses start to reopen, a few are again using uniformed St. Paul police for their properties' private security, specifically the Lunds & Byerlys in Highland Village, the Whole Foods on Selby Avenue and the Starbucks on Marshall Avenue. Whether these officers are on- or off-duty is relevant, but it misses the point to focus solely on this status.

I am not a person of color and I do not pretend to know what the life experiences of people of color are, but I feel it is incumbent on the ruling white majority supremacist society to raise awareness of situations that have little effect on the daily lives of white folks but could greatly impact a person of color's comfort and safety.

Not everyone is comforted by seeing an armed, uniformed cop while simply picking up groceries or grabbing a cup of coffee. As a white male, I have never had to fear that a malfunctioning tail light or an improper lane change would result in a fatal interaction. For people of color, however, that simple encounter could and has led to deadly encounters with law enforcement.

I have contacted a manager at each of these three businesses. The Lunds manager actually hung up on me when I asked why there was a St. Paul police officer in his car in the parking lot. A Whole Foods manager told me it was a district manager's decision. The Starbucks district manager said they were currently reviewing their contract with the police to control traffic.

I enjoy Starbucks coffee as much as the next person, but I've never needed a cup of coffee so badly as to have an armed cop direct me through the drive-through. Perhaps if we need armed cops in the parking lot to feel safe, we need to ask ourselves if it is change and submission of power that we are really fearful of.

*Greg Trentman  
Lexington-Hamline*

### Help prohibit nuclear weapons

In addition to COVID-19 and global warming, our world faces another existential threat—nuclear weapons. In mid-May, President Trump announced that the U.S. would consider resuming nuclear weapons testing, in violation of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The United States last conducted a nuclear test in 1992.

Last week, Minnesota Senators Klobuchar and Smith and Representatives McCollum, Phillips and Craig signed on to a letter to President Trump stating their opposition to the resumption of nuclear testing. Legislation prohibiting the use of funds for nuclear weapons testing has been introduced. Senator Smith is a cosponsor of the bill, S. 3886, introduced by Massachusetts Senator Ed Markey. A companion bill, HR 7140, was introduced in the U.S. House by Representative Dina Titus of Nevada. Minnesota Representatives Ilhan Omar and Angie Craig are co-sponsors.

Please ask Senator Klobuchar and Representative McCollum to co-sponsor and vote for this critical, life-

## Delay the installation of solar array at Ford site

The city of St. Paul and Ryan Companies have been promoting their plan to install a solar array atop Area C at Ford Motor Company's former assembly plant. It's a laudable goal, but there are good reasons not to rush this project.

Area C is a massive pile of hazardous waste and construction debris dumped by Ford onto the Mississippi River floodplain adjacent to Hidden Falls Park. A solar array atop it could provide 20 percent of the power needs for the development at the Ford site. However, while the pollution on the main Ford site has been fully remediated, Area C has not. We're still in the data gathering phase, and it will be one to two years before we even figure out our cleanup options. Adding a solar array atop the dump site could complicate cleanup.

This fall, Ford is installing additional monitoring wells to better assess the risks that Area C poses. After a year or two's worth of data, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) will be able to lay out the health and environmental risks and a range of cleanup options for

Ford to take. The MPCA has indicated that at least modest remediation will be required, and many neighbors and the Friends of the Mississippi River want the state to require Ford to remove their riverfront waste pile completely.

Adding a solar array atop the waste could severely limit the range of cleanup options. Cost is one of the key criteria that the MPCA uses to select a cleanup option. If the array needs to be removed to clean up the site, it could add enough cost or time that any cleanup is dismissed as too costly.

Increasing our renewable energy production is crucial, but there are always tradeoffs to be mindful of. In this case, by rushing to build a relatively small solar array on a big pile of riverfront waste, we could essentially cement the waste into place by making its removal more expensive. City and project leaders need to coordinate their project timelines.

*Colleen O'Connor Toberman  
River Corridor Program Director  
Friends of the Mississippi River*

preserving legislation. There is another path forward for a more peaceful world and a more just and healthy society—the UN-adopted Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons. I urge Representative McCollum and Senators Klobuchar and Smith to sign the treaty.

*Dolores Voorhees  
Highland Park*

### Many ways to combat racism

My wife and I applaud the tens of thousands of people who exercised their First Amendment rights on May 28 and 29, marching and chanting and protesting the murder of George Floyd and systemic racism in our cities. But we couldn't help but wonder how much more might have been accomplished in that same cause if each of one of those protesters had put an equal amount of time and passion into actually doing something constructive.

Think of how much good tens of thousands of hours could do if spent working in a food bank or a homeless shelter, for example. Or volunteering to tutor young children in an inner city-school or library. Or helping recent immigrants by teaching English as a second language. Or working overseas with disabled orphans in a refugee camp. Or simply working to clean up public spaces trashed by uncaring neighbors.

Many of our neighbors are doing these things already. Ten thousand more would make a difference.

There are many ways to combat racism. Protesting is only the most visible and convenient. We recommend working as a volunteer, side by side with people of a race different from your own. It's a lot more satisfying than chanting and carrying a sign. And you'll learn more.

*Jack Maloney  
Merriam Park*

### A perilous time for District 197

One of the major fallouts from the COVID-19 pandemic has been a hollowing out of government and school district budgets throughout Minnesota. In 2018, voters in Mendota Heights, West St. Paul and Eagan approved a bond referendum to support renovation and additions for every public school in District 197. In a newsletter last winter, the district proudly outlined the construction projects underway. What impact will the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as new construction, have on District 197's performance?

First, it is noteworthy that the original bond referendum, outlined in a 2018 newsletter, did not include a provision for emergent facilities management expenses, attributable to new renovation and additions, that inevitably will burden the District 197 budget. More fundamental is the question of the impact on academic performance.

Will investing millions in school renovation and additions support this mission? Not likely. Will the impact of the pandemic on the District 197 budget undermine this mission? Very likely. In other words, District 197 finds itself between a rock and a hard place. This sobering assessment could be questioned if District 197 were holding its own in terms of student learning. Unfortunately, it is not.

I have innovative research centered on the study of how design factors in learning environments influence student learning. One major project has been an assessment of the

effect of socioeconomic status on standardized math and reading tests taken by eighth-graders in more than 50 school districts across the Twin Cities metropolitan area. From 1996-2018, the percentage of students qualifying for subsidized lunches (a proxy for socioeconomic status) accounted for between two-thirds and three-fourths of the observed variance in the average test scores of eighth-graders.

District 197's performance, therefore, can be objectively assessed by ascertaining how its eighth-graders performed on standardized math and reading tests relative to metro area school districts with comparable subsidized lunch levels. In fact, in the years cited above, District 197's eighth-graders underperformed their peer districts on standardized tests.

District 197 cannot be faulted for a lack of foresight in anticipating the pandemic. However, the situation dramatically undermines the validity of the preposterous District 197 slogan, "Bonds are for building, levies are for learning." If building does not support student learning and achievement, how can it be justified? Moreover, the pandemic will exacerbate the budget burden of new building, further undermining District 197's efforts to improve student performance. The onus, therefore, is on District 197 to demonstrate that its mission can be sustained in the face of the challenges outlined above.

*Thomas J. Smith  
Mendota Heights*

### Gratitude for St. Kate's

A heartfelt thanks to St. Catherine University for being so open and inviting to its neighbors. A spacious yard in this wonderful but densely populated neighborhood is a rarity. For this reason, when we are bursting at our seams, we have always treasured the fact that we could enjoy the wide open spaces at St. Kate's with our children. It is a haven that we do not take for granted.

My gratitude for this resource has doubled over the last several months since our options for outdoor running and play were so limited during the COVID-19 shutdown. St. Kate's was there for all of us who needed an outdoor refuge that was conducive to social distancing.

Many thanks, St. Kate's, for your gracious and invaluable service to our community.

*Jenni Maas  
Macalester-Groveland*

### A birthday wish comes true

My grandson recently celebrated his ninth birthday. He requested a scavenger hunt as a gift. I'd like to thank all of the following people and places for lending us a bit of their space to create an enjoyable event: Thomas Liquors, for graciously letting us tape a "ransom note" to the frame of its outdoor pharmacy mural; the residents at 17XX Palace Ave. for interrupting their lawn mowing to agree to be a part of the fun; J & S Bean Factory, whose outdoor patio and tiki were perfect hiding spots; and Sensei Max of Grappler Station, for his front yard and playing along as the dojo.

It's wonderful to live in such a friendly and supportive community.

*M.M. Holloway  
Highland Park*



# Commission delays Lexington-James rezoning

Debate centers on need for more residential projects in St. Paul to offer affordable housing

By JANE McCLURE

The ongoing debate over the need for more affordable housing in new St. Paul residential developments has delayed city action on a proposed 60-unit apartment building at the southeast corner of James Avenue and Lexington Parkway.

After much discussion on June 26, the city's Planning Commission voted 11-1 to postpone rezoning 1074-1096 James Ave. from single-family residential to multifamily residential. The request will go back to the commission on July 10.

Preliminary plans unveiled by developers Chet Funk, Nathan James and Erich Leidel earlier in June showed three to four levels of apartments above two levels of parking. Six houses would be removed to make way for the new building. The developers also have discussed plans to construct a second apartment building on the northeast corner of Lexington and Randolph Avenue in partnership with another property owner. That building would mean the removal of four dwellings.

Funk, a Summit Hill resident, said the delay would affect the timeline for the Lexington-James project, but that it was not a major concern. "We're still early in the process of this development and are looking to work with all stakeholders on what the best use of this land will be in the decades to come," he said.

Under state law, the Planning Commission has until July 27 to act on the rezoning request.

While they are seeking the zoning change, the developers are also waiting for pending changes to regulations in the city's residential multifamily (RM) zoning code before moving ahead with the project. The changes would allow developers to add more density in projects on RM-zoned sites.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the RM zoning changes this spring and hopes to take action this summer. The final decision will be up to the 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.

The commission's Zoning Committee voted in June to support the Lexington-James rezoning. Still, several commissioners expressed concern over the need for more residential developments in the city to provide affordable housing.

"I want to see an affordable component to this project, which in this neighborhood is very important," said commissioner Cedric Baker, "but I feel like our hands get tied."

Baker said he is tired of "rubber-stamping" development projects and not seeing more affordable housing units.

Commissioner Kristine Grill asked if the Lexington-James project should be the one on which the commission takes a stand. While agreeing with the need to provide more affordable housing, she said, "I feel like we're making this decision on the backs of small developers."

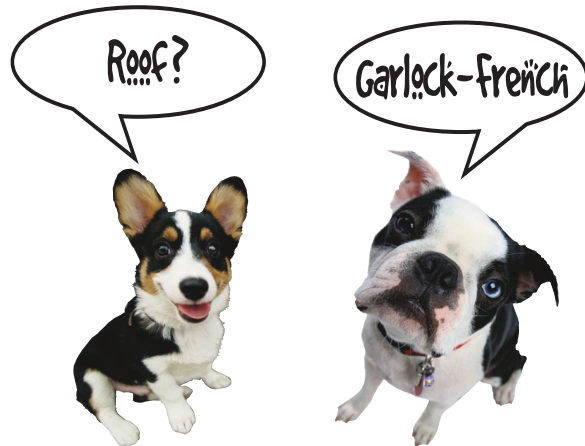
The sole vote against the layover was cast by commissioner Nate Hood. He said the commission voted to "kick the can down the road" with an unnecessary delay to a developer who lives in the neighborhood and is actively engaged with the neighborhood.

"Until the City Council adopts an affordable housing policy, which they should, the Planning Commission shouldn't be delaying projects based on a policy that doesn't exist," he said.

An affordable housing policy is coming, according to city planning director Luis Pereira. The Metropolitan Council's Housing Policy Plan calls for the region to add 37,400 housing units for low- and moderate-income people. St. Paul's share is estimated at 1,973 units at varying levels of affordability.

At this time the path forward appears to be that of obtaining City Council approval for "inclusionary zoning." Such zoning would require a given share of new construction to be affordable to people with low to moderate incomes.

A study of that zoning was paused due to COVID-19 and its impact on housing market conditions. Commissioners asked on June 26 to find a way to move the study along, possibly with housing market data from 2019 and earlier. Other steps include placing an emphasis on affordable housing in documents tied to zoning applications and amending the city's 2040 comprehensive plan.



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# The shows go on

## Highland and Grandview reopen with safeguards, classic movies

By FRANK JOSSI

Movies at the Highland and Grandview theaters attracted a trickle of customers during the first weekend they were open since being forced to close nearly four months ago due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Owned by Mann Theatres, the Highland and Grandview offered a lineup of classic films when they reopened on June 26. The theaters, whose four screens constitute the last two movie houses in St. Paul, have taken several precautions to ensure the safety of customers. Managers at both locations said patrons played by the rules by social distancing and wearing masks.

With the pipeline to new movie releases shuttered by the pandemic for now, the Highland was showing the 1973 coming-of-age story *American Graffiti* and the more recent comic murder mystery *Knives Out*. The Grandview screened *Twister*, a 1996 thriller about storm chasers in Oklahoma, and *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*, a 1971 musical starring Gene Wilder.

The first weekend was “pretty slow,” said Alex Malave, general manager at the Highland. But the modest turnout allowed his staff to practice how to serve customers in a new environment.

“It made it easy to open that way, and nearly 100 percent of the people were wearing masks,” Malave said. “It’s been interesting to adjust to the new normal, but I think we’re doing it.”

Both theaters have adopted many safeguards recommended by the Centers for Disease Control. Theater personnel suggest that patrons wear masks in the lobby, though they can take them off during the movies because they are seated far from one another, Malave said.

In the theaters, every other row is roped off to maintain social distancing. Groups or families are allowed to sit together, but they must stay at least three seats from the next set of patrons.

The Highland and Grandview, which were both built in the 1930s, have a maximum occupancy of 632 and 487 people, respectively, on their two levels.

Theater staff are disinfecting seats between films and cleaning bathrooms every 30 minutes, Malave said. Bathroom access is controlled to avoid crowding. Concessions remain open, but no refills are allowed. Hand sanitizer stations and disinfectant wipes are provided on request.

Mann Theatres requires employees to wear masks and gloves. Plexiglass partitions separate workers at



Tammy Lohmann was one of the first patrons to return to the Highland Theatre when it reopened on June 26. General manager Alex Malave is shown admitting her for a matinee showing of *American Graffiti*. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

the box office and at concessions. The theaters also have visual reminders about social distancing.

The story at the Grandview was similar to the Highland. Assistant manager Jennifer Yeung described the first weekend as “slow” in part because few people knew the theater had reopened.

Customers seemed pleased with the experience, according to her. “I’ve worked the two days and I’ve had no customers come to me with concerns,” Yeung said. “We do check the theater often to make sure people are spread out and that people are being careful.”

Malave said Mann Theatres is



Grandview Theatre manager Henry Paddock wore COVID-19 protection as he manned the concession counter on June 26.

MOVIES RESUME ▶ 11

# School Board OKs budget with 1,228 drop in enrollment projected

By CASEY EK

The St. Paul School Board on June 23 approved an \$822 million budget for the St. Paul Public Schools for the 2020-21 school year. The budget anticipates a decrease of 1,228 in enrollment districtwide, causing the loss of about \$1.7 million in state aid, according to Marie Schrul, the school district’s chief financial officer. That drop in enrollment—to 35,458 students in grades K-12—would offset any increase in revenue the school district receives through the 2 percent increase in the state’s per-pupil aid formula next year.

However, changes in the budget are likely

as the district grapples with the new operational guidelines instituted by the Minnesota Department of Education for preventing the spread of the coronavirus. “Not only are we still in this distant, remote environment (for student learning), but there are unknowns ahead of us,” said St. Paul Superintendent Joseph Gothard. “I wish I could tell you today what they were.”

The St. Paul Public Schools closed its classrooms this spring and instituted online learning from home for all of its students through the end of the school year. A decision from the state Department of Education on whether or not to resume online learning in September is pending, and that decision is likely to bring

budget changes.

School districts around the state are planning on three possible scenarios for the coming school year—online distance learning, in-person instruction or a hybrid of the two. A decision by the state on which model of learning to employ is expected during the week of July 27.

The St. Paul Public Schools’ approved budget for 2020-21 reduces the number of full-time staff by 138 districtwide. Seventy-nine of the reductions are teacher positions, and 39 are teaching assistants.

School district officials on June 16 chose not to renew the contracts of 46 teachers who were in the three-year probationary phase of

their employment. Of those, 22 were not renewed based on budgetary concerns—the highest number since the 2010-11 school year. However, those 22 probationary teachers may be invited back to work as funds allow, according to Kenyatta McCarty, who heads the district’s human resources department.

Of the \$822 million budget, roughly \$580 million is included in the general fund, and of that about \$250 million is allocated to individual schools. Building construction accounts for about \$50 million of the budget, and \$28 million is devoted to Community Services (Community Education, Early Childhood Family Education and Adult Basic Education).

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# News Briefs

## Applicants sought to fill School Board seat until Nov. 3 election

The St. Paul Public Schools is accepting applications to fill the vacancy on its seven-member School Board created upon the death of former board chair Marny Xiong in June. Applications will be accepted until 5 p.m. Tuesday, July 21. Interviews will take place at a special meeting of the School Board on Monday, July 27. The selected applicant will serve on the board until a special election is held in conjunction with the general election on Tuesday, November 3.

To be eligible to serve on the School Board, applicants must be at least 21 years old, a resident of the school district for at least 30 days prior to their appointment, eligible to vote, and never convicted as a sex offender.

To apply, send a letter describing your interest in the position and a resume with day and evening phone numbers, e-mail address or fax number to Sarah Dahlke, Board Secretary, St. Paul Public Schools, 360 Colborne St., St. Paul MN 55102 or sarah.dahlke@spps.org. For information, visit [spps.org/boe](http://spps.org/boe).

## Summit Hill House Tour is latest victim of coronavirus pandemic

The Summit Hill Association voted on June 25 to cancel this year's Summit Hill House Tour, which was set for September 13, due to safety concerns associated with COVID-19.

Instead, the SHA will work with the Ramsey Hill Association to hold a joint house tour in 2021. The district council and the neighborhood association have alternated hosting house tours for years. The events are major fundraisers for both organizations.

The house tour joins a long list of annual events, including Grand Old Day, Highland Fest and Rondo Days, that have been canceled this year due to the pandemic.

SHA began discussing the prospect of no 2020 house tour earlier this year. With uncertainty about the pandemic, board members said a postponement and a change in direction were necessary.

"I think it could be a win-win for both groups," said SHA executive director Monica Haas. She said a joint tour could be "bigger and better" than what has been held before.

People who have already purchased tickets for this year's tour should contact the SHA office at 651-222-1222 for information.

## United Village and Uni-Fairview projects receive cleanup grants

The Metropolitan Council last month awarded \$3 million in polluted-site cleanup grants and \$500,000 in additional grants that promote redevelopment and economic opportunity in the region. The grants are expected to help clean up 33 acres, create or re-

tain more than 600 full-time jobs, and help to produce and preserve more than 1,200 homes.

Two local projects received cleanup grants. The United Village Midway Block B development west of Allianz Field was awarded \$125,000 for the cleanup of a 2.4-acre site that is currently a surface parking lot. Plans call for 234 market-rate apartments and 15,500 square feet of commercial space over structured parking.

Receiving a \$111,800 grant was developer Reuter Walton to clean up a 3.2-acre site that currently has four vacant buildings and surface parking at the northwest corner of University and Fairview avenues. The development will include 280 affordable apartments and 2,440 square feet of commercial space with underground and surface parking.

The Met Council also awarded a predevelopment grant of \$100,000 to the YWCA of St. Paul, which is looking to redevelop its property at Selby and Western avenues.

Keystone Community Services, which wants to build a new food distribution site near Lexington Parkway and University Avenue, was also awarded a \$100,000 predevelopment grant.

The St. Paul City Council in June applied for additional grants, including \$500,000 for the Reuter Walton project and \$600,000 for a housing project by PAK Properties at 1619 Dayton Ave., just north of the former Richards Gordon School.

## HRA grants \$98K for apartments serving homeless in Lowertown

The St. Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority board voted unanimously on June 24 to approve a forgivable loan of \$98,000 to boost the capital reserves at American House Apartments in Lowertown as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

American House, 352 Wacouta St., has 70 single rooms for adults who have been homeless. The building was acquired by Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative in 2010 from the Wilder Foundation. The project does not generate cash flow. With its shared space, it also poses increased health risks during the pandemic. Residents face elevated risks of becoming sick because many have underlying health conditions or disabilities.

Current tenants in some units may be unable to meet their rent obligations due to the economic impact of the pandemic. The property owners also are experiencing higher operating costs related to increased cleaning and other health measures. Federal Housing and Urban Development officials are allowing projects like American House to set up capitalized reserves to preserve the financial viability of the housing.

*News Briefs were compiled by Jane McClure and Dale Mischke.*

## 10 MOVIES RESUME

currently focusing on running older films, a common practice as theaters reopen around the country. The movies include *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Jaws*, *E.T.*, *Jurassic Park*, *Dirty Dancing*, *The Greatest Showman* and *The Goonies*.

Steven Spielberg either directed, wrote or produced many of the films now showing at theaters. Spielberg was associated with five of the Top 10 grossing films in late June, with *Jurassic Park* on top for the first time since 1993.

"Spielberg is to summer movies what the Beach Boys are to summer songs," said National Public Radio film critic Bob Mondello. "No one is better at making audiences sweat and feel good at the same time, which is why people craving escape from a pandemic and social turmoil naturally gravitate to his movies."



A floor marker at the Grandview reminding patrons to practice safe social distancing.

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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**—A strong-arm robbery was reported on the 1900 block of Bayard Avenue at 5:51 p.m. Thursday, June 11.

**Burglary**—Commercial burglaries were reported on the 2400 block of West Seventh Street at 4 a.m. Saturday, June 13; and at the Speedway, 1580 Ford Pkwy., at 3:20 p.m. Saturday, June 13.

—Residential burglaries were reported on the 1600 block of Bohland Avenue on June 15, the 2400 block of Edgcumbe Road on June 16, the 1300 block of Edgcumbe on June 21 and the 600 block of South Snelling Avenue on June 23.

**Theft**—Vehicles were stolen on the 1700 block of Wordsworth Avenue on June 13, the 1300 block of West Maynard Drive on June 19, the 2000 block of Itasca Avenue on June 22 and the 2100 block of Hartford Avenue on June 24.

—Thefts from autos of items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported on June 13 on the 2000 block of Pinehurst Avenue; on June 16 on the 1200 block of Colette Place, the 2000 block of Yorkshire Avenue and the 2500 block of Crosby Farm Road; on June 18 on the 1800 block of Munster Avenue; and on June 20 on the 1400 block of South Mississippi River Boulevard.

**Weapons**—Gunfire was reported on Pleasant Avenue, on Highland Parkway and Davern Street, on Munster Avenue and on South Cleveland Avenue between June 11-24.

## Lexington-Hamline

**Robbery**—A strong-arm robbery was reported on the 1100 block of Selby Avenue at 4:40 p.m. Tuesday, June 16.

**Theft**—Vehicles were stolen on the 1100 block of Selby Avenue on June 16, on Concordia and Hamline avenues on June 17, and on the 1300 block of Marshall Avenue on June 18.

## Macalester-Groveland

**Robbery**—Strong-arm robberies were reported on Grand and Hamline avenues at 7:44 p.m. Friday, June 12; on Prior and Summit Avenues at 11 p.m. Saturday, June 13; on the 1300 block of Grand Avenue at 9:19 p.m. Friday, June 19; and on the 2100 block of Grand at 1:43 a.m. Monday, June 2.

—A robbery at gunpoint was reported on Albert Street and Goodrich Avenue at 9:12 p.m. Friday, June 19.

—A robbery was reported on the 1200 block of Wellesley Avenue at 5:21 p.m. Tuesday, June 23.

—A commercial robbery at gunpoint was reported on the 1300 block of Randolph Avenue at 7:32 p.m. Tuesday, June 23.

**Burglary**—A burglary was reported on the 200 block of South Hamline Avenue at 12:38 p.m. Tuesday, June 23.

**Theft**—Vehicles were stolen on the 400 block of South Lexington Parkway on June

12, on the 2200 block of Fairmount Avenue on June 22, and two vehicles on the 400 block of South Snelling Avenue on June 23.

—Thefts from autos of items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported on the 1800 block of Princeton Avenue on June 14, the 300 block of South Saratoga Street on June 15, the 200 block of South Fairview Avenue on June 21, and two thefts on the 1900 block of Stanford Avenue on June 22.

**Weapons**—Gunfire was reported on Woodlawn Avenue, on Cleveland and Randolph avenues, on Cleveland and Grand avenues, and on South Lexington Parkway between June 11-23.

## Mendota Heights

**Robbery**—A robbery at gunpoint was reported on the 1000 block of Brompton Place at 4 p.m. Tuesday, June 16. The suspects were never located.

**Theft**—Several items were reported stolen from vehicles on the 2000 block of Mendakota Drive on June 12, and the 2000 block of Dodd Road on June 14.

—A newly planted weeping pine tree was stolen from the front yard of a residence on the 900 block of Chippewa Avenue during the evening of June 13-14.

—Trailers were reported stolen on the 1000 block of Sylvandale Road during the evening of June 17-18 and on Beebe Avenue at 7 p.m. Thursday, June 18.

**Miscellaneous**—Police responded to a call about a resident who had fallen and could not get up on the 1600 block of Dodd Road at 6:17 p.m. Thursday, June 18. The individual reportedly had driven himself home from a bar, and was extremely intoxicated. He was taken to the hospital.

## Merriam Park

**Robbery**—A robbery at knifepoint was reported on the 1900 block of University Avenue at 12:24 p.m. Saturday, June 13.

—Robberies at gunpoint were reported on the 1900 block of Marshall Avenue at 7:17 p.m. Thursday, June 18; and on Carroll and Fairview avenues at 8:35 p.m. Sunday, June 21.

—A strong-arm robbery was reported on Fry Street and Hague Avenue at 8:54 p.m. Saturday, June 20.

**Burglary**—A commercial break-in was reported on the 400 block of Dewey Street at 10 p.m. Saturday, June 13.

—A residential burglary was reported on the 1700 block of Marshall Avenue at 11 p.m. Friday, June 19.

**Theft**—Vehicles were stolen on Marshall Avenue and Moore Street on June 12, on the 400 block of Dewey Street on June 13, the 400 block of West Lynnhurst Avenue on June 14, the 400 block of Herschel Street on June 16, the 1600 block of Selby Avenue on June 18, the 1700 block of Carroll Avenue on June 22 and the 1600 block of Selby on June 23.

—Thefts from auto of items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported on Aldine Street and Ashland Avenue on June 14, the 1700 block of Marshall Avenue on June 15, and on Ashland and Saratoga Street on June 23.

**Sex crime**—A rape was reported on the 1600 block of Dayton Avenue at 8 a.m. Saturday, June 20.

**Assault**—An aggravated assault with a gun was reported on Snelling and Dayton avenues at 7:56 p.m. Wednesday, June 24.

**Weapons**—Gunfire was reported on Iglehart Avenue, on Concordia Avenue, on Desnoyer Avenue, on Riverwood Place, on Feronia Avenue and on University Avenue between June 11-21.

## Snelling-Hamline

**Robbery**—A strong-arm robbery was reported on the 1500 block of University Avenue at 2:40 p.m. Sunday, June 21.

**Burglary**—Commercial burglaries were reported on Syndicate Street and Ashland Avenue on June 14, the 300 block of North Snelling Avenue on June 16, the 200 block of North Hamline Avenue on June 21, on Snelling and Ashland avenues on June 22, and on the 1400 block of University Avenue on June 22.

**Theft**—A theft from auto of items valued at more than \$1,000 was reported on the 1500 block of Carroll Avenue at 11 p.m. Saturday, June 13.

**Assault**—An aggravated assault with a knife was reported on Selby and Snelling avenues at 12:30 p.m. Friday, June 19.

**Weapons**—Gunfire was reported on Selby and Snelling avenues on Thursday, June 18.

## Summit Hill

**Robbery**—A strong-arm robbery was reported on the 800 block of Osceola Avenue at 2:11 p.m. Saturday, June 13.

—Robberies at gunpoint were reported on Dale Street and Grand Avenue at 9:20 p.m. Friday, June 19; on the 800 block of Grand at 6:37 a.m. Saturday, June 20; and on Dale Street and Lincoln Avenue at 9:29 p.m. Saturday, June 20.

**Theft**—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 900 block of Lincoln Avenue on June 11, the 800 block of Summit Avenue on June 13, the 800 block of Lincoln on June 14, on Grand Avenue and Victoria Street on June 14, and the 600 block of Grand on June 18.

**Weapons**—Gunfire was reported on Fairmount Avenue and Chatsworth Street on June 14, and on Dale Street and Summit Avenue on June 15.

## Summit-University

**Robbery**—Strong-arm robberies were reported on Ashland Avenue and Milton Street at 2:16 p.m. Saturday, June 13; on the 900 block of Portland Avenue at 12:54 p.m. Monday, June 15; and on the 1000 block of University Avenue at 9:16 p.m. Saturday, June 20.

—Robberies at gunpoint were reported on Dayton Avenue and Arundel Street at 4:26 p.m. Saturday, June 13; on Grotto Street and Selby Avenue at 2:07 a.m. Monday, June 15; and on the 500 block of Holly Avenue at 1 p.m. Monday, June 15.

**Burglary**—Commercial break-ins were reported on the 200 block of Marshall Avenue at 9 p.m. Monday, June 15; and on the 400 block of Selby Avenue at 4:11 a.m. Tuesday, June 16.

**Theft**—Vehicles were stolen on June 17 on the 800 block of Concordia Avenue; on June 19 on Dale Street and Ashland Avenue; on June 20 on the 600 block of Portland Avenue and 700 block of Concordia Avenue; on June 21 on the 400 block of Dale Street; and on June 22 on the 1000 block of Dayton Avenue, on Milton Street and Ashland, and on Lexington Parkway and Summit Avenue.

**Assault**—An aggravated assault with a gun was reported on Selby Avenue and Dale Street at 11:03 p.m. Friday, June 12.

**Weapons**—Police received more than a dozen reports of gunfire in the Summit-University neighborhood south of I-94 between June 13-24.

## West End

**Robbery**—A robbery a gunpoint was reported on the 400 block of North Smith Avenue at 9:20 a.m. Friday, June 19.

**Burglary**—Residential burglaries were reported on the 900 block of Bayard Avenue on June 11, the 100 block of Forbes Avenue on June 13, the 700 block of South Victoria Street on June 14 and the 200 block of South Exchange Street on June 22.

—A commercial break-in was reported on the 1100 block of West Seventh Street at 1:07 a.m. Monday, June 15.

**Theft**—Vehicles were stolen on the 100 block of Forbes Avenue on June 13, the 400 block of North Smith Avenue on June 17, the 200 block of Grand Avenue and 900 block of West Seventh Street on June 19, the 300 block of Arbor Street on June 21, the 300 block of West Seventh on June 22 and the 400 block of North Smith on June 23.

—A theft from auto of items valued at more than \$1,000 was reported on the 1200 block of Pleasant Avenue at midnight Tuesday, June 23.

**Sex crime**—A rape was reported on the 600 block of Palace Avenue at 9:41 p.m. Thursday, June 18.

**Weapons**—Gunfire was reported on Vance Street on June 14, on Michigan Street and Richmond Avenue on June 16, the 700 block of Otto Avenue on June 22, and Tuscarora Avenue and West Seventh Street on June 23.

# Fire Calls

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

**St. Paul**—Arson fires were reported on the 1500 block of Marshall Avenue on June 14, the 1400 block of University Avenue on June 16, on Prior and St. Anthony avenues on June 18, the 1000 block of University Avenue on June 18 and the 1300 block of East Maynard Drive on June 20.

**Mendota Heights**—The contents of two trash cans were lit on fire on the 2100 block of Dodd Road, it was reported at 8:30 a.m. Monday, June 22.

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# ON THE TOWN

## A climate for change

Author Holthaus imagines a future where humanity has solved global warming

BY ANNE MURPHY

Eric Holthaus says he has done some of his best thinking at Hidden Falls Park, and some of his best writing at Quixotic Coffee in Highland Village, including the manuscript for his new book, *The Future Earth: A Radical Vision for What's Possible in the Age of Warming*.

A Highland Park resident and a journalist with a specialty in weather and climate change, Holthaus said his book takes an optimistic view, encouraging readers to do their part and help solve the problem of climate change on the local, national and global level.

"I felt that other books (on climate change) had been done before—books that tell you how bad things are and how bad they're going to get," Holthaus said. "But I hadn't read one that offers hope. I thought that this would be a more compelling way to tell people that they can be a part of the solution."

"In some ways, it's much easier to imagine things going badly," he said, "but it's a lot more interesting when you write about a future when the struggle has been difficult but in the end everyone and everything comes together. This is a moment when we have the chance to deviate from business as usual. We can deviate from the idea of the future being this dystopic world. We can think about what the world will look like if we do what we need to do."

In *The Future Earth*, Holthaus familiarizes readers with the perils of climate change by pointing to the natural disasters that have been linked to carbon emissions: floods, hurricanes and droughts. He introduces climatologists, biologists, economists and activists and relates his personal experiences that contributed to his vision for reversing climate change over the

next three decades.

Holthaus' vision is rooted in what he has observed, learned and contemplated. "I grew up in a small town in Kansas," he said. "We weren't radical or revolutionary. So much of what has been written in the past (about climate change) has been science-oriented. I wanted to humanize it."

"Western Kansas gets about the same amount of rainfall each year as southern Arizona," he continued. "What will happen when that aquifer dwindles to the point it's no longer useful for agriculture? What will happen to my old hometown? What will happen to the countless other small towns and the families who call them home?"

"Minnesota is the fastest-warming state in the country," he said. "We're losing native plants and animals at an alarming rate, just as fast as in the Pacific Islands. I often wonder, will the forest in our backyard survive? Will our mosquitoes begin to carry tropical diseases? Will our neighbors continue to welcome refugees and climate migrants? Will we come together and create the change we need soon enough?"

"I can't ignore the fact that I'm raising kids who will be here for hopefully many more decades," he said. "In a few years, they'll start asking tough questions. I want to have answers. That makes climate change personal. For me, that makes it about love."

Early on in the book, Holthaus suggests that the best route to reversing climate change involves community conversation and social movements. He writes: "On a pleasant spring evening on the campus of Macalester College in St. Paul, I sat in on a Sunrise Movement town hall meeting just as the 2020 presidential campaign was beginning to heat up. Less than a mile away, the Mississippi River was cresting at one of the highest



Highland Park resident Eric Holthaus' new book, *The Future Earth: A Radical Vision for What's Possible in the Age of Warming*, imagines a time when the problem of climate change has been solved and how we got there. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

*Holthaus believes that to address climate change, people need to begin conversations in their neighborhoods. "Change starts on the local scene," he said. And the work needs to be ongoing. "It may feel overwhelming initially," he said, "until you start to think of it as a collective effort."*

levels ever recorded in Minnesota, part of an unprecedented spring flood that spanned more than a dozen states across the Midwest.

"One of the later speakers was Christie Manning, a Macalester environmental psychologist, who told the students that her own research shows that in a world where the vast majority of our elected representatives and other elites in society might privately agree with the climate movement but publicly oppose action, social movements like Sunrise are primed to create rapid change. The most effective way to break through this dissonance, she said, is storytelling, because it personalizes the problem and makes it feel more immediate, which physically changes your brain chemistry and is more likely to generate empathy."

Holthaus learned that what he heard at Macalester was supported by Harvard University political scientist Erica Chenoweth. Chenoweth, he writes, "discovered

a surprising and empowering truth about the science of revolution: Throughout the 20th century, every single nonviolent movement to create political change that received active participation from at least 3.5 percent of the population succeeded."

"In the U.S.," he said, "that works out to about 15 million people. That's a lot. But in St. Paul, it might be like 15,000 people."

In the chapters that follow, Holthaus lays out his call to action as if he were writing in the future and looking back at the steps that have already been taken to successfully address climate change. Included in his vision of the future are steps that could have been or may yet be taken in his adopted hometown. He writes:

"St. Paul put its plan together in the 2010s and prepared for a radical transformation by 2040. It began implementing steps to electrify and remodel every building in the city to exclusively use renewable

energy; install community-owned solar gardens; reduce driving by eliminating parking, adding congestion pricing and removing highways; allow self-driving electric cars, e-bikes and scooters for last-mile transit; add hundreds of miles of new bike lanes and sidewalks on every street; and reduce waste by 80 percent.

"Comparable in scope and ambition to the plans in New York City and cities in California, the initiative in St. Paul—in the heart of the Midwest—demonstrated to the rest of the country that carbon-free cities were possible...."

"...A new streetcar route started passing through our neighborhood, Highland Park, in 2033 when my boys were in high school. An old Ford assembly plant down the road was transformed into an entirely new walkable, bike-friendly, zero-carbon neighborhood."

Holthaus believes that to address climate change, people need to begin conversations in their neighborhoods. "Change starts on the local scene," he said. And the work needs to be ongoing.

"If you go to the grocery and drop off a donation, that's helpful, but it doesn't solve the problem," he said. "Activism needs to be a continuing effort. It may feel overwhelming initially, until you start to think of it as a collective effort."

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# ON THE TOWN *Briefly*

## Music

The Minnesota Opera is offering a series of past performances as audio recordings that can be streamed online. The schedule includes Massenet's sensual and melodic *Thais* through July 12; Joel Puckett and Eric Simonson's *The Fix*, set against the backdrop of America's favorite pastime, through July 19; and Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* from July 11-26. Visit [mnopera.org](http://mnopera.org).

The Oratorio Society of Minnesota has teamed up with the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh to offer Candid Conversations, a weekly program combining professional vocal coaching with lectures on choral music. The free, online program will run from 7-8:30 p.m. Wednesdays, July 8-August 5. (To access the program, visit [oratorio.org](http://oratorio.org) or [themendelssohn.org](http://themendelssohn.org).) Each class begins with a 20-minute vocal warmup and question-and-answer session with tips on vocal technique and practice methods. A lecture or discussion will follow. Speakers include soprano Jamie Chamberlin and Oratorio Society director Matthew Mehaffey on July 8; opera singer Kiera Duffy and St. Olaf College professor Tesfa Wondemagegnehu, July 15; and soprano Elisabeth Stevens and Border Crossings founder Ahmed Anzaldúa, July 22.

Jazz Fest Live will be live-streamed on Crowdcast on Thursdays, July 9 through August 27, from the patio of Crooner's Lounge and Supper Club in Fridley. The schedule of free online performances includes Rio Nido at 7 p.m. on July 9, an evening of showtunes with Tyler Michaels and Friends at 7 p.m. July 16, Laura Caviani at 5:30 p.m. July 23, and the songs of Jerome Kern with Maud Hixson at 8:30 p.m. July 30. A limited number of tickets to attend the

concert in person are available for purchase. Visit [twincitiesjazzfestival.com](http://twincitiesjazzfestival.com).

Haydn Quartet in FM and Piston Quartet No.1 will be performed by the Artaria String Quartet in a prerecorded concert at 7 p.m. Friday, July 17, on YouTube. Artaria will introduce the music live and answer chat line questions. They invited their audience to join them in a "Zoom room" for a spirited conversation right after the concert. The entire program is free, though donations (\$20 suggested) are welcome. Visit [youtu.be/Rsw-I-ujn5c](http://youtu.be/Rsw-I-ujn5c).

## Exhibits

"Visual Prayer," new works by the Interfaith Artist Circle of the Twin Cities, are on view through August 31 at [sabesjcc.org/about/visual-prayer-online-exhibit](http://sabesjcc.org/about/visual-prayer-online-exhibit). The Interfaith Artist Circle is a group of visual artists who pursue art as a spiritual journey. Founded in 2005 as the Jewish Women Artists' Circle, the group now includes women artists from multiple faiths.

"Public Art: The Permanent Collection of Landmark Center" is on view now through August 8 at [landmarkcenter.org](http://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

The Friends of the St. Paul Public Library is offering for free download through August 23 the e-book *A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota*. Published by the Minnesota Historical Society in 2016 and edited by Sun



"Art at St. Kate's." The 13th annual summer showcase of local artists on the St. Catherine University campus will return in an online format from Friday through Sunday, July 10-12, due to the coronavirus pandemic. Sponsored by the Artists' Circle, the juried fair will feature everything from paintings, earrings and pottery to silk scarves, leather purses and metal sculpture. To view the list of artists and images of their work, visit [artistscircle.org](http://artistscircle.org). Pictured above is a collage by participating West End artist Kristin Schue.

Yung Shin, the Friends' "One Book, One Minnesota" selection is a series of essays by 16 Minnesota writers about what it is like to be a person of color in this state. Reading guides, conversation facilitators and virtual discussions on the book are also available. For more information, visit [thefriends.org](http://thefriends.org).

"The Power of Stories to Heal," a free online reading and discussion, will be led by writers Wendy Brown-Baez, Michael Kiesow Moore and Pamela Fletcher Bush at 7 p.m. Wednesday, July 15. Brown-Baez is the author of *Heart on the Page: A Portable Writing*

Workshop. Moore is the author of the poetry collections *What to Pray For* and *The Song Castle*. Bush, a former English professor at St. Catherine University, is executive director of *St. Paul Almanac*. Registration is required for the program. Visit [subtextbooks.com](http://subtextbooks.com).

*Song for My Baby and Other Stories* author Christopher Bremicker will discuss his new book and other literary issues with writer Lee Baker in an online program at 7 p.m. Wednesday, July 22. The program is free, but registration is required. Visit [subtextbooks.com](http://subtextbooks.com).

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# SPORTS



## The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

### Even runners are adjusting to virus

As the sports world becomes accustomed to new restrictions due to COVID-19, one might have thought that long-distance running was one sport that would retain a fairly normal routine. After all, a runner can go at his or her own pace to keep some social distancing, right?

That may be so for those who are just out for some exercise. It's a different story to the hardcore runners who compete in races.

One of the latest victims of the coronavirus was the Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon and all of its related events. Twin Cities in Motion (TCIM), which oversees the race, recently announced that the 39th annual marathon will still take place, but with a very different format. You may still see some marathoners running on Summit Avenue, but you won't see them in groups with spectators cheering them on.

Mike Logan, a Highland Park High School graduate who serves as TCIM's president, delivered the bad news that the Twin Cities Marathon will be a virtual event this year on weekends throughout October. Competitors will clock their own times and send them in. The same will be true for the 5K, 10K and 10-mile races that have been part of marathon weekend for years.

"We gave this a lot of thought," Logan said about the races that were originally scheduled for October 2-4. "We had a couple of different scenarios, but after consulting with the MASC (Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission) and state health directors, this was the right thing to do."

It was also important to do it early before the influx of runners from all over the world made flight and hotel reservations. "We already had 3,300 people registered (for the marathon)," Logan said. "We have to contact all of them."

TCIM has a professional recruiter who goes on the prowl to get the best runners in the world to come to town. That recruiter now has to reach out to runners in Africa, Asia and other distant locales to suggest they wait until next year. Marathoners received further bad news two days later when the New York City Marathon—the largest in the country—was also cancelled for 2020.

So instead of lining up in a pack, everybody who wants to compete and is willing to pay the \$94 fee can simply send in their times. "It's an honor system," Logan said. Some folks who had paid in advance will get partial refunds, according to him.

Devin Monson, head cross-country coach at Hamline University and a former participant in the marathon's 10K race, grimaced at the thought of the do-it-yourself routine. "I've watched a couple of people do it already," he said. "It doesn't look like fun."

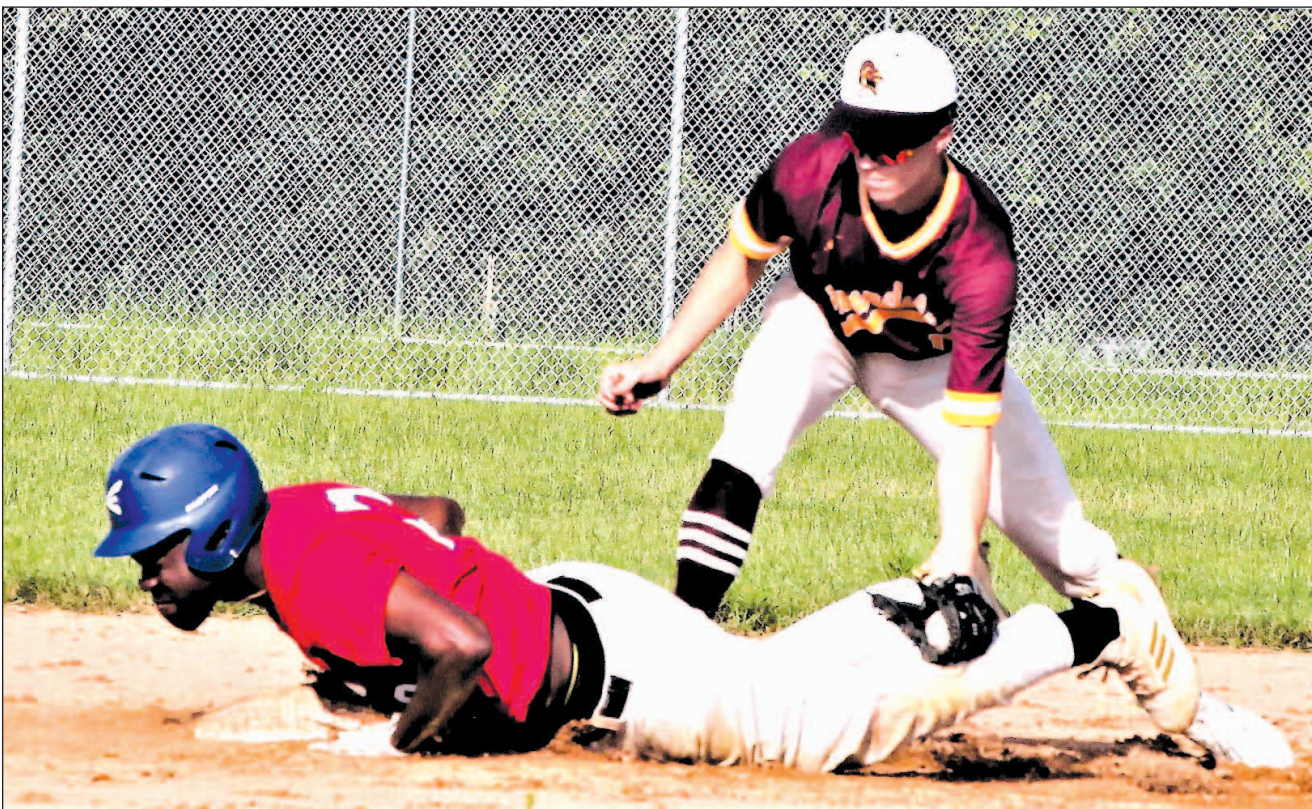
We've all heard of the loneliness of the long-distance runner. We've all seen high school and college cross-country hopefuls jogging alone in anticipation of a fall season. We also know about the new restrictions that are in place so that baseball games, from the youth level to the pros, can be played this summer. Football, volleyball and soccer players also are practicing in smaller groups in the hope that they'll be able to play this fall.

Cross-country has its own set of issues to deal with. To an outsider, it may come as a surprise that runners develop a camaraderie. They have teammates they like to run with, either because they can push each other or are just friends. However, come race day those friendships are put on hold. Cross-country runners are just as hard-nosed competitors as any member of the Minnesota Vikings.

Like a lot of coaches, Monson is slowly forging a path for his team this fall. Though there are meets where runners compete, the only ones that really matter are at the end of the season. The MIAC Championships are currently scheduled for October 31 at St. Olaf College. The NCAA Central Regional is at the same course two weeks later, with the finals set for November 21 in Terre Haute, Indiana.

High school runners get their chance to shine at the section meets, which also are held the last week of October. Those

WRIGHT CALL ▶ 16



The St. Paul Diamond's Joe Cobb slides safely into second during a 4-2 loss to Irondale on June 29. PHOTOS BY LOU MICHAELS

## Taking the field—It's a whole new ballgame for Legion/VFW teams this summer

BY BILL WAGNER

Youth baseball games finally started up late last month, with safety precautions in place due to concerns over the coronavirus pandemic. That was welcome news for local youngsters who lost their entire spring seasons. However, many of the teams that formerly played American Legion and VFW schedules have had to regroup as play resumed.

With Legion, VFW and other play already cancelled because of COVID-19 concerns, the Minnesota Youth Athletic Services (MYAS) and Metro Baseball League teamed up to salvage the summer season by forming the Baseball Alliance of Minnesota. The two organizations usually compete for pretty

much the same pool of players, but now they're working together.

"Metro Baseball is competitive with us, but we talked about this and were able to come together," said MYAS executive director Dawson Blanck.

He emphasized that the resumption of play comes with social distancing and other guidelines in place. "Everybody needs to do their part in regard to safety," he said. "If not, the fear is that we'll get locked down again."

"We've gone above what's being recommended now (for safety)," said Kim Eul, administrator for the Metro Baseball League.

Among the safety precautions instituted this summer are instructions that parents not watch their youngsters practice. There is to be no sharing of equip-

ment and no handshaking between players. Some teams were experimenting with having only one or two umpires call a game, though other early games had four-person umpiring crews. Spectators also were being urged to observe social distancing.

Eul said allowing baseball games to resume should give a boost for youngsters who were craving to play after all sports were canceled this spring. He cited many emails from parents pleading to allow their kids back on the field.

"We thought we'd be playing ball in May," Eul said. "This year was probably the best spring (weather) we've ever had and the kids didn't get to play."

According to Blanck, there are approximately 900 teams under the combined purview of the MYAS and Metro Baseball League covering about half of the state. The way the reopening of outdoor sports was regulated by the state, full

team practices and scrimmages were allowed to begin on June 24, followed two weeks later by games pitting teams that are geographically close to one another. Two weeks after that, teams could consider expanding competition beyond their local towns.

There are two segments of summer competition: one for players who lost their Legion or VFW seasons, and another for those ages 9-19 who play games sponsored by local baseball groups or who sign up on their own. As of late June, some teams remained largely intact and some not.

"We're mostly the same team, except that we're not under the Legion or VFW," said Bobby Thompson, coach of the West St. Paul Challengers, which is composed of recent graduates and incoming seniors from Henry Sibley High School and St. Thomas Academy.

Two other longtime local Legion teams—the Hamline Red and Hamline Purple—no longer exist. However, a new St. Paul Diamond team coached by Rob Thompson has emerged with players largely from St. Paul Academy, but also some from Central High School and Cretin-Derham Hall.

There also is no longer a Giantvalley Legion entry in the new format. However, Minnehaha Academy head coach Scott Glenn now manages a team that is known simply as Minnehaha and competes in the same small-school division as Minnetonka, Highland Park, Bell Plaine, Holy Family and Norwood/Young America.

Glenn said that, in contrast to past years with Giantvalley, his team has only three eligible Minnehaha Academy seniors playing for the new squad this summer. Other players hail from Heritage and Concordia academies.

As July approached, Glenn said that his squad was still waiting to receive insurance certification to have access to its home field.

Still, he said, if his team had to play all road games this summer, "so be it."



Sitting out in the open serves as the new dugout for members of the St. Paul Diamond baseball team.

# Sports Shorts

**Despite its best efforts** to keep the 15th annual Officer Scott Patrick Memorial 5K Run/Walk as an in-person race, the city of Mendota Heights announced on June 30 that the event originally scheduled for July 11 has been turned into a virtual race due to health concerns connected to the pandemic. Participants may run or walk the race anytime beginning July 9 and record their own times. Runners with times under 30 minutes should send them to Mayor Neil Garlock, the race director, at [neilg@mendota-heights.com](mailto:neilg@mendota-heights.com) by the end of Sunday, July 12. Participants will be eligible to qualify for nearly 130 door prizes, and race T-shirts will be included with the registration fee. Proceeds will benefit Special Olympics Minnesota. For more information or to register, visit [mendota-heights.com](http://mendota-heights.com).

**Fitness in the Parks** is back. The St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation is offering a limited schedule and all classes will follow current health and safety guidelines. Fitness in the



Mendota Heights Mayor Neil Garlock at the Officer Scott Patrick plaque in the Village at Mendota Heights. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Parks is free and open to all, but participants are urged to stay home if they are sick or at a higher risk of illness. Check out the full schedule and guidelines at [stpaul.gov/fitnessintheparks](http://stpaul.gov/fitnessintheparks).

**Concordia University-St. Paul** has named senior Jordyn Clark and junior Chris Garrett as its 2019-20 female and male athletes of the year. Goalkeeper Clark is the first student-athlete to earn the honor from the soccer program, while defensive end Garrett is the fifth recipient from the football program.

**Jaycee Rhodes**, who played in the Class AA state golf tournaments during her freshman and sophomore years at Visitation School, was unable to compete in varsity for her junior and senior years—one due to a transfer to Eastview High School and the other due to the pandemic. However, despite the setback and a pair of early bogeys, she fired an even par 72 to claim a one-stroke victory at the 2020 Minnesota High School Senior Showcase on June 10 at Bunker Hills Golf Club. The win earned Rhodes, who will play golf collegiately at St. Catherine University, a spot in the 2020 Girls High School Golf Invitational in Pinehurst Village, North Carolina, on August 3-5.

## 15◀ WRIGHT CALL

who place well there advance to the state meet scheduled for November 7, also at St. Olaf.

This is one time where high schools and colleges are likely to be following similar rules. Practices are easy enough with runners going out in smaller groups, but meets will have to undergo a few changes.

“The biggest difference is there won’t be any fans allowed,” Monson said. In past meets, teams could have as many runners as they want. The roster sizes this year might be limited.

Coaches are still discussing the best way to send the runners off. “In a smaller meet, they might have individual boxes for each team,” Monson said. “In larger ones, they just have to space everyone out.”

Once the runners start, the risk is considered minimal because they’re outside and they often separate themselves quickly.

One problem that hasn’t been solved yet is the subject of portable toilets. Each team will have to come prepared for its own emergency. Then again, any cross-country runner worth

his or her salt is likely to come up with a plan there.

On your mark, get set—go.

## Follow your teams over the airwaves

It appears that professional baseball, basketball, soccer and hockey teams will resume playing soon. That’s the good news. The bad news is it appears highly unlikely any of us will be able to get to watch the games in person.

If you want to see the Twins, Lynx, Loons or Wild play, you’ll probably have to settle for watching them on television. That should please saloon owners who went a couple of months with little or no income and can now welcome back patrons to watch their favorite teams.

It’ll look a little different than the last time you watched a game. With few exceptions, there won’t be anyone in the stands. Another twist is that, with the exception of when the Twins are playing at Target Field, the announcers probably won’t be in the stadium describing the action. They’ll be in a studio calling road games from a monitor.

This has been going on for some time in soccer. CBS introduced its own version of this kind of setup when the pro

golf tournament telecasts resumed a couple of weeks back. With good camera work, baseball should be no problem. Hockey, soccer and basketball are a little trickier, but TV is a visual medium and less talking from some folks might be better anyway.

It gets trickier for the radio guys if they’re not traveling and are having to work off a monitor. However, baseball has an old work-around that it can fall back on.

When baseball games first started being broadcast on the radio, announcers rarely traveled with the teams. Instead, away games were called via re-creation. A wire service ticker would send a pitch-by-pitch summary to the studio. “B!” was ball one and “SIF” was strike one via a foul ball, etc. An engineer would supply the sound effects.

Long before he was in the movies and later in politics, Ronald Reagan did this type of work for WOC-AM Radio in Davenport, Iowa, for the princely sum of \$5 a game. How much fun do you think it would be to hear Dan Gladden announcing a Minnesota Twins game that way?

Dave Wright can be reached at [dwright53@msn.com](mailto:dwright53@msn.com).

# District Councils

## Highland Park

[highlanddistrictcouncil.org](http://highlanddistrictcouncil.org) • 651-695-4005

**Communications help wanted**—The Highland District Council is seeking a part-time communication and outreach coordinator. That person will be responsible for HDC communications, website management, and electronic and print newsletters. He or she will also work with HDC staff, board members and residents to respond to current issues. For a detailed job description, visit the HDC website. To apply, submit a resume and cover letter by July 13 to [kathy@highlanddistrictcouncil.org](mailto:kathy@highlanddistrictcouncil.org).

**Snow emergencies explained**—The HDC’s Transportation Committee will host an online discussion on snow emergencies from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 15. Matthew Morreim, street maintenance manager for the St. Paul Department of Public Works, will provide information on how snow emergency decisions are made, what the routes are, staffing, etc. Morreim will answer questions following the presentation. For the link to access the meeting, visit the HDC’s website.

**Upcoming meetings**—board of directors, 7 p.m. Thursday, July 16; and Community Development Committee, 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 21. All HDC meetings are currently being conducted online. Links to access the meetings are posted on the HDC’s website.

## Macalester-Groveland

[macgrove.org](http://macgrove.org) • 651-695-4000

**Virtual book discussion**—The Macalester-Groveland and Highland Park neighborhoods will be coming together this summer to read *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi in memory of George Floyd. The goal is to educate people about racism and oppression, and to share a common reading experience to begin more long-term conversations. Learn more at [macgrove.org/2020webinars](http://macgrove.org/2020webinars).

**Summer webinar series**—Join neighbors online for free presentations from local experts on rooftop solar panels, pollinator gardens, gun safety and more. Space is limited to 25 participants. Visit [macgrove.org/2020webinars](http://macgrove.org/2020webinars) to register.

**PPE and food shelf support**—The Macalester-Groveland and Highland district 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 insecurity. For information, visit [givemn.org/story/fundcommunity](http://givemn.org/story/fundcommunity).

**Get your gardens ready**—Judging for the 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 plants, both in the ground or in pots. Learn more at [macgrove.org/aga](http://macgrove.org/aga).

**Annual meeting and elections**—The community council’s annual meeting and board elections will move online and take place in July and August. Visit [macgrove.org/annualmeeting](http://macgrove.org/annualmeeting) to learn about open board seats and proposed bylaw changes.

**Upcoming online meetings**—board of directors, 6:30 p.m. Thursday, July 9; Community Building Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, July 13; Housing and Land Use Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 22; and Transportation Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, July 27. The public can tune into committee and board meetings via Zoom. Council staff will send out meeting links a few days in advance. Email [mgcc@macgrove.org](mailto:mgcc@macgrove.org).

**COVID-19 resources**—Visit [macgrove.org/2020resources](http://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](mailto:mgcc@macgrove.org).

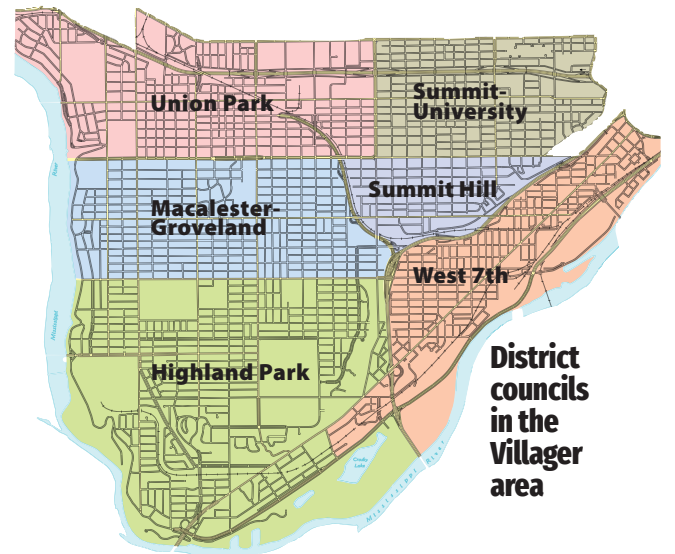
**Office closed**—The Macalester-Groveland Community Council office remains closed. Email [mgcc@macgrove.org](mailto:mgcc@macgrove.org) for more information.

## Union Park

[unionparkdc.org](http://unionparkdc.org) • 651-645-6887

**COVID-19 resources**—Those who need assistance or informational resources pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic are invited to call the UPDC office or visit its website.

**Stay in contact**—The public is invited to “like” the Union Park District Council on Facebook, follow it on Twitter at @UnionParkDC, and subscribe to its monthly e-newsletter, “Neighborhood Matters,” by emailing [info@unionparkdc.org](mailto:info@unionparkdc.org).



District councils in the Villager area

## West Seventh

[fortroadfederation.org](http://fortroadfederation.org) • 651-298-5599

**Board vacancies**—Candidates have stepped forward for each of the four vacant positions on the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation’s board of directors. The board will elect people to fill the positions at its meeting at 7 p.m. Monday, July 13.

**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 or learn more about a committee can contact the office or [emily@fortroadfederation.org](mailto:emily@fortroadfederation.org).

**Upcoming virtual meetings**—board of directors, 7 p.m. Monday, July 13; Community Engagement and Outreach Committee, Thursday, July 16, at a time to be determined; and Transportation and Land Use Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, August 5. Agendas and information on how to participate in the Zoom meetings can be found at [fortroadfederation.org/calendar](http://fortroadfederation.org/calendar).

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



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[click on www.teamedelstein.com](http://www.teamedelstein.com)

**HENRY EDELSTEIN** CRS  
651-270-1667 • \$724,900



**PATRICK RUBLE**  
651-230-0903



**100 HOWELL**  
Great opportunity to own a St. Thomas student registered rental. This property is in wonderful condition, features 4 bedrooms and 3 baths, it has a fenced in yard and fireplace. Only 4 blocks to St. Thomas!

**MIKE & TOM DISTAD**  
612-432-4771 • \$374,900



**1801 BAYARD**  
Lovingly updated 3 bedroom, 2 bath home in Highland Park. The home features newer windows, hardwood floors, AC, newer two car garage and updated kitchen. Truly move-in condition.

**MIKE & TOM DISTAD**  
612-432-4771 • \$459,900



**COMING SOON!**  
4BR, 2BA property with tons of charm. The hardwood floors have been refinished throughout. There is a great fireplace and newer two car garage. Great location less than a mile to the Mississippi and Highland Village.

**MIKE & TOM DISTAD**  
612-432-4771 • MID \$300



**MAGICAL MENDOTA HEIGHTS!**  
Carefree 2BR, 2BA main floor condo offer EZ, carefree living! New carpet, fresh paint throughout. Formal & informal dining, porch, private owner's suite, super storage. Two heated garage stalls, inground pool + more!  
1850 Eagle Ridge Drive #107.  
[click on www.teamedelstein.com](http://www.teamedelstein.com)

**HENRY EDELSTEIN** CRS  
651-270-1667 • \$195,000

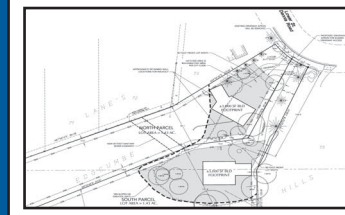


**MICHAELA TOOHEY**  
651-253-6830



**ONE LEVEL LIVING FOR ENTERTAINING!**  
Fantastic 4 BR, 4 BA home on Montcalm Place. Spacious gourmet kitchen. Main floor master suite. LL living area with bar. Grand outdoor spaces with bar. Prof landscaped. Don't miss this opportunity!

**TJ PIERRET**  
651-755-6669



**FABULOUS LOTS!!!**  
2130 & 2134 Lower St. Dennis: Two fabulous building sites in this unique wooded site. Each lot is 1.43 acres offering a large building pad.

**JIM BURTON**  
651-690-8556 • \$650/600K



**EXCEPTIONAL VALUE!!!**  
643 Pascal St: Immaculate 4 bedroom, 3 bath featuring gleaming hardwood floors, eat in kitchen, delightful porch off the garage, newer Andersen Windows, roof, furnace and air.

**JIM BURTON**  
651-690-8556 • \$319,900



**FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY!!!**  
295 Salem Church Rd: Spectacular Sunfish Lake home offering 12,447 sq ft to be used for your largest entertainment need but designed for comfortable everyday living as well. Quality construction and finishes.

**JIM BURTON**  
651-690-8556 • \$3,499,000



**COLIN VOERDING**  
651-357-3667



**DEER LAKE, WI**  
Great cabin opportunity, just over an hour from St. Paul! If you have dreams of a lake cabin in MN or WI, contact me to start your search.  
[AnotherHomeSoldByMary.com](http://www.AnotherHomeSoldByMary.com)

**MARY KNUDSEN** CRS  
651-335-6619



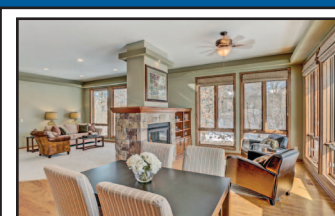
**MID-CENTURY RAMBLER ON TURTLE LAKE**  
Lakeshore living with 132' on Turtle Lake with spectacular sunset views. Spacious, open floor plan with both casual and formal areas. This rambler features the best of both old and new.  
[www.MidCenturyLakeHome.com](http://www.MidCenturyLakeHome.com)

**KRISTA WOLTER**  
612-247-5106 • \$1,495,000



**ARTISAN HOME ON BALD EAGLE LAKE**  
A once in a lifetime opportunity to own this architect designed home with over 2.2 Mil into it. Entertaining is easy both inside & out with the open floor plan and private lakeshore.

**KRISTA WOLTER**  
612-247-5106 • \$1,795,000



**DETACHED TOWNHOME**  
Main floor living in this custom built detached townhome with an open floor plan, hardwood floors, two-sided fireplace between the great room & hearth room. Main floor master suite.  
[www.NorthOaksTownhome.com](http://www.NorthOaksTownhome.com)

**KRISTA WOLTER**  
612-247-5106 • \$675,000



**BRIAN WAGNER, M.D.**  
651-497-4387



**712 FAIRMOUNT AVENUE!**  
Spectacular 5BR home in Crocus Hill. Built in 2014, this property offers a historical design and rich architectural details along with an open floor plan and modern amenities.  
[AnotherHomeSoldByMary.com](http://www.AnotherHomeSoldByMary.com)

**MARY KNUDSEN** CRS  
651-335-6619 • \$1,600,000



**1671 PINEHURST**  
First offer in 44 years! Lovingly maintained and updated is this large 30's built Tudor style 4 bedroom (on one floor) 3 baths 2 story with entertainment sized space plus finished lower level. Premier Pinehurst Avenue.

**LOLLY MCNEELY SALMEN**  
612-810-4138 • \$650,000  
**MORAGHAN DeROSIA**  
952-486-3697 • \$650,000



**STUNNING NEW TUDOR JUST STEPS TO THE RIVER...**  
2182 Stanford - 4 bedrooms, 4 baths, 3rd floor master suite. Newer Marvin windows, new kitchen and baths. Sun-drenched space is lovely and totally renovated. Back yard oasis with limestone and paver patio - state of the art mechanicals. Call Lolly for details!

**LOLLY MCNEELY SALMEN**  
612-810-4138 • \$624,900

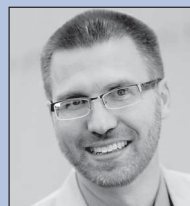


**324 SUMMIT #103, SAINT PAUL MN 55102**  
This condo in the Lightner-Young Mansion features vaulted ceilings, multiple terraces and has an additional apartment accessible by private elevator. The perfect Summit Avenue location with panoramic views of the river valley.

**MYA HONEYWELL**  
651-329-3619 • \$950,000



**KRISTA WOLTER**  
612-247-5106



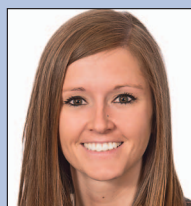
**BRYAN BEDESSEM**  
612-382-8415



**JIM BURTON**  
651-690-8556



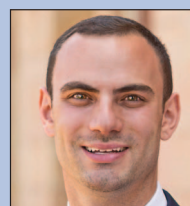
**MORAGHAN DeROSIA**  
952-486-3697



**CLAIRE BISANZ DISTAD**  
651-307-7260



**MICHELE DUMOND**  
651-283-7996



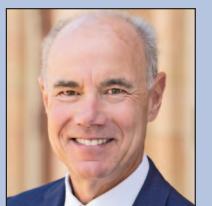
**HENRY EDELSTEIN**  
651-270-1667



**ROBBIE GROSSMAN**  
651-434-7887



**GARY FABEL**  
651-334-3659



**TOM EDELSTEIN**  
651-695-4300



**SARAH KINNEY**  
651-282-9621



**KAREN KELJIK**  
612-414-3245



**MIKE JAMBOR**  
612-889-9773



**MYA HONEYWELL THE HIVE**  
651-329-3619



**ANITA C. HILL**  
651-707-6408