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Ford site dubbed Highland Bridge

Ryan Cos. reveals new name, new partners for 122-acre development

By JANE MCCLURE

Ryan Companies, master developer of the former Ford Motor Company assembly plant in Highland Park, unveiled a new name for the 122-acre site and new partners for redeveloping it during a virtual groundbreaking for the \$1.3 billion project on July 14.

Ryan has christened the future neighborhood of 3,800 homes, 55 acres of parks and open spaces, 150,000 square feet of retail space and 315,000 square feet of office and institutional space Highland Bridge. The name refers to the urban village's connection to the surrounding Highland Park neighborhood.

Ryan's newest partners in the development are PulteGroup, which will build and market 320 row-houses, and Presbyterian Homes & Services, which will build a senior housing complex with independent and assisted-living apartments and memory care units.

The groundbreaking video was released against a backdrop of controversy over Highland Bridge's first project, a five-story mixed-use building that Ryan is developing with partner Weidner Apartment Homes



An artist's rendering of the central water feature at the newly christened Highland Bridge, looking north toward Ford Parkway.

at the southeast corner of Ford Parkway and Cretin Avenue. Plans for that building call for four levels of market-rate apartments above a 50,000-square-foot supermarket on the ground floor.

Ryan was granted variances for building heights and window areas for that project, but variances for lot coverage and car-sharing spaces were denied by the Saint Paul Board of Zoning Appeals. Ryan has filed an appeal of the rejected variances, which will be taken up by the Saint Paul City Council at 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 22.

However, the focus at the groundbreaking was on the Highland Bridge project as a whole. "We've paid particular attention to what makes Highland Park

special, and our goal is to uphold those unique qualities, to expand upon them, and to create a place where people thrive for generations," said Mike Ryan, president of Ryan Companies' north region.

Ryan Companies closed on its purchase of the former Ford property in December after working with Ford, city officials, local residents and business people on an amendment to the city's master plan for the site.

"In creating the new vision for the Ford site, we paid considerable attention to the core tenets of the master plan, significant input from the community,

HIGHLAND BRIDGE ▶2

Damaged Midway Center shops to be demolished

Evictions take strip mall businesses by surprise

By JANE MCCLURE

Midway Center business owners knew that someday they would have to relocate to make way for the mixed-use developments planned around the Allianz Field Major League Soccer stadium at Snelling and University avenues. The arson and vandalism that occurred on May 28 and 29 has hastened that day.

Several of the stores were looted and set on fire. Others sustained smoke and water damage. Preparations are now being made to demolish the buildings.

Leases in the Midway Center strip mall were terminated in late June by property owner RK Midway. Business owners had until July 17 to remove fixtures, equipment and inventory. The business

owners met on July 14 with Midway Center management, city officials and community development agencies. Although RK Midway has indicated that businesses could return when new retail spaces are ready to be occupied, some business owners said they could not wait that long.

"I really sympathize with these small business owners," said Saint Paul City Council member Dai Thao, whose Ward 1 includes Midway Center. The city has resources to help small businesses, he added. "We grieve the loss of their business with them, but we're prepared to help them move forward," he said.

Another agency that is offering assistance is the Asian Economic Development Association. Its executive director, Va-Meng Thoj, said his group is ready and willing to help.

The problem is finding available space, especially in the Midway area. About a dozen businesses were affected by the fire, smoke and water damage. Foot Locker, Great Clips, Game Stop and To New York in

the strip mall sustained the heaviest damage, as did the stand-alone Big Top Liquors building.

Some small-business owners initially assumed they would be able to clean up their leased spaces and reopen. Two restaurants, Peking Garden and Golden Gate Cafe, are the strip mall's oldest tenants. Golden Gate has been owned and operated by the Hui family for more than 40 years. Mary Lau's family has operated Peking Garden since 2006 after losing its longtime location on the University of Minnesota's East Bank to the development of TCF Bank Stadium.

Lau said she watched news coverage of the Midway Center fires on television and went to assess the damage as soon as possible. "We sustained smoke and water damage, but otherwise our restaurant was OK," she said. Finding out that the strip mall will be torn down was a shock, she added.

"We don't know where we're going to go or what

MIDWAY CENTER DEMOLITION ▶2

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City keeps door open to public financing for Midway Center project

By JANE McCLURE

The demolition of two Midway Shopping Center strip malls and the stand-alone Big Top Liquors building is expected to take place later this summer. But before that can happen, steps must be taken to preserve the use of tax increment financing (TIF) for redeveloping the property.

The Saint Paul City Council, acting as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Board, took two actions in June to move that process along. The HRA approved a demolition and development agreement with Snelling-Midway Redevelopment LLC. The partnership, which includes Midway Center owner Rick Birdoff and Minnesota United FC owner Bill McGuire, is involved in redeveloping the entire superblock bounded by Pas-

cal Street and Snelling, University and Saint Anthony avenues.

The HRA also determined that the Midway Center and Big Top Liquors buildings are sub-standard following the fire, smoke and water damage that was sustained on May 28 and 29 when rioting broke out across the Midway area following the death of George Floyd while in police custody in Minneapolis.

Kristin Guild, interim director of the Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development, emphasized that the HRA's actions simply preserved TIF as an option. It did not award TIF to the redevelopment project. If the developers choose to use TIF, Guild said, a separate application must be brought before the HRA and City Council.

"The Big Top Liquor building is really severely damaged," Guild said. So too is Mid-

way Center. The worst damage was sustained by the Foot Locker store, but fire, smoke and water damage spread to the adjacent stores, she said.

In September 2017, the HRA found that parcels in the Midway Shopping Center qualified as a "renewal and renovation TIF district." That finding allowed for demolition to make way for the soccer stadium and its adjacent parking lots and green space. The demolition of Big Top Liquors' original building on Snelling and Shields Avenue, the former American Bank building at Snelling and University, and the old Cub Foods and Midway Pro Bowl followed soon after.

The redevelopment of the superblock around Allianz Field is governed by a master plan approved by the City Council in 2016. The plan calls for a mix of retail, office, hotel

and multifamily residential uses. Before the damage of late May, city officials were awaiting a request from Snelling-Midway Redevelopment LLC for amendments to the master plan, Guild said.

McGuire unveiled plans for two mixed-use buildings west of the soccer stadium earlier this year. Those plans call for 234 market-rate apartments and 15,500 square feet of commercial space over structured parking.

McGuire is working with the Saint Paul Port Authority to obtain funding for environmental cleanup on part of the site. The Metropolitan Council in June awarded the United Village Midway Block B a \$125,000 grant for cleanup of a 2.4-acre site that is currently a surface parking lot. A grant from Ramsey County is still pending.

Peking Garden co-owners Mary Lau and Tina Yang sorted through boxes of goods as they cleaned up the restaurant and counted their losses following their eviction from Midway Shopping Center and the riots that left some of the shops unfit to reopen. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER



◀ MIDWAY CENTER DEMOLITION

we'll do," Lau said. She was hoping to work with her landlord on relocating, but does not know whether she will be able to wait as long as that may take.

Lau had recently renovated the Peking Garden space, investing about \$350,000. "We've lost everything," she said. "This is very difficult for us."

Two GoFundMe accounts have been started for Peking Garden, raising more than \$25,000 as of last week. Wyn Huynh, a friend of Lau's, said he and others felt compelled to help after hearing about the restaurant's forced relocation.

Thien's Cajun Boiling Seafood was a

relative newcomer to Midway Center, opening in 2018. Co-owner and chef Thien Do said his business and its neighbors at the north end of the strip mall only sustained smoke damage. "We were very surprised to get the letter indicating that our lease would be terminated," he said. "We're hoping to stay in the Midway, but we don't know what we're going to do."

Other business owners said they would also like to reopen, ideally in the Midway. A letter from RK Midway indicated that the businesses could come back when the proposed United Village at Midway project is complete. However, no timeline for that development has been announced.

◀ HIGHLAND BRIDGE

the Highland District Council, city leaders, and of course the legacy that Ford created," said Tony Barranco, Ryan Companies senior vice president. "We wanted to respect the rich history of the site and honor the heart and soul of Saint Paul."

"We're thrilled to partner with Ryan Companies and the city of Saint Paul to bring housing to Highland Park, an unmatched location with a rich history and an exciting vision for its future development," said Jamie Tharp, Minnesota Division president for Atlanta-based PulteGroup, which was known for many years as Pulte Homes. "This rowhome community will feature a historic idea rethought with innovative and contemporary floor plans designed to complement city living with rooftop terraces, brick facades and open floor plans."

The rowhouses will range from 1,900 to 3,000 square feet with prices starting in the upper \$300,000s. Construction is expected to begin this winter with the first homes available for closing in the winter of 2021-22. PulteGroup will work with Ryan and Habitat for Humanity to build six affordable rowhouses. All of the rowhouses will be built along a central water feature that will be fed by stormwater.

Roseville-based Presbyterian Homes & Services (PHS), which was founded in 1955, offers a wide range of senior housing and services. The proposed complex at Highland Bridge is expected to create more than 100 jobs.

"Our faith-based heritage provides a clear vision to extend our mission into areas of unmet need, such as at this forward-thinking development," said Jon Fletcher, vice president of Senior Housing Partners, the project

development arm of PHS. "In concert with the city of Saint Paul, Ryan Companies and community stakeholders, we have an excellent team assembled to create a welcoming environment for all."

The July 14 groundbreaking was also a chance to highlight Ryan's partnership with Xcel Energy to provide 100 percent renewable energy at Highland Bridge. Residents and businesses will be able to subscribe to locally generated solar and hydro energy and to power their electric vehicle at charging stations throughout the site.

"This is an exciting project for Xcel Energy, our customers and this unique urban development," said Chris Clark, president of Xcel Energy-Minnesota. "We're already leading the clean energy transition with a goal to reduce carbon emissions by 80 percent by 2030. Today we're taking another step to provide our

customers with clean and affordable energy sources that reduce our carbon footprint."

The groundbreaking included a look back at the Ford site's long history as a motor vehicle manufacturing plant and an ancestral home of the Dakota people. Saint Paul Mayor Melvin Carter read a proclamation honoring Dakota people past and present who have lived in the area.

"It's important to recognize the significance of this land to those who were here before," said Shelley Buck, president of the Prairie Island Indian Community Tribal Council. According to her, the property still has deep meaning for the Dakota people.

Further information on the development is available at highlandbridge.com. The website will be updated frequently with the latest information on specific projects and construction schedules.

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Area ice cream shops are taking a licking

After a slow start this spring, parlor business rebounds with a string of sultry summer days

By CAROLYN WALKUP

With face masks removed, people of all ages are digging into their favorite ice cream at local shops that are getting through the COVID-19 pandemic as best they can. Many of the ice cream parlors did not fully reopen until close to June, or just in time for the summer heat waves after being limited to curbside service throughout the spring. Though few of the shops are offering indoor seating, most are allowing customers inside to make their purchases.

"This felt like a good time to spread a little bit of joy," said Becky Najarian, co-owner and manager of Nelson's Ice Cream, 454 S. Snelling Ave. The seasonal ice cream shop is one of two owned by the Najarian family. It opened in 2013. The original Nelson's in Stillwater opened in 1923.

Nelson's employs about 40 high school and college students part-time, providing first-time job experience for many of them. This summer the owners decided to close both the indoor and outdoor seating areas to play it safe during the pandemic. One thing that has not changed is the oversized portions. "That's our business model," Najarian said. "We like the wow factor."

Just a half mile to the east, Cold Front at 490 S. Hamline Ave. reopened its indoor space in May after offering curbside pickup only since March. Partners George Doyle and Matt Jasper operate the ice cream parlor and coffee shop as a sideline to their professions as an accountant and photographer, respectively, while general manager Kyle Farizel runs the day-to-day operation. Ice cream accounts for about 75 percent of Cold Front's sales, with coffee drinks making up the remainder. The shop recently added four small tables on the sidewalk with seating that is six feet apart. Doyle and Jasper had planned to open a stand at the Saint Paul Saints games this summer, but that expansion



Will Atlas and son Will Jr., 1, cool off with an ice cream cone at 2 Scoops, 921 Selby Ave., served up by proprietor Brian White Jr., who is behind the counter. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

has been postponed.

Another seasonal ice cream stand, Minnehaha Scoop at 3352 Minnehaha Ave. S. in Minneapolis is open for curbside pickup only, but has benches outdoors and a grassy area in back where take-out customers may enjoy their ice cream. Owner James Fried, a resident of the Longfellow neighborhood, has been in the ice cream business for more than 20 years. He also operates a fleet of eight ice cream trucks that serve surrounding neighborhoods. However, his practice of sending those trucks to local parades and movies in the parks has been put on hold this summer.

Grand Ole Creamery, 750 Grand Ave., did not close during the first months of the pandemic. Chase Huffman, third-generation owner of the 36-year-old shop, said the creamery was considered an essential business exempt from the state-mandated lockdown.

Instituting online ordering for curbside pickup really helped his sales, according to Huffman. That portion of the business still accounts for about 40 percent of orders, he said, though customers are now allowed to come inside to order. However, the creamery is taking a hit this summer with the cancellation of Grand Old Day, the White Bear Lake Marketfest, the Minnehaha Falls bluegrass festival and the Minnesota State

Fair—big moneymakers in past years. The company also had to postpone its agreement to operate a stand at Major League Soccer's Allianz Field.

Nostalgia is a selling point for the ice cream served from the soda fountain at Saint Paul Corner Drug, 240 S. Snelling Ave. The drugstore is not serving ice cream cones during the pandemic due to sanitation concerns, but is offering its usual variety of ice cream sundaes, sodas, malts, shakes and floats. Sales this summer are limited to outdoor service through a sliding glass window installed by owner John Hoeschen.

Sweet Science Ice Cream has scaled back its offerings at Keg and Case Market, 928 W. Seventh St. Known for its creamy concoctions handcrafted in small batches, Sweet Science has suspended hand-scooping during the pandemic. Instead, it is selling pre-packaged ice cream cups, ice cream bars, ice cream sandwiches and sorbet freeze pops. When weather permits, Sweet Science also operates a stand under a tent in the Keg and Case parking lot.

The year-old Treats Cereal Bar & Boba at 770 Grand Ave. is different from the usual ice cream parlor. It infuses its soft-serve ice cream with crushed General Mills cereals. Sister-and-brother owners

ICE CREAM SHOPS ▶ 5



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Ayd Mill Road work will mean only slight changes to garden

By JANE McCLURE

When work to reconfigure Ayd Mill Road starts on August 1, volunteers at the Eleanor Graham Community Garden will be watching closely. A bike and pedestrian trail planned as part of the street project will intrude on a small part of the longtime community garden in the triangle formed between Hamline and Ashland avenues and Ayd Mill Road.

The need to move a tree and several berry bushes from the garden is a better outcome than some gardeners had earlier feared. At one point, they thought they would lose most if not all of their orchard and garden plots.

The Eleanor Graham Garden has been in place since the 1970s. It has about 65 garden plots, a berry hedge and an orchard. Gardeners pay a small annual fee to lease the plots to raise vegetables and flowering plants, including pollinator plants for bees. Some vegetables grown at the garden go to local food shelves.

A water line and several spigots were added to the garden to eliminate the need to haul water. The gardeners compost plant waste, take turns mowing the grass around the plots and work together on garden improvements. It is an all-volunteer operation with a small



Roger Johnson planted raspberries at the Eleanor Graham Garden in 2014. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

leadership group. The Union Park District Council is the fiscal agent for the garden and handles leasing with the city.

Eleanor Graham, a former Snelling-Hamline Community Council board member, helped found the garden. It was named in her honor after her death several years ago. Her intent was to provide a space for people who did not have space in their own yards to

grow food. Over half of the plots are rented by apartment dwellers.

The Ayd Mill Road project, which won City Council approval this spring, calls for reducing the 1.5-mile street from four lanes of motor vehicle traffic to three—two southbound and one northbound. A bicycle and pedestrian trail will be added in a 12-foot-wide space along the east side of Ayd Mill Road. Trail users will be able to cross the roadway at Ashland Avenue to connect to a new path that will take them to Hamline Avenue.

A stop sign between Ashland and Selby avenues that is meant to allow people to stop and turn around will be taken out due to changes to the ramp onto Ayd Mill Road. Space is being added to make it easier to make a left-hand turn onto northbound Ayd Mill Road from Ashland.

On southbound Ayd Mill Road, the right-turn lane at Ashland will be removed. People can still make turns there, but removing that lane frees up more space for the trail.

This will be the second time in a decade that the garden has faced disruption from a Saint Paul Department of Public Works project. When the Hamline Avenue bridge over Ayd Mill Road was rebuilt in 2013, garden volunteers worked with city staff to remove the

water line, spigots, bushes, perennial plants and trees. The plants that remained were protected during bridge construction.

Lisa Hiebert, the spokesperson for Public Works, said the new bike and pedestrian trails along Ayd Mill Road are being planned to minimize their impact on the community garden. The proposed trail and boulevard are being narrowed north of the Ashland Avenue access ramp from six to five feet for the boulevard and from 12 to 10 feet for the trail.

Longtime Snelling-Hamline resident Tom Robison said that while gardeners support the idea of a bicycle and pedestrian path, there were concerns that much of the garden's orchard and berry bushes could have been lost had the path not been narrowed.

While there has been some disappointment among garden volunteers that plans for reconfiguring Ayd Mill Road were made without talking to them first, they appreciated the ability to work with the city to reach a compromise.

"I think the city has been great to work with," Robison said. One misunderstanding occurred when gardeners went to their plots one day and found a row of construction stakes within the garden. However, that was quickly straightened out.

Committee shakeup delays relief to damaged Midway businesses

By JANE McCLURE

Neighbors United Funding Collaborative's Midway United initiative has raised more than \$1 million to help Midway area businesses that were damaged or destroyed in the riots of late May. Members of the Union Park District Council (UPDC) and Hamline Midway Coalition (HMC) want to see that money distributed as quickly as possible. However, questions about racial equity, which neighborhoods are eligible for the grants and who makes the allocations are delaying action.

"People want to rebuild our community," said HMC board member Erin Pryor Pavlika. "A majority of our businesses remain closed."

While community funds elsewhere in Saint Paul and Minneapolis have already awarded grants to damaged and destroyed businesses, the Neighbors United Funding Collaborative has been roiled by disagreements over the makeup of the fund's community advisory committee. Several advisory committee members resigned in June, and a new committee was formed.

At a meeting of the UPDC on July 1, Kate Mudge and Brandon Long, executive directors

of the HMC and UPDC, respectively, said they were not comfortable with the changes on the advisory committee. The executive directors had done much to get the fund rolling, "but we were essentially cut out" once the new advisory committee came in, said Mudge. "Issues of race were to be discussed, but the process was thrown out the window."

Mudge and Long have been targets of criticism in recent weeks, and Long has since left the UPDC.

UPDC community organizer Abdulrahman Wako said the advisory committee had previously had only two members of color. According to him, it was a matter of equity to change the makeup of the advisory committee. "It didn't have the capacity to do justice to the community," he said.

UPDC board member Terryann Nash, one of the new members of the advisory committee, said she felt she had to beg to be involved in the advisory committee. Her voice as a person of color was needed on the committee, she added.

The Neighbors United Funding Collaborative was formed three years ago by a resolution adopted by the Saint Paul City Council during planning for Allianz Field, the new

Major League Soccer stadium. The collaborative is overseen by the two district councils with the help of the community advisory committee and the Saint Paul Foundation. The HMC leads the fundraising effort for the collaborative, the advisory committee reviews grant applications and the UPDC distributes the funds.

The initial goal of the collaborative was to set up a fund for neighborhoods around the stadium, supporting such initiatives as new public amenities, public art and community-building activities. Those priorities changed in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. About \$200,000 in assistance for businesses affected by the pandemic was distributed this spring and summer.

Then came the riots in the wake of the May 25 killing of George Floyd while in the custody of Minneapolis police. Scores of businesses and institutions on University Avenue from west of Snelling to east of Lexington Parkway were damaged. Several were set ablaze and others were vandalized and looted. That prompted a change in the collaborative's focus.

One key change approved by the UPDC on July 13 would affect the eligibility of busi-

nesses for the funds. The collaborative's original memorandum of understanding limited financial assistance to businesses within a half-mile of Allianz Field. That was expanded to three-quarters of a mile to help businesses suffering during the pandemic. Now, the proposal is for no geographic boundaries. If the HMC agrees, any businesses that sustained damage from the riots could apply for financial assistance.

One point that several UPDC board members have raised is donors' intent. According to them, many donors to the fund who want to help businesses likely have a larger area in mind than the boundaries defined by the original memorandum of understanding.

UPDC members want financial assistance in the larger area limited to businesses damaged or destroyed in the rioting. If other reasons for fund allocations are considered in the future, that would require the approval of another amendment to the memorandum of understanding.

"I don't think anyone is opposed to helping businesses," said UPDC board member Jilla Nadimi. "The issue comes down to what is allowed under the (memorandum of understanding)."

4 ICE CREAM SHOPS

Trisha Seng and Minh Dinh also offer a variety of teas, coffees and waffles.

The newest ice cream parlor in the area is 2 Scoops Ice Cream Eatery at 921 Selby Ave. Operating an ice cream shop had been a long-time dream for co-owner Brian White Jr. and

his extended family. The shop had been in the planning stages for three years when the storefront at Selby and Milton Street became available with Golden Thyme Coffee's move just down the street. White had planned to open in March, but postponed it until May 30.

The brightly painted shop has a sports theme with one wall devoted to photos of lo-

cal sports figures. White himself was a running back at North Dakota State University. In addition to 18 flavors of ice cream, the menu at 2 Scoops includes pulled pork sandwiches, pizza, hot dogs and other food. White is hoping the hot food and homemade pies will help carry the shop through the cold weather months. He is also in the process of establish-

ing an ice cream catering service with a mobile freezer.

Opening in the midst of the pandemic as well as the civil unrest following George Floyd's death turned out to be good timing for 2 Scoops, according to White. "People come in with a frown on their face and leave smiling," he said.

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News Briefs

Electric scooters are charged up for next go-round in Saint Paul

Electric scooters are returning to Saint Paul streets. The City Council approved contracts with two scooter vendors on July 8, allowing the vehicles to operate until November 30.

Lime, which is based in San Francisco, can place up to 500 scooters throughout the city. Bird, based in Santa Monica, will place another 500 scooters around town. Around 338,000 electric scooter rides were reported in Saint Paul last year.

The scooters have generated controversy in recent years. Riders love the convenience of using an electronic payment system to make a quick trip, but critics contend the scooters are often left in places where they do not belong. One disability rights advocate last year sued the city of Minneapolis over scooters that were left to block sidewalks.

Scooters are not to be driven on sidewalks, but can be used on streets, in bike lanes, and on bike paths. They can be parked on city right-of-way, but are not allowed to block sidewalks.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Lime and Bird must meet strict cleaning protocols. That will be done when a scooter is moved by contractors or picked up for charging overnight.

Council gives final approval for 5-story apartment at Selby-Dale

TJL Development's plans to construct a five-story apartment building at 594 Selby Ave. won unanimous approval from the Saint Paul City Council on July 15. The decision also clears the way for rehabbing and converting a former auto repair shop at 156 N. Dale St.

The apartment building will have 81 units



Making an entrance. National Park rangers Kyle Just and Cory Mohn eased David and Marni Oberpriller's kayak into Pickerel Lake at Lilydale Regional Park during a Paddle with a Ranger event on July 14 through the Mississippi Park Connection. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

ranging in size from studios to three bedrooms, with 110 parking spaces below ground and on the first floor. A second-floor deck will be located on the west side of the building.

The project won Planning Commission approval for seven variances and rezoning earlier this spring. The Heritage Preservation Commission supported the design for the apartment building, which is in the Historic Hill District. However, the HPC rejected a request from the developer to demolish the former auto repair shop

The variances approved by the Planning Commission for density and building setbacks were final and did not require City Council approval.

dents will do the installation.

Such mirrors are typically seen on parking structures where vehicles exit. Three mirrors have gone into place in Summit Hill, including one on the south side of Grand Avenue between Grotto and Saint Albans streets.

Department of Public Works spokesperson Lisa Hiebert said the few mirrors her department is aware of prior to this have been placed on private property and are maintained by the owners. She said any mirror placed in the public right-of-way would require a permit.

Saint Paul OKs sound variances for sewer relining work this fall

The Saint Paul City Council approved sound level variances on July 15 for the relining of sewers at 11 locations around the city. The variances are in place for September 8 through October 9.

Area locations include Aldine Street between Saint Anthony and University avenues, Cleveland Avenue between Marshall and Dayton avenues, Cleveland between Portland and Ashland avenues, Grand Avenue between Cleveland and Prior avenues, Marshall between Prior and Howell Street, Marshall between Snelling Avenue and Asbury Street, Pelham Boulevard between Wabash and Myrtle avenues, Portland between Hamline Avenue and Syndicate Street, and Snelling between Upper Saint Dennis and Edgumbe roads.

The variance allows for two overnight work periods on each project. From 6 p.m.-7 a.m., pumps and other equipment will not be allowed to exceed 80 decibels at 50 feet. Affected property owners within 400 feet of each project will be notified.

News Briefs were compiled by Jane McClure.

Look what's new in Summit Hill: Mirrors to end traffic blind spots

A long-awaited safety improvement in Summit Hill neighborhood is now a reality. A limited number of parabolic mirrors are being installed to provide greater safety for motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists at the ends of alleys and streets with blind spots.

"Folks are excited to finally get the mirrors up," said Summit Hill Association board member Bridget Ales. According to her, the SHA has heard from more than half a dozen neighbors wanting mirrors. The mirrors will be provided free of charge and will be placed in consultation with the district council. Resi-



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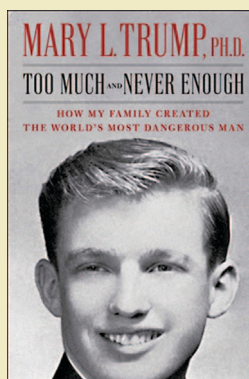
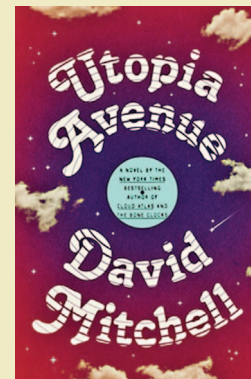
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Council approves new rules designed to protect tenants

By JANE McCLURE

Saint Paul's new SAFE (Stable, Accessible, Fair and Equitable) Housing Tenant Protections Ordinance won unanimous approval from the City Council on July 8. However, the work is just beginning as city officials start establishing measures to enforce the new ordinance before it takes effect in March.

Advocates contend that those measures will reduce displacement and protect tenants from unethical landlords. They point to the city's shortage of affordable housing and the need to help protect low-income people and people of color. That is especially true during the COVID-19 pandemic, they say, as advocates brace for an upcoming spate of foreclosures and evictions.

However, many landlords and property management companies object to the new regulations, claiming that they add to the costs and complexities of renting. Some predict that more landlords will sell their properties rather than deal with more regulations.

More than half of Saint Paul residents are renters and the city is facing an affordable housing shortage.

One of the most controversial aspects of the new rules is a "just cause" provision that requires landlords to provide written reasons why a lease is not being renewed and limits conditions under which they may terminate a lease. Saint Paul is the first city in the state to have such a measure. Some tenants and advocacy groups claim leases were being terminated simply because tenants asked for repairs.

Landlords can still opt to not renew a lease if a tenant has not paid or is habitually late with rent, or violated significant lease conditions. A lease can also be terminated if a landlord wishes to renovate a unit or wants to rent that unit to a family member.

The ordinance also limits the use of credit and criminal history in screening tenants, and changes how past evictions are considered when a rental application is reviewed.

Tenants cannot be denied a lease if they had a misdemeanor more than three years ago or a felony more than seven years ago. They could still be turned down if they had been convicted of murder, distributing or manufacturing controlled substances, arson, kidnapping, assault, robbery, manslaughter or criminal sexual conduct, or if they are on the lifetime sexual offender registry.

The ordinance caps the deposit a landlord can require to one month's rent. Landlords of all types of rental residential properties will be required to provide the city and tenants with a 90-day advance notice of an impending sale. Landlords are also required to provide tenants with packets of information on tenants' rights and responsibilities.

Council members praised the ordinance, as did Mayor Melvin Carter in a statement after the vote. Supporters cited the two years of work on the ordinance.

Council member Mitra Jalali said the coronavirus pandemic has put the spotlight on housing access in Saint Paul as a public health issue. She said she is "incredibly proud" to have played a role in the ordinance's passage.

"I believe it couldn't have come at a more important time," Jalali said.

Council member Chris Tolbert said he will be monitoring the ordinance closely as it goes forward, and urged the council to be flexible when looking at its impact on the city's rental housing market. Tolbert said that while he does not agree with everything in the ordinance, he wants to see it go forward and for the council to be willing to make changes to it if needed.

"I don't think any ordinance should be set in stone," Tolbert said.

Correction

A story in the July 8 issue of the *Villager* should have stated that the monarch is being considered for inclusion on the updated federal endangered species list that is due to be announced at the end of 2020.



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VIEWPOINT

Mayor Carter is using crises as cover for questionable hires

BY SHIRLEY ERSTAD, DAVE
DURENBERGER AND LAURA GOODMAN

The year is more than half over and what a ride it has been. Globally, we have been dealing with a pandemic, economic uncertainty, social unrest and more signs of climate change, all with a presidential election in November amid questions about how the balloting will be safely, effectively and accurately carried out. These situations cause communities to ask themselves how to cope, be good human beings and chart a sustainable course. They require us to take stock of where we are and to reflect on past decisions, plans and commitments.

Which brings us to the question, “How are you, Saint Paul?”

We wouldn't know, given the mayor and City Council's lack of transparent governance. Our leaders have used the pandemic, economic collapse and racial unrest as a cover to make questionable and highly expensive hires that on the surface seem to be working only to inflate the mayor's image. We cannot afford a fireworks show in the Capital City, but the mayor needs three chiefs-of-staff and a political director to communicate with the seven-member City Council.

Mayor Melvin Carter recently told Saint Paul's legislative delegation that our city budget needs to be cut by \$20 million in 2020. In March, Saint Paul implemented a hiring freeze due to COVID-19 and the unknown yet likely devastating economic

impact of the pandemic on our city.

In 2019, Saint Paul broke a decades-old record of homicides in a year. Even before the events surrounding the murder of George Floyd, the city was on track to break the record for shots fired that was set only last year. While violence may be increasing nationally, too, that is no excuse for not dealing with our own issues.

In December 2019 Mayor Carter proposed, and the City Council approved, a supplemental city budget. One of the components of that budget was \$1.7 million for Community First Public Safety (CFPS) to fund several programs already in place, including Right Track, which facilitates youth employment, and Community Ambassadors, which supports citizen interactions with police on the street. As early as February, before COVID, City Council members Jane Prince and Nelsie Yang asked the mayor's office why that money was not being spent. Months later, City Council member Rebecca Noecker asked Mayor Carter that same question at a City Council meeting. However, she was speaking only to an image of the mayor's name, since he had left the meeting before any questions could be asked.

Later, Mayor Carter's response was that a CFPS coordinator needed to be hired. As of this writing, that has yet to be done and the CFPS money remains unspent, even for programs already in place. Much angst and passion have been expressed throughout our country that policing systems and structures need to be addressed. This makes the mayor's

Hiring mayoral staff seems to be one of this administration's fortes. Not only has the CFPS coordinator position been created, a single chief-of-staff position has morphed into three chiefs-of-staff... There are now 13 assistants to the mayor on the city payroll.

inaction on CFPS that much more confusing and disturbing.

Hiring mayoral staff seems to be one of this administration's fortes. Not only has the CFPS coordinator position been created, a single chief-of-staff position has morphed into three chiefs-of-staff and we've seen the creation of a second deputy parks director.

There are now 13 assistants to the mayor on the city payroll plus the recently filled position of executive project lead for redevelopment. The director of Planning and Economic Development (PED) position has been vacant for a year. Why was a project lead hired for \$180,000 per year instead of a qualified PED director?

Also hired since the COVID lockdown began is a new political director for the mayor, ostensibly to replace the outgoing press secretary. This hire, which the mayor said is necessary for him to communicate with the City Council, comes from the local AFSCME union, which endorsed Mayor

Carter's candidacy in 2017 (even though there was no DFL endorsement in the mayoral race) and the candidacy of every sitting City Council member. The mayor's new political director has been employed since April, without the required approval of the City Council. Despite that glitch, it stretches the imagination that the mayor and City Council cannot communicate with one another without a highly paid intermediary.

In addition to these under-the-cover-of-crisis hires, \$50,000 of public money is being paid to a public relations firm to bolster Carter's image as the “economic mayor.”

We cannot escape the math. Many highly paid staff positions take funding away from other things our community needs, like mill-and-overlay projects for our pot-holed streets. Renters and homeowners alike are already feeling the heavy weight of city taxes.

Elected leaders and citizens have responsibilities to one another, including transparency and accountability. As we have seen at the national and now city level, some questionable things are being done during this time of uncertainty. It is our civic duty to demand accountability to stop that from happening.

Shirley Erstad, Dave Durenberger and Laura Goodman are members of Saint Paul STRONG, a nonpartisan organization dedicated to improving representative government in Saint Paul by empowering citizen participation and encouraging open and transparent public processes at City Hall.

INBOX

Add sports fields to Ford site

Our neighborhood is missing a big opportunity by not putting more fields for recreational sports at the Ford site. The development will create an increase in the population of Highland Park. Many of the people moving in will be families with children. These kids will want to play sports near their home. Kids don't want to stroll in a landscaped park, they want to play sports like soccer, lacrosse and basketball. The high density of the Ford site means these kids won't have a backyard of their own to run around in.

A great place for recreational fields on the Ford site would be the southwest corner of Montreal and Cleveland avenues. This area is adjacent to the existing baseball and softball diamonds and is farther away from residential buildings to minimize the impact of lights and noise. It should be rezoned for recreational fields.

*Dominik Amann, age 15
Highland Park*

Heroes who stand up for justice

In Jack Maloney's letter to the editor (“Many ways to combat racism,” *Villager* Inbox, July 8), he suggested that the people who protested the murder of George Floyd put their time and passion into “actually doing something constructive.” Please don't assume that people who protested aren't the same people who are already donating time to a food bank or homeless shelter, teaching ESL, cleaning up public spaces or volunteering with children in inner-city schools. The protests are the very reason that all four police officers were arrested for the murder of Mr. Floyd. If people had not taken to the streets, the officers would not have been charged. People have grown weary of repeatedly seeing police officers put on paid leave while the department investigates, only to declare the officers' actions justified.

When our nation was created, rights were only granted to wealthy white males. Every right outside of the original (voting rights for women, civil rights, GLBT rights, etc.) was fought for by people taking to the streets in protest. One could argue it is the ultimate act required to enact systemic change.

Mr. Maloney stated that protesting is the most convenient way to combat racism. There is nothing convenient about marching in the scorching heat for hours, facing down

School resource officers got a bad rap in Villager story

The article about school resource officers (SROs) in the July 8 *Villager* was disappointing. I was specifically troubled by the *Villager's* willingness to print inflammatory quotes by Saint Paul School Board member Chauntyll Allen and Como Park High School student Kalid Ali. Neither Ms. Allen's remark that having an SRO present at a school was a “traumatic situation,” nor Mr. Ali's remark that “if you see an officer with a gun, it's a threat that you might be the next one on his hit list,” reflected the day-to-day reality of SROs in Saint Paul schools. Why did the reporter, Casey Ek, not query Ms. Allen and Mr. Ali further to have them offer evidence to support these mind-boggling assertions?

Both of my children have attended Saint Paul schools, and my daughter is a senior at Washington Technology Magnet School on the city's North Side. I have also volunteered at Washington, serving for the last four years on the school's School Climate Improvement Team. SCIT teams routinely review disciplinary data and speak with school leaders. Never in the past four years have we read or heard about SROs at Washington or elsewhere causing “trauma” or carrying a “hit list.” In fact, I'm unaware of any SRO ever having drawn his or her gun. My own observations and interactions with SROs on duty

at Washington are closer to the scene depicted in the photo accompanying your article of an SRO engaged in nonconfrontational conversation with students, who show evident respect for the uniformed officer.

I believe, as do most district teachers and principals, that having SROs stationed in Saint Paul high schools is a good idea and supported by data. If there's conflict at the school, it nearly always arises from students in conflict with each other or with teachers and administrators. SROs were not the cause of any “trauma” or trouble; they were there to prevent it by their very presence and to deal with it in coordination with school teachers and staff.

In the aftermath of the protests and riots in late May and early June, Minneapolis police have reduced their patrol presence in the city. Not surprisingly, crime has risen. I predict that whenever students return to Saint Paul high schools, the same dynamic will take hold. Misbehaving students understand moral hazard as well as adults, and will adjust quickly to the absence of SROs. Inevitably, police will be called for more serious situations. Hopefully, they won't be too late to help.

*Barry Randall
Macalester-Groveland*

militarized police and being shot at with tear gas canisters, rubber bullets and flash-bang grenades. The people who put their personal safety on the line to stand up for racial and social justice are heroes. When they're not exhausting themselves in the streets, I can assure you they're already out there volunteering in the community.

*Rachel Goligoski
Lexington-Hamline*

Good riddance to racist logos

Twenty years ago, the suburban high school where I coached and taught banned students from wearing T-shirts and belt buckles with the Confederate battle flag. Likewise, students were not allowed to park in the student lot if their vehicles carried images of that flag. Despite objections by some students and parents, the measures were put in place by the school board and administrators because the display

of the CSA battle flag was seen for what it was—a symbol of hate and white supremacy that could provoke violent conflicts between students.

In my school, the display of the CSA battle flag by a small number of students was done primarily to intimidate, demean and taunt minority students as well as students who held liberal ideas about politics. The students who opposed the ban sometimes said they were merely honoring American history and heritage. It's unlikely any of them would have been able to name a single Civil War battlefield or Union or Confederate general, or describe what Reconstruction was about or the purpose of Jim Crow laws. Certainly, these same students would probably not have had a clue regarding the lives of enslaved people or why the Civil War was fought. All they knew was that for some vague reason, the CSA battle flag was a way for them to antagonize authorities and feel superior to other students.

84 INBOX

Twenty-eight years ago, a group from my church attended a service at All Nations Church, which primarily serves the Native American community in Minneapolis. After the service, we all marched to the Metrodome to protest the racially offensive logo of the Washington Redskins, a team that was set to play the Buffalo Bills later that day in the Super Bowl in Minneapolis. This many years later, the Redskins will finally change the team name. Sadly, team owners apparently are not considering the name change because of any moral outrage on the part of the public. Instead, the name change has more to do with the bottom line: Nike has refused to carry clothing and other team paraphernalia that display the Redskins logo and name.

My hometown of Cleveland has finally decided it's time the Indians dropped its offensive team name, and the state of Mississippi recently removed the CSA battle flag inset on its state flag. It's nice to see that the former states of the Confederacy, NASCAR, the National Football League and Major League Baseball will finally enter the modern era and dispense with their racist symbols. They should be commended, but hey, what took you guys so long?

*M.L. Kluznik
Mendota Heights*

Great city needs a new name

I have enjoyed living in this progressive and liberal-minded city for the past 12 years. However, one thing that has always bothered me is the name. How can there be a separation between church and state when the city is named Saint Paul? Is it fair to force our Muslim neighbors and people of other faiths (as well as atheists) to live in a city named after a Christian saint? In the current time when we are reevaluating statues and monuments as well as the names of lakes and parkways, we need to consider the same for our city. At a minimum, the name is politically incorrect and to some it may be offensive. In 2016 Barrow, Alaska, changed its name to an indigenous word. It is time for Saint Paul to do the same. We need a name that is inclusive to all people who call this great city home.

*Chris Bredehoft
Merriam Park*

Protests need protections

Sad but not unexpected that a young lady recently lost her life in Seattle while protesting on Interstate 5. Summer Taylor, 24, protesting with several others around 1:40 a.m. on July 4, was struck by a car along with another person who remains in critical condition as I'm writing this. News reports say the freeway was closed and blocked with several cars with no lights on, but a car swerved around the stationary cars and into the protesters. The driver who left the scene was eventually stopped by protesters in another car until authorities could make an arrest.

Apparently, the Washington State Patrol had closed the freeway ramps. They assume the driver got on the freeway by driving the wrong way down an exit ramp. Now the Washington State Patrol will no longer allow protests on Interstate 5. Seems like they admit they looked the other way

knowing people were on the freeway but refused to send vehicles with flashing lights to protect the protesters as a warning to any vehicle that might have ended up there.

I put the biggest blame on the local politicians who let this tragedy happen in the first place. Will our own mayors and governor get the message and stop the reckless behavior we're seeing in our own city before more people have to die?

*W. Huemmer
Highland Park*

Discomfort for the privileged

I generally am a fan of Saint Paul Police Chief Todd Axtell. But his statement that police officers were treated during the recent civil unrest in ways that were "dehumanizing" left me bitterly angry. Did it make them feel vulnerable, falsely accused, targeted, prejudged, victimized or fearful? Now imagine feeling this all your life as a black man or woman in this city.

I'd like to think the Saint Paul Police Department learned a valuable lesson from the experience of "civil unrest." That is what civil unrest is supposed to do: make those who are privileged feel the discomfort of those who are suffering. But it seems to have gone over Chief Axtell's head. His obviously insensitive statement left me teary with hopelessness. It's not just people of color whose trust they've lost.

*Kate Vichich
Snelling-Hamline*

Hypocrisy of suing big oil

The state of Minnesota has filed a lawsuit against large oil firms for making misleading statements about climate change. Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison has said these misleading statements have been going on for 30 years. If the state knows the truth about the dangerous effects of burning fossil fuels and has known for 30 years, why does it keep building roads to promote driving and the burning of fossil fuels? Keith Ellison, the frontman in this lawsuit, knows the truth firsthand, so does he ride a bike when traveling around the state?

Why isn't the state filing a lawsuit against Ford Motor Company? For decades, Ford has known the truth about climate change, yet it continues to build its hugely popular F-Series pickup trucks that are gas-guzzling, iceberg-melting machines. In 2019 alone, Ford sold 900,000 F-Series pickup trucks. Why isn't Ford in trouble? Why are only those who provide the gas in trouble? Keith Ellison and millions of Minnesotans drive all over the place, and they're going to blame this on the oil firms? Get real.

*Frank Erickson
Standish, Minneapolis*

The Villager welcomes letters to the editor. To be considered for publication, however, letters must be signed, indicate the neighborhood in which the letter writer lives and include a telephone number for verification purposes. Please send your letter to the Villager at 757 S. Snelling Ave., Saint Paul, MN 55116, or email it to letters@myvillager.com.

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REAL ESTATE

Multifamily boom

Pandemic puts a small, hopefully short-lived dent in rental market

By Frank Jossi

The Harper, the new five-story apartment building at the corner of Selby and Snelling avenues, opened in March, just in time to suffer through the first few months of the coronavirus pandemic and the state-imposed lockdown of the economy.

Developed by Ryan Companies, the same firm that developed the five-story Vintage at Selby across the street, the Harper also weathered several nights of civil unrest following the death of George Floyd in South Minneapolis on May 25. First-floor windows were boarded up in fear of vandalism. Still, prospective tenants continued to tour the building, albeit at a slower pace.

The leasing of the Harper “has been going well in a tough time,” according to Joseph Peris, a manager of real estate development for Ryan. “We’ve gotten a good reception from the neighborhood. There’s definitely a demand for living in the Snelling-Selby area.”

Typically, new apartment buildings fill up within a year of their opening, but Ryan Companies expects it will take a good four to six months longer to fully lease the Harper. Due to the pandemic, many prospective tenants are opting to stay in their current homes, according to Peris. “Folks are becoming entrenched where they are; they’re a little stickier now than they used to be,” he said.

Apartment living continues to be an attractive option in the Twin Cities even with the pandemic-generated fears of denser living. The metro area’s apartment vacancy rate, which has been extremely low in recent years, still stands at 3.2 percent, according to Brent Wittenberg, vice president of Marquette Advisors, a real estate consulting firm and publisher of the quarterly *Apartment Trends*. However, he added, that vacancy rate may be artificially low because of the pandemic and the related government stimulus payments, additional unemployment benefits and the moratorium on apartment evictions.

Wittenberg remains bullish on the local rental market. The city of Saint Paul will see 3,500 new apartments built between now and 2022, he said, a much more aggressive pace than in the past seven years when developers added just 3,000 new apartments.

“We expect the market will respond very well to the new apartment products in Saint Paul, including the neighborhoods south of I-94,” he said. “These are appealing, walkable neighborhoods with ready access to goods and services, public amenities and significant employment centers.”

The Twin Cities was one of the first urban markets to recover from the economic recession of 2008, and Wittenberg believes that history will repeat itself once the threat of COVID-19 infection dissipates. However, the landscape will continue to be challenging for developers as the region delivers an estimated 9,000 new apartment units this year and potentially 30,000 new apartments over the next three years.

In July, Twin Cities landlords as a whole collected 86 percent of the rent due, which was substantially higher than the national average, according to Cecil Smith, president and CEO of the Minnesota Multi Housing Association. The rent collection was “beyond everyone’s expectations,” he said, and possibly due in part to the additional \$600 per week federal government unemployment assistance. Smith also credited the moratorium on evictions and the industry’s decision not to charge late fees for rent or to impose rent increases for helping to stabilize the market.

The Twin Cities continue to have a critical shortage of apartments despite the many new multifamily buildings going up in the downtown, Uptown and Dinkytown areas of Minneapolis, according to Smith. “We still have full occupancy in the metro. That hasn’t changed,” he said.

Before the onslaught of COVID-19, the apartment market was so healthy that some buildings filled up a year ahead of schedule,



The living and kitchen areas of one of the Harper’s 163 apartments (above) and the second-floor pool deck (right).

PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER



he said. However, challenges remain, from the ongoing pandemic to the costly regulations imposed by Saint Paul’s new Tenant Protections Ordinance, he said.

The impact of COVID-19 pushed the usual spring rush for new leases into summer and forced policy changes within buildings, according to Brenda Hvambal, vice president of marketing for Steven Scott Co., which manages 10,000 apartment units in the Twin Cities, including the Finn and South Highland in Highland Park. Many apartment amenities such as fitness centers, party rooms and theaters were closed for several weeks and only recently reopened at a limited capacity, Hvambal said.

About half of the tenants understood the new limitations, but the rest were angry they could not use those spaces, she said. Landlords and property management companies have also had to adapt to new protocols, switching to virtual tours and appointment-only visits, requiring face masks on all staff

and visitors, and reducing the potential touch points in buildings, she added.

The Harper’s management has held socially distant ice-breakers for new tenants outside of the building, Peris said. And with more tenants having groceries delivered, staff have found places to store grocery bags until tenants have a chance to pick them up, he said.

The Harper has attracted local college students, empty-nesters and others who mirror the residents of the surrounding neighborhood, according to Peris. “We’d like to be more leased,” he said, “but relative to everything that has happened, the interest we’ve seen is a testament to the product and the neighborhood.”

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Low inventory of homes for sale makes for balanced market

Homeowners who are ready to sell are able to get close to 100% of initial asking price

By FRANK JOSSI

The coronavirus pandemic may be taking a toll on many parts of the U.S. economy, but the real estate market in the Twin Cities remains strong. “Honestly, the real estate market has been strong in relative terms to the conditions we’re in now,” said Patrick Ruble, president of the Saint Paul Area Association of Realtors. “When you look at this year, it’s below last year, but it’s tracking in the same pattern.”

Historically low interest rates and continued strong demand are driving the market, said Ruble. The problem, as it has been for years, is the lack of supply. “We’d like to see more listings, and that’s the case across the Twin Cities,” said Ruble, who is a manager in the Highland Park office of Coldwell Banker Realty.

The trade association Minnesota Realtors released a report in mid-July showing a 7.8 percent increase in pending sales and a 12 percent decline in listings statewide in June 2020 compared to June 2019. The supply of Minnesota homes for sale fell 30 percent, bringing a slight price increase despite a challenging economy. The market has a two-month supply of homes for sale, or

Neighborhood	Homes Sold 2019	Homes Sold Jan.-May 2020	Median Price 2018	Median Price 2019	Percentage of Original List Price, 2020
Highland Park	318	125	\$325,000	\$334,450	98.7%
Macalester-Groveland	305	115	\$351,000	\$354,950	98.1%
Merriam/Union Park	139	50	\$325,000	\$335,000	98.9%
West Seventh	152	75	\$229,930	\$230,000	98.5%
Summit Hill	88	41	\$418,000	\$454,950	97.8%
Summit-University	213	61	\$244,250	\$251,000	96.5%
Downtown Saint Paul	170	49	\$193,250	\$205,900	96.7%
Lilydale	22	9	\$275,000	\$342,500	99.1%
Mendota Heights	201	47	\$385,000	\$424,250	98.4%
Mpls. Longfellow	396	120	\$265,950	\$280,000	101.1%
Mpls. Nokomis	737	270	\$275,000	\$291,000	100.7%

The figures for homes sold and the prices of those homes in neighborhoods served by the Villager were supplied by the Regional Multiple Listing Service and the Saint Paul Area Association of Realtors.

four months less than what a balanced market would have.

The number of new listings and closed sales has dropped dramatically in neighborhoods served by the Villager, but home prices less so. In all 10 of those neighborhoods, homes this year have sold within 3.5 percent of their original asking price (see chart above). And after double-digit decreases in April and May, the number of signed purchase agreements in June 2020 increased by 6.2 percent when compared to June 2019, according to the Saint Paul and Minneapolis Area Associations of Realtors.

With the lack of new-home construction, the inventory of homes for sale remains tight, according to Ruble. More people are staying put and refinancing or remodeling their homes rather than buying a new house given the limited choices and

the continued uncertainty about the economy.

Lower-priced homes, generally below \$300,000, represent the hottest segment of the real estate market currently. Those homes are often attracting multiple bids, Ruble said. What is making the lower-priced market so competitive is the demand of first-time home buyers and baby boomer empty-nesters looking to downsize, he said.

The sale of homes in the \$300,000-\$700,000 range remains “pretty strong, and that surprises me,” Ruble said. With some uncertainty in the job market, buyers may be reluctant to invest in more expensive homes, he added.

COVID-19 has not dimmed the dreams of people wanting to move into a home that better serves their lifestyles with room for a home office, fitness center or outdoor re-

treat, according to Sue Johnson of Good Company Realty Group and the Highland Park office of Coldwell Banker Realty. Homeowners considering a move may want to act now, she said.

After an April slowdown, the real estate market heated up even though the supply remained flat, Johnson said. Most price points, including upper bracket homes, continue to sell. “Every year has its own personality,” she said. “If you watch the news, you’d think the world is coming to an end, but the market and the economy continue.”

Homes selling in the \$600,000-\$900,000 range are seeing fewer buyers, “and I haven’t totally figured out why yet,” said Marti Estey of Reidell-Estey & Associates.

However, the West Seventh and Midway neighborhoods have become especially attractive, she said,

because of their affordability, access to transit and good housing stock. One of Estey’s buyers offered \$30,000 more than the \$225,000 asking price for a Midway home and was outbid, she said.

Some of Estey’s clients are hoping to move out of an apartment because of health concerns related to high-density living. They no longer want to ride elevators to their upper-floor units or share common spaces for fear of infection by the coronavirus. Whether that desire will have an impact on apartment living is unclear, but it has drawn customers to Estey’s business.

The selling process for single-family homes has changed for buyers and sellers alike, according to Estey and Johnson. Prospective home buyers and their agents must wear face masks in homes and sometimes gloves. Hand sanitizers stand ready for frequent use. Open houses are rare, and you will not see multiple buyers walking through a home at the same time. Sellers may head out of town on weekends when their homes are shown, and they will sanitize door knobs and other frequently touched surfaces when they return.

The real estate market has remained healthier in the Twin Cities than in other large metropolitan areas despite the pandemic and the days of unrest following the death of George Floyd while in the custody of Minneapolis police. “Some markets on the East and West coasts and Detroit were harder hit than we were,” Ruble said.

Business Briefs

The Gnome is scheduled to open in late July in the former Happy Gnome space at 498 Selby Ave. Chef Brian Ingram and his wife, Sarah, will feature modern pub fare and more than 100 beverages on tap. Changes to the building, which started out in 1882 as a city fire station, will include an expanded patio with outdoor bar, a redesigned main floor, and a reimagined beer hall and event space upstairs with games and other activities. Chef Justin Sutherland has come onboard as director of culinary, working with Ingram to fine-tune the menu. Just like they do at their Hope Breakfast Bar in the former

firehouse at 1 Leech St., the Ingrams plan to give 3 percent of their profits at The Gnome to neighbors in need. The Ingrams, along with Sutherland, also reportedly plan to do the same when they open Elotes Woodfired Cantina in the former In Bloom location in the Keg & Case Market on West Seventh Street later this year.

Rick Appelsies has been named president of Minnesota Knitting Mills, 1450 Mendota Heights Road, Mendota Heights. He came to the company last year as senior product development manager. His past experience includes a wide array of executive leadership and experience in the textile industry, ranging from senior vice president at Red Wing Shoe Co. to

Wolverine Worldwide and Rocky Brands. Minnesota Knitting Mills has been in business since 1908. Its products can be found worldwide as component parts of high-quality apparel, medical devices, sports uniforms, military garments and hunting accessories.

Abbott Paint & Carpet, 1808 Grand Ave., announced last month that it has delayed its 75th anniversary celebration due to the coronavirus pandemic. The paint company was started in 1945 by Howard (Mike) Abbott in Saint Paul. It added locations in downtown White Bear Lake in 1991 and Stillwater in 1994. Visit Abbottpaint.com for updates on the rescheduling of the anniversary celebration events.

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Crime Report

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

Highland Park

Burglary—Residential burglaries were reported on the 1900 block of Dorothea Avenue at 12:12 p.m. Thursday, July 2; and on the 2000 block of Montreal Avenue at 1:39 p.m. Monday, July 6.

Theft—Items worth more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on Hartford Avenue and on Randolph Avenue on June 26, Bohland Avenue and on South Mississippi River Boulevard on June 29, Ford Parkway on July 1, Beechwood Avenue and on West Maynard Drive on July 4.

—Vehicles were reported stolen on East Maynard Drive on June 27 and 29, Hampshire Avenue on July 1, Edgcombe Road on July 2 and South Roy Street on July 7.

Sex crime—A rape was reported on the 2200 block of West Seventh Street at 4:26 p.m. Sunday, July 5.

Assault—Aggravated assaults with dangerous weapons were reported on the 2100 block of West Seventh Street on July 1, and on Bayard Avenue and Syndicate Street on July 6.

Lexington-Hamline

Burglary—Commercial break-ins were reported on Sunday, June 28, on the 1200 block of University Avenue and on the 1100 block of Selby Avenue.

—Two home break-ins occurred on the 1200 block of Dayton Avenue on July 6-7.

Theft—Items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on the 1200 block of Selby Avenue on June 30, and on Griggs Street and Portland Avenue on July 6.

Sex crime—A rape was reported on the 1200 block of Saint Anthony Avenue at 9:32 p.m. Friday, June 26.

Assault—An aggravated assault with a gun was reported on the 1300 block of University Avenue at 3:54 p.m. Tuesday, July 7.

Macalester-Groveland

Robbery—A robbery at gunpoint was reported on the 1700 block of Grand Avenue at 2:21 p.m. Sunday, June 28.

Burglary—Two residential burglaries were reported on the 1300 block of Sargent Avenue on July 5-6.

Theft—Items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on Juliet

Fatal shooting in Summit-U

Two men were arrested following gunfire that left Bajuan Davon Adams, 25, of Saint Paul dead and another man injured in the Summit-University neighborhood on Wednesday, July 15. Shots rang out at about 5:45 p.m., drawing dozens of officers to Concordia and Western avenues. When they arrived, they found Adams lying in the street with a gunshot wound to the head.

Police said a large crowd had gathered as a nurse was rendering aid and paramedics were on the way, but Adams died at the scene. A gray, four-door sedan was seen speeding away from the area and officers found it crashed near Marshall Avenue and Chatsworth Street.

Police later arrested Tazman A. Jones-English, 21, on suspicion of murder and Quincy R. Adams, 26, for aggravated assault in connection with the case.

Shortly after the fatal shooting, a second male gunshot victim arrived at Regions Hospital in a private vehicle. He was treated for injuries that police said were not life-threatening. Police believed he was injured in the shooting on Concordia.

This was the 18th homicide of the year in Saint Paul. Anyone with information about the shooting is asked to call 651-266-5650.

Avenue on June 25, Princeton Avenue on June 26, Sargent Avenue on June 28, Grand Avenue and Saratoga Street on June 30, Woodlawn Avenue on July 8, and Grand on July 8.

—Vehicles were reported stolen on Brimhall Street on June 27 and July 6, and on Grand Avenue on June 29.

Mendota Heights

Shooting on bridge—A 29-year-old man was fatally shot by a Carver County Sheriff's deputy after a police standoff on Monday, July 13, that closed the Mendota Bridge for more than 13 hours. Officers used tire spikes to disable the suspect's vehicle following a pursuit that began around 12:45 a.m. in Chaska and involved the suspect threatening to shoot a woman. The chase ended around 3 a.m. with the suspect still holding the woman at gunpoint until he was shot. He died at the scene.

Theft—Several items were reported stolen from vehicles on the 1400 block of Cherry Hill

Road on June 25, the 1300 block of Highway 13 during the evening of July 6-7 and on the 1500 block of Vandall Street on July 9.

—The driver of a stolen vehicle was arrested following a chase on I-35E that started at Highway 62 at 2:10 a.m. Saturday, July 4, and ended with a high-risk stop on Grand Avenue.

Assault—A woman was taken to jail for assaulting her husband with a baseball bat on the 500 block of Fremont Street at 10:55 p.m. Sunday, June 21.

Miscellaneous—An elderly man who was lost was located with the assistance of a State Patrol helicopter at 11:09 p.m. Wednesday, June 24, near railroad tracks in Lilydale. He was reunited with his family.

Merriam Park

Robbery—A strong-arm robbery was reported on Summit and Fairview avenues at 2:38 p.m. Sunday, June 28.

—A robbery at gunpoint was reported on the 2000 block of Marshall Avenue at 2:45 p.m. Sunday, June 28.

Burglary—A residential break-in was reported on the 2000 block of Carroll Avenue at noon Friday, June 26.

—Commercial burglaries included two on the 400 block of North Roy Street on June 28-29, two on the 1700 block of University Avenue on July 1 and 5, and one on the 2100 block of Marshall Avenue on July 3.

Theft—Vehicles were reported stolen on North Cleveland Avenue on June 28, Saint Anthony Avenue on July 3, University Avenue and Carroll Avenue on July 5, and Saint Anthony and Carroll on July 7.

—Items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on the 1600 block of Ashland Avenue on June 29, and on Mississippi River Boulevard and Summit Avenue on July 4.

Assault—An aggravated assault with a gun was reported on Marshall Avenue and North Mississippi River Boulevard at 3:45 p.m. Tuesday, June 30.

—An aggravated assault with a knife was reported on the 1700 block of University Avenue at 11:01 a.m. Sunday, July 5.

Summit Hill

Burglary—Home burglaries were reported on the 1200 block of Lincoln Avenue at 8:56 a.m. Sunday, June 28; and the 900 block of Goodrich Avenue at 9:31 a.m. Friday, July 3.

—Commercial break-ins were reported on

the 800 block of Grand Avenue at 7:05 a.m. Wednesday, July 1; and on the 100 block of South Chatsworth Street at 9:22 p.m. Monday, July 6.

Theft—Three vehicles were reported stolen on the 700-1000 blocks of Grand Avenue on July 3-4.

—Items worth more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from a vehicle on the 700 block of Grand Avenue at 10 p.m. Friday, July 3.

Summit-University

Burglary—A burglary was reported on the 400 block of North Lexington Parkway at 3:41 a.m. Monday, June 29.

Theft—Vehicles were stolen on North Western Avenue on June 25, Portland Avenue and Western on June 26, three on Marshall Avenue on June 29, and Selby Avenue on July 1.

—Items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on Laurel Avenue and Virginia Street on June 26, Holly Avenue on July 3 and Marshall Avenue on July 4.

Assault—Aggravated assaults with guns were reported on the 700 block of Iglehart Avenue on Sunday, June 28; and on the 200 block of Kent Street on Monday, July 6.

West End

Burglary—Commercial burglaries were reported on the 300 block of Sherman Street at 10:48 a.m. Thursday, June 25; the 200 block of West Seventh Street at 4:56 a.m. Wednesday, July 1; the 200 block of Grand Avenue at 3:48 a.m. Saturday, July 4; and the 1400 block of West Seventh at 1:10 a.m. Sunday, July 5.

—A residential burglary was reported on the 700 block of South Victoria Street at 1:20 p.m. Sunday, June 28.

—A burglary was reported on the 400 block of Goodhue Street at 8:25 a.m. Monday, July 6.

Theft—Vehicles were stolen on West Seventh and Albion Avenue on June 25, West Seventh on June 29, South Western Avenue on July 6 and Smith Avenue on July 7.

—Items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on Juno Avenue and Mercer Street on June 26, Armstrong Avenue on June 27, Arbor Street on June 30, and Leech Street and Forbes Avenue on June 30.

Sex crime—An attempted rape was reported on the 1300 block of Pleasant Avenue at 11:21 p.m. Wednesday, July 1.

Assault—An aggravated assault with a dangerous weapon was reported on Otto Avenue and Shepard Road at 1:52 p.m. Saturday, June 27.

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ON THE TOWN

A murder mystery for your Macintosh Park Square premiere Zooms in on the suspected killer

BY ANNE MURPHY

Actor E.J. Subkoviak didn't have a clue that he would be offered a role in Park Square Theatre's new mystery drama, though he is delighted to be a part of the whodunit. *Riddle Puzzle Plot* will play out in four weekly episodes beginning July 24. It will not appear on stage, but will be live-streamed via Zoom with the cast appearing from remote locations and an interactive component for audiences.

Subkoviak plays the Host in *Riddle Puzzle Plot*. A resident of Saint Paul's Summit Hill neighborhood, he has a longstanding affinity for mystery theater and believes audiences will be enthralled with the premiere production, the brainchild of Park Square executive director C. Michael-jon Pease and Twin Cities playwright Jeffrey Hatcher.

"I thought up that title years ago," said Hatcher, who also wrote the stage adaptations for *Sherlock Holmes and the Ice Palace Murders* and *Sherlock Holmes and the Suicide Club*. "I didn't know what the title would be attached to, just that it would be for a mystery. When Michael-jon asked me to write a Zoom mystery, *Riddle Puzzle Plot* was ready and waiting."

Pease's request came as COVID-19 was dropping the curtain on theaters across the country. Park Square had planned to present Hatcher's play *Holmes and Watson* this summer, but cancelled the production due to the pandemic.

"Like many theaters, we're trying to find a means of reaching our audience," said *Riddle Puzzle Plot* director Warren C. Bowles. "We can't bring them into the physical space. We're not trying to do film or video, and if we wanted to, there wouldn't be a safe way of working together anyway. So like other theaters, we're exploring the medium of Zoom."

"We don't have the controls available in Zoom that we'd have in film or video," Bowles said, "so Jeffrey has very cleverly made Zoom a basic element of the story itself. His great talent at mystery and clever scripting goes without saying. Still, this is going to be a learning experience for all of us. It's going to be fun."

Set during a pandemic, *Riddle Puzzle Plot* unfolds as a group of actors decide to hold their annual summer scavenger hunt and other theater engagements online. When a member of the cast ends up dead, the actors and the audience are tasked with finding the killer before another actor meets his or her end. Hatcher said he will be working on the script for each episode as the production proceeds, taking into account audience input.



The mystery unfolds online in *Riddle Puzzle Plot*. The Park Square Theatre premiere stars E.J. Subkoviak (center) as the Host, with (clockwise from top left) Sun Mee Chomet (the Femme Fatale), Shanana Custer (the Gimlet-Eyed Cynic), Alessandra Bongiardina (the Ingenue), Rodolfo Nieto (the Gigolo), Pearce Bunting (the Usual Suspect) and Aimee K. Bryant (the Hard-Boiled Dame with a Heart of Gold). PHOTOS COURTESY OF PARK SQUARE THEATRE

And fun is exactly what Subkoviak thinks he will find as the Host who, according to the playbill, "is an armchair mastermind who devises the riddles, the puzzles and the perfect plot. Until the plot goes wrong."

"Truthfully, I've been a mystery buff since I was a kid," Subkoviak said. "My cousins introduced me to the board game Clue when I was about seven, and I became instantly suspicious of people who were named after colors. In grade school, my best friend and I formed our own detective agency and spent recesses looking for mysteries to solve. I later moved on to Agatha Christie and anything that could be labeled a whodunit and did *The Mousetrap* in high school and college."

"Needless to say, when I was asked to play detective Nero Wolfe, who I only had a passing familiarity with, it was a childhood dream come true," said Subkoviak, referring to his starring role in the classic mystery series at Park Square. "The Wolfe stories are pretty much a mixture of a hard-boiled detective story and an Agatha Christie 'gather up all the suspects in the sitting room so that I may reveal the killer at the end of an incredibly long monologue' story."

"I'd like to say I've become incredibly smart and deductive after so much exposure to the

"This has been a very difficult time for theater," said Highland Park actress Sun Mee Chomet. "We've been so affected by the closures. We've gone through days of feeling overwhelmed. But we're also creative, and this production represents a creative response to what's happened."

mystery genre, but I'm really not," Subkoviak said. "What I did pick up from watching and reading mysteries is the drama of it, the atmosphere, the timing, and the archetypal characters that we have Christie to thank for, including those colorful Clue suspects."

Highland Park actor Sun Mee Chomet plays the Femme Fatale in *Riddle Puzzle Plot*. She believes that audiences will enjoy the mystery for its fascinating characters and its similarities to the game of Clue. Rounding out the cast are Shanana Custer as the Gimlet-Eyed Cynic, Pearce Bunting as the Usual Suspect, Rodolfo Nieto as the Gigolo, Aimee

Bryant as the Hard-Boiled Dame With a Heart of Gold and Alessandra Bongiardina as the Ingenue.

"This has been a very difficult time for theater," Chomet said. "We've been so affected by the closures. We've gone through days of feeling overwhelmed. But we're also creative, and this production represents a creative response to what's happened."

"This has been a dreadful time," Hatcher agreed of the lockdown. "Ours is going to be one of the last professions to come back." His hope is that by getting creative and presenting *Riddle Puzzle Plot*, Park Square will fill a void until the COVID intermission is over.

Since all four episodes of *Riddle Puzzle Plot* are prerecorded, audiences will have the choice each week of Zooming in on Friday or Saturday evening. Each episode is approximately an hour long. They come with a live introduction and a live post-show discussion with hints of who did it provided by the cast and the playwright. Audiences may also stream the episodes on Sundays with a recorded post-show discussion.

Tickets for the series of four episodes are \$30. For reservations, visit parksquaretheatre.org.

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ON THE TOWN *Briefly*

Music

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 is runs from 7-8:30 p.m. on Wednesdays through August 5. 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 follows. Speakers include soprano Elisabeth Stevens and Border CrossSing founder Ahmed Anzaldúa on July 22; tenor Nathan Granner and composer Jocelyn Hagen, July 29; and mezzo-soprano Victoria Vargas and Mehaffey, August 5. Visit oratorio.org or themendelssohn.org.

Jazz Fest Live is being streamed on Crowdcast every Thursday through August 27 from the patio at Crooner's Lounge and Supper Club in Fridley. The schedule of free online performances includes the Laura Caviani Trio at 5:30 p.m. July 23, and singer Maud Hixson performing the songs of Jerome Kern 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.

Books

"Fitz Bits," a series of video lectures about native Saint Paul author F. Scott Fitzgerald's life and literature, is being presented for free viewing on the Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library's website. The videos are narrated by local Fitzgerald scholar Dave Page. The first one highlights the connections between Saint Paul and Fitzgerald's alma



No stuffed shirts. The Teddy Bear Band will present a free concert from 6-7 p.m. Wednesday, July 29, in Mendakota Park, located on Dodd Road just south of Highway 62 in Mendota Heights. Participants are invited to bring along their own teddy bear or other stuffed friend. The event is limited to 240 participants, not counting stuffed animals, and social distancing will be encouraged.

mater, Princeton University, and how those connections inspired his debut novel, *This Side of Paradise*. The second video, which is due out the week of July 20, addresses Fitzgerald's smoking habit and its place in his life and literature. The third video, due out in August, covers the author's interest in the Civil War and how that conflict plays into his fiction. Visit thefriends.org/fitzgerald.

SubText Books, 6 W. Fifth St., will play host to free online discussions with authors Christopher Bremicker and his collection, *Song for My Baby and Other Stories*, at 7 p.m. Wednesday, July 22; and Matt Goldman and David Housewright and their new private-eye novels, *Dead West* and *From the Grave*, respectively, at 7 p.m. Wednesday, August 5. To register, visit subtextbooks.com.

Next Chapter Booksellers, 38 S. Snelling

Ave., will play host to free online discussions with authors Neal Patrin and his book, *Bring That Beat Back: How Sampling Built Hip-Hop*, at 7 p.m. Sunday, July 26; John Rosengren and his novel, *A Clean Heart*, about a counselor at an adolescent drug treatment center and his efforts to rescue himself from his family's broken past, at 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 28; and David Housewright and his McKenzie series novel, *From the Grave*, at 7 p.m. Tuesday, August 4. To register, visit nextchapterbooksellers.com.

The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library is offering for free download through August 23 the e-book *A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota*. The book 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 are available. Visit thefriends.org.

Exhibits

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

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

The AZ Gallery, located in Suite 130 of the

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

Family

The Twin City Model Railroad Museum has reopened to the public between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Saturdays. To promote health and safety, visitors age 3 and older are required to wear face masks, keep a distance of 6 feet from anyone outside their household and follow a consistent route through the museum. Museum staff sanitize touched objects frequently. All wooden train layouts in the children's play area have been removed. To ensure the museum remains under 25 percent capacity, tickets must be purchased in advance at tcmrm.eventbrite.com. The cost is \$11.94 each, free for children age 4 and under, \$25 for a family of three and \$30 for a family of four. Visit tcmrm.org.

Etcetera

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



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SPORTS



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

Sports will go on but with new look

Major League Baseball games are going to look a little weird for the next couple of months. There won't be any television shots of fans with "Circle Me Bert" signs, couples kissing, people glued to their cellphones, and ball boys and girls making short-hop snags of foul balls.

Most ballparks, including Target Field, will be empty except for the players. When the games commence this week, the benches will be fuller for a while. Teams will start with 30 players, but 15 days later must drop down to 28.

Scoreboards in Saint Louis, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh and Chicago's Wrigley Field will have to be reconfigured to add the abbreviation DH, no longer an exclusive of the American League. (Fans in Milwaukee, a former member of the junior circuit, will quickly recall the days when Gorman Thomas, among others, served as the designated hitter.)

Unless they get the last out of an inning, relief pitchers can no longer come in to face just one batter. Thus, Twins fans may have to grit their teeth as Taylor Rogers and Devin Smeltzer try their luck at getting right-hand hitters out.

Umpiring will be done with little dissent. A player or manager who comes within six feet of an umpire will be subject to ejection or worse. Sanitation will reign supreme. Spitting is now verboten in big league parks. So is a pitcher licking his fingers. In a move Gaylord Perry or Joe Niekro would appreciate, pitchers may now carry a small wet rag in their back pocket.

Finally, should a game be tied after nine innings, a runner will be stationed on second base to start the extra frame. He'll be the player who made the last out in the previous inning. In 2019, a little over 8 percent of all games went into extra innings. Apparently, there's a concern about fans' attention spans.

All of the above may have you thinking this season's MLB rules came from watching a 12U game at the Edgcumbe Recreation Center. No, this is the product of months of intense negotiations followed by the realization that you either figure out how to play now—and collect what's left of your contract—or wait until 2021.

No matter. We badly need the diversion that a baseball season offers.

Other sports that have started up again also offer some forms of relief. If they're not on the course themselves, golfers can stay home on weekends and watch the best players in the world hit shots the couch potatoes can only dream of duplicating. Soccer fans can also get their fix again. Even with the late start to the season, soccer games didn't change that much.

Basketball and hockey may also start up again. We've seen summer basketball before during Olympic years. With the Timberwolves out of the picture, there may not be as much interest in the games being played in Orlando. Early reports have several key players opting out, not all of them by choice.

Hockey in August will seem odd. It'll seem even stranger to be playing a Stanley Cup series in a neutral setting with no fans. It'll likely scratch a small itch, but for Wild fans the real interest will be higher next season when the Russian youngster Kirill Kaprizov suits up for Minnesota.

It's been an exhausting four months of battling an invisible enemy that has wreaked havoc on people's bodies, psyches and livelihoods. Then just when we had had about enough of the coronavirus and things were starting to look up, we suffered the tragedy of George Floyd's killing that put nearly everyone on edge. Six weeks after witnessing something we couldn't believe we were watching, a lot of us are still uneasy.

Thus, we need the diversion that sports can bring us. Barring rainouts, there'll be just six days with no Twins games from the first pitch in Chicago on July 24 until the final out against Cincinnati on September 27. Every game will be aired. As long as there's a TV in your home, you're good. Or presuming people can behave themselves well enough to allow the bars to stay open, baseball fans can flock to their favorite local watering hole to watch a game.

WRIGHT CALL ►16



Instructor Sandy LeMay leads a packed crowd in yoga during her Monday evening Fitness in the Parks class at Summit Overlook Park.

PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Fitness in the Parks offers room to stretch out

BY BILL WAGNER

Sandy LeMay is a yoga instructor, but she is a lot more than that these days. With the continued stress and uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, she has found herself acting as a steward of her students' emotional as well as physical well-being.

LeMay can be found on Monday evenings this summer teaching Vinyasa yoga classes at Summit Overlook Park in Ramsey Hill. She is part of the Fitness in the Parks program sponsored by the Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation that has been making changes on the fly since resuming in-person classes in mid-June.

Overlook is among a handful of Saint Paul parks where free, outdoor exercise activities are being offered. Fitness in the Parks began in 2014 and is open to all ages and fitness levels, with no experience or registration required. This summer's classes will run through August 31.

Physical distancing is required for attendees and all classes follow current health and safety guidelines, such as wearing a mask when a six-foot distance between participants isn't possible, washing hands and staying home if sick. Some class videos also are avail-

able on the YouTube Fitness Channel for those who don't feel comfortable going out just yet. The classes are led by local fitness businesses and instructors partnering with Parks and Rec.

For LeMay, 61, assembling a group of people for workouts and fellowship is a task borne of love. This is her third summer of offering Fitness in the Parks classes and she said she gets special pleasure seeing people line up for classes and interact with each other as they make new friends. She said getting to know new people is vital to those who miss having normal social interactions.

"There's something about gathering, even if you don't know the person next to you," said LeMay, a longtime Highland Park resident until she moved to Cottage Grove last month. "I think a lot of people are just tired of being locked in their homes."

LeMay and her husband raised three children, all of whom graduated from Highland Park High School. Last year, she was paid for being an instructor. This year, she was told that city budget constraints due to the pandemic meant she wouldn't be able to be paid.

"But I didn't even care," she said. "I feel blessed that I can do this."

LeMay said her Fitness in the Parks

class has continued to grow this summer, with as many as 45 people turning out for one session. According to her, participants all know about the proper guidelines to follow because of pandemic concerns, and she doesn't feel the need to belabor the point.

"They know how to socially distance without having to hear about it from me," she said.

When asked what has been the most rewarding thing her students have said to her about her class, LeMay didn't hesitate. "One said, 'I just like it that the instructor keeps showing up,'" she said with a laugh.

The current Fitness in the Parks schedule also includes PIYo (Pilates Yoga) sessions with Gina Carlson from 6-6:45 p.m. on Tuesdays at the Lake Phalen beach house; Dancing Freedom with Teresa Reid from Rooted and Rising from 5:30-7 p.m. on Thursdays at Hidden Falls Park; a new Community Flow class with Northern Yoga from 7-8 a.m. Fridays at Raspberry Island; and Nia Dance from 9:30-10:30 a.m. Saturdays at Hidden Falls Park.

The classes are subject to change and are dependent on the weather. For more information, visit stpaul.gov/fitnessintheparks.

UST gets nod to make historic jump to Division I

BY DAVE WRIGHT

Next year arrived early for the University of Saint Thomas athletic program. Instead of having to wait until next spring, the university got the green light from the NCAA on July 15 to make the unprecedented leap directly from Division III to Division I effective with the 2021-22 season.

Under NCAA rules, UST will have to wait until the fall of 2026 to be eligible to compete in an NCAA Division I post-season competition.

The Tommies will join the Summit League for 19 sports. The Summit doesn't offer football or hockey. Accordingly, UST will join the nonscholarship

Pioneer Football League in 2021. Its women's hockey program will become part of the Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA). UST men's hockey is the only sport that currently doesn't have a conference home.

"This has been a long time coming," said university president Dr. Julie Sullivan. "It's consistent with our history and our future."

UST athletic director Phil Esten now has the task of navigating the athletic program through its final season in the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC), while also getting its teams ready to step up two levels in a little over a year.

Thinking of the short term, Esten said,

"We need to find a way to get students back to campus." Looking ahead, he added, "We have a lot of work to do."

In football, for example, UST moves into an 11-team conference that's one of just two at the Division I level that doesn't offer scholarships. (The Ivy League is the other.) That will still require finding nonconference games.

"We need to hustle," Esten said. "There aren't a lot of openings on 2021 schedules."

The Tommies will be playing against several well-known football powers, including San Diego, which has won 37 straight conference games and has

UST DIVISION I ►16

154 UST DIVISION I

advanced to the FCS playoffs four years in a row.

Pioneer Football League head Patty Viverito welcomed Saint Thomas by joking, "I feel I should be handing out cigars."

The Summit League has nine full-time members and five part-timers. Seven of those schools are within busing distance, including Drake and the Division I schools in North and South Dakota. As a result, schedules are somewhat scattered. In 2019-20, the league had nine participants in men's and women's basketball, seven in softball and six in baseball.

In basketball, North Dakota State was 25-8 for the men last year and South Dakota went 30-2 for the women. Both would have been considered teams to watch if the NCAA tournaments had been played last March.

Summit League commissioner Tom Douple was thrilled to get a new member in the lodge. "They have a culture of success," he said, referring to the Tommies' dominance in the MIAC. He then offered this cautionary thought when UST takes on its new rivals: "The hardest thing to do is to have patience. Will this be easy? No."

In the short term, UST women's hockey may become the school's highest profile team. The WCHA women's league will now



Coach Glenn Caruso celebrates with linebacker Jesse Addo during UST's semifinal win over Linfield, Oregon, in December 2015. The Tommies advanced to the NCAA Division III title game, where they lost to Mount Union and finished the season with a 15-1 record. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

have eight teams with some of the best skaters in the country, including the U of M and Wisconsin, who have won 11 of the last 20 NCAA championships.

"It was a no-brainer from our point of view," said WCHA women's league commissioner Jennifer Flowers. "To get to eight is huge."

Where UST men's hockey will end up re-

mains unknown. There are three possibilities. The longstanding WCHA is losing several members to the newly formed Central Collegiate Hockey Association (CCHA) for the 2021-22 season. Thus, men's WCHA commissioner Bill Robertson is looking for new faces.

"Saint Thomas would be a welcome addition," said Robertson, a Cretin-Derham Hall alumnus. One possible drawback is the

Tommies' current home arena has room for roughly 1,100 spectators—less than the 2,500 usually required by the league. "For now, we could work it out," Robertson said.

The new CCHA will have seven members, including Minnesota State (Mankato). The National Collegiate Hockey Conference has eight teams, including Minnesota-Duluth and North Dakota. To all of this, Esten said, "It's important to note this is not necessarily our decision to make. We need to be invited."

As the giddiness of moving into the bigtime fades, Esten has to roll up his sleeves and get to the heavy lifting. Asked about the status of all sports at UST, including such nonrevenue ones like cross-country and tennis, he said, "At the moment, we're proceeding with all 22."

A move like this expands costs considerably. One estimate had athletic budgets for Summit League schools at \$20 million—quite a leap from the roughly \$5 million Saint Thomas currently spends. To help make up the difference, Sullivan said, "We need income from ticket sales and philanthropy."

However, she looked at the big picture regarding the move. "We need to look 10-20-30 years down the road," she said. "This (move) puts us in line with our Catholic peers."

So move over Notre Dame, Marquette, Georgetown, Dayton, Loyola and Villanova. You have company now.

154 WRIGHT CALL

It helps that the Twins are coming off an excellent season with high hopes of doing even better this year. Las Vegas apparently thinks so. Minnesota is heavily favored to win its division and, at 16-1, ranks fourth to win the World Series.

So, give yourself a break—you've earned it. Take the few hours to relax and enjoy a game. A body can only take so much tension.

There's historical precedent for this. A month after Pearl Harbor was bombed, President Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote MLB commissioner Kenesaw Landis a letter. Landis had wondered if playing baseball was a good idea that 1942 season. Roosevelt's reply was succinct: "I honestly feel that it would be best for the country to keep baseball going."

Later he added, "Baseball provides a recreation...which can be got for very little cost. And, incidentally, I hope that night games can be extended because it gives an opportunity to the

day shift to see a game occasionally."
History is a great teacher. Play ball!

College, prep fall sports still undecided

The curse of writing every other week means that, at times, news breaks after deadline. Such may be the case with the college and high school fall sports seasons. The MSHSL hopes to provide guidance soon on the future of the prep sports season. The NCAA has scheduled a series of upcoming meetings that should provide clarity for what may or may not happen this fall in the collegiate ranks.

Some dominoes have fallen already on the college front. The Ivy League has already announced it will not have a fall season in any sport. Several other schools have followed suit. The Big Ten has already nixed its nonconference games this fall. The MIAC presidents met last week and decided to follow suit. Soccer and volleyball conference action is scheduled to

start September 16, with football expected to start three days later.

For schools like the University of Minnesota and its Big Ten counterparts, it's a money issue. If they don't play games, their advertisers and sponsors will likely get their money back. With no gate revenue as well, just how the colleges will pay for the scholarships of their tendered players gets a little dicey.

It's also a tricky balance for local schools like Macalester, Saint Thomas and Saint Catherine. While they don't give athletic scholarships, it would be naive to think that all of the members of their student bodies are on campus strictly for the academics.

MIAC commissioner Dan McKane spoke for a lot of colleges when he said with a sigh, "It's been an interesting year so far." And no one knows for sure what's next.

Dave Wright can be reached at dwright53@msn.com

District Councils

Highland Park

highlanddistrictcouncil.org • 651-695-4005

Blood drive—A blood drive will be held from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday, August 17, at the Allina Health Highland Clinic, 2120 Ford Pkwy. Call 1-800-733-2767 or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter AllinaHigh to schedule an appointment. Those who give blood during August will be entered in a drawing for a chance to win a trip for four to Cedar Point or Knott's Berry Farm. The prize includes travel, hotel, park admission and more. For terms and conditions, visit rcblood.org/CedarFair.

Highland Bridge—The Ford site virtual groundbreaking took place on July 14. For those who missed it, the video is now available at highlandbridge.com.

Upcoming meeting—Community Engagement Committee, 7 p.m. Monday, July 27. All HDC meetings are currently being conducted online. Links to access the meetings are posted on the HDC's website.

Macalester-Groveland

macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

Virtual book discussion—Residents of 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/be-antiracist.

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 to register.

Support the Twin Cities—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.

Annual meeting and elections—The community council's annual meeting and board elections have moved online. The annual meeting will be available to view on the website beginning July 23, while board elections will be held from August 13-21. Visit macgrove.org/annualmeeting to learn about open board seats and proposed bylaw changes.

Upcoming online meetings—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 participate in the meetings via Zoom. Council staff will send out meeting links a few days in advance. Email mgcc@macgrove.org. There will be no committee meetings in August.

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

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

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

Union Park

unionparkdc.org • 651-645-6887

Union Park Solidarity Fund—The Union Park District Council is offering a solidarity fund to provide economic relief

for renters in its neighborhoods. It is hoping to raise \$15,000 to assist 30 families. For information on giving to the fund or applying for assistance, visit givemn.org/story/Li2sdg.

COVID-19 resources—Union Park neighbors who need assistance or informational resources related to the coronavirus 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.

Upcoming online meetings—board of directors, 7 p.m. Wednesday, August 5; Transportation Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, August 10; Committee on Land Use and Economic Development, 6:30 p.m. Monday, August 17; and Environment and Parks Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, August 19. To join the Zoom meetings, email wako@unionparkdc.org.

West Seventh

fortroadfederation.org • 651-298-5599

New board members—At its meeting on July 13, the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation's board of directors elected people to fill four vacant board positions. They included secretary Anthony Molaro, Area 2 coordinators Mary Cutrufello and Emma Pearl, and Area 3 coordinator Sara Fleetham.

Upcoming virtual meetings—Transportation and Land Use Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, August 5; board of directors, 7 p.m. Monday, August 10; and Community Engagement and Outreach Committee, 6:30 p.m. Thursday, August 20. Agendas and details on how to participate in the Zoom meetings can be found at fortroadfederation.org/calendar.

Stay in touch—West Seventh 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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Next Issue: August 5 Deadline: July 29

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Notice of Informal Probate of Will and Appointment of Personal Representatives and Notice to Creditors

**State of Minnesota
Ramsey County
Second Judicial District
District Court Informal Probate
Division
Court File Number: 62-PR-20-438
Estate of Joyce Adele Rogers,
Decedent**

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS AND CREDITORS: Notice is hereby given that an application for informal probate of the above-named Decedent's Last Will dated April 9, 2010 has been filed with the Probate Registrar, and the application has been granted. Notice is also given that the Probate

LEGAL NOTICES

Registrar has informally appointed the following:

Deborah K. Connor
2265 Youngman Ave., Apt. 501
St. Paul, MN 55116

and

Christine P. Rogers
2925 Belmont
Casper, WY 82604

as personal representatives of the Estate of the Decedent. Any heir, devisee or other interested person may be entitled to appointment as personal representative, or may object to the appointment of the personal representatives Unless objections are filed pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 524.3-607, and the court otherwise orders, the personal representatives have full power to administer the Estate, including, after 30 days from the date of issuance of letters, the power to sell, encumber, lease or distribute real estate. Any objections to the probate of the Will, or to the appointment of the personal representatives, must be filed with this court, and will be heard by the court after the filing of an appropriate petition and proper notice of hearing. Notice is also given that, subject to Minn. Stat. § 524.3-801, all creditors having claims against the Estate are required to present the claims to the personal representative or to the Court Administrator within four (4) months after the date of this Notice, or the claims will be barred.

Laura J. Stevens
Probate Registrar
July 1, 2020
Michael F. Upton
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July 1, 2020
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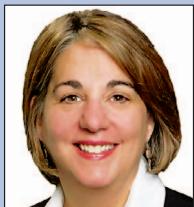
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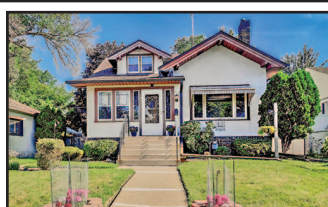
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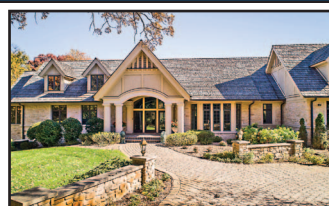
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This Mac-Grove beauty has it all! Ideal entertaining spaces inside and out, open concept with modern conveniences and old world charm. It offers the flexibility of a main floor sunroom with a private entrance adjacent to a bedroom and full bath. socialresponsiblerealtors.com

MYA HONEYWELL
651-329-3619 • \$575,000



115 KENT STREET, SAINT PAUL, MN
Lovely home in wonderful location! Bright & sunny with newer windows, hardwood floors and updates throughout. Main level features FR, living room with beautiful fireplace, formal dining, large kitchen and powder room. socialresponsiblerealtors.com

MYA HONEYWELL
651-329-3619 • \$325,000



885 PORTLAND AVENUE
Lovely bungalow home in a wonderful location! Bright and sunny with hrdwd flrs and updates throughout. Conveniently located near William Mitchell College-allowing for outstanding walkability to Saint Paul's best shopping and restaurants. socialresponsiblerealtors.com

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



MYA HONEYWELL
THE HIVE
651-329-3619



JOE UEHEL
651-341-3599



1400 SUMMIT
Storybook English Tudor with every amenity. 4 bedrooms, 5 luxury baths beautifully renovated with high end kitchen, new mechanicals, slate roof and copper gutters, formal and informal gathering areas. Walkability a "10"!

LOLLY MCNEELY SALMEN
612-810-4138 • \$1,300,000
MORAGHAN DeROSIA
952-486-3697 • \$1,300,000



HEART OF HIGHLAND PARK!
Classic 30's Tudor with commanding curb appeal. 4BR's on one floor, 3BA's includes 3/4 master. Beautiful woods, high end kitchen, 3 finished floors and set on a lovely 70 wide lot; just steps to Highland Village.

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



TWO BLOCKS TO THE RIVER!
2182 Stanford is sun-drenched 4 bedroom, 4 bath Tudor complete with new Marvin windows, central air, refreshed kitchen and baths. Stunning 3rd floor master. Private backyard patio and landscape. Call Lolly for details!

LOLLY MCNEELY SALMEN
612-810-4138 • \$599,900



1204 PALACE AVENUE
Adorable turn-key 2BR/1BA home in demand Mac-Groveland! Enjoy the cozy front porch, hardwood floors, updated kitchen and bath, privacy fence and newer 2++ garage. Potential to finish basement if desired. Amazing value!

MORAGHAN DeROSIA
952-486-3697 • \$249,900



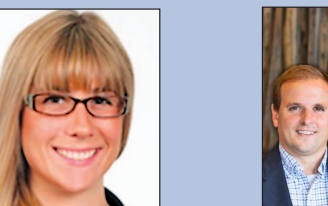
ROBBIE GROSSMAN
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JIM BURTON
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MORAGHAN DeROSIA
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TOM & MIKE DISTAD
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PETER DONOVAN
651-336-8050



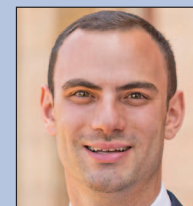
TOM EDELSTEIN
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HENRY EDELSTEIN
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