

# VILLAGER

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## Developers refine Dixie's plan after hearing concerns

5-story project to have 79 units, vehicle access off Grand Avenue

By JANE MCCLURE

Changes are in the works for a proposed \$32.5 million mixed-use development on the current site of Dixie's on Grand, Saji-Ya and Emmett's Public House at 695 Grand Ave. The development team of Reuter Walton, ESG Architects and the Kenefick family reviewed revisions to parking access, loading zones and the mix of proposed apartment units with more than 115 people who joined an online meeting on April 8.

It was the second of two public meetings held to review the project. The Keneficks, who own the property, want to replace the one-story structure that houses the three restaurants with a five-story building with three ground-floor commercial spaces, a mix of one- to three-bedroom apartments on its upper floors, and underground and ground-level parking.

The developers have reviewed "hundreds" of questions and comments, and have made changes to the project, said Ari Paritz of Reuter Walton. One was to reduce the number of apartments from 81 to 79 by taking out four smaller units to create a pair of two-bedroom units.

Building details were changed to provide more articulation on the north and east sides, with limestone on the first floor, and brick and metal bronze metal accents on the upper floors.

DIXIE'S DEVELOPMENT ▶4



SubText Books manager Matt Keliher helped customer Meta Enzo find a book. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

## Book browsing makes comeback

### Shops celebrate that personal service with weeklong promotion

By ANNE MURPHY

Ernest Hemingway once said, "There is no friend as loyal as a book." For many readers, there is no better friend than their neighborhood independent bookstore. And surely, the feeling is mutual for the owners and employees of those bookstores.

That friendship will be celebrated on Saturday, April 24, when booksellers across the Twin Cities take part in the annual In-

dependent Bookstore Day (IBD). Part of a nationwide event, the forthcoming IBD will highlight how these small independent bookstores managed to survive the COVID-19 lockdown and a year with little to no in-person book browsing and buying.

"We're so grateful for the support our customers have shown," said Sarah Cassavant, events coordinator at SubText Books, 6 W. Fifth St. "Their patience, generosity, kind words and humorous notes and continued love of books have brightened our days and kept us hopeful throughout a difficult year."

During last year's lockdown, SubText converted its events programming to a

INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORES ▶2

## BZA nixes mixed-use project at St. Clair-Cleveland

Variations denied for 5-story building on site of cleaners

By JANE MCCLURE

It's back to the drawing board for developer Jerome Exley and his proposed five-story, mixed-use development at the northwest corner of Saint Clair and Cleveland avenues. The Saint Paul Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) on April 5 unanimously rejected three variances that he was seeking for the project.

Exley and Bloomington-based WEB Developments LLC Cleveland want to tear down Roxy Cleaners at 235 S. Cleveland Ave. to make way for a new building with 23 one- and two-bedroom apartments and about 2,600 square feet of first-floor commercial space.

The variances were for a building height of 54.8 feet where a maximum of 40 feet is permitted, a floor area ratio of 2.75 where 2.0 is permitted (the building's floor area is in relation to the size of the lot), and 23 off-street parking spaces instead of the required 37.

The building was to be stepped back at its second floor to reduce its massing. Exley planned to have vehicle lifts on the first floor so residents could rent one space and park two vehicles in it. However, the lifts were not allowed to be counted in the parking totals.

BZA staff recommended denial of the variances, saying the applicant did not prove a practical difficulty in meeting the zoning code. They also found that the request would alter the essential character of the area. The

SAINT CLAIR-CLEVELAND ▶3

## PAC outlines obstacles in path of Riverview Corridor streetcar project

By JANE MCCLURE

Protecting Historic Fort Snelling, crossing the Mississippi River and finding space along a narrow bluff line are among the challenges facing the proposed Riverview Corridor transit project. The corridor's Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) discussed the potential obstacles along the modern streetcar line's proposed 12-mile route on April 1.

Riverview would link downtown Saint Paul with Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport and the Mall of America. After a three-

year hiatus, the PAC began meeting again last November as the project entered its next study phase. The project has an estimated cost of \$2 billion to construct and \$35 million annually to operate and maintain.

In late 2017, the PAC recommended a modern streetcar line along West Seventh Street as the locally preferred alternative for the project. Various studies have been conducted behind the scenes since then. The latest engineering and pre-environmental study phase is expected to take three years.

At the April 1 meeting, Grant Wyffels and

Jessica Laabs of the Kimley-Horn consulting firm outlined the issues along the corridor's proposed route in four study areas: Fort Snelling, West Seventh Street, downtown Saint Paul and Bloomington.

Of the four areas, crossing the river near Fort Snelling is expected to be where the project team finds its greatest hurdles. The Dakota people refer to the area as Bdote, which translates as "where two waters come together," and consider the land around the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers as sacred. The project team is working with Indian

tribes and the Minnesota Historical Society on issues there.

"There are significant cultural resources there, so working within the existing right-of-way would be a benefit," Wyffels said.

Where Riverview would connect with the light-rail Blue Line in Minneapolis after crossing the river is also a key question. Options include following an alignment off of Highway 5 or using one that follows Highway 55/62.

Getting streetcars across the river would

RIVERVIEW CORRIDOR ▶3

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virtual format and made the store's full inventory available online. "We have a brand new website that allows folks to browse online and order any books we might not have in stock," Cassavant said. "Downtown Saint Paul has changed a lot in the last year, but our place within it remains unchanged. Last May we resigned our lease. We'll be staying for many years to come."

For IBD, SubText will hold a sidewalk sale of used books. That way, people who may not feel comfortable entering the store can safely browse outside. As has been the case since in-store shopping returned, "masks will be required both inside and outside the store," Cassavant said. "And we'll be monitoring capacity to ensure proper social distancing."

Bookseller David Enyeart of Next Chapter Booksellers, 38 S. Snelling Ave., is looking forward to IBD and the week-long promotion that precedes it. "We missed seeing our customers," he said. "We've been waiting to see them again. To have an occasion like Independent Bookstore Day is always great, but in a year when we've hardly seen our customers, it's even more exciting."

Next Chapter saw its sales dip with the COVID shutdown and the subsequent disruption of in-person shopping. Yet the bookstore remains healthy thanks to online shopping, curbside pickup and in-person shopping by appointment.

"When people enter the store, especially to just browse, they see a book or books they may not have planned to buy but do. That doesn't happen with online shopping," Enyeart said. "How has the last year been? I would say OK-ish. The 'OK' part is that our customers made sure of that. We were able to continue connecting people and books. The 'ish' part is, there was much less direct contact. But we're here, and that's the best thing."

"The last year was incredibly challenging and exhausting," said Holly Weinkauff, owner of Red Balloon Bookshop, 891 Grand Ave. "There were all of the changes we had to make quickly to continue to serve customers. But the pandemic taught us that we could continue to meet customer needs. Our customers remained supportive through online shopping and virtual events. We're thankful for the community support."

After initially reopening for in-person



Manager Matt Keliher stocked puzzles last week at SubText Books' downtown shop as regular customer Archie Dickens took a break from browsing the shelves. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

shopping by appointment, the Red Balloon has begun welcoming drop-in shoppers with face masks and social distancing. "Now, with people becoming fully vaccinated, I've seen more grandparents coming in to shop," Weinkauff said. "We're connecting readers of all ages to our books again."

Amy Turany and Marcus Mayer, owners of Storied Owl Books at 2059 Randolph Ave., are also excited to be a part of Independent Bookstore Day this year. "Even though we're still closed for browsing, we'll be offering curbside pickup from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. on Saturday and lots of recommendations and special day-of buys," Turany said.

"The pandemic has been difficult for us, especially hitting during our first year in business," Turany said. "Just as we were starting to get the hang of running the store, we needed to reinvent it. But we've been overwhelmed by the support we've received from the neighborhood. We've found that people love the free delivery and the online ordering—two things we hadn't considered

before but hope will remain a part of our offerings. We're planning to reopen to the public sometime this summer after we're fully vaccinated. We can't wait to be able to see our customers in person again."

Storied Owl, Red Balloon, Next Chapter, SubText and the other participating bookstores have linked with the literary organization Rain Taxi to offer Twin Cities Independent Bookstore Passports. Readers may pick up a passport at any of the stores (or online at storiedowlbooks.com) beginning April 18. From then until April 24, customers are encouraged to get their passport stamped at as many bookstores as they can. No purchase is necessary, but when a passport is stamped, it activates a coupon that can be redeemed at the store at a later date. Those who receive a stamp from every eligible store in the passport will be entered in a drawing for books and other merchandise, VIP event tickets and more.

For more information, visit [twincities-independentbooksellers.com](http://twincities-independentbooksellers.com).

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require using the existing Highway 5 bridge or building a new one. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has raised concerns about the impact a mass transit route could have on the existing bridge.

“Overall, it strikes me that with the environmental, technical and cultural issues, this is the most complicated segment,” said Russ Stark, who represents the Saint Paul Mayor’s Office on the PAC. “I’m concerned about spending a lot of staff time on this if there’s not a path forward.”

Kimley-Horn’s staff said they think the issues can be resolved, but they need more time.

Riverview’s route through the Highland Park and West End neighborhoods was also reviewed on April 1. Though West Seventh was chosen as the preferred route, project staff are revisiting the possible use of part of the Canadian Pacific Rail spur from Saint Paul Avenue to Randolph Avenue.

Mike Rogers, a project manager for Ramsey County, said there are major space constraints along the base of the bluff in that area, so keeping the rail spur in the mix keeps their options open.

Other issues include the interchanges of West Seventh/Shepard Road and West Seventh/I-35E. Additional issues specific to that part of the transit corridor include whether streetcars would run in the center of the street or on the side, as well as streetscape and pedestrian improvements.

In the Smith/West Seventh, Seven Corners and downtown areas, Wyffels said there are several issues under study. One is the possibility of using Smith between West Seventh and Kellogg Boulevard as part of the route. Another is how transit would affect large events that close down West Seventh.

The use of Fifth or Sixth streets in downtown, and tying into the light-rail Green Line at the Union Depot are other issues to sort out. A decision also must be made on how the Riv-

**Groups to review corridor design, station planning**

The Riverview Corridor’s Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) appointed 24 members to a community advisory committee on April 1. The committee will meet quarterly and provide a public perspective on the project’s design, environmental analysis and public engagement opportunities.

The committee members are Safiyo Ali, Abenezer Ayana, Katherine Bell, Daniel Bruggeman, Sam Burns, Stephany Carpenter, Hanna Debele, Jason DeBoer-Moran, Cristina Diaz, Eric Ecklund, Kevin Gallatin, Diane Gerth, Sylvie Guezeon, Mary Hogan-Bard, Meghan Kress, Bill Lindeke, Matthew McMillan, Negatu Mekuria, Corinne Ollman, Lawrence Richardson, Jay Severance, Bob Whitehead, Amanda Willis and Adam Yust.

The PAC also named 14 members to a station area planning task force. That group will meet monthly and provide a public perspective on the development of station area plans, as well as host engagement activities to inform those plans.

City planning commissioner Kristine Grill of Highland Park will co-chair the task force. Other members include Nathan Bakken, Richard Bohannon, Tracy Farr, Patrick Guernsey, Mathews Hollinshead, Aaron Johnson-Ortiz, Perri Kinsman, Jyni Koschak, Joe Landsberger, Jose Lozano, Lisa Moe, Paul Pappas and Tanner Schulz.

erview line would connect with the Gold Line and Rush Line bus rapid transit routes.

Issues in the Bloomington study area are different than those faced in Saint Paul as the transit vehicles would follow existing Blue Line tracks. In that area, the Mall of America and airport are receiving the most scrutiny.

**14 SAINT CLAIR-CLEVELAND**

property’s current commercial zoning allows for a smaller mixed-use building.

Exley disputed the staff findings. He argued that the project will clean up what has been a polluted site. Before the dry cleaners opened, the property was occupied by a gas station. It has been under Minnesota Pollution Control Agency review for several years.

Exley said the proposed development would update the corner, provide new housing and commercial space, and comply with the Macalester-Groveland neighborhood plan and city comprehensive plan. “I think this is a good fit,” he said.

The project has the support of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council, which held an online hearing in February. The BZA received nine letters in support, 12 letters raising concerns and 112 letters in opposition.

Exley dismissed the opposition as “just the nature of the beast in Macalester-Groveland,” and said many of the comments were form letters.

Neighbors also submitted a petition with



A drawing of the proposed five-story mixed-use building at Saint Clair and Cleveland avenues.

118 signatures opposing the project. Half a dozen people spoke to the BZA.

Neighbors said that while they would like to see new housing and development, the building would be too big for the site. Neighbors also said they already deal with spillover parking and that the planned building would only cause more congestion.

“It’s a very large building and that makes it out of character for the neighborhood,” said Joel Lagerquist.

“I love the idea of additional housing,” said Marc Manderscheid, but he added that larger buildings belong in areas rezoned for higher-density development.

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# Names proposed for new parks at Ford site

## City Council will have the final say

By JANE McCLURE

The Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission has recommended names for the four new city parks that will be developed in the 122-acre Highland Bridge development on the site of Ford Motor Company's former assembly plant in Highland Park. The city had solicited suggestions for the park names from the public. Ninety-three individuals and groups responded with a total of 302 suggestions. The proposed names were reviewed by city

staff, a group of Native Americans and the Parks and Recreation Youth Commission, all of whom made their own recommendations. The City Council will have the final say.

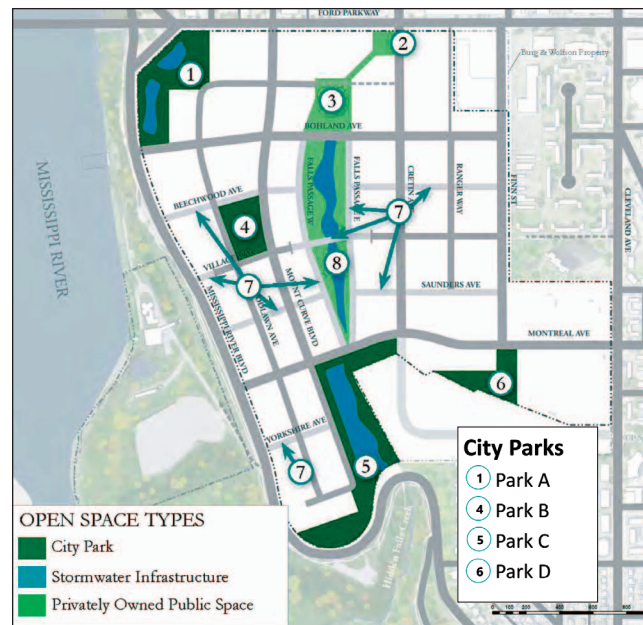
Recommended by the Parks and Rec Commission were the following names:

- Gateway Park for Park A, the open space near Ford Parkway and Mississippi River Boulevard.
- Assembly Union Park for Park B, the open space in the west-central portion of Highland Bridge, in a nod to the 86-year history (1925-2011) of the Ford Plant and the United Auto Workers who worked there.
- Uŋčī Mak'a (pronounced oon-CHEE mah-KAH) Park for Park C in the southwestern portion of the site. The name

translates as "mother earth" in the Dakota language, reflecting the area's early history as home to the Dakota tribe.

• Míča (pronounced MEE-cha) Park for Park D in the southeastern portion of the site. Míča is an abbreviation for "coyote" in the Dakota language, and coyote sightings have been common in the area. The park will remain largely undeveloped due to its wetlands and steep slope.

The Parks and Recreation Department will hold a virtual open house about the future of the city parks in the Highland Bridge development from 6-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 20. The link will be live at 5:50 p.m. To join the meeting, visit [bit.ly/3m8imi1](https://bit.ly/3m8imi1) and download the Cisco Webex app or Chrome extension.



The four city-owned parks and the other privately owned public spaces that will be part of the Highland Bridge development.

### 14 DIXIE'S DEVELOPMENT

Another change is in vehicular access and the use of the Grand-Summit alley behind the building. The original plans showed 73 underground residential parking spaces being accessed from the alley. The building also was to have a setback from the alley for commercial deliveries.

The revised plans call for a loading zone on Grand in front of the building. Resident vehicles will enter from and exit onto Grand through a controlled gate. The building would also include 32 commercial parking spaces accessed on Grand and Saint Albans.

Saji-Ya and Emmett's plan to reopen in the new building, but Dixie's will not. Dozens of suggestions for the third commercial space have been made, ranging from different types of restaurants, a small grocery store or a

locally owned coffee shop. The developers have contacted the Neighborhood Development Center with an eye toward bringing in a minority-owned business.

The most controversial issue on April 8 was the developers' plans to seek an exemption to the East Grand Avenue Zoning Overlay District, which limits building heights to three stories. Several meeting attendees said that they do not want to see the overlay district set aside. However, Reuter Walton representatives said the five-story height is necessary to make the project financially feasible.

"We're not able to make the project work within the confines of the overlay district," Paritz said.

The proposed changes drew a mixed reaction from those at the meeting, with some neighbors expressing support and others saying they want to see a shorter building with

fewer apartments. Some pushed back against bypassing the overlay district as well as the involvement of three members of the Summit Hill Association board in an initial planning process.

"It's going to destroy the property values of the surrounding houses and apartments owned by people who invested in this neighborhood with the belief that the overlay district would be maintained," said neighbor Jake Klisivitch. "No one has properly explained why this project cannot be conceived of within that overlay."

Other residents liked what they saw. "This is a well-thought-out project," said Paul Sand. "I've never seen this level of neighborhood engagement. They've listened, even though there's no requirement to do so. This shows good faith. This is a very good project for the neighborhood—not perfect, but a massive

improvement from the existing building and surface parking lot."

Paritz and Reuter Walton president Nick Walton said they have heard strong public support for the five-story building and the market-rate housing options it would provide.

This spring, the developers hope to submit plans to the city for review. At this time, a change in zoning is being sought from commercial to Traditional Neighborhoods 3, which allows a height of up to 55 feet. The proposed building is 56 feet tall, so a conditional use permit would be required. Setback variances also might be needed.

If city approvals are obtained, the three restaurants would close this summer and the building's demolition would start in November. Construction would take about a year, and people would move in by 2023.



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# Divided City Council denies Lexington Station appeal

## Majority agrees that site plan fails to meet city's goal for more affordable housing

BY JANE MCCLURE

A closely divided Saint Paul City Council voted on April 7 to deny an appeal by Alatus LLC and reject the developer's site plan for a six-story 288-unit apartment building at 411-417 N. Lexington Pkwy. The 4-3 vote upheld an earlier 8-7 vote by the Saint Paul Planning Commission to reject the Lexington Station site plan.

Minneapolis-based Alatus had hoped to construct the \$59 million building on a long-vacant parcel just south of the light-rail Green Line's Lexington Parkway station. The land is owned by the Wilder Foundation. After the council vote, Wilder president and CEO Armando Camacho said the nonprofit social service agency will not move ahead with its purchase agreement with Alatus. Instead, he said, Wilder will engage local residents and business people in planning the future of the site.

Chris Osmundson, Alatus' director of development, was disappointed in the vote. "The City Council absolutely erred in its affirmation of the previous erroneous findings of the Planning Commission," Osmundson said. "They failed to approve a totally unsubsidized, mixed-income housing project with rental rates committed in the public record at 60 and 50 percent of the Twin Cities area median income (AMI). This on a parcel of land that has been vacant for 10 years with no other development proposals."

The developer, Osmundson said, had taken part in "a year of engagement with district councils. This engagement resulted in various letters of support from community stakeholders. (The City Council's vote) is tremendously disheartening and will certainly chill proposed development in the city of Saint Paul going forward."



An artist's rendering of Alatus LLC's \$59 million Lexington Station housing development planned for a long-vacant parcel on Lexington Parkway between I-94 and University Avenue.

Alatus' plan for Lexington Station called for 3,000 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor and 254 structured parking spaces. The 288 apartments included alcoves, studios and one- and two-bedroom units with a few four-bedroom units.

City staff had recommended approval of the site plan, noting that the development is consistent with the city's comprehensive plan, the Union Park district plan and plans for the area around the Green Line's Lexington Station. The property is zoned for Traditional Neighborhoods 4, and no zoning changes or variances were required.

Alatus had agreed to reduce the rent on at least half of the apartments to make them affordable to lower-income households. Offered at 60 percent AMI were 124 efficiency apartments. Offered at 50 percent AMI were 10 one-bedroom and 20 two-bedroom apartments. The developer had committed to these rents for at least 10 years as a condition of site plan approval.

The 13-county Twin Cities AMI is about \$72,350 for a single person and \$103,400 for a family of four. Sixty percent of that is \$43,410 for an individual and \$62,040 for a family of four. However, the AMI for Saint Paul is believed to be quite a bit lower. The Minnesota

*The city cannot deny a developer's application based on policies the city has not yet enacted. The rules should not be changed in the middle of the game.*

— City Council member Rebecca Noecker

Housing Partnership has estimated the city's AMI at \$64,000 for a family of four.

City Council member Dai Thao, whose Ward 1 includes the Alatus site, moved to deny Alatus' appeal. He said the project is not consistent with the values of Saint Paul's 2040 Comprehensive Plan. That plan calls for equity and opportunity for all residents and reducing disparities, according to Thao. The six-story project also runs counter to the city's desire to provide a smooth transition to the predominantly single-family neighborhoods around the site, he added.

City Council members Mitra Jalali, Jane Prince and Nelsie Yang joined Thao in voting to deny the appeal. Yang said the Alatus de-

velopment was contrary to the direction the city wants to go in providing more affordable housing.

Prince suggested laying over the appeal because of questions about the number of apartments Alatus would offer at affordable rents. She criticized Alatus for not making a sincere effort to address neighborhood concerns.

Alatus had met several times with the local Union Park District Council. Representatives of the adjacent Frogtown and Summit-University district councils were also invited to attend those meetings.

The Union Park District Council voted in support of the site plan. Saint Paul needs more housing at all price points, Lexington Station advocates said, and there was no legal justification for rejecting the site plan.

The site plan was opposed by the Frogtown Neighborhood Association, Summit-University Planning Council and a host of affordable housing advocacy groups. They said Lexington Station did not meet the needs of the Frogtown and Summit-University neighborhoods, and they feared it would lead to higher rents and higher property taxes in the area, causing the displacement of long-time residents.

"(Valuing) buildings over people is not what we should be doing," said Isabel Chanslor of the coalition Midway RiseUp.

City Council president Amy Brendmoen and members Rebecca Noecker and Chris Tolbert voted against denying the site plan. The three council members agreed that more affordable housing is needed in the city, but they argued that a better way to pursue that is by adopting a zoning ordinance that requires developments to include affordable housing.

Noecker said that while she agreed with opponents' concerns about city development policies being racist, the legal issues of the site plan needed to be separated from arguments about displacement and gentrification. According to her, the city cannot deny a developer's application based on policies the city has not yet enacted. The rules should not be changed in the middle of the game, she said.

"My fear in this case is that we're sending a message to private developers, a message that we don't want to send," Tolbert said.

# Mount Curve duplex will make way for 10-unit apartment building

## Some concerns raised over spillover parking

BY JANE MCCLURE

The Saint Paul Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) approved a setback variance on April 5 that will allow developer Joe Schneider to demolish a duplex at 749 Mount Curve Blvd. and build a three-story, 10-unit apartment building in its place.

A minimum setback of 26.6 feet is required and 22.5 feet was approved to allow for balconies facing the front yard. The project came in under recently changed regulations for sites zoned for residential multifamily (RM) use, which were meant to encourage infill development.

The one-bedroom apartments will be 550-650 square feet each with monthly rents estimated at \$1,300-\$1,500. Schneider said the rents can be held down because the building will not have shared amenities, such as an exercise room.

The Highland District Council (HDC) Community Development Committee recommended approval of the variance in March. Two neighbors sent letters to the BZA in opposition. No one other than the developer attended the virtual BZA hearing.

Debate at both meetings centered on the project's six off-street parking spaces. Typically, more parking would be required, but the lowered number is possible because the site is just a block from the A Line bus rapid transit route on Ford Parkway.

Neighbors and committee members ex-

pressed mixed reactions at the HDC meeting, with some voicing support and others asking if a precedent was being set for other RM-zoned properties in the area. Concerns were raised about spillover parking, the potential affect on nearby property values and the placement of new fences.

Schneider said the new building will be comparable in height to other apartment buildings in the area. He plans to start construction in June and finish by next spring. A tree in front of the property will stay, but trees in the backyard will come down.

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# News Briefs

## Commission supports rezoning of old power station lot on St. Clair

The Saint Paul Planning Commission on April 2 recommended approval of rezoning a property at 1219 Saint Clair Ave. from local business to Traditional Neighborhoods 3 (TN3) to allow a mixed-use building on the site. The rezoning will go to the City Council for a public hearing on April 21.

The vacant 12,000-square-foot lot at the northeast corner of Saint Clair and Griggs Street is owned by Xcel Energy and was occupied from 1937 to 2018 by an electrical power substation. That structure was torn down after it was no longer needed. Hovda Properties LLC now has the site under contract and wants to develop it. A two-sided billboard just east of the property will remain in place.

Developer David Hovda has plans for a commercial use on the first floor with housing above. The plans won a recommendation of support in March from the Macalester-Groveland Community Council's Housing and Land Use Committee.

TN3 zoning allows a building height of up to 55 feet. Because the lot is located adjacent to a smaller residential property, it may require a stepped-back design to reduce its massing.

## UST lot can remain for another 15 years at Grand & Cleveland

The University of Saint Thomas can retain its parking lot at the northwest corner of Grand and Cleveland avenues for up to the next 15 years, the Saint Paul Planning Commission decided on April 2. The decision is final unless it is appealed to the City Council within 10 days.

The commission's Zoning Committee voted 7-1 in March to recommend that the lot



**Happy to be hiking.** Members of the Saint Paul Hiking Club, which is celebrating its centennial this year, were out enjoying a three-mile jaunt in Highland Park on April 6. Leading the group were Pat Maher and Liz DeLay. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

be allowed to remain in place until 2036. By then, the university must either submit a plan to continue using the lot or construct a mixed-use building there. A 2004 conditional use permit for the campus called for the site to be occupied by a building with commercial uses on the first floor and student housing above.

UST has proposed modifying the parking lot with electric vehicle charging stations, bike racks and new landscaping. The plans have the support of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council and the West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Committee.

One argument for retaining the lot was that the nearby Davanni's restaurant rents 16 of the spaces. Davanni's has lost parking in recent years due to residential permit parking in the neighborhood and the creation of a bike lane on Cleveland.

The parking lot was deemed an interim

use when the university's McNeely Hall was planned in 2005 at the corner of Summit and Cleveland avenues. At that time, the use of the lot was not to exceed 10 years. The university was given three-year extensions to maintain the lot in 2015 and 2018. The lot had been allowed to remain under a temporary agreement that expired on March 11.

## Second time was the charm for building new home in Highland

The Saint Paul Board of Zoning Appeals approved two variances on April 5 for Scott Rehovsky to build a home on a vacant lot at 1171 Rankin St. in Highland Park. The decision is final unless appealed to the City Council.

The long, narrow lot was rezoned several years ago for Traditional Neighborhoods 2. It is near a Canadian Pacific railroad spur in an

area with a mix of land uses. Rehovsky wants to build a single-family home on the lot, but his request for several variances was turned down last year by the BZA. Board members questioned whether the variances met legal requirements.

Rehovsky then redid his plans, but still needed two variances. One was for a 40-foot front-yard setback instead of the maximum 25 feet. The other canceled the requirement that 60 percent of the front facade of the building fall within the 25-foot setback.

City zoning administrator Yaya Diatta said the lot's deep, narrow dimensions present design challenges. City staff and the Highland District Council recommended approval of the variances.

## Petition drive looks to cap annual rent increases to 3% in Saint Paul

Rent control could make its way onto the November ballot in Saint Paul if the group Housing Equity Now Saint Paul succeeds with getting enough signatures on a petition. The group announced the petition drive in late March and spent the first weekend of April gathering signatures. The intent is to cap residential rent increases at 3 percent per year.

More than half of Saint Paul residents rent their homes, and about 5,000 names are needed to get a ballot question approved. Several other groups have joined the petition drive in the effort to cap rent increases.

However, the Minnesota Multi-Housing Association has come out against the measure, saying it would deter development of rental housing. It contends that an increased housing supply, not rent controls, are needed to support affordable housing.

News Briefs were compiled by Jane McClure.



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# VIEWPOINT

## Gem of a neighborhood is threatened by repaving project

### City dismisses residents' concerns as it prepares to obliterate a generation of investment in landscape

BY TOM MEIER

The city of Saint Paul claims to treasure its neighborhoods. However, the seven homeowners on a small cul-de-sac in Highland Park have found the opposite to be true.

In the nine months since the city announced Phase 2 of the Griggs-Scheffer paving project, we have sought to work with city planners to preserve the atmosphere of our neighborhood and save the city money.

Our efforts to be a part of the process have served only to allow the city to claim that it is inclusive and transparent, when in fact it has been dismissive and opaque. City staff have stated in so many words that they are not interested in our opinion on the project and

have hurried on to more important work.

Our neighborhood is a closely spaced planned unit development that was created in 1987. Road clearances are narrow. Our street winds slightly downhill and does not fit into the city's paint-by-numbers approach to repaving. So the city has decided to re-engineer our neighborhood to make the road look like the city says it was supposed to look when it was first paved 35 years ago.

The houses and yards on our street were all constructed and landscaped based on the location of the road approved by the city in 1987. It turns out that the legal description of that 20-foot-wide easement was faulty and does not reflect the road as built in several technically minor but physically important respects.

The property owners have asked unanimously that the replacement road simply follow the path of the existing road. Unfortunately, city planning staff have decided to ignore the existing road and replace it according to the original faulty survey.

The result will be the destruction of numerous mature trees, the forced removal of retaining walls, fences and landscaping, and the relocation of a section of road within 10 feet of the living room windows of one house.

None of this must happen nor should it be allowed to happen. In fact, this result is so vastly different from what presently exists that we are willing to petition the City Council to vacate our road so that it can be privately repaved, saving the city hundreds of thousands of dollars.

We have asked that the Griggs-Scheffer project exclude our stretch of pavement so that the overall project will not be delayed by further discussion of our situation. We have obtained the services of a reputable engineer and contractor to do the necessary work at a substantially lower cost than the city's projected costs.

We, like many residents in the Griggs-Scheffer area along scenic Edgumbe Road, have sought to work with city planners to encourage the thoughtful and cooperative redevelopment of our streets. We, like they,

have seen our input dismissed by city staff.

We have been patronized by city staffers. They have heard our input but not listened. Their conduct has not been in good faith. They have been opaque about their plans to re-engineer our neighborhood, and have been purposely late so that they can claim there is no other option. This is no way to run "Minnesota's Livable and Dynamic Capital City."

The City Council has scheduled a public hearing on Phase 2 of the Griggs-Scheffer paving project for April 14. We plan to appear at the hearing to ask that the council delay approval of the portion of the project that deals with our street until a more responsive plan is developed, a plan that does not suddenly and arbitrarily revise 35 years of right-of-way maintenance.

City staff is forcing on us seven homeowners a solution to a problem that does not exist.

We urge the City Council to make good on its policy that neighborhoods matter.

## INBOX

### Mouthpiece of the people

It has been an honor to get to know the members of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council through various activities and meetings. Every person on the council's board and committees is clearly dedicated to the betterment of the community. However, there seems to be some confusion about who we ultimately serve.

Time and again I have heard, "The city wants..." or "We board members want..." What I am not hearing enough of is what the people want. I know that everyone in their heart feels they are doing the best thing for the city. However, this is not our role. It is not for any of us to make personal choices on how we want things to be in the community.

If all of my neighbors told me they wanted things a certain way, I could not in good conscience vote in opposition to them. Our job is to be the mouthpiece of the people. That is the essence of democracy, and it is why the district councils were formed. If 100 community members showed up at a meeting and all of them were opposed to a certain project, there should be a 100 percent chance that the project would not be accepted. How can it be any other way?

There is a great and growing resentment at the disregard shown to the average citizen. We are better than that. No matter how much we may personally want something, no matter how good we might think it would be, we have no right to impose our personal will on others. We have chosen to serve.

Ann Dolan  
Macalester-Groveland

*Editor's note: The writer is a member of several of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council's committees.*

### Riverview analysis was flawed

We should not be spending \$500 million or more to build a light-rail line that serves only as an express between Downtown Saint Paul and Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport ("Modern streetcar does not measure up to Riverview's needs," *Villager* Viewpoint, March 31). It really would not be that useful, and would be a waste of money to whet the inferiority complex of Saint Paul while ignoring the actual transportation needs of its residents.

The Riverview Corridor should improve transit access between Bloomington, the airport and Davern Street. It should allow for downtown office workers to eat lunch at Shamrocks Grill and Pub. The Riverview Corridor should do all sorts of things. Shoving it over to Shepard Road and the old Ford CP Rail spur does none of that.

The highest ridership on Metro Transit's 54 bus is between the airport and Davern Street. Using the CP Rail spur would ensure that the Riverview Corridor serves that segment worse than today's bus. The next highest ridership is leaving downtown Saint Paul. Using Shepard Road would not serve that need either.

I understand the appeal of using the CP Rail spur, Shepard Road and other bypasses for a nice pretty train to get downtown hobnobs to their flights faster. But these plans do not serve Saint Paul nor its residents. The options on Riverview stand with streetcar/light-rail and improved bus service. Choose either mode, but choose a path that leads forward instead of dippy-doodling around Highland Village.

Joseph Totten  
Ramsey Hill

### Digging Minecraft

Saint Paul public libraries should have a dedicated room where people can play video games, especially Minecraft. Minecraft is an interactive game that you can play with your friends. It lets you build almost anything, which promotes creativity. You can also complete cooperative quests with your friends, so you don't have to be together in person during the pandemic.

Justin Libbus  
Macalester-Groveland

### Not so Grand

I'm looking at the artist's rendering of the proposed building at the Dixie's site at Grand Avenue and Saint Albans Street (*Villager*, March 17 and March 31). This is supposed to revitalize Grand Avenue? Are you kidding me? Grand Avenue is supposed to be quirky and fun.

I love Dixie's, and not just for the black-and-blue burgers and beignets. It has ambience and a choo-choo train. This new structure has all the charm of a government building circa 1960. Add a chain-link fence, and one can envision men in orange jumpsuits milling about the yard. No wonder the neighbors don't like it. I'd be upset, too, with this stone megapile.

Yes, I agree, Grand Avenue needs a fresh coat of paint. Leave it to developers to destroy a neighborhood by pretending to save it.

Regina Purins  
Highland Park

### Health of the homeless

We have reached a new low in Highland Park. There is a growing garbage dump on the corner of Saint Paul Avenue and Davern Street, where there is a ramshackle encampment on city land known as McDonough Park.

According to Saint Paul officials, Governor Tim Walz's Stay-at-Home Order 20-20 directs municipalities to discontinue displacement and removal of unsheltered homeless encampments. Effective immediately, the city's Department of Safety and Inspections will stop clearing unsheltered homeless sites in order to preserve and maximize the health of homeless occupants during the COVID-19 crisis. This

means that this mess will continue unfettered and unsolved by our fearless leaders.

If this is Governor Walz's idea of preserving the health of our homeless, then God save us from the government. Our taxpayers deserve better as they watch the Twin Cities become more unsafe and unlivable for all.

Jeanne Condon  
Highland Park

### Nothing but the best for city

Melvin Carter III was elected mayor of Saint Paul in November 2017. He was sworn into office in January 2018. My research on the internet regarding the Most Livable City in America revealed that since Mayor Carter took office, Saint Paul has not been the Most Livable City in America.

This November, I expect Saint Paul voters to be much wiser in selecting a new mayor. A mayor who is more qualified, more independent, more moderate or more conservative. A candidate who will work for the best interests of the people and lead us off the current, steady, downhill path that Saint Paul is on to becoming a ghost town.

Sue Shetka  
Macalester-Groveland

*Editor's Note: According to U.S. News and World Report, Minneapolis-Saint Paul was ranked as the 22nd best place to live in the United States in 2020-21. The Twin Cities were ranked sixth in that category in 2019-20.*

### Prioritizing public health

A letter to the editor criticized state Representative Dave Pinto for following Governor Tim Walz's dictum of preserving, as much as possible, the lives and health of the public from the COVID-19 pandemic (*Villager* Inbox, March 31). Nobody likes having businesses and schools closed. We're all more than aware of societal problems caused by the closings. However, causing illness and death by having children and adults unknowingly bring disease to home and community is shameful.

Governor Walz and Representative Pinto, thank you for understanding the rationale of health for the whole public.

Dorothy Lipschultz  
Highland Park

### Do write

The *Villager* welcomes letters to the editor and longer guest editorials. However, all commentary must be signed, indicate the neighborhood in which the writer lives and include a phone number for verification purposes. Please send yours to the *Villager*, 757 S. Snelling Ave., Saint Paul, MN 55116; email it to [letters@myvillager.com](mailto:letters@myvillager.com); or submit it via our website at [myvillager.com/editorial](http://myvillager.com/editorial).



# Construction slated for \$1.1M multiuse field at Victoria Park

By JANE MCCLURE

A \$1.1 million multiuse athletic field will be constructed this year near the corner of Victoria Way and Adrian Street in Victoria Park. About a dozen people attended a March 30 open house to review the plans for the synthetic turf field. It was the last meeting before the project goes out for bid this spring, and it followed a final round of reviews by a park design advisory committee.

The field has generated controversy in the West End neighborhood in recent weeks. Proponents say the field is badly needed by people who need more room to play.

"We know that a deficit of field space exists," said Mary Norton, a landscape architect with the Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation.

However, some neighbors have expressed concerns about lighting and parking, as well as the potential use of the field for tournaments. They would have preferred more passive park use or a natural grass field.

Planning for the park recently started up again after having been put on hold for almost four years. Parks and Recreation has about \$900,000 remaining in an account earmarked for Victoria Park, and additional funding is anticipated from the Minnesota Twins.

The field is expected to be used for youth baseball, soccer and lacrosse. A partial fence will be installed to keep errant balls out of the street, while still allowing public access for open play. Trees near Montreal Way will be maintained, and landscaping will be added around the field. A pedestrian connection to Adrian Street also is planned.

If bids are favorable, some features could be added to the project. They include field lighting, picnic tables and benches, and improved spectator areas. If lighting is installed, Norton said it would be discussed further and would be designed to not spill beyond the field itself.

Norton acknowledged the debate over synthetic versus natural grass fields. Artificial turf



A synthetic turf field will be installed this year for soccer, lacrosse and baseball in the West End neighborhood's Victoria Park.

is popular with users and provides advantages for city maintenance staff, she said. The planned field also offers the opportunity to build in drainage improvements.

"They get pretty beaten up," Norton said about grass fields. Synthetic turf fields can last 10-15 years and be easily replaced as needed, according to her.

Rob Spence, who works for the Saint Paul Blackhawks soccer program, asked if the baseball field could be dropped from the plans. "Basically, every park in Saint Paul has a baseball field," he said.

Norton said that whenever the city can accommodate multiple sports on a field, it does. "The ability to add another premier baseball field to what is already a multipurpose turf field would be a win," added city recreation services manager Andy Rodriguez.

Others at the meeting said they would welcome another baseball field in the area, noting that one of the Little League fields on the former Ford site is being lost due to the Highland Bridge development.

As far as parking is concerned, Norton said it is anticipated that the new multiuse field would see a maximum of 80 vehicles. A 40-space parking lot is planned and there are more than 130 on-street parking spaces nearby. The city is also looking at shared parking with adjacent property owners.

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# HOME IMPROVEMENT

## Now they're cooking Leaky refrigerator leads the way to a brighter, more functional kitchen

By FRANK JOSSI

Before sisters Pola and Betsy Rest closed on the purchase of their Mendota Heights condominium a year and a half ago, a leaky refrigerator wreaked havoc with the kitchen's wood floor and cabinets. The insurance company paid for new flooring in the kitchen as well as the dining and living areas because the contractor could not match the existing wood flooring in those areas.

The insurance company would not pay for the other damages in the kitchen, but that did not stop the Rests. "We were going to do a kitchen remodel anyway," said Betsy Rest, a retired physician. "This just got the process going a little faster."

The sisters hired Castle Building & Remodeling for the project. Castle redesigned and re-

built an island counter, opened a kitchen wall to draw in more natural light and installed new appliances and lighting.

The importance of having a kitchen that functions well was a major reason the sisters moved to Mendota Heights from their apartment in Saint Paul. The Rests enjoy entertaining, "and the kitchen at our other place was terrible," Betsy said.

The Linden Street Lofts condo has an open floor plan. However, a wall with a pass-through opening separated the kitchen from an adjacent room. That room had windows overlooking the street, and the sisters wanted to bring that natural light into the kitchen. Working with designer Tracy O'Donnell, they had Castle enlarge the pass-through and remove a half-wall to create a doorway. To add a bit of pizzazz, they chose a white Artisan Hardware barn door that can be slid into place to close off the room from the kitchen when quiet or privacy is desired.

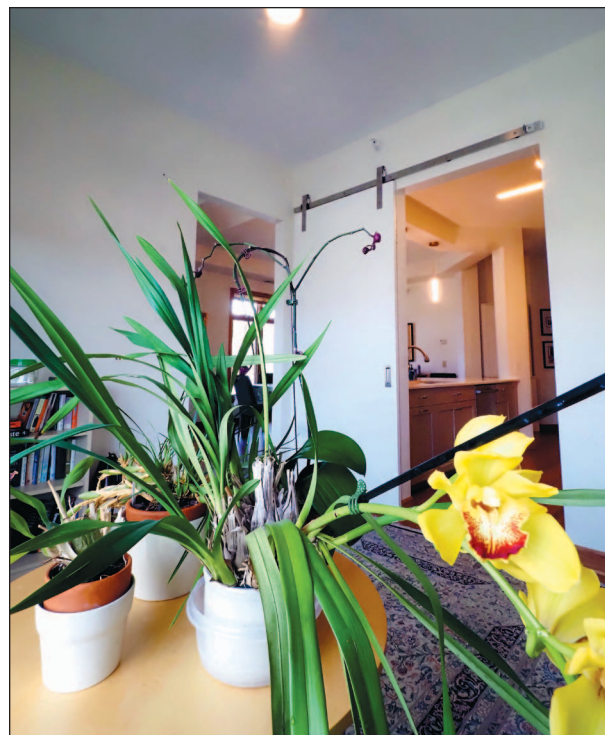
The sisters made other changes, starting with the island counter, which now runs the kitchen's length and separates the cooking area from the dining area. They removed the island's bar top to gain counter space for food preparation. The new island features a deep Blanco America sink with a stylish Brizo single-handle faucet, a dishwasher and storage cabinets.

"Now we can both work comfortably without bumping into each other when we're preparing food," Pola said. "And we're using all of the counters a lot because we've been cooking a great deal during the pandemic."

The sisters installed a new GE Profile stove, microwave and refrigerator. Betsy likes the GE induction stovetop because it cooks



Pola Rest reclines at the new island counter that serves as a bridge between the kitchen and dining room of her and her sister Betsy's Mendota Heights condominium. PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER



Orchids frame the barn door that replaced a half-wall separating the Rests' kitchen from a small side room.

faster and responds to temperature settings quickly. The appliance also leaves the stovetop warm but not hot after cooking. "We're trying to age in place," Betsy said, "and this seemed safer than a gas cooktop. I also like that it's really adjustable in heating."

Castle constructed the kitchen's cabinets and painted them a custom color. The sisters chose Cambria countertops for the kitchen surfaces. Pola designed and constructed a stained-glass backsplash, covering quarter-inch mesh with square and rectangular glass pieces in a colorful mosaic to brighten the kitchen's back wall.

"It was a fun project to work on, and I love the result," Pola said.

While they were transforming the kitchen, the sisters had Castle complete a few other projects. Workers removed a popcorn ceiling over the condo's main areas and replaced the hallway and kitchen lighting with more contemporary lamps. O'Donnell said she enjoyed helping the sisters choose three tube-shaped pendant lights to hang above the island counter and a series of lighted lines that are attached to the kitchen ceiling.

The project, O'Donnell said, transformed the condo's original kitchen "with what is a more bright and airy space." The kitchen is not only more functional now, but more pleasant to work in as well, she said.

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# Parking study envisions a city with fewer cars, more efficient land uses

By JANE MCCLURE

A study of relaxed off-street parking requirements geared toward reducing the use of automobiles and increasing the efficiency of land uses in Saint Paul was recently released by the city's Planning Commission. The proposed changes will be the subject of a public hearing before the Planning Commission at 8:30 a.m. Friday, April 30.

The 154-page study includes dozens of suggestions that could transform the appearance and function of the city. One of the main questions in the study is whether to eliminate minimum off-street parking requirements entirely or scale them back through exemptions.

Saint Paul has 2,659 acres of surface parking lots, 631.2 acres of parking garages, and 8,560 acres of streets and highways. "Altogether, about 35.6 percent of the city's land area is primarily dedicated to the moving and storing of automobiles," said city planner Tony Johnson. "If the city plans for driving, as we have done, people are going to drive."

The new off-street parking requirements have two main goals, according to Johnson. One is compliance with the city's climate action plan, which calls for Saint Paul to become carbon neutral by 2050. Thirty-one percent of Saint Paul's carbon emissions are currently attributed to vehicle travel, Johnson said. Promoting alternatives to driving is part of the climate action plan.

The second goal is compliance with the city's 2040 Comprehensive Plan and its strategies for development. Those strategies include reducing the amount of land devoted to parking; building structured parking that could be converted to other uses later on; promoting compact, walkable neighborhoods; improving the efficiency of off-street parking through shared parking; and promoting car sharing, car-pooling, walking, biking and public transit.

Providing off-street parking adds to the cost of new housing. The study recommends that landlords be required to separate off-street parking costs from housing costs in leases.

When affordable housing is built with public subsidies, the oversupply of parking can become an issue, Johnson said. The money spent on parking could be spent on providing more affordable housing units, he noted.

According to Johnson, 34.5 percent of Saint Paul families do not own a motor vehicle.

"Parking requirements are akin to a regressive tax on low-income residents," he said.

That comment brought pushback from planning commissioner Deborah Michell. According to her, there are many low-income residents who need a car to get to jobs in the suburbs.

Minimum off-street parking requirements have long been in place to reduce congestion on Saint Paul streets. Those requirements are sometimes pegged to maximum parking needs, Johnson said, and that has led to an oversupply of parking spaces in some areas.

The city's current off-street parking requirements vary by land use and size and type of development. New land uses along major transit corridors already have reduced parking standards. Other factors that influence parking demand include the walkability of a neighborhood, and generally the more dense is development, the more walkable a neighborhood will become, Johnson said. COVID-19 has also changed the way people shop and commute, further reducing parking demand. Those changes could continue long after the pandemic is over, Johnson added.

Developers in Saint Paul may currently reduce off-street parking requirements by seeking variances, agreeing to share parking with others, and providing space for car-sharing services or bike parking. The new study recommends dozens of other parking exemptions, including proximity to mass transit, availability of low-income housing, being a small business of under 3,000 square feet or operating in a structure built before 1955.

No district councils or business groups have taken a position on the proposed parking changes. James Farnsworth, interim executive director of the Highland Business Association, said that group began discussing the parking study on April 8. The Summit Hill Association has reviewed the study, according to its president Peter Rhodes, but it has not taken a position. The Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce will be hosting an information session on the parking study for members, but the date has not been set.

The city planning department will hold public webinars on the parking study from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 15, and noon-1 p.m. Tuesday, April 20. To register for the free programs, visit [tinyurl.com/2vsbcexn](http://tinyurl.com/2vsbcexn). To review the parking study, visit [stpaul.gov/parking-study](http://stpaul.gov/parking-study).

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# Crime Report

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

## Highland Park

**Robbery**—A strong-arm robbery was reported on the 1300 block of West Maynard Drive at 11:10 a.m. Thursday, March 18.

**Burglary**—A residential burglary was reported on the 1300 block of Kenneth Street at 8:14 p.m. Thursday, March 18.

—Commercial break-ins were reported on the 2500 block of West Seventh Street on March 20, and the 2100 block of West Seventh on March 23.

**Theft**—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 1900 block of Ford Parkway and 2500 block of Crosby Farm Road on March 20, and the 1900 block of Ford on March 22.

**Miscellaneous**—Felony criminal damage to property was reported on the 1900 block of Ford Parkway at 7:15 a.m. Friday, March 19.

## Lexington-Hamline

**Robbery**—Information is being sought about the male who robbed TCF Bank, 459 N. Lexington Pkwy., at 6 p.m. Tuesday, February 23. He is described as about 20 years old,



5-foot-6 with a neck tattoo resembling a cloud. He was last seen running east across Lexington. Anyone with information is asked to contact the FBI at 1-800-225-5324 or at

tips.fbi.gov.

—A strong-arm robbery was reported on the 300 block of North Lexington Parkway at 3:51 p.m. Thursday, March 18.

**Theft**—A shoplifting loss of more than \$1,000 was reported on the 1300 block of University Avenue at 2:45 p.m. Sunday, March 21.

—A vehicle was reported stolen on the 1200 block of Saint Anthony Avenue on Monday, March 22.

## Macalester-Groveland

**Burglary**—A residential break-in was reported on the 2000 block of Grand Avenue at 11:18 p.m. Friday, March 19.

## Mendota Heights

**Burglary**—Two bicycles were reported stolen from an underground apartment garage on the 1800 block of Eagle Ridge Drive at 11:24 a.m. Friday, March 26.

**Theft**—Several items were reported stolen from vehicles on the 900 block of Highway 13 on March 20, and the 1000 block of Dakota Drive on March 23.

—A box containing elevator and maintenance room keys was reported ripped off the wall of a building on the 1000 block of Highway 13 at 8:48 a.m. Monday, March 22.

—Money was reported missing from a teacher's purse at Sibley High School at 1:32 p.m. Tuesday, March 23.

## Merriam Park

**Theft**—A vehicle was reported stolen on

the 1700 block of Ashland Avenue on Thursday, March 18.

—A bicycle valued at more than \$1,000 was reported stolen on the 1600 block of Marshall Avenue at midnight Monday, March 22.

## Snelling-Hamline

**Gas tank explosion**—Two men were injured, including one severely, after a metal tank with compressed gas they were trying to recycle exploded around 11:30 a.m. Saturday, April 3, on the 1400 block of Iglehart Avenue. According to media reports, the men were outside a commercial building cutting the top of the cylinder when it exploded, propelling the top more than a block away. The men were taken to the hospital.

## Summit Hill

**Theft**—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on the 900 block of Summit Avenue on March 17.

—A shoplifting loss of more than \$1,000 was reported on the 800 block of Grand Avenue at 10:10 a.m. on March 17.

—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 700 block of Lincoln Avenue on March 22, and the 700 block of Linwood Avenue on March 23.

## Summit-University

**Robbery**—A strong-arm robbery was reported on the 300 block of North Milton Street at 3:27 p.m. Sunday, March 21.

**Theft**—Several items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from vehicles on the

800 block of Ashland Avenue on March 18, the 900 block of Carroll Avenue on March 22, and the 400 block of Laurel Avenue on March 24.

—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 900 block of Selby Avenue on March 22, and the 200 block of North Western Avenue on March 23.

**Arson**—An arson fire was reported on the 600 block of Holly Avenue at 7:18 a.m. Thursday, March 18.

**Miscellaneous**—An incident involving methamphetamine was reported at 7:32 p.m. Saturday, March 20, on the 300 block of North Dale Street.

—An incident involving heroin was reported at 5:11 p.m. Monday, March 22, on the 300 block of North Dale Street.

## West End

**Burglary**—A commercial break-in was reported on the 900 block of Randolph Avenue at 5:56 a.m. Sunday, March 21.

**Theft**—A vehicle was reported stolen on West Seventh Street and Grand Avenue on Tuesday, March 23.

**Assault**—An aggravated assault with a dangerous weapon was reported on the 200 block of Grand Avenue at 7:04 p.m. Sunday, March 21.

**Weapons**—Gunfire was reported on the 300 block of West Seventh Street at 7:38 p.m. Wednesday, March 24.

**Miscellaneous**—An incident involving methamphetamine was reported on the 1000 block of Otto Avenue at 9:53 p.m. Tuesday, March 23.

# District Councils

## Highland Park

highlanddistrictcouncil.org • 651-695-4005

**Annual meeting**—The Highland District Council will hold its annual meeting via Zoom at 6:45 p.m. Thursday, April 22. There will be news about the parks in Highland, an update on the Highland Bridge development, information on how local restaurants are faring during the pandemic, and crime and safety tips from the Saint Paul Police Department. The event will also provide an opportunity to meet candidates for the district council's board of directors. Register to receive the meeting link at bit.ly/RSVPannualmeeting.

**Board election**—An online election will be held from 7 p.m. on April 22 to 10 p.m. on April 27 to fill seats on the HDC board. Up for election are representatives for all odd-numbered grids, and three at-large positions. Candidates must submit their applications by April 15. To request a mail-in ballot, call the office or email Kathy@highlanddistrictcouncil.org. To learn more about applying and voting, visit bit.ly/HDCelection.

**Lexington realignment**—People are invited to provide comments by April 15 on proposed road layouts for phase two of the Lexington Parkway reconstruction. Options for the new Elway Street and Montreal Avenue intersection include a two-way stop, a full roundabout, and a mini-roundabout. Learn more and comment at bit.ly/LexRealignment.

**Highland Bridge parks**—Join the city of Saint Paul's Department of Parks and Recreation at 6 p.m. Tuesday, April 20, for a virtual open house about future parks in the new Highland Bridge development. The meeting can be accessed at bit.ly/3m8imil. For information, email Ellen.Stewart@ci.stpaul.mn.us or visit stpaul.gov/HighlandBridgeParks.

**Taste of Ward 3: Encore**—Following a successful event in January, the Highland and Macalester-Groveland district councils and Highland Business Association are again conducting a month-long promotion of restaurants in Ward 3. Order from restaurants in Highland Park and Macalester-Groveland between April 22 and May 22 and submit your receipts. Every two receipts received by June 1 will be entered in drawings for gift cards. Learn more at tasteofward3.com.

## Macalester-Groveland

macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

**Neighborhood cleanup**—The Macalester-Groveland Community Council's Community Building Team and local volunteers will conduct a neighborhood cleanup from 9-11:30 a.m.

Saturday, April 24, in celebration of Earth Day. Learn more and sign up to volunteer at macgrove.org/events.

**Mac-Grove survey**—The community council is asking people to submit comments about its current programs, activities, communication and outreach at macgrove.org/2021survey by April 16. Include an email for a chance to win a \$25 gift card.

**Show your pride**—Locally designed Macalester-Groveland T-shirts can still be ordered online for home delivery. The shirts come in kiwi green, heather indigo blue and dark heather gray in a variety of sizes. To order, visit macgrove.org/tshirt.

**Upcoming online meetings**—Transportation Committee on Monday, April 26; Housing and Land Use Committee on Wednesday, April 28; Inclusivity Task Force on Thursday, May 6; and board of directors on Thursday, May 13. All meetings will be held via Zoom beginning at 6:30 p.m. Sign up for monthly meeting notices and Zoom information at macgrove.org/participate.

## Union Park

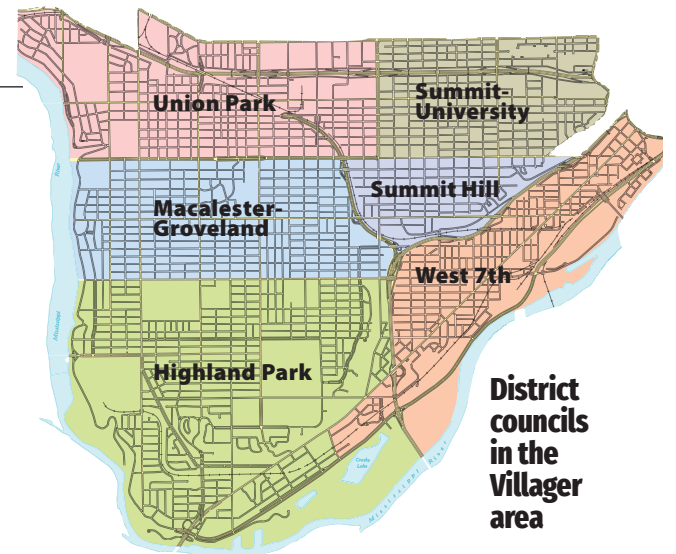
unionparkdc.org • 651-645-6887

**Solidarity fund**—The Union Park and Lexington-Hamline community councils have established a solidarity fund for those in need of housing relief. The funds may be used to cover rent, mortgage payments and utilities. Those who are able to donate to the fund are being asked to visit givemn.org/story/Li2sdg. Those in need of assistance should call Keystone Community Services at 651-917-3883.

**Union Park micro-grants**—The UPDC is seeking applications from residents and small groups of neighbors for grants of \$400-\$600 to complete small projects in its neighborhoods. Applications are due by the end of May. Email info@unionparkdc.org or visit unionparkdc.org/micro-grant.

**Become a UPDC scholar**—The district council's Neighborhood Involvement Committee is sponsoring a one-time \$500 scholarship for someone who works, lives or attends school in one of Union Park's neighborhoods and will be pursuing a post-secondary education this fall. Applications will close on April 30 and the finalist will be notified by mid-May. For information, email jonah@unionparkdc.org.

**Equity scorecard**—The UPDC has finalized its Equitable Development Scorecard, a tool for residents, employers and committee members to rank potential neighborhood developments on equity issues in transportation, land use, environment, pedestrian safety and more. Comments regarding the scorecard are being sought at surveymonkey.com/r/8QBG27R.



District councils in the Villager area

**Upcoming meetings**—Committee on Land Use and Development, 6:30 p.m. Monday, April 19; Environment and Parks Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 21; Neighborhood Involvement Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, April 26; and board of directors, 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 5. To access the Zoom meetings, email wako@unionparkdc.org or click on the links at unionparkdc.org/calendar.

## West Seventh

fortroadfederation.org • 651-298-5599

**Annual meeting**—The West Seventh/Fort Road Federation will hold its annual meeting via Zoom from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 20. The guest speaker will be Sean Kershaw, a West Seventh resident and director of the Saint Paul Department of Public Works. The meeting will include breakout sessions and updates on the district council's work. Register by visiting the website.

**Board elections**—Anyone 16 and older who lives, owns property or owns a business in the West Seventh neighborhood can vote for members of the board of directors. Voting will be done online by visiting the website from April 13 until 6:45 p.m. April 20. Vote curbside at 882 W. Seventh St. from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. April 13-16 and 19-20 by calling the office to be greeted at the door.

**Upcoming Zoom meetings**—Community Engagement and Outreach Committee, 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 15; annual meeting and election results, 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 20; and Transportation and Land Use Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 5. Go to fortroadfederation.org/calendar for details and log-in information.



# ON THE TOWN

## Framing inequity

### Former public defender portrays cities' down-and-out on canvas

BY ANNE MURPHY

Maalester-Groveland artist Mark Cosimini is framing the inequities in society in a series of paintings he groups under the headings "Social Landscapes" and "Haves and Have Nots." The paintings put a face on poverty and render the stark contrasts between the more and the less fortunate among us.

Cosimini began painting full time after retiring from a 30-year career as a public defender in Hennepin County. He grew up in Saint Paul's Dayton's Bluff neighborhood, completed a double major in studio art and political science at the University of Minnesota and earned his law degree at the former William Mitchell College of Law.

"My wife passed away in 2010," he said. "We'd met in law school. I worked for another year or so after she died and finally decided it was time for a change. I thought I'd restart my life as if I never went to law school and just kept painting after college. It's like having a job where every day is a good day.

"Practicing law as a public defender was a very fulfilling but stressful life," Cosimini said. "I retired and decided to return to my original love—painting. I made room in my basement. I had tubes of paint I kept from college back in the '70s. It was amazing; they were still good."

Cosimini's portfolio includes oil and acrylic still lifes, florals, landscapes and portraits. He joined the AZ Gallery in downtown Saint Paul, and has been a part of juried exhibits and solo shows across the Twin Cities, including the Summit Avenue Artisan Festival and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts' virtual Foot in the Door exhibit.

Cosimini described his Social Landscapes as a natural extension of his work as a public defender. "For most of my working life, I was fortunate to be able to work with the poor and less fortunate," he said. "In those years, I witnessed daily the inequities in society. It

only seemed natural to portray that in my paintings.

"In 2016, I was in New York and started taking photos of people on the street asking for money. The first social landscape I painted was based on an interesting fellow I saw during that visit. That gentleman was in three or four paintings I completed in the following two years. After I returned home, I started taking photos of homeless people here and anywhere I traveled.

"I work from photos," he said. "They're all candid, not posed. Many of my photos are taken when I'm a passenger in a car. I don't really talk with the people I photograph, but if I'm on foot I'll greet them, give them some money.

"There are so many disturbing things about the landscape," Cosimini said. "How can there be such poverty and wealth so close to each other? Urban areas are crowded with the homeless, while in outlying areas one wouldn't know this population existed. Large cities are divided into regions of the homeless surrounded by prosperous commercial



Cosimini's painting, "Homeless Please Help."



Artist Mark Cosimini and his oil painting, "Chestnut Street Sunday Afternoon." PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

communities. How as a society can we accept this?"

Cosimini's series of Social Landscapes includes paintings set in Saint Paul, New York and Chicago. Among the Saint Paul group is "Shepard Road Sunday Morning," a painting drawn from his weekly excursions to visit his brother on the East Side.

"Landscape painting may be defined as the depiction of nature, but it's much more," Cosimini said. "Landscapes have progressed from serving as the background for religious and historical paintings to being a genre in themselves. By the 19th century, landscapes were part of the Romantic movement in art, representing the glory of nature and the struggles of man against the forces of nature. By the 20th century, landscapes had grown to include man's struggles in urban and industrial settings."

Cosimini admires the 19th century Ash Can School in which artists portrayed scenes of daily life in New York City. Sometimes known as the Apostles of Ugliness, the artists of the Ash Can School were intent on painting scenes of what society's more fortunate members were inclined to ignore. "They painted real people, urban society," Cosimini said. "I love their style. It's a very direct approach."

Cosimini hopes his Social Landscapes will move the plight of the homeless and underserved to the forefront. A similar intent is behind his Haves and Have Nots paintings. "The first painting in this series takes a composition by the Symbolist painter Gustave Moreau and substitutes palaces with skyscrapers and the homeless in place of the adoring masses," he said. "My next paintings will be still lifes showing the contrasts between a rose and a dandelion or a gold chalice and a tin can.

"These series of paintings come down from the Ash Can School, where they said, 'Hey, there are a bunch of people hurting out there and we're going to put a frame around it, put it in a museum and have people look at this.' I don't purport that anything will change immediately, but I hope my paintings make people think twice.

"Paintings can be enjoyed on so many levels," Cosimini said, "the composition, the colors, the technique, the subject matter. Me slapping some paint on a canvas will have little or no effect on the world around us. I just hope someone will look at my work and think, 'Hmmm, something's not right.' And hopefully they aren't talking about my technique."

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# ON THE TOWN *Briefly*

## Dance

**Minnesota Dance Theatre** will delve into themes of the classic fairy tale "Twelve Dancing Princesses" and how those themes resonate today in Exploring Enchantment from 7:30-8:30 p.m. Thursday, April 15. The online program is offered free of charge up until two hours before curtain. To register for the link, visit [thecowlescenter.org/tickets/exploring-the-enchantment](https://thecowlescenter.org/tickets/exploring-the-enchantment).

## Music

**The Minnesota Orchestra** will continue its series of free Friday night concerts with the live-streaming of "Outliers and Intrigue" on April 16 and "Dreams and Discovery" on April 30. Both programs begin at 8 p.m. Conductor Marc Albrecht and pianist Simon Trpčeski will be featured on April 16 in Herbsttag (Autumn Day) by Del Aguila, Piano Concerto No. 1 by Shostakovich and Symphony No. 4 by Schumann. Fabien Gabel will conduct the orchestra on April 30 in Alberga's Shining Gate of Morpheus, Stravinsky's Suite from Pulcinetta and Mozart's Symphony No. 39. Visit [minnesotaorchestra.org](https://minnesotaorchestra.org).

**Music written by and dedicated** to 18th-century Afro-European violinist and composer Joseph Bologne will be performed by Lyra Baroque Orchestra in a live-streamed concert at 11 a.m. Saturday, April 17. The program will feature violinists Lucinda Marvin, Marc Levine and Elizabeth York, violist Ginna Watson, cellist Tulio Rondón and harpsichordist Tami Morse. Tickets are \$15, \$5 for students. Visit [lyrbaroque.org](https://lyrbaroque.org).

**The Church of the Lost Souls**, a 12-week concert series featuring guitarist Billy McLaughlin, his band SimpleGifts and special guests, will continue at 4:30 p.m. Sundays through May 2 at the Parkway Theater, 4814 Chicago Ave. S. in Minneapolis. SimpleGifts



**"Sinclair Lewis: 100 Years of Main Street"** opened on April 10 at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. The new exhibit celebrates the Minnesota author (pictured above in 1922) whose novels and short stories sold in the millions. In 1930 he became the first American to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. His literary works and social critiques of American life ring true today. The History Center is open from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Sundays. Admission is \$8-\$12. Call 651-259-3015 or visit [mnhs.org](https://mnhs.org).

includes singers Karen Paurus, Amy Courts and Kathleen Johnson, instrumentalist Laura MacKenzie and drummer Billy O. Joining them will be Turn Turn Turn on April 18; Annie Mack, April 25; and Peter Mayer, May 2. Ninety-two seats are available in the theater (25 percent capacity). Tickets are \$29 in advance, \$39 at the door. The concerts will also be live-streamed with tickets priced at whatever you care to pay. For reservations, visit [theparkwaytheater.com](https://theparkwaytheater.com).

**"Bowing and Fretting in the Baroque,"** music from the 16th-18th centuries for treble viol, liron, violone and bass viol, will be performed by string musician Julie Elhard

and harpsichordist Paul Boehnke in a live recital at 7 p.m. Friday and 11 a.m. Saturday, April 23 and 24, via Zoom. Tickets are \$10, \$5 for students. Visit [lyrbaroque.org](https://lyrbaroque.org).

### Native Vietnamese classical guitarist

Thu Le will perform in a Minnesota Guitar Society concert at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, April 24. She will play favorites from the Baroque and Classical eras by Scarlatti and Aguiado as well as contemporary works. The online program is free, but donations are welcome. For reservations, visit [mnguitar.org](https://mnguitar.org).

## Theater

**Diesel Heart**, a reworking of a Raw Stages production based on the autobiography of former Saint Paul police officer Melvin Carter Jr., is being streamed online through April 18. Written by Brian Grandison and directed by J. Adam Harris, the drama stars Mikell Sapp, Jamila Anderson, JuCoby Johnson and Rajane Katurah. It is recommended for mature audiences due to language and themes. For tickets, visit [historytheatre.com](https://historytheatre.com).

**I and You**, a play by Lauren Gunderson about the poetry of Walt Whitman and humanity's desire for connection, will be streamed from April 14-17 and 21-24 by SteppingStone Theatre. The drama tells of a high school student who has been isolated for months with an illness and the classmate who bursts into her room with waffle fries and a poetry project. The show is not recommended for young children. For more information and tickets, visit [steppingstonetheatre.org](https://steppingstonetheatre.org).

**Vengeful Spirits**, two plays in the style of a vintage radio broadcast, will be presented online by the Mysterious Old Radio Listening Society at 7:30 p.m. Monday, April 19. The ghost stories "He Who Follows Me" and "Runestones Are a Girl's Best Friend" will be featured along with dramatic music, sound effects and the occasional commercial. Tim

Uren, Shanan Custer, Joshua Scrimshaw and Eric Webster star. Tickets are \$18. Visit [parksquaretheatre.org](https://parksquaretheatre.org).

## Books

**Next Chapter Booksellers**, 38 S. Snelling Ave., will host free online readings and discussions with Jana Bouma, Susan Chambers, Deborah A. Goschy, Ben Unseth, Ronda Redmond and Henry Panowitsch of the Southern Minnesota Poets Society at 6:15 p.m. Thursday, April 15; Patry Francis and her novel, *All the Children Are Home*, 7 p.m. Monday, April 19; Laura Maylene Walter and her novel, *Body of Stars*, 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 20; *Saint Paul Almanac's* Global Poetry Celebration, featuring poems in more than a dozen languages, 7 p.m. Thursday, April 22; and Katie Quinn, foodie Jen Phanomrat and Quinn's book, *Cheese, Wine and Bread: Discovering the Magic of Fermentation*, 5 p.m. Tuesday, April 27. To register for the link, visit [nextchapterbooksellers.com](https://nextchapterbooksellers.com).

**Yang Warriors**, a picture book by Saint Paul author Kao Kalia Yang and illustrator Billy Thao, will be released in an online event from 7-8:30 p.m. Friday, April 16. Set in a refugee camp, where author Yang lived as a child, the book is the story of hope and resilience in a Hmong family. To register for the program, visit [eastsidefreedomlibrary.org](https://eastsidefreedomlibrary.org).

## Et cetera

**March of the Governors**, Ramsey County Historical Society podcasts on the governors of Minnesota, has begun with a program on the state's first governor, Henry Sibley. Led by author Paul Nelson, a team of local historians will introduce listeners to each of the governors in chronological order. Shows on Alexander Ramsey, Henry A. Swift, Stephen Miller and William R. Marshall are coming soon. Visit [rchs.com/news/rchs-podcasts](https://rchs.com/news/rchs-podcasts).

# THE KIOSK

### SUNDAY/APRIL 18

**NEXT CHAPTER**, an online program for women at midlife to discover a new direction and gain the confidence they need to make their next step the right step, will be offered from 10-11:30 a.m. by Jewish Family Service of Saint Paul. To receive the Zoom link, email [jsaltzman@jfsp.org](mailto:jsaltzman@jfsp.org).

**"ISRAEL AND ITS NEIGHBORS** Since 1882: Putting Things into Context" will be addressed from 10 a.m.-noon by Steve Lear of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas. To register for this program hosted by Or Emet, email Scott Chazdon at [president@oremnet.org](mailto:president@oremnet.org).

**THE SAINT PAUL HIKING CLUB** will gather today for a five-mile hike around the Como neighborhood. The hike will begin at 2:30 p.m. at Gabe's by the Park, 991 N. Lexington Pkwy. New members are welcome. Call Sharon at 651-207-5926.

### THURSDAY/APRIL 22

**LEGALIZING MARIJUANA** for recreational use will be discussed in a Saint Paul Sunrise Rotary Club webinar from 7:45-9:15 a.m. The online discussion will feature panelists state Representative Jessica Hanson (DFL-Burnsville), chief author of House File 1511; psychologist Gary R. Schoener; Chris Tholkes of the state Office of Medical Cannabis; and Darin Erickson of the University of Minnesota School of Public Health. To register, visit [tinyurl.com/7abyfpat](https://tinyurl.com/7abyfpat).

**"FRESH WATERS, ETHICS and Decolonial Values"** will be addressed at 7 p.m. by associate professor Christiana Zenner of Fordham University in a Myser Initiative on Catholic Identity lecture. From global markets to "Laudato Si'" to Standing Rock and Flint, the free online program will explore who controls the water supply and why decolonial approaches are crucial to its

ethical distribution. To register, visit [stskate.edu/events/myser-initiative](https://stskate.edu/events/myser-initiative).

### SATURDAY/APRIL 24

**SHOW YOUR PRIDE** in Saint Paul. Take part in the 35th annual citywide spring cleanup from 9-11:30 a.m. and prevent plastic and other trash from being washed down storm drains to the Mississippi River. Public health guidelines will be observed, including face masks, social distancing and limits on the number of participants per site. To register individually or as a group, visit [tinyurl.com/m827w89t](https://tinyurl.com/m827w89t).

**COINS FOR KIDS**, a fundraiser for the Saint Paul Optimist Club and its various programs for youths, will be held from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. in front of Ramsey Middle School, 1700 Summit Ave. Any amount of coins is welcome. Checks payable to the Optimist Club of Saint Paul also may be dropped off or mailed to P.O. Box 40065, Saint Paul, MN 55104-8065.

For more information, visit the Optimists' website at [stpauloptimists.org](https://stpauloptimists.org).

### TUESDAY/APRIL 27

**"REBUILDING UNIVERSITY AVENUE,"** the effort in Saint Paul's Midway Area to rebound from the looting, vandalism and arson of last summer, will be discussed by local residents and business people in a Zoom webinar from 7-8 p.m. Sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Saint Paul, the program will also be available on the league's Facebook page. To register, visit [lwv.org](https://lwv.org).

### THURSDAY/APRIL 29

**THE VIOLENT CONFLICT** in the Tigray region of Ethiopia where war crimes have been reported will be discussed in a Zoom program from noon-1 p.m. The cost is \$10, \$5 for students and seniors. To register, visit [worldwithoutgenocide.org/ethiopia](https://worldwithoutgenocide.org/ethiopia).



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# SPORTS



## The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

## New UST men's hockey coach is a sign of the future

While sports contests against Macalester, Hamline, Saint Catherine and other MIAC college opponents are being played out for the last time this spring, the University of Saint Thomas' transition to Division I athletics is already taking place on its Saint Paul campus. It started with football coach Glenn Caruso announcing a couple of future nonconference games and the school's hockey programs officially finding new leagues for the 2021-22 season.

However, in the last couple of weeks just how different athletics will be for UST really began to take shape. Courtney Brown, who played high school basketball at East Ridge and spent the last two seasons at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, announced on March 26 that he is leaving the Panthers to become a Tommie. The 6-foot-7 Brown averaged 5.4 points and 3.9 rebounds while starting 14 games last season at Milwaukee.

A week later, UST men's basketball coach John Tauer announced that Mike Maker, a former head coach at Division I Marist College in New York, and Gameli Ahelegbe, an ex-Tartan and Minnesota State University-Mankato player who spent the last seven seasons on the staff at the University of South Dakota, have signed on as full-time assistant coaches for the Tommies. Ahelegbe's help should be invaluable, since UST will play basketball in the Summit League next year, a conference that includes the USD Coyotes.

On April 6, an even bigger move was announced. Rico Blasi, who won 398 games in 20 years as head men's hockey coach at Miami University (Ohio), was introduced as the new head coach of UST's men's hockey program. Miami is known as one of the best universities in the country for studying geology. However, in athletics it's probably best known as a place where football coaches learn their craft before moving on to bigger things. The coaches who moved from there to higher plateaus include such old-timers as Weeb Ewbank (New York Jets) and Paul Brown (Cleveland Browns), college's Bo Schembechler (Michigan) and Woody Hayes (Ohio State), and current NFL coaches John Harbaugh (Baltimore Ravens) and Sean McVay (Los Angeles Rams).

But the Miami RedHawks have hockey street cred as well. A native of Weston, Ontario, Blasi played at Miami in the early 1990s (one of his teammates was current Saint Thomas Academy head hockey coach Trent Eigner). Blasi later spent four years as an assistant there before being handed the reins in 1999. His teams finished ninth in the CCHA the first year, second the next season and made the NCAA tournament a couple of years later. In 2009, the RedHawks lost to Boston University 4-3 in the NCAA Division I title game. The RedHawks also made the NCAA tournament five of the next six years.

In Division I, things can change quickly. Blasi was let go by Miami in 2019 and moved on to Providence College as associate athletic director for men's and women's hockey.

Jeff Boeser, one of the best players in UST hockey history and the head coach for the past 13 seasons, told UST's athletic director Phil Esten last fall that he wouldn't be a candidate for the Division I position. That gave Esten around a five-month window to find a new bench boss.

Local names such as Mike Guentzel, a former head coach and a longtime Gopher assistant, and Scott Bell, an ex-Gopher who guided Hamline to its first MIAC championship in 53 years, were among the names bandied about as possibilities.

In the end, Esten went with Blasi, saying, "He was a clear candidate for the job because of his record and his belief system."

In his public debut, Blasi acknowledged the past efforts of Boeser and, before him, Terry Skrypek, who twice guided UST to the Division III title game. Both were in the audience at the introductory press conference. Then, as a hint of what

WRIGHT CALL ►16

## Coming up big again

### Redhawks claim 4th straight state hoops title

By BILL WAGNER

Top-ranked Minnehaha Academy and its highly coveted senior center Chet Holmgren punctuated their nearly perfect season with a resounding 80-29 drubbing of Alexandria for the state Class 3A boys' basketball crown on April 10 at Target Center.

The victory gave the Redhawks their fourth straight state title, including their first since moving up from Class 2A. Minnehaha won its section in Class 3A last year, but could not compete for the state title after the tournament was canceled due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

The Redhawks (20-1) were challenged in the opening round of this year's tournament, but posted a 75-63 win over Byron. Minnehaha topped DeLaSalle 79-58 in the semifinals and then in the finals steamrolled Alexandria (22-2), which was competing for its first title since 1943.

The 7-foot-1 Holmgren, a consensus choice as the most prized high school recruit in the nation, put up his typical numbers—18 points, 13 rebounds and seven assists. As he habitually does, he also shared the ball well when he was not taking the shot. He made a sterling basket in the first half as he spun down low through the defense and moved in for a dunk. After the game, TV analyst Trent Tucker called Holmgren "the most uniquely talented player there has ever been in this state."

Minnehaha coach Lance Johnson was elated, but also relieved after the game. "There was a lot of pressure on us to win the state championship this year," he said.

Johnson said that in the second half, the Redhawks played about as well as they have all year. "Defensively, we played pretty well in the first half, but in the second half you could see that our



Minnehaha Academy's highly recruited senior center Chet Holmgren goes up for two during a 79-58 win over DeLaSalle in the state Class 3A semifinals. PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WISCH

defense wore them down," he said.

Holmgren's performance, Johnson added, was the ultimate game film for recruiters to see. "And he did it all with a smile on his face," he said. "He was having fun out there."

Johnson also pointed with pride to his two Miller boys. Senior Hercy Miller is headed for Tennessee State next year, while his freshman brother Mercy has already been offered a scholarship by the University of Minnesota.

The Redhawks got 24 points from

Hercy Miller in the final and 15 from Mercy. Throw in another eight from senior Isaiah Davis and six from junior Donovan Smith, and it provides a pretty good clue why they were so unstoppable.

And they won without the services of starting junior forward Prince Aligbe, who was sidelined with a bad ankle. Smith, who missed almost the entire season after undergoing wrist surgery, returned late in the year and gave the Redhawks a boost with hits three-point shooting.

## Raiders fall just short of Class 4A state title

By BILL WAGNER

The Cretin-Derham Hall boys' basketball team pulled off some exciting victories in this season's playoffs, but ran up against a talented Wayzata team that took the Class 4A state title with a 75-61 victory on April 10 at Target Center.

The ninth-seeded Raiders (18-6) trailed by a manageable seven points at the half, but second-ranked Wayzata (19-2) came out on fire after the break on both sides of the ball to claim the Trojans' first state title since 1959.

CDH started the season 4-4, but only lost two games the rest of the way. The winning streak included a 58-55 thriller against Woodbury in the section final and a 41-40 win over Rosemount in

the opening round of state. The Raiders also defeated Maple Grove 54-42 in the state semifinals.

Junior standout Tre Holloman led CDH in the state final with 19 points. Senior Marselio Mendez scored 14, while senior Jack Plum had nine points and added a team-high 13 rebounds.

At times, Holloman appeared on the verge of carrying the Raiders on a run that would make the game a toss-up, but Wayzata's defense was too tough for the Raiders to solve. Wayzata was also 10-for-23 from three-point range, compared to 6-for-19 by the Raiders, and shot 53 percent from the field compared to 37 percent for CDH.

Veteran Raider coach Jerry Kline Jr. said his club just fell a little short this time out. "You



Cretin-Derham Hall's Tre Holloman slams one home during a 54-42 win over Maple Grove in the Class 4A semifinals. PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WISCH

just hope to give yourself a chance at the end," he said. "(The Trojans) have multiple scorers—multiple shooters. They made a few more plays than we did down the stretch."

Kline said it was "remarkable" how his squad turned the year around following the slow start. He called this season one of the top thrills of his 18-year career as head basketball coach at the school.



## Athena Awards mark 27th year of recognizing Saint Paul's top female athletes



Nora Barnard



Carly Sullivan



Caroline Anderson



Celeste Alden



Erin Cray Magnuson



Margaret Dalseth

The 27th annual Saint Paul Area Athena Awards will be back live and in person on April 21, after last year's ceremony was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Forty-four young women representing the Saint Paul area's public and private high schools will be honored for excellence in athletics and academics during the event. The local winners are:

### Nora Barnard Central

Sports: cross-country (3-time letter winner, all-conference, honorable mention, coach's award); Nordic skiing (4-time letter winner, all-conference honorable mention, 2-time state participant, team captain); track and field (2-time letter winner, all-conference honorable mention).

Other activities: YMCA Youth In Government Model Assembly and United Nations, band, student election judge, middle school track meet volunteer, volunteer at races around the city.

Scholastic achievements: 4.38 GPA, college-board AP Scholar, A Honor Roll.

Post-high school plans: undecided.

### Carly Sullivan Cretin-Derham Hall

Sports: dance team (4-time letter winner, all-conference, 2-time honorable mention, all-state in jazz, spinning top and best mover awards, captain); lacrosse (offensive player of the year JV); performance dance team (best positive mental attitude award, turn competition winner, captain).

Other activities: student council, volunteer with Leap Forward for Children, House of Charity, Habitat for Humanity, school supply drive, fifth-grade retreat leader, fall cleanup.

Scholastic achievements: National Honor Society, Presidential Honor Roll (all 4 years), U.S. History Day regional qualifier, Distinguished Student of the Month in U.S. history, Distinguished Student of the Month in Spanish.

Post-high school plans: attend the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities or University of Wisconsin-Madison to study business.

### Caroline Anderson Henry Sibley

Sports: basketball (4-time letter winner, all-conference honorable mention, MIP Award, captain); track and field (5-time letter winner, 2-time all-conference, honorable mention, 3rd place state, 2nd place Hamline Elite Meet, 1st place sections, Best Field Athlete Award, school record holder for high jump at 5-6, 2-time captain).

Other activities: LiveGreen, Link Crew, Wind Ensemble, Suzuki Association of Minnesota pianist, volunteer with Feed My Starving Children, blood drive, LiveGreen Week, nursery at Saint Joan of Arc.

Scholastic achievements: National Honor Society co-chair, academic letter winner, Spotlight on Scholarship winner, 3.829 GPA.

Post-high school plans: attend the University of Saint Thomas, compete in track and field and major in neuroscience.

### Celeste Alden Highland Park

Sports: Nordic skiing (4-time letter winner, 4-time all-conference, conference champion, most improved, 3-time section runner-up, 4-time state qualifier, 2-time all-state, 4-time conference and section championship team member, state runner-up and state champion team member, 2-time Junior National

qualifier); cross-country (5-time letter winner, 5-time all-conference, 5-time conference championship team member, most improved); track and field (3-time letter winner, 2-time all-conference, 2-time conference championship team member).

Other activities: IB art student, senior class council, president of Young Democrats Club, Spanish immersion team member, volunteer with National Honor Society, Link Crew leader, Minnesota DFL, Sunrise Movement, Central Valley for Georgia, Kids for the Boundary Waters.

Scholastic achievements: bilingual diploma candidate, A Honor Roll, National Honor Society.

Post-high school plans: attend Williams College and compete in Nordic skiing.

### Erin Cray Magnuson Saint Paul Academy

Sports: lacrosse (5-time letter winner, captain, all-section, most improved); hockey (2-time letter winner, captain); soccer (two years).

Other activities: Outdoors Club co-president for two years, SPA mentor, Summit Singers, photography, volunteer at YMCA Camp Widjiwagan Leaders Club, Feed My Starving Children.

Scholastic achievements: Les Farrington Best 100 Juried Art Exhibition Scholastic Art Award Honorable Mention, Working Assumptions Honorable Mention, 2-time Honor Roll.

Post-high school plans: attend Whitman College and compete in lacrosse.

### Margaret Dalseth Visitation

Sports: cross-country (5-time letter win-

ner, 5-time all-conference, 3-time individual conference champion, 3-time conference champion, captain, 3-time state, all-state academic honors, 2-time MVP, Rookie of the Year, school record for 5K); Nordic skiing (3-time letter winner, 2-time all-conference, captain, 2-time state, 2-time MVP, Rookie of the Year, Junior National participant); track and field (4-time letter winner, 3-time all-conference, honorable mention, 3-time event conference champion, captain, 2-time all-state, all-state academic honors, Rookie of the Year, MVP, school record for 1,600 and 3,200).

Other activities: yearbook, Leadership Club, volunteer at the Minnesota Children's Museum and Prince of Peace Church.

Scholastic achievements: Scholastic Art and Writing Silver Key Award, Library of Congress Literacy Award, 4-time National Spanish Exam awards, AP National Scholar Award, High Honor Roll for four years.

Post-high school plans: attend college and run and ski competitively.

\*\*\*

The Saint Paul Athena Awards luncheon will take place from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 21, at Vadnais Heights Commons, 655 E. County Road F. Jody Redman, associate director of the Minnesota State High School League, will be the keynote speaker. Randy Shaver of KARE 11 will emcee.

Health and safety guidelines will be in place, including mask wearing and social distancing. No guests will be allowed inside the commons, only the award winners.

The program will be streamed live and recorded for future viewing. For information, email athena.stpaul@gmail.com or call Sara Paul at 651-338-1302.

## Minneapolis Athena Awards celebrate their 49th year

The 49th annual Minneapolis Athena Awards luncheon has been canceled this spring due to the coronavirus, just like last year's event. However, the 55 top female student-athletes from public and private high schools in greater Minneapolis are still being honored.

That includes Linnea Askegaard, a four-time letter winner in three sports for Minnehaha Academy. In soccer, she was a captain and three-time all-conference honoree. In

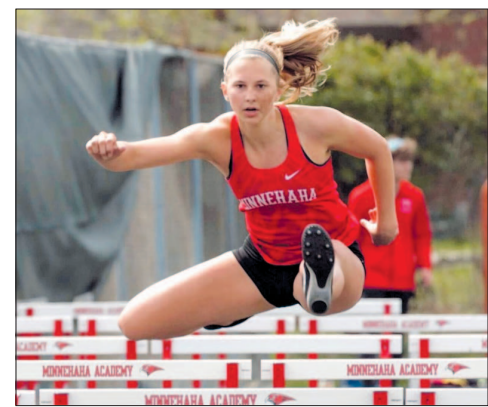
Nordic skiing, she was a two-time captain, two-time MVP, four-time all-conference and a section award winner. In track and field, she has been a two-time captain, four-time all-conference, three-time section, two-time state participant and state award winner.

Askegaard received the Most Improved/Rookie Award in all three sports as a freshman, and earned the Redhawk Award for soccer her senior year. She also was a Junior Olympic competitive gymnast from age 4-14.

Some of her other activities include being a student activity intern, service intern, four-year choir member and part of the high school church leadership team.

Askegaard's scholastic achievements include being on the school's honor roll for all four years, a member of the National Honor Society, a two-time academic letter winner and an all-state academic award recipient.

She plans to attend Saint Olaf College, compete in soccer and track, and major in nursing.



Linnea Askegaard of Minnehaha Academy

### 15◀ WRIGHT CALL

lies ahead for all the head coaches about to embark on a new adventure, Blasi said, "We have to manage expectations. We need to create a culture. There are going to be tough days, but we'll learn from them. The wins will come."

Esten agreed, noting, "This is a three- to five-year process."

Part of that process is upgrading the roster. It'll likely take more than finding talented freshmen. One route is with players available through the NCAA transfer portal. Basketball has already dipped into that pool with Brown.

The Tommies have been a Division III power in several sports for years, but none of that will matter after this spring's seasons end. Thus, the possibility exists that UST, as a first-year Division I program, may be active portal pursuers in several sports. Regarding the portal, Blasi said, "It can help because it gives student-athletes an opportunity, but there's a lot of vetting that needs to be done."

Blasi met the team for the first time just before his press conference. What he likely didn't say to them is that several current players may not be wearing purple next fall.

One big question for UST's hockey programs is the matter

of facilities. The Tommies currently use Saint Thomas Academy's arena, which holds about 1,000 fans, as their home ice. The general view is that a new arena is needed to attract top-notch players. Blasi noted that when he started at Miami, the RedHawks also played in a small arena. Eventually, a newer, larger place was built.

Asked about this, Esten simply said, "We're assessing options."

Blasi also skipped the question. "My job is to recruit players," he said.

However, before that he'll need to do what Tauer did and find some assistant coaches. That will likely be true for all the head coaches as they make the transition to Division I.

At present, there are a few spring sporting events left for UST to participate in as a Division III school. As this was being written, the baseball, softball and both tennis teams were all undefeated in MIAC play.

### STA, CDH pucksters back together in 2021-22

The recently completed boys' high school hockey season was the first one in anybody's memory where longtime rivals

Saint Thomas Academy and Cretin-Derham Hall did not face each other. All that will change—perhaps in a big way—in 2021-22.

Coaches Trent Eigner of STA and Matt Funk of CDH have agreed to make up for lost time with two contests next season, including the season opener. If the rumor mill is to be believed, there might even be a third meeting.

As a matter of routine, section designations for all high school sports are being shuffled around next year. Word is that CDH, which has been in Section 6AA with Edina, Benilde-Saint Margaret and others, will move to Section 3AA, which STA has dominated in recent years. Holy Angels will also move into that section, as will Minnehaha Academy's cooperative team.

On a side note, Gentry Academy, which rolled to a Class A state championship last month in its first year, will move up to Section 4AA. Life could be difficult there as Gentry will contend with Hill-Murray and White Bear Lake for a return trip to Xcel Energy Center.

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



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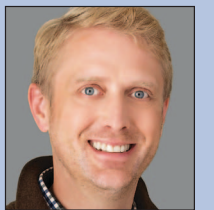
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Call Robbie Grossman today at 651-434-7887, or email at [RLGrossman@cbrealty.com](mailto:RLGrossman@cbrealty.com) for a free consultation for all of your real estate needs! You can be assured you will receive the utmost integrity, communication, guidance & superior service from The Robbie Grossman Group. Don't delay, contact us today!

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**1665 SELBY AVE**  
Wonderfully maintained fourplex in a prime St. Paul location, close to restaurants, colleges, bus lines and shopping. All 4 units are fully occupied. The building has a newer roof, windows, kitchens and bathrooms.

**TOM DISTAD**  
612-432-4771 • \$799,900



**PHILIP M. WAHLBERG**  
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**Crocus Hill 821 Grand Ave.**  
**651-227-9144**



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



**MICHAELA TOOHEY**  
651-253-6830



**MIKE JAMBOR**  
612-889-9773



**SOLD**  
**500 NORTH 2ND ST #114**  
Riverstation Condo in NORTH LOOP. Accepted offer in just 5 days on the market...I would love to help you sell your home with ease and trouble free! Call/text me to discuss your options!

**TJ PIERRET**  
651-755-6669 • \$349,900



**VINTAGE CONDO!**  
at 1753 Marshall Avenue. Two bedroom and one bath, hardwood floors thru out. Updated kitchen and bath. Large storage closet or office space. Shared patio and gardens.  
[vspaniolocbbumet.com](mailto:vspaniolocbbumet.com)

**VIRGINIA SPANIOLA**  
651 402-7412 • \$164,000



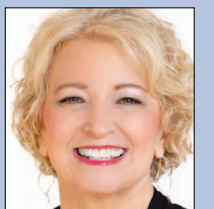
**JUST LISTED!!!**  
2155 Bayard: Stunning 3-bedroom Tudor style in impeccable condition, updated kitchen with large eating area. Fabulous 2nd floor bedroom with ideal space for a bath, delightful rear porch and deck.

**JIM BURTON**  
651-690-8556 • \$439,900



**2461 NEMITZ AVE E, MAPLEWOOD, MN 55119**  
Beautiful chef's kitchen with large island, combo wall ovens, gas cooktop and farmhouse sink. This 2,195 sf home has 4BR's, 3BA's, 4-season porch, family room, & a media room with bar. The backyard is built for barbecues, swimming and evenings by the fire. Let's have a conversation!

**DEB SOUCHERAY**  
651-263-0552 • \$380,000



**DEB SOUCHERAY**  
651-263-0552



**KAREN KELJIK**  
612-414-3245



**New Listing!**  
**1472 CHERRY HILL IN MENDOTA HEIGHTS - PREMIER OFFER!**  
First time available in 36 years is this exceptionally large Cape Cod w/tremendous curb appeal & rare side-load garage! 5BR's on one floor, 4BA's, all the wanted gathering space includes family & exercise rooms; situated majestically on lot. Call Lolly for details!

**LOLLY MCNEELY SALMEN**  
612-810-4138 • \$599,000



**New Listing!**  
**1455 JAMES - PREMIER OFFER!**  
1917 Craftsman updated with 4+BR's, 3BA's, all the woodwork of the era & space for your growing family. Meticulously maintained and improved in the heart of Macalester Groveland - walkability factor a 10+ to coffee shops, area schools, grocery and eateries. Call Lolly for details!

**LOLLY MCNEELY SALMEN**  
612-810-4138 • \$425,000



**Sale Pending!**  
**JUST STEPS TO HIGHLAND VILLAGE!**  
Completely updated 3 bedroom, 2 bath bungalow with eat-kitchen and bright sun-drenched space. New windows, mechanicals and decor makes this doll house ready to move in! Central air and two car garage. Call Lolly Salmen for details 612-810-4138.

**LOLLY MCNEELY SALMEN**  
612-810-4138 • \$334,900



**New Price!**  
**CLARENCE JOHNSTON DESIGNED COTTAGE!**  
Sits atop the bluff at 34 Kenwood Parkway offering panoramic views & stately yet livable sun-drenched space completely renovated. Luxury finishes for 4BR's, 5BA's, 7-car heated garage & dog run. Entertainment center & wine grotto. Impeccable.

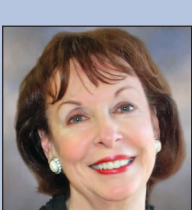
**LOLLY MCNEELY SALMEN**  
612-810-4138 • \$1,975,000  
**MORAGHAN DeROSIA**  
952-486-3697 • \$1,975,000



**LOLLY MCNEELY SALMEN**  
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**PATRICK RUBLE**  
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**SARAH KINNEY**  
651-282-9621



**ANNE KIRCHNER**  
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**LILY NEWSON**  
651-227-9144



**DAVID NOYES, JR.**  
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651-233-0748



**JOE OVERHAUG**  
651-338-2639



**TJ PIERRET**  
651-755-6669