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Debate continues over proposed zoning for homeless day shelters

Some call for more conditions on places like Freedom House

By JANE McCLURE

Day shelters for homeless people could more easily operate throughout Saint Paul under proposed zoning changes that the city's Planning Commission will consider on August 20. The changes could also reduce the demands on the Freedom House day shelter that is now operating in a former fire station at 296 W. Seventh St.

The behavior of clients at Freedom House—including public urination and defecation, drug and alcohol use, theft and vandalism—have roiled the surrounding West End neighborhood for months. More than 80 people attended a meeting hosted by the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation outside the Palace Recreation Center on July 14 to discuss the commission's potential zoning changes.

Ideas raised during the sometimes raucous meeting will become part of the federation's recommendations to the commission. The recommendations could also shape a future conditional use permit for Freedom House, which opened late last year.

Suggestions ranged from adding stricter operating conditions to 24-hour neighborhood security to property tax breaks for affected businesses

DAY SHELTERS ▶2



The cotton candy man can. Lexington-Hamline Community Council board member Jesse Hennem served up cotton candy and other treats to a line of customers during the organization's 49th annual Ice Cream Social on July 18 at the Hamline-Hague Tot Lot. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Committee recommends variances for five-story development on Grand

But neighborhood sentiment is running heavily against project

By JANE McCLURE

The proposed development of a five-story building on the site of Dixie's on Grand, Saji-Ya and Emmett's Public House restaurants at 695 Grand Ave. took another step forward on July 15 when the Saint Paul Planning Commission's Zoning Committee voted 5-1 to recommend approval of the variances and a conditional use permit needed for the project.

The recommendations will be reviewed by the full Planning Commission on July 23. Planning Commission action on the conditional use permit and variances will be final unless appealed to the City Council.

The property is owned by the Kenefick family, who have been working with Reuter Walton on plans for a mixed-use building that would include Saji-Ya, Emmett's and two other businesses on the first floor and 80 apartments above. The variances would allow the developers to sidestep the zoning overlay district that for the past 15 years has limited the size of new buildings on Grand.

The Planning Commission on July 9 voted 17-2 to recommend the rezoning of the property from business to mixed-use Traditional Neighborhoods 3 (TN3). That recommendation goes to the City Council for a final public hearing and vote later this summer.

695 GRAND AVE. ▶2

Zone makes strides in turning West Midway into urban oasis

Creativity gives rise to new enterprises

By ANNE MURPHY

Despite the limitations imposed by COVID-19, Saint Paul's Creative Enterprise Zone (CEZ) has expanded its presence and impact over the last 18 months in the city's West Midway neighborhood.

"We increased capacity and output in our two key program areas—community-led real estate development and established public spaces," said CEZ founder and board chair emeritus Catherine Reid Day.

The CEZ instituted a 100 Trees Initiative to provide additional greenery and shade in the

former industrial district. And, after a one-year hiatus, the Chroma Zone Mural and Art Festival is back with 10 new works by muralists, including Peyton Scott Russell of Minneapolis and Marlena Myles of Saint Paul. Tours of the new murals will be part of CEZ's Midsummer Happening scheduled for 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, July 24.

The nonprofit CEZ got its start 12 years ago when Reid Day, a Macalester-Groveland resident, began promoting the industrial area on either side of University Avenue between Prior Avenue and the west city limits as a place where creative people could establish new enterprises in affordable spaces.

Since then, "the CEZ has attracted creative, entrepreneurial and purpose-centered people to our gritty and active area," Reid Day said. "We now have a mix of industrial, retail and

entertainment establishments, a large concentration of breweries, plus dance, drumming, theater, film, music and more. The Playwrights' Center recognized the character of our community when they decided to make their new home here."

Over the past few months, the CEZ has undergone a change in leadership. "We have a new board chair, Renee Spillum, who lives in Midway and works for Seward Redesign," Reid Day said. "We have two paid consultants, including executive director Angela Casselton. She joined us in 2019 to secure sponsors for our first Chroma Zone festival, and we were so impressed we asked her to stay on."

"Like many organizations, we had had a great deal of momentum and ambition in 2020," Casselton said. "Things were really going well. We were building off of 2019, and

then everything shut down."

Chroma Zone was the first mural festival in Minnesota with artists of local, national and even international renown. But with COVID-19, Casselton said, "we were forced to postpone the 2020 Chroma Zone, release our partners and funders from their commitments, and watch as contracts for our commercial real estate services dried up."

Last summer "we decided to use the support from two funders to employ local artists and vendors affected by the shutdown in the creation of six more outdoor murals," Casselton said. "We held a socially distanced outside open house in October, and we continued to promote self-guided, socially distanced tours of the murals, which now number over 24."

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1◀ DAY SHELTERS

and homeowners. Others asked that city officials work more closely with homeless people. Some neighbors wanted Freedom House closed down, criticizing how it is operated.

Pat Salkowicz of Art Farm Advertising, 310 Sherman St., brought two trash bags and a small plastic bag of syringes and pipes used to smoke methamphetamine to the July 14 meeting. Holding up the bags, she said, "This is just from Monday." She and other business owners and residents said the trash and behavior of Freedom House clients are contrary to efforts to promote the Seven Corners area as a city gateway and event destination.

Others said that if Freedom House is to stay, more regulations are needed for it to operate in a way that is equitable to its guests and to neighbors. "We need to ask, 'How is Freedom House helping everybody?'" said neighbor Ben Vigdal. He and others said their family members are afraid to leave their homes. "We need to set safety measures and not rush into a zoning study," he added.

The ordinance would allow new day shelters to operate within half a mile from overnight shelters.

Molly Jalma, executive director of Freedom House, said she attended the meeting to listen and talk to neighbors. She declined any further comment.

The controversy surrounding Freedom House is just a part of the city's long and complicated effort to help people who lack shelter. The pandemic caused many overnight shelters to reduce their populations in order to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus.

The rise in homelessness spurred a huge uptick in encampments, which the city spent weeks clearing out and getting people into other shelters, including hotels and the former Bethesda Hospital. Saint Paul saw the number of unsheltered people jump from 26 in 2019 to 384 in 2020.

Day shelters like Freedom House provide people who are homeless with places to relax, shower, seek social services and get something to eat. Currently, overnight shelters can provide day services as an accessory use, but stand-alone day shelters are not allowed. The exception is Freedom House's sister facility Listening House, which won a legal settlement with the city to occupy its site in a Dayton's Bluff church.

Freedom House was allowed to open under a November 2020 emergency order tied to the pandemic. Without a zoning change to allow such facilities, Freedom House would have to close when the emergency ends. No date has been set for when that will occur.

The so-called homeless service facility ordinance was unveiled this spring and was the topic of two Planning Commission public hearings. The ordinance originally included a requirement that homeless service facilities be no closer than half a mile from an overnight shelter. That proposed restriction has been dropped, said Department of Safety and Inspections director Ricardo Cervantes, to free

up more places for day shelters to operate in the city.

The facilities would be allowed in the downtown and other neighborhood commercial districts, in industrial areas and in areas zoned for traditional neighborhoods mixed uses. They would not be allowed in strictly residential districts.

Day shelters that are smaller than 5,000 square feet could operate without conditional use permits. Larger facilities like Freedom House would be required to get permits, which can be used to set operating restrictions.

Those at the July 14 meeting disagreed on how to handle homeless service facilities under the proposed regulations. Some people wanted them concentrated in downtown, while others wanted them spread throughout the city.

If the City Council ultimately approves the zoning changes, the immediate impact would be to allow Freedom House to remain if it can obtain a conditional use permit. That would require a separate Planning Commission process.

1◀ 695 GRAND AVE.

The Zoning Committee hearing on July 15 lasted almost three hours, focused largely on the East Grand Avenue Zoning Overlay District. The district was adopted in 2006 as a way to preserve the character of Grand by limiting building heights and footprints between Dale Street and Ayd Mill Road. That 1.3-mile stretch of Grand has not had a new mixed-use development since, according to city planner Emma Siegworth.

The East Grand Avenue Zoning Overlay District limits building heights to a maximum of three stories or 36 feet, building footprint to a maximum of 25,000 square feet, and building size to a maximum of 75,000 square feet. The Zoning Committee recommended variances that would allow a building height of five stories or 59 feet 10 inches, a building footprint of 30,500 square feet and a building size of 124,000 square feet.

TN3 zoning allows a building height of up to 55 feet. The Zoning Committee recommended the approval of a conditional use permit for a height of 59 feet 10 inches. The committee also recommended a variance from the maximum 10-foot front-yard setback, allowing an 18-foot setback to accommodate restaurant patio space.

The zoning change, conditional use permit and all of the variances have the support of the Summit Hill Association. The SHA is currently studying the East Grand Avenue Zoning Overlay District. It opted to support a variance



The stepped-back facade of the proposed five-story development at 695 Grand Ave. with its restaurant patio off the sidewalk and second-floor terrace.

to the overlay district in hopes of preserving the district while it considers recommending to the city any changes to its parameters.

The Zoning Committee received 63 comments in support of the development as proposed and 122 against. The commission also received a petition with 465 signatures in opposition.

More than 20 people testified at the hearing against the project as planned. While some objected to how it would affect the neighborhood's historical character, most spoke in defense of the zoning overlay district and the protections it provides. Margaret Gadiant said the overlay district was developed over three

years with extensive neighborhood participation. "The limits are there for a purpose," she said, and that is to provide a balance in development on Grand.

Sonja Mason, who lives across Saint Albans Street from 695 Grand, was among several speakers who said the development as proposed is just too big for the site. The new building would tower over adjacent homes, blocking light and air, she and others said. "Neighbors do want more housing," Mason said. But they do not want what she described as "high-density luxury boxes."

"This will greatly impact the livability of the neighborhood," said Marit Kucera, a resident

of Saint Albans Street. According to her, the increased traffic from the development would pose a greater risk for pedestrians.

Five people spoke in support of the permit and variances, saying the project will provide new housing and vitality for the neighborhood. "I think this is something Grand Avenue needs," said neighborhood resident Beth Strusinski.

Zoning Committee chairman Cedrick Baker asked Ari Parritz of Reuter Walton if the developers would consider continuing their discussion with neighbors to resolve some of their objections to the project. Parritz, however, cited the months of discussion that has already taken place and did not believe that would be productive. A smaller building, he added, would involve tradeoffs, such as giving up the ground floor restaurant and retail space.

Baker joined committee members Kristine Grill, Nate Hood, Simon Taghioff and Omar Syed in recommending the conditional use permit and variances. Jake Reilly was the lone vote against.

Reilly questioned whether the project meets all of the required legal findings for approval, including "practical difficulty." He also cited the 4-to-1 neighborhood opposition.

Reilly also cast one of the two votes against rezoning the property on July 9. He thought a more reasonable solution would have been to rezone the property to TN2, which would have allowed for many of the features the developers sought in their proposal but not such a large building.

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Maurice F. Mischke, 1920-1991

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Editors

Dale Mischke • John Wadell
news@myvillager.com

Letters to the Editor
letters@myvillager.com

Display Advertising Sales
Gary Ball gball@myvillager.com
Owen Davis odavis@myvillager.com

Classified Ads & Legal Notices
Jennifer Gordon
wantads@myvillager.com

Graphic Designers

Craig Schuster • Jennifer Gordon

Administration

Jennifer Gordon
jgordon@myvillager.com

Publisher

Michael Mischke
mmischke@myvillager.com

Subscriptions

subscriptions@myvillager.com

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

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Creative Enterprise Zone chair emerita Catherine Reid Day is flanked by CEZ executive director Angela Casselton and artist Thomasina Topbear near the intersection of Hampden Avenue and Territorial Road where Topbear is working on a mural dedicated to Grandmother Earth. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

1◀ CREATIVE ENTERPRISE ZONE

“The murals and public spaces are absolutely integral to our social justice and equity work,” Reid Day said. “We create space and connectivity for people to communicate and get to know each other. We encourage people to make things and to find their way to being successful by making those things here. Our district is a major job center for Saint Paul, and many of our businesses are growing.”

In January 2021, with a STAR grant from the city, the CEZ launched its first round of allocations, offering \$100,000 in grants and \$60,000 in loans to small businesses, non-profits and commercial property owners for capital improvements in the CEZ. “We’re proud to have funded 10 women-owned or women-led businesses, three of which are also owned or led (by people of color),” Casselton said. “We hope to continue this program into 2022 with the support of the city.”

The CEZ works with landlords to prevent the displacement of businesses and maintain the affordability of spaces, according to Casselton. “We’re also seeking opportunities to expand community ownership through an investment cooperative as a long-term anti-displacement strategy,” she said.

The CEZ partnered with the Saint Anthony Park Community Council and Transition Town on the 100 Trees Initiative, a program directed by Ben Shardlow of Merriam Park, the director of urban design for the Minneapolis Downtown Council and Downtown Improvement District. Bare-root trees planted in gravel-bed nurseries in the spring will be transplanted this fall throughout the CEZ with the support of local sponsors. Among the businesses hosting the gravel-bed nurseries are DeNeen Pottery and Urban Growler Brewing Company, both at 2325 Endicott St.

Urban Growler is owned by Jill Pavlak and Deb Loch of Macalester-Groveland. “We’re proud to be located in the CEZ, where we’re surrounded by artists, potters, glass blowers and musicians,” Pavlak said. “When we found our current location, we needed to convince the landlord to rent to us. The CEZ wrote a letter on our behalf, and the rest is herstory.”

Pavlak credits the CEZ for turning “what

Creativity celebrated in the Zone on July 24

Discover the people, places and larger-than-life murals that are transforming the industrial area of Saint Paul’s West Midway area. The Creative Enterprise Zone (CEZ) will hold its Chroma Zone Midsummer Happening from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, July 24, in the parking lot at 2417 University Ave.

The free, family-friendly event will feature live performances, walking and bicycle tours of the area, an artist and makers market and a host of hands-on activities. Maps of the 24-plus murals that have been created over the past two years will be available at the CEZ information booth. Guided walking tours of nearby murals will also step out at 11:30 a.m., 12:30 and 1:30 p.m.

Other highlights include:

- Community Paint Day on the east wall of Bro-Tex, 840 Hampden Ave.

- A bike ride to see more CEZ murals beginning at 10:15 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. (restricted to bicyclists age 18 and older with helmets).

- Demonstrations, hands-on activities and live performances by CAAM Chinese Dance Theater at 10:30 a.m.; Smiling Drum Studio at 12:30 p.m.; Art Buddies’ free art kits for children; and pavement murals made with biodegradable cornstarch paint.

For more information, visit creativeenterprisezone.org.

was once just an industrial park into an urban oasis. Thanks to the CEZ, we have beautiful murals popping up all around our brewery. We also received a grant from the CEZ to give us some COVID relief and help us provide for more socially distant ordering.

“We need the tax base industrial parks provide,” Pavlak said, “but who says industrial parks have to be desolate and ugly? The CEZ has proven that doesn’t have to be the case.”

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Funds build for Rondo land bridge over I-94

By JANE MCCLURE

Efforts to knit together Saint Paul's Rondo neighborhood with a "land bridge" over I-94 have received a big boost with infusions of state and regional tax dollars. Representatives of ReConnect Rondo presented an update on their work to the city's Planning Commission on July 9.

The nonprofit ReConnect Rondo received \$6.2 million from the state during a special legislative session in June. The money will be used for a master planning process, launching what is expected to be a two-year effort.

Calls for the land bridge first began in 2009. Building a five-block bridge has an estimated cost of \$459 million. Various land bridge configurations have been sketched out over the years, including one of more than 20 acres.

The bridge is intended to reconnect the old Rondo neighborhood, which was cleaved in two by I-94's construction in the 1950s and '60s. At the time, Rondo was the city's predominantly African-American neighborhood.

"We've been building the case for the land bridge," said Marvin Anderson, the board chair of ReCon-

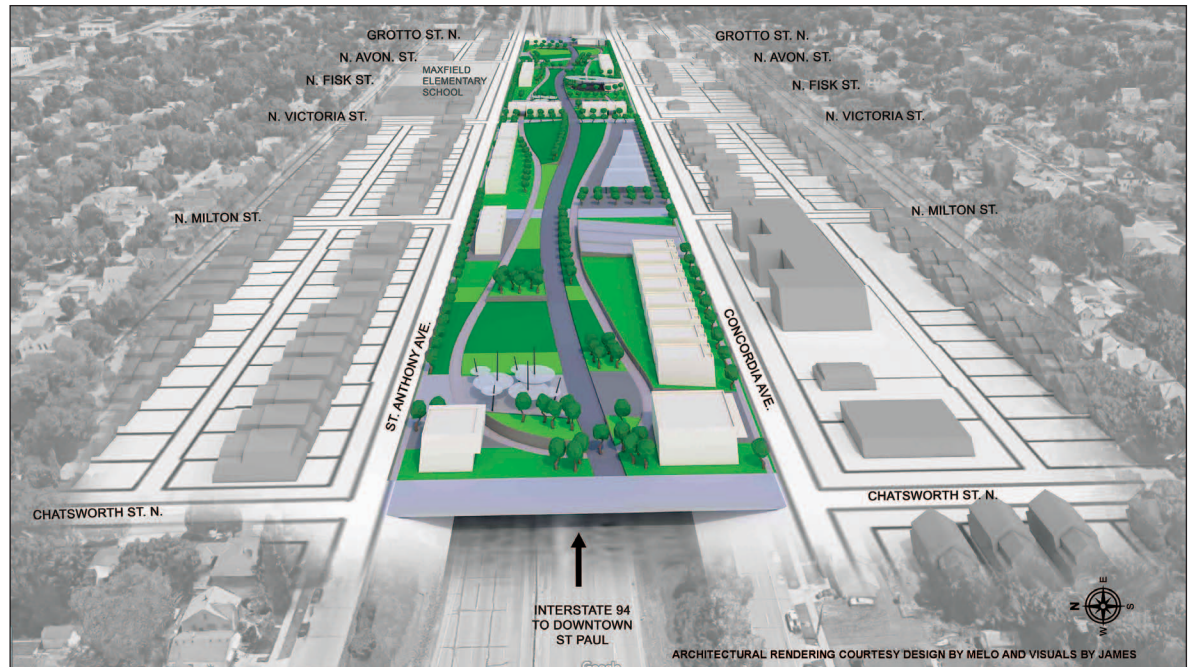
nect Rondo. Anderson, 81, has been a lifetime champion for improving his neighborhood. He cofounded Rondo Days and led the efforts to build a commemorative plaza honoring the neighborhood's heritage.

"This project will help us reignite a vibrant African-American cultural district," said ReConnect Rondo executive director Keith Baker, who worked for 18 years at the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

Three potential land bridge locations will be studied. One is between Grotto and Chatsworth streets. A second would extend from the Victoria Street Bridge east to Grotto. A third would be on either side of Victoria.

Public engagement will be a major focus during studies of the land bridge's location and feasibility. ReConnect Rondo has many ambitious goals centered on providing neighborhood connections, new space for affordable housing, improved public health and more open space.

Anderson said the land bridge would be a big part of righting the wrongs of the past. According to him, had I-94 not gone through the neighborhood six decades ago, more than 700 homes with a collective value of more than \$157 million



A view of the potential five-block Rondo land bridge over I-94 looking eastward from Chatsworth to Grotto streets.

would still be standing.

Freeway construction also meant the loss of 300 businesses. Anderson's family lost both its home and business. Not only did many families believe they did not receive adequate compensation, he said, discrimination made it difficult for many to find places to resettle.

ReConnect Rondo also received a \$150,000 Metropolitan Council grant in June. The money will be used to study how proposed development on the land bridge can be done without causing gentrification or displacement of neighborhood residents.

Creation of a Rondo Restorative

Development Overlay District is also expected to be considered. The district would focus on affordable housing as well as a proposed Black cultural enterprise zone on the bridge.

The project has faced some critics in Saint Paul's Black community, who are concerned about gentrification. Anderson said an extensive public outreach effort this fall and an upcoming planning process will attempt to address those fears.

The land bridge could accommodate up to 576 new housing units and 1,000 residents. It is also seen as providing up to 108,000 square feet of new commercial space, 36,000

square feet of nonprofit and institutional space, and as many as 1,872 construction and permanent jobs. Development of the land bridge is expected to produce up to \$4.2 million in city tax revenue each year.

The state grant for the project could be combined with \$5.2 million from the federal government. U.S. Representative Betty McCollum helped get money for the land bridge project approved in the U.S. House on July 1 as part of the \$715 billion federal INVEST in America Act.

The funding, which focuses on environmental and transportation projects, has yet to pass the Senate.

Saint Paul seeks \$2M grant to study Rondo neighborhood streets

By JANE MCCLURE

A proposed Rondo Neighborhood Streets Improvement Study won support on July 7 from the Saint Paul City Council. The council is now seeking a \$2 million federal RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) grant for the three-year study.

The city's Department of Public Works would lead the study with input from other city departments, Ramsey County, and regional and state agencies. Public Works director Sean Kershaw outlined the grant request for the City Council.

City transportation planner Reuben Collins met with the Union Park District Council

(UPDC) on July 7 to review the grant request. Union Park is one of four district councils in or near the study area. The others are Summit-University, Frogtown and Hamline-Midway. The study area is bounded by Rice Street, John Ireland Boulevard, and University, Selby and Hamline avenues.

The area includes the former Sears site, Saint Paul College, Martin Luther King/Hallie Q. Brown Center, Oxford Community Center, Central and Gordon Parks high schools, and Concordia University. It also encompasses the area of I-94 where the proposed ReConnect Rondo land bridge could be built (see story above).

If federal funding is obtained, the study's results could bring big changes to local

neighborhoods. About 62 percent of residents in the study area are people of color and around 40 percent of the households are considered to be cost-burdened.

The area benefits from the light-rail Green Line, local and express bus routes, the planned B Line bus service along Marshall and Selby avenues, and the G Line bus rapid transit on Rice Street.

The Rondo Neighborhood Streets Improvement Study has several goals, Collins said. One is to give priority to pedestrians, bicycles and transit riders. Others are to address gaps in the transit network and improve safety.

Another focus is to defend the area from gentrification and displacement. "It (gentri-

fication) is a real concern," Collins said. "We don't want the residents we're trying to help to get priced out."

Collins said the study would tie into the ongoing work of Rethinking I-94 and redeveloping the Sears property. Sears closed its Rice Street store in 2019. A proposed mixed-use development is now being eyed for the site.

"This study would allow us to cover a lot of topics in the area, and would tie in with a lot of other planning efforts that are underway," Collins said.

The study will not duplicate the one planned for ReConnect Rondo. Rather it would seek to focus on the surrounding area's transportation needs.

Charter Commission considers fining, not charging, ordinance breakers

By JANE MCCLURE

Should people who violate Saint Paul city ordinances receive administrative citations and pay fines instead of face criminal charges? That question is the topic of upcoming hearings before the Saint Paul Charter Commission. The first one will be held at 4:30 p.m. Monday, August 2, at City Hall. A second hearing is expected to be held in September.

The Charter Commission on June 28 discussed how it will proceed with a request from the City Council to amend the charter in order to allow citations and fines for ordinance violations. A recommendation from the commission is expected by October.

Council members and some city department heads see the change as a step toward reducing or eliminating criminal sanctions that are now the city's only recourse in a variety of cases, including property code violations, animal complaints, and violations of human rights-related matters such as earned sick and safe time and minimum wage.

"This is all about gaining compliance," said

"One reason we're here is that we don't see criminal citations as equitable," Niziolek said. "This isn't about punishment. We want to bring people into compliance."

Dan Niziolek, deputy director of the city's Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI).

Criminal penalties can affect a person's search for housing and employment. The low-level cases can also languish in the Ramsey County District Court system for years.

This is the second time around for the idea of administrative citations. The Charter Commission voted in February 2019 to send the issue to the City Council. However, it was set aside at the DSI's request after some council members wavered in their support. A charter change requires a 7-0 City Council vote. It can

also be placed on an election ballot through a petition process.

Familiar concerns resurfaced on June 28 among some commissioners, including equity in fines and how penalties are imposed.

"I'm concerned about how equitable this would be," said commissioner Debbie Montgomery. One of her concerns is that fines could disproportionately affect low-income people.

Niziolek and Assistant City Attorney Rachel Tierney said the intent is not to pile on fines. A \$2,000 cap is proposed, and the City Council could decrease or increase fines.

"One reason we're here is that we don't see criminal citations as equitable," Niziolek said. "This isn't about punishment. We want to bring people into compliance."

"Do we really want to take someone to court because they haven't fixed their fence?" Tierney asked.

Niziolek said about 75 percent of dogs impounded in Saint Paul do not have their required rabies vaccinations. While that may not rise to the level of a criminal citation, he

said there is concern about the potential for a rabies outbreak.

DSI receives about 50,000 property code-related complaints a year. About 90 percent are resolved voluntarily, but others go through a legislative hearing process. The city issues about a dozen criminal citations per year for property code violations.

Violations that could result in citations would either be handled by a city administrative hearing officer or by an administrative law judge, Tierney said. Both instances would result in a recommendation to the City Council. Those who are sanctioned could pay the fine resulting from either hearing process or appeal the matter to the City Council.

Adding administrative citations would mean hiring up to four more city staff to handle the hearing process. It would also mean making a series of ordinance changes by the City Council, as the citations are added to each kind of ordinance violation.

Administrative citations will not be used in unpaid garbage bills, Tierney said, which have their own legislative hearing process.

HPC supports city's plans to replace two Kellogg Blvd. bridges

Says projects won't negatively affect historic structures

By JANE MCCLURE

The Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) provided a vote of support on July 12 to replacement of the Kellogg Boulevard/Third Street Bridge that stretches from Broadway Street to Mounds Boulevard, and the eastbound Kellogg RiverCentre Bridge at Exchange Street. The action is one more step toward the start of reconstruction of both bridge projects in 2022.

The HPC reviewed the projects since the former has one end in the Lowertown Historic District and the latter is near historic structures. Commissioners determined that the bridge projects would not have any adverse impacts in those areas. The review was needed because the projects will use federal funding.

Replacement of the Kellogg/Third Bridge has been on the drawing board for many years. The bridge, which was built by the state in 1983 and later turned over to the city, is the longest city-owned bridge in Saint Paul. Structural deficiencies were discovered in 2104 and the bridge now has weight limits.

Kellogg/Third currently has one traffic lane in each direction and a center turn lane, with a narrow sidewalk on either side. The replacement bridge will have two lanes of traffic and a 12-foot shared bike and pedestrian space in each direction. The project's total cost is \$63.9 million, using a combination of local,

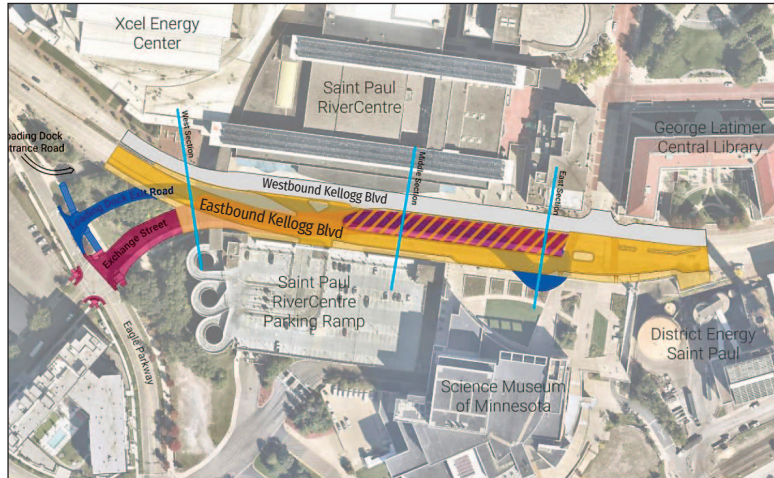


Saint Paul wants to begin reconstruction next year on the Kellogg/Third Street Bridge (shown above) and the eastbound Kellogg RiverCentre Bridge (at right) at a cost of around \$63.9 million and \$35.6 million, respectively. Kellogg/Third stretches from Broadway Street to Mounds Boulevard and is the longest city-owned bridge in Saint Paul. The Kellogg RiverCentre project area is more than 1,000 feet long and also will include improvements to the Exchange Street viaduct.

regional, state and federal dollars.

City leaders had long sought state assistance to replace the bridge, finally obtaining \$52 million in the 2020 state bonding bill. A \$7 million federal grant is pending. Construction is expected to start in the summer of 2022 and be complete by the winter of 2024-2025.

The reconstructed bridge is scheduled to be part of the planned Gold Line bus rapid transit route, according to assistant city bridge engineer Brent Christensen. The bridge carries more than 15,000



vehicles per day.

The Kellogg/Exchange work is also expected to start in 2022, pending approved funding, and be complete in 2024. Christensen said the \$35.6 million project has a shortfall of about \$24 million. About \$7 million in federal funds are pending and could be lost next year if money is not secured to complete the project.

The eastbound Kellogg Bridge was built in 1936 as downtown

businesses expanded toward the Mississippi River. Kellogg now carries about 18,000 vehicles per day in that area. The project area is more than 1,000 feet long and extends between West Seventh and Market streets. It provides access to Xcel Energy Center and RiverCentre, including their loading docks, and the RiverCentre and Science Museum parking ramps.

The project area also includes the Exchange Street viaduct, which was

a 1936 federal Works Progress Administration project. The viaduct is now in poor condition.

Plans call for replacing the bridge and creating a separate loading dock access. The current access is from the viaduct using a signalized intersection in the existing tunnel. The signal would be removed. Work would include a bike and pedestrian connection from Kellogg to the Samuel Morgan Trail along the river.

HPC members asked about the project's impact on a planned bluff-top park and the RiversEdge mixed-use development on the former county jail and West Publishing sites. They also questioned whether reconstruction would affect the extensively repaired RiverCentre parking ramp.

Dag Dejene, project manager for the Saint Paul Department of Public Works, said the city is working closely with stakeholders to coordinate the work and the parking ramp will not be affected by the project.

The city has about \$18 million in hand for the Kellogg/Exchange project and has a \$10 million bonding request pending at the state Capitol. Legislators did not pass a bonding bill during the 2021 regular or special sessions. A September special session is being eyed to deal with federal capital project funds, which could include the bridge and other projects. A bonding bill is anticipated at that time as well.

Funding for Kellogg/Exchange is one of three requests the city submitted as part of its 2021 legislative wish list. The others are for a learning center at Crosby Farm Regional Park and improvements at Como Zoo.

PAC submits findings of why Riverview Corridor should move ahead

By JANE MCCLURE

The proposed Riverview Corridor streetcar line has taken one step closer toward federal approval and funding. The corridor's Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) on July 15 unanimously approved a "purpose and need statement" and will forward it to the Federal Transit Administration. Even so, the statement exhibits a split in public sentiment about the decisions that have been made about the project thus far.

The proposed 12-mile Riverview Corridor would connect downtown Saint Paul with Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport and the Mall of America. Modern streetcars would run downtown on light-rail Green Line tracks, then down West Seventh Street for

much of the route. It would cross the Mississippi River at the Highway 5 bridge near Fort Snelling, then proceed to the airport and mall. It would use the light-rail Blue Line tracks for part of the southwestern route.

The purpose and need statement gives an overview of the project work so far, including how future decisions will be guided. The project is now in an early engineering and environmental review phase, with the goal of starting construction in 2028 and opening the line in 2032. Ramsey County is overseeing the transit project.

While a preferred route and mode of transportation have been chosen, the transit studies also include the possibility of using alternatives, such as rapid transit buses or extending the route along part of an abandoned

Canadian Pacific Railroad line in the West End neighborhood.

The statement had been in the works for several months. The PAC approved four "need" statements to indicate why the project should move ahead. They include planning for population and employment growth, and meeting the needs of people who rely on public transit.

Two other statements were amended at the Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit's request to emphasize the need for transit to support local and regional plans, and the desire to make Saint Paul more economically competitive.

Public comments on the statement were received between May 17-June 25, including those at a June 23 open house. During that

period, 53 comments came in. Thirty-six percent supported the purpose and need statement and the locally preferred alternative, said project staff member Lyssa Washington. Thirty-two percent were opposed and another 32 percent wanted more information before making a decision.

Groups including MOVE Minnesota, Sustain Saint Paul, Saint Paul Area Chamber and Minnesota Wild weighed in with their support for the project. United and Children's Hospitals expressed opposition, especially regarding the possible use of part of Smith Avenue. Comments from citizens ranged from enthusiastic support to adamant opposition. Opponents advocated for different routes and modes of transit or dropping the project entirely.

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Books for Africa feeds a growing hunger for knowledge on that ever more literate continent

By Carolyn Walkup

As COVID-19 continues to afflict Africa where, according to the BBC, more than 130,000 people have died of the coronavirus and cases are on the rise in many countries, the Saint Paul-based nonprofit Books for Africa is ramping up the quantity and quality of the books it supplies to reduce the continent's high rates of illiteracy.

COVID-19 has been keeping schools and libraries closed on that continent, limiting access to the books it already has and making Books for Africa's effort all the more urgent. Last year Books for Africa (BFA) raised \$3.2 million in donations and sent 3.7 million volumes valued at \$38 million to 20 of the 55 countries it serves in Africa.

"There's a lot of hardship in Africa and a huge COVID problem, but people still can read at home," said Joni Sussman, president of BFA's board of directors.

The number of books shipped by BFA to schools, libraries and other institutions in Africa has grown exponentially since founder and Twin Cities resident Tom Warth began sending books to Ghana 33 years ago. A book lover, Warth was shocked to discover libraries in Ghana with empty shelves when he took a vacation there. He began BFA with the help of book publishers and other local donors. The list of its charitable partners has grown over the years to include numerous corporations, foundations, government agencies and individuals.

BFA is reported to be the world's largest shipper of donated books to Africa. Since its inception, it has sent more than 50 million books

to the continent. Some 46 million children, or about 40 percent of the children in Africa, do not attend school, according to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). More than 34 percent of Africans of all ages are illiterate.

The kinds of books most requested by Africans are reference books, textbooks and children's books. The vast majority of those sought are in English, according to Patrick Plonski, a Merriam Park resident and BFA's executive director since 2003. The organization also supplies books in French to the continent's French-speaking countries with the help of partners in Paris and Montreal.

BFA has a new publishing division that is producing children's books in the Somali language in partnership with Lerner Publishing and the Minnesota Humanities Center. The publishing division is also capable of translating books into many other languages spoken on the continent.

Another area of growth for BFA is the Girls Empowerment Collection, which distributes books to inspire African girls who have been denied educational opportunities. BFA recently worked with children's rights activists in South Africa to help a group of 11-year-old girls start a book club. Some of the girls had never even seen a book before.

Children's books of all kinds are welcome, according to Sussman, who has a background in children's book publishing. The only kinds of books Africans do not seem to want are popular fiction for adults.

BFA, in partnership with USAID, has delivered hundreds of thousands of new children's books to Ethiopia with the help of the Ethio-



Books for Africa executive director Pat Plonski shows off some of the children's books that are being packed for shipment from the nonprofit company's newly expanded warehouse at 717 N. Prior Ave. in Saint Paul's Midway area. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

In sub-Saharan Africa, the adult literacy rate was 65.5 percent in 2019 as tabulated by the World Bank. That is close to 17 percent better than the 49 percent literacy rate in 1985.

pian Knowledge and Technology Transfer Society. EKTTS was established in 2002, and its partnership with BFA has resulted in the distribution of more than 3.8 million books to elementary through college-level schools, 1 million medical books to medical schools and hospital libraries, and millions of

digital e-books to colleges and public libraries in Ethiopia, according to EKTTS manager Yonathan Kasahun.

BFA has a newly expanded warehouse at 717 N. Prior Ave. where donated books may be dropped off between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. on weekdays. Donated books are sorted there. The Midway warehouse ships 20 tons of books at a time to a BFA warehouse in Atlanta, where the books are further organized and readied for shipment to Africa. If a book is of a kind not wanted by Africans, BFA recycles it.

"Books for Africa is pleased to have played a role in marshaling global resources to significantly increase literacy across Africa over the past 33 years," Plonski noted. "That said, there is much work that remains to be done."

In sub-Saharan Africa, for exam-

ple, the adult literacy rate was 65.5 percent in 2019 as tabulated by the World Bank. That is close to 17 percent better than the 49 percent literacy rate in 1985.

"All categories of books have been beneficial to the people of Ghana," said Genevieve Eba-Polley, director of the Ghana Book Trust, but textbooks are especially helpful, she said. Schools that cannot afford the cost of new textbooks are able to procure them at very little cost through the efforts of BFA.

BFA is always in need of volunteers to help sort and pack the books received at the Midway warehouse. Though the job requires no heavy lifting, volunteers must be over 14 years of age. Those who are interested in volunteering can contact BFA warehouse manager Roger Anderson at 651-251-8896 or roger@booksforafrica.org.



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Phase two of Griggs-Scheffer repaving project is largely postponed to next year

Phase one sewer work will have to be redone

By JANE MCCLURE

The Griggs-Scheffer street reconstruction project has been a bumpy ride for local residents and Saint Paul city officials alike. Sanitary sewer work done during the project's first phase in 2020 must be redone in 2021, and that is delaying the project's second phase. In fact, most of the phase-two work will now be done in 2022. That includes the resurfacing and the addition of bike lanes on Hamline Avenue between Randolph Avenue and Highland Parkway.

Griggs-Scheffer's second phase has also prompted a lawsuit by Edgumbe Road residents who object to the addition of sidewalks and the loss of boulevard trees on Edgumbe between Randolph and Hamline avenues. The lawsuit was filed in Ramsey County District Court under the Minnesota Environmental Rights Act (MERA), a 1971 statute that provides Minnesotans with "an adequate civil remedy" to protect natural resources from pollution, impairment or destruction.

Regarding phase one's sewer work, project engineer Chris Engelmann of the city's Department of Public Works explained in a July 8 letter that "the project team has identified locations where repair or replacement of sanitary sewer pipes and connections are necessary." Although the work was not up to

city standards, there are no immediate safety concerns, according to Engelmann. The repair and replacement work is expected to begin in July. Further details and possible impacts of the extended timeline will be provided when that information is available, Engelmann added.

City officials are still determining the start and completion dates of phase two. Some of that work could begin after Labor Day, but most of it will not be happening until next year.

Phase one is bounded by Edgumbe Road and Randolph, Hamline and Scheffer avenues. It involves 17 blocks and had a cost of \$14.275 million.

Phase two is bounded by Edgumbe Road and Scheffer and Hamline avenues, but also includes the cul de sacs of Montcalm Court and Montcalm Place and sections of Alaska and Vista avenues east of Lexington Parkway.

Attorney Ferdinand Peters, who represents the Edgumbe Road residents in the lawsuit against the city, said city officials ought to host an in-person meeting to discuss the postponement of the project's second phase. Recent letters from the city regarding the delay were only sent to property owners, Peters said, "and then they left out the most important information: When are they going to dig up our neighborhood?" People do not want to have work started and then left unfinished over the winter, he added.

"This is local government being tone deaf to such a degree that no hearing aid can remedy," Peters said.

Business Briefs

Bap and Chicken, 1328 Grand Ave., will mark its second anniversary on Thursday, July 29, with dining specials and giveaways beginning at 11 a.m. Then from 5-8 p.m, owner John Gleason will continue the celebration with Korean drummers and complimentary cake, along with mimosas and sparkling teas from Jinx Tea. The evening will wrap up with a grand prize drawing to receive free chicken for a year.

Yum! Kitchen and Bakery, after operating in the west metro area for 15 years, is crossing the Mississippi River to open its third location this fall in the new Harper Apartments on the southeast corner of Snelling and Selby av-

enues. For Yum! co-owner Patti Soskin, who grew up in Highland Park, the new location is a homecoming of sorts. "When the space became available, we thought it had to be a twist of fate," Soskin said. "My dad lived behind his father's plumbing shop kitty-corner from where our new Yum! will be. It was all meant to be. We're excited to be part of the community again." The 4,116-square-foot Yum! at Selby and Snelling will feature the same menu as the Saint Louis Park and Minnetonka locations, with everything made on-site, counter service, and plenty of seating, including on a four-season patio. It will also serve beer and wine. The opening is scheduled for October.



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VIEWPOINT

Bill promotes holistic approach to restoring Mississippi's health

By WHITNEY CLARK

The Great Lakes, Everglades, Chesapeake Bay, Puget Sound. What do these national treasures have that the Mississippi River does not? A dedicated federal restoration program. However, U.S. Representatives Betty McCollum (D-Minnesota), Cori Bush (D-Missouri), John Yarmuth (D-Kentucky), Steve Cohen (D-Tennessee) and Bennie Thompson (D-Mississippi) aim to change that. Their bill would authorize a federal Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Initiative (MRRRI) to coordinate restoration and resilience opportunities along the Mississippi. And just as the bill's cosponsors represent the river's reach, so do the groups lining up to support it.

"Organizations in each of the 10 riverfront states are rallying behind this," said Kelly McGinnis, executive director of the Mississippi River Network, a national organization that so far includes 50 groups that are backing the initiative.

Here in Minnesota, the Friends of the Mississippi River has supported the initiative from the start. We know that while there are programs and initiatives that have made great strides to promote the river's health, we need a coordinated, holistic approach—one that respects and supports local solutions—to truly address the Mississippi River's complex problems.

Nearly 40 percent of the land in the continental United States drains into the Mississippi River. The waterway faces urban and agricultural runoff, habitat loss and intensifying storms and floods. River pollution culminates in the northern Gulf of Mexico, where stretches of the Mississippi are increasingly transformed into summer "dead zones" with water that has too little oxygen for fish and other wildlife to breathe.

"The Mississippi River has long been neglected when compared to other vital waters throughout the country," said Matt Rota, senior policy director for Healthy Gulf in New Orleans. "The river needs a comprehensive restoration program. The MRRRI would be an incredible resource for the communities and wildlife that depend on the river."

The Mississippi supports 879 wildlife species, and 18-20 million Americans rely on it for drinking water, according to the National Park Service. Researchers at Green Lands Blue Waters estimate that Mississippi delta wetlands, forests, coastal areas and agricultural land provide flood and hurricane protection, fishery and recreational services worth anywhere from \$12-\$47 billion

annually in the delta area alone.

If approved, the MRRRI would authorize an estimated \$300-\$350 million annually in federal grants to state, tribal and community agencies and organizations to improve water quality, restore habitat and natural systems, reduce aquatic invasive species and build resilience to natural disasters in and along the Mississippi River. At least 25 percent of the funds would be directed to river projects in

low-income communities or communities of color that bear the brunt of river pollution or degradation. An additional 10 percent would be directed to communities that experience persistent poverty.

All funded projects will need to take place in an area of a riverfront state or tribal nation that drains to the Mississippi River. We cannot yet point to specific projects that the new initiative would support.

"We—people from throughout the 10 river states and tribal nations—will make these decisions together," according to McGinnis.

The bill calls for the federal Environmental Protection Agency to head the new headwaters-to-Gulf river program. It directs the EPA to work closely with other federal

agencies, state and local decision makers, scientific advisers and the public to craft an action plan that guides investments according to publicly expressed and research-backed priorities. We are optimistic that by funding community-driven projects and the jobs that come with them, rather than creating new regulations or policies, both sides of the political aisle will embrace the bill.

America's great river, the mighty Mississippi, is one of the most important waterways—ecologically and economically—in the world, yet it has never received a fraction of the restoration investment that it so direly needs. "Thanks to Representative McCollum's visionary legislation, the innovative tools, strategic investments, collaborative partnerships and sustained focus are finally in reach to ensure that the communities and wildlife that depend on the Mississippi can thrive," said Collin O'Mara, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation.

Those of us who live in river communities, who love the Mississippi and want to see it restored to full health are excited to support MRRRI. We urge representatives and senators to take up the bill and pass it during this Congress.

The writer, Whitney Clark, is the executive director of the Saint Paul-based Friends of the Mississippi River.

The MRRRI would authorize an estimated \$300-\$350 million annually in federal grants...to improve water quality, restore habitats, reduce aquatic invasive species and build resilience to natural disasters in and along the Mississippi.

INBOX

For a better legacy on Grand

The developers of a proposed five-story apartment building at 695 Grand Ave. are trying to sell the project as a "legacy to the neighborhood." A legacy can be good or it can be harmful. A good legacy would be to build a new restaurant facility using the same footprint as the old building with underground parking for guests. Then put a park over the rest of the land with trees, flowers and picnic benches.

The restaurateurs who own 695 Grand Ave. can do whatever they politically can with the property, but let's not call it a legacy. Overcrowding, parking and traffic congestion, faulty design, lack of light and excessive use of land—that's what the developers will leave us.

I believe this building will be approved though the infinite wisdom of the City Council and mayor. Let's make it more appealing to the people of Summit Hill by making the apartments all condos, enforcing the three-story height limit and providing adequate parking for residents. There will be more real estate taxes collected from condos than rental units. And now, when longtime Summit Hill residents choose to downsize, they're forced to move out of the area because there aren't any places to buy with 1,500-2,500 square feet of space.

*Lloyd A. Froelich
Summit Hill*

Sidewalks—for safety's sake

It was a great blessing when the city of Saint Paul installed sidewalks on Hartford Avenue in our neighborhood. We no longer fear for our safety when walking on this street. It can be busy with school buses and delivery vehicles, leaving little room to walk on the street. Our neighbors bought their house this year specifically because the neighborhood has good walking options. There is a steady stream of adults, children and pets enjoying the beauty of walking in our part of Highland.

We love to walk to the Highland Park picnic shelter and across the charming pedestrian bridge over Montreal Avenue via Edgcombe Road, except for the fact that there are no sidewalks for much of the route. Like Hartford, this street is frequented by cars and delivery vehicles unimpeded by stop signs, making us fear for our safety.

While I love trees as much as anyone, I value public safety more highly. Trees don't last forever, and the ones on Hartford

don't appear to have suffered within the tight constraints of the new sidewalks. With the wide expanse of boulevards and median on Edgcombe Road, it seems a small risk for the increased livability of the city.

*Bruce Jacobs
Highland Park*

Sign is a step in wrong direction

Good grief. Another Highland Bridge variance, this time for a 35-by-35-foot sign atop a building (*Villager*, June 23). This is almost as large as the Twins sign at Target Field! Highland Bridge has been presented as a complement to the single-family housing in the surrounding area. A good fit. A part of the community. We would like to see the development continue to try to minimize its impact on the area. The sign request is a blatant move in the opposite direction.

*Kurt and Barb Klussendorf
Highland Park*

What's missing at Ford site

Have you noticed the traffic backups in Highland Village recently? It is only going to get worse, as evidenced by the vision of the fully built-out Highland Bridge development (*Villager*, July 7). All that you can see are blocks and blocks of multifamily housing. From the earliest planning meetings that I attended, the city of Saint Paul has done nothing but discourage single-family homes, in spite of the fact that their presence makes Highland Park one of the best neighborhoods in the city.

*John Ryan
Highland Park*

Why have zoning ordinances?

The Saint Paul Planning Commission's Zoning Committee voted on July 1 to approve a request to rezone the property at 695 Grand Ave. to allow a developer to construct a five-story building. Compared to the existing zoning, the proposed structure will be 67 percent taller, have a 22 percent larger footprint and fail to transition, as required, to the adjacent lower-density residential districts. Concerns about the negative impacts on the neighborhood are being overrun by the drive to expand financial gains.

Public comments on this proposed development were 10 to 1 against (480 to 42), to no avail. The zoning code is supposed to protect neighborhoods from the efforts of greedy developers who take value from the surrounding area to maximize their profits. What is our recourse when neighborhood councils and public officials fail to represent the interests of the area?

*Gary R. Todd
Summit Hill*

Progress is for the future

The houses and apartment buildings surrounding Summit and Grand avenues were built when Saint Paul was a small city. As the old saying goes, you cannot create more land, so the only way you can grow is by building upwards. Grand Avenue has to grow with the expectations of future generations of citizens, not the current generation.

*Jim Buscher
Ramsey Hill*

Railroded in District 197

The greatest railroad job in the history of Northern Dakota County has been completed in the name-changing of Henry Sibley High School (*Villager*, July 7). The most important part of this process was done early and conveniently during the COVID-19 pandemic. The District 197 School Board hid behind the camera—a gutless move—and hand-picked the naming committee. The public got to fill out an online survey of potential new names. In filling out the survey, you didn't have to be connected to District 197 in any way. You could even vote more than once.

The district was to publish the results of the survey, but I have yet to find those results. Then, with the crowning moment in District 197's history at hand, the School Board could only muster a vote of 5-1 on the new name. You would think that after the 7-0 vote last December to change the high school's name because of the so-called character flaws of Henry Sibley, all seven members of the School Board could show up to vote and stand united behind this mess.

The School Board members and backers have had their say. Now we will see what the general community has to say. Three board members are up for election in November. Then

84 INBOX

we will get a real sense of where the community stands on the high school renaming issue.

*Dennis G. Hoyer
Mendota Heights*

Bar for namesakes is set too high

I decry the headlong movement to rename schools, infrastructure and whatever because they were originally named for people who do not meet the standards of today's political correctness. The namesakes were people of their times, not of ours, and not one of them was a saint.

Do we rename anything named after John F. Kennedy and extinguish the eternal flame burning at his grave in Arlington National Cemetery because he was a womanizer? Even Saint Augustine wouldn't pass the sainthood test if we considered the early part of his life.

To me, Lake Calhoun is still Lake Calhoun and Ramsey School will always be Ramsey School. If we can't name a school after the first territorial governor of Minnesota, despite his serious failings, maybe our standards are set way too high for mere human beings to attain.

*Kathleen Deming
Macalester-Groveland*

Intuition of the average driver

A guest editorial on the city of Saint Paul's new, lower speed limits (*Villager Viewpoint*, June 23) gives far too little credit to the average driver. The letter poses the idea that people are liable to drive 20 mph even in a 45 mph zone unless or until they are notified that they may do otherwise.

I reject this idea on its face. The average driver recognizes that there is a difference between Hamline Avenue and Syndicate Street. The average driver does not do 20 mph on Snelling Avenue before they finally see a sign, and certainly not on Ayd Mill Road.

I admire the letter writer's fastidious concern for safety and consistency. However, I would also like to assure the general public that the average driver has a more intuitive grasp of traffic laws.

*Samuel Robertson
Summit Hill*

Poor climate for learning

Congrats to the Saint Paul Public Schools' Class of 2033 who just finished what for many was their first year of school and did so in the face of numerous challenges. The Class of 2033 faced near constant changes in learning platforms. Many faced food insecurity, housing instability or the loss of a loved one. All of them faced some level of family stress. In spite of it, they pushed forward and made it through.

While I would like to think the worst challenges are behind us, I know that is not true. In particular, when we look at the planet's current path regarding climate change, we know those challenges will likely worsen. Without bold and aggressive action to address our changing climate, food insecurity will worsen, housing instability will increase, health conditions will deteriorate and extreme weather will

disrupt learning.

The only positive to this bleak outlook is that it could still change. To make that outlook brighter, the Class of 2033 needs the adults in their lives to demand climate justice. One solution available to the school district is to embrace community solar gardens on school facilities. I encourage you to make your voices heard. Sign the Saint Paul Federation of Educators' petition for SPPS Solar and speak to district administrators and Saint Paul School Board members about this and other climate actions. Time is short, and the class of 2033 can't wait for us any longer.

*Tom Lucy
Como Park*

Editor's note: The writer works as a social worker in the Saint Paul Public Schools and is a member of the Saint Paul Federation of Educators.

Thanks, Immanuel Lutheran

I'm in Boy Scouts, and we go on a lot of camping trips. We store the equipment we need like tents, coolers, etc., at Immanuel Lutheran Church. Before the coronavirus, we held most of our meetings at the church. While we couldn't meet at the church during the pandemic, we could get our equipment and have fun camping outside. I would like to thank Immanuel Lutheran for being such gracious hosts for me and the rest of Troop 9090.

*Nathaniel Kelly
Highland Park*

Taking aim at gun violence

Liberals decry the large numbers of people who are shot and killed by handguns. Conservatives decry the large numbers of violent scum bags who are running loose shooting and killing large numbers of people with handguns. The difference between these two perceptions is much more than semantics.

*T.J. Sexton
Highland Park*

Keep up the good work

When I signed on as a founder's-level member of the *Villager* last year, I thought I was making a contribution. Today, I happily renewed my status, although now it is a subscription because the value has been there.

Thanks for the good work, and keep it up.

*Susan McCloskey
Lilydale*

Do write, won't you?

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 your commentary to the *Villager*, 241 S. Cleveland Ave., Suite V, Saint Paul, MN 55105; email it to letters@myvillager.com; or submit it via our website at myvillager.com/editorial.

School Notes

Mary E. Larew has been chosen as the new executive director of the Saint Paul Conservatory of Music, 1524 Summit Ave. She succeeds Cléa Galhano, who served in that role for 15 years. Larew is an accomplished violinist, award-winning composer and seasoned arts administrator. She moved to Saint Paul a year ago with her family from Connecticut where she served as a teaching artist, Suzuki violin instructor, music director and executive director of the Danbury Music Center. She holds a degree in music composition from Oberlin Conservatory, a master's in arts administration from Teachers College of Columbia University, and a doctorate in directing medieval music dramas from the University of York.



MANUELA THAMES PHOTOGRAPHY

The Central High School class of 1965 will celebrate its 56th reunion (the 55th was put on hold due to the pandemic) on Saturday, August 21, at the Lost Spur, 2750 Highway 13, Eagan. Check-in is at 5:30 p.m. with a social hour and buffet to follow. Email stpaulcentral1965@gmail.com or call 651-292-9409.

Patterson Companies in Mendota Heights recently partnered with Saint Thomas Academy to provide dental hygiene supplies, meal kits and volunteers to assemble 33,000 meals to distribute to Saint Vincent de Paul's Twin Cities food pantry. The Patterson Foundation donated \$3,600 through the Dollars for Doers program, and Patterson Dental donated \$3,000 worth of dental supplies to accompany the meals.

World Without Genocide, 875 Summit Ave., will host its annual Summer Institute for High School and College Students from Tuesday through Thursday, August 10-12. Students will explore genocide and other human rights abuses, and develop strategies for taking local and global action to promote peace. The cost is \$125. Registration is due by July 26. Visit worldwithoutgenocide.org/summer-institute-2021.

Names in the News

Cheryl Jacobson has been appointed to succeed Mendota Heights city administrator Mark McNeill, who recently announced that he will be stepping down at the end of September after having served in that role since 2015. Jacobson is the current assistant city administrator. She is scheduled to take over the position on October 1.

Jewish Family Service of Saint Paul, 1633 W. Seventh St., recently added education consultant Tom Cytron-Hysom, Amper Radio CEO Joel Glaser, retired higher education administrator Bruce Goodman, Sholom vice president of sales and marketing Jamie Maddeaux and Aon Reinsurance Solutions managing director Andy Rapoport to its board of directors. Outgoing board members include Rena Glaser, Ira Kipp and Roger Kramer.

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REAL ESTATE

Advantage goes to seller

With low inventory and high demand, single-family home prices are soaring

BY FRANK JOSSI

The real estate market in the neighborhoods served by the *Villager* is setting records with a persistent shortage of homes for sale, multiple offers from prospective buyers and hefty increases in the prices of homes sold. By mid-July, the market had cooled some since spring. However, the inventory is still low and the demand high for single-family homes “at all price points” in the area, according to Patrick Ruble, manager of the Highland Park office of Coldwell Banker Realty.

Driving the demand for homes are low-interest rates and a surplus of money available for down payments. Americans saved record amounts of money during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Ruble.

“The best description I’ve heard for the real estate market is that we were going 100 mph (in the spring) and now we’re going 80 mph,” Ruble said. “We still have low inventory and active buyers, but we’re beginning to see some price reductions and homes staying a few extra days on the market.”

The Saint Paul Area Association of Realtors (SPAAR) reported that while the inventory of homes for sale declined 35.5 percent from June 2020 to June 2021 in the 16-county Twin Cities region, closed sales increased by 13 percent. The supply of

homes for sale fell from two months to just one month over that same period. Meanwhile, the average sales price jumped 14.8 percent to \$387,407 and the median sales price rose 13.5 percent to \$334,900.

“It’s still a hot market, but it isn’t what it was (this spring) when sellers were getting 30 offers and people were lining up down the street,” said Tracy Baglio, president of SPAAR and a Realtor with Keller Williams. “Now we’re seeing a handful of offers coming in for most homes. And that’s not a bad thing.”

The housing market tends to quiet down at this time of year when many families are taking vacations before school starts. But it could heat up again in September, Baglio said. A balanced market has a four- to six-month inventory of homes for sale, she said. With the current one-month supply, she would not guess when the Twin Cities would return to a balanced market.

One reason for the low inventory, Realtors surmise, may be the many aging baby boomers who are choosing to stay in their homes rather than downsize. New home construction has picked up, but it is still lagging behind demand, according to Baglio. However, the continued low-interest rates are giving home buyers the flexibility to purchase higher-priced homes.

The change in median sales price from June 2020 to June 2021 var-



Realtor Henry Edelstein of Coldwell Banker’s Highland Park office shows a home in Macalester-Groveland to prospective buyers Alex and Anna Church. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

A balanced market has a four- to six-month inventory of homes for sale, Baglio said. With the current one-month supply, she would not guess when the Twin Cities would return to a balanced market.

ies greatly from neighborhood to neighborhood, possibly because of the low number of homes sold, especially in 2020. However, the trend in prices is definitely upward.

The median sales price increased 12.7 percent in the Macalester-Groveland neighborhood over the past year, to \$400,000, according to the Northstar MLS as reported by SPAAR. It increased 5.7 percent in Highland Park, to \$402,000. Saint Paul’s West End neighborhood saw

a 20 percent increase in its median sales price, to \$300,000. The median sales price in the Union Park neighborhoods of Merriam Park, Snelling-Hamline and Lexington-Hamline increased by 10 percent, to \$385,000.

Summit Hill saw an 8 percent increase in its median sales price, to \$440,000. Summit-University saw a 0.7 percent decrease, to \$280,000. Downtown Saint Paul saw a 6 percent decrease in the median sales price of its homes, to \$197,450. In the suburban community of Mendota Heights, the median sales price increased 54.3%, to \$532,500.

In Saint Paul as a whole, the median sales price increased 10.6 percent over the past year, to \$260,000; the average number of days on the market decreased from 47 to 36; and the percentage of the original list price received by home sellers increased from 99.4 to 102.6.

Selling a home is more complex

now than ever, according to Tom Edelstein, a long-time Realtor with the Highland Park office of Coldwell Banker. Nearly every home is staged, he said, “to evoke excitement and urgency” in buyers. Homes need appraisals and many need inspections. “There are a lot of people involved,” he said.

With the real estate market tilted toward the seller this spring, some buyers offered to pay the difference between the appraised value and the higher asking price, according to Jennifer and Sean Dunn, who operate their own real estate agency in Highland Park. For example, if the bank’s appraisal on a home listed for \$750,000 comes in at \$725,000, the buyer faces a gap of \$25,000. Banks will only loan up to the appraised value. However, because of the hot market, buyers were inclined to find a way to pay the difference, according to Jennifer Dunn.

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St. Paul seeking ways to build more duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes

BY JANE MCCLURE

Increasing the housing density in Saint Paul does not necessarily mean adding large apartment buildings. More density could come in the form of duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes in what are largely single-family neighborhoods. That is the intent of a new zoning study undertaken by the city.

Other goals of the study include changes to the city’s regulation of accessory dwelling units (ADUs), allowing more than one dwelling unit on a single lot, and making it easier to build so-called tiny houses as ways to broaden the range of housing choices in Saint Paul.

Staff from the city’s Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED) have been making the rounds of local district councils to outline the proposed zoning changes and solicit comments. The changes have received a favorable response in most neighborhoods and from members of the City Council, although there have been questions about parking congestion and how the new housing would blend into neighborhoods.

In neighborhoods where there have been pitched battles over large new apartment buildings, the alternative of small-scale multifamily developments may be welcome.

In neighborhoods where there have been pitched battles over large new apartment buildings, the alternative of small-scale multifamily developments may be welcome.

Minneapolis recently adopted similar changes to its zoning code. Between January 2020 and March 2021, that city gained 10 new triplexes and 44 new duplexes, with half of those structures built on properties that had been zoned for single-family use.

Several factors are driving the zoning study in Saint Paul. One is low rental vacancy rates, which averaged 4.4 percent in 2019 and 6

percent in 2020. An estimated 47.5 percent of renter households are cost-burdened, meaning they pay more than 30 percent of their monthly income on housing.

Though more than 50 percent of Saint Paul residents are renters, 72 percent of the city’s residentially zoned land is reserved exclusively for single-family homes. And between 2000 and 2017, the city lost many of its duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes.

The number of duplex units in Saint Paul decreased from 9,724 to 8,030 during that period. The number of triplex and fourplex units decreased from 5,497 to 4,913. “This housing has started to disappear,” according to city planning administrator Luis Pereira.

City officials are hoping to address this “missing middle” of housing options between single-family homes and larger apartment buildings, Pereira said. In addition to duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes, these include courtyard housing, townhouses and live-work housing. This housing, which can be rental or owner-occupied, is seen as being more compatible to existing

neighborhood housing.

The study of missing middle housing was commissioned by the City Council in 2018. It is also part of the city’s 2040 comprehensive plan. PED’s goal is to have the study to the City Council for approval by year’s end.

City planner Emma Siegworth said the zoning changes are planned in two phases. The first phase would be directed at allowing smaller homes, allowing more than one residential building per lot, allowing ADUs on smaller lots and allowing larger ADUs.

The more complex issue of promoting more duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes and more cluster developments will take more time, according to Pereira. Among other things, it will involve changing the current single-family zoning. Saint Paul has several different single-family zoning districts, each with different lot and building size requirements that will need to be reviewed.

For more information on the zoning study, visit stpaul.gov/departments/planning-and-economic-development/planning/current-activities/1-4-unit-housing-study.

News Briefs

UPDC opposes plan to increase speed limit on Highway 280

A proposal to raise the speed limit on Highway 280 from 55 to 60 mph is drawing resistance from local neighborhood associations. The Union Park District Council (UPDC) joined the opposition on July 7, forwarding its concerns to the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). The Saint Anthony Park and Prospect Park district councils also object to the change.

MnDOT wants to raise the speed limit on Highway 280 and remove its intersection with Broadway Avenue. The state initially planned to raise the speed limit without public comments, but instead has been meeting with neighborhood groups this summer.

Highway 280 was built in the 1950s and connected to I-94 in 1968. It was designated as the detour route after the I-35W bridge collapsed in 2007, resulting in its temporary conversion to a full freeway. Its intersections at County Road B, Broadway, Walnut Street and Roselawn Avenue were closed. After the new I-35W bridge opened in September 2008, many of Highway 280's at-grade intersections did not reopen.

Highway 280 now functions more like an expressway, according to UPDC committee members. The opposition centers on several points, including that even a slight speed hike can increase vehicular noise and pollution. Opponents also say Highway 280 has heavy truck traffic and motorists already exit onto neighborhood streets at high rates of speed. Committee and district council members said any change to the speed limit should be considered in connection with Rethinking I-94 and not before. Rethinking I-94 is MnDOT's

plan to revamp the freeway and better serve neighborhoods on both sides of it.

Mendota Hts. updates its regs for door-to-door peddlers, solicitors

The Mendota Heights City Council updated its city code on July 6 to come into compliance with a U.S. Supreme Court ruling against "blanket" ordinances that prohibit all or most door-to-door sales activities or transient merchants. The new ordinance allows solicitors and peddlers to go door to door between 9 a.m. and 30 minutes before sunset.

All solicitors (those who sell a product or service for later delivery) must register with the city. No fee will be charged and no background check will be required.

All peddlers (those who sell a product or service for immediate delivery) and transient merchants must obtain a city license. A background check will be done and a \$100 fee will be charged.

No registration will be required for non-commercial canvassing or fundraising by a charitable organization, school, religious or service organization, and people exercising their state or federal constitutional rights.

Residents who do not want to be bothered may prohibit all peddlers, solicitors and canvassers from entering their property by placing at least a 4x4-inch sign stating "No Peddlers, Solicitors Allowed" or similar language.

The city has free copies of such signs at the front desk of City Hall. They also can be printed from the city's website at tinyurl.com/rhbjm7.

News Briefs were compiled by Jane McClure and John Wadell.

Rent control will appear on Nov. ballot

By JANE MCCLURE

An attempt to limit increases in the rent charged to residential tenants in Saint Paul is headed to the ballot this November. In response to a petition circulated by the Housing Equity Now Saint Paul (HENS) coalition and signed by over 5,000 residents, the City Council approved putting the referendum on the general election ballot. If the measure is approved by a majority of voters, it will limit annual increases in rent to 3 percent beginning in May 2022.

The average monthly rent for an apartment in Saint Paul is \$1,327, meaning the landlord could increase that apartment's monthly rent by no more than \$39.81 in the first year.

State law requires that new ordinances dealing with rent control first be approved by voters, according to Assistant City Attorney Rachel Tierney. "The City Council doesn't have the option to adopt this (on its own)," she said.

To be placed on the ballot, the rent control measure required the support of 4,958 residents on a petition—a number equal to 8 percent of those who voted in Saint Paul's last mayoral election. The HENS petition included more than 9,000 signatures, but only 5,592 of them were determined by Ramsey County election officials to be valid.

The ordinance as proposed, in addition to

a 3 percent cap on annual rent increases, calls for city officials to set up a process whereby landlords may apply for an exemption from the cap. The exemption might be for landlords who make investments in their properties or get hit with large property tax increases.

HENS has discussed the rent control measure with some of the city's 17 district councils, most recently in July with the Union Park District Council. The UPDC has not taken a position on the ordinance. However, the West Seventh-Fort Road Federation has voted in support of the measure.

Whether or not a district council supports a proposed ordinance, it cannot spend any of the money it receives from the city to advocate for or against the ballot measure. Additional restrictions apply to the federal Community Development Block Grant funds that some district councils receive, according to Tierney.

However, district councils may spend city funding to educate local residents and business people about a proposed ordinance, such as holding a forum where all sides of an issue are addressed.

Similarly, the city may publish factual information about the rent control ballot question, but it may not advocate for or against it. City Council members may advocate for or against the measure, but they may not do so with city resources.

Results. "Maybe it's the communal living," Estey said. "If you want a good deal today, you can find it in the condo market."

On the other hand, single-family homes priced above \$900,000 have sold in a week or less, according to Estey. She attributed that phenomenon to the savings people have accrued during the pandemic, allowing them to make a large down payment and reduce their mortgage. The incidence of cash payments for homes has increased, according to Estey. "There's more of that than I've seen in 20 years," she said.

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Sean Dunn said he knows of people who bought townhouses this spring for family members with cash and without the usual appraisal. Buyers were also willing to forgo home inspections, he said, though now they are asking for them again and negotiating a lower price if they face expensive repairs.

Not every corner of the real estate market is so bright and cheery. Condominium sales in particular have been slow, according to Marti Estey of Reidell-Estey & Associates RE/MAX

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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

Burglary—Commercial break-ins were reported on June 30 at Highland Auto Collision Center at 2042 W. Seventh St. (a Toyota Camry was stolen), Agra Culture at 721 S. Cleveland Ave. (cash was stolen from the register), and the BP Station at 2005 Ford Pkwy. (several items were stolen).

—Home burglaries were reported on the 1100 block of Montreal Avenue on July 6, and the 900 block of South Cleveland Avenue on July 8.

—Shark Tooth Tattoo, 500 S. Lexington Pkwy., was broken into at 3 a.m. Tuesday, July 6.

Theft—Seven vehicles were reported stolen between June 28-July 7, including on the 2000 block of Ford Parkway, from Hertz Rent a Car on the 1400 block of Davern Street, the 2200 block of West Seventh Street, on West Seventh and Saint Paul Avenue, the 1600 block of Ford, the 1300 block of West Maynard Drive, and the 1700 block of Yorkshire Avenue.

—Catalytic converters were stolen from vehicles on the 1700 block of Yorkshire Avenue between June 25-28, and the 1300 block of Yorkshire on July 8.

Sex crime—A rape was reported at noon Thursday, July 1, on the 2100 block of West Seventh Street.

Weapons—Three shots were fired and a vehicle was damaged on the 1200 block of Edgcombe Road at 2:42 a.m. Sunday, July 4.

Lexington-Hamline

Robbery—Armed suspects threatened three victims and stole their vehicle at Skyline Tower, 1247 Saint Anthony Ave., at 3:43 a.m. Tuesday, July 6.

Theft—At the Midway Target on June 28-29, security officers arrested a 37-year-old woman trying to steal merchandise valued at \$769, a 63-year-old man trying to shop-lift \$571 in merchandise, and a 39-year-old woman trying to steal \$568 in merchandise.

—Vehicles were reported stolen at Lexington Commons, 375 N. Lexington Pkwy., on July 4, and at Skyline Tower, 1247 Saint Anthony Ave., on July 11.

Macalester-Groveland

Burglary—Cajah Salon, 247 S. Snelling Ave., was broken into at 4:21 a.m. Monday, June 28.

—A vehicle drove through the service door of Precision Tune, 360 S. Snelling Ave., during a burglary at 2:28 a.m. Wednesday, June 30.

—Residences were burglarized on the 2000 block of James Avenue between July 2-5, and on the 1500 block of Grand Avenue on July 10.

Theft—A catalytic converter was reported stolen from a vehicle on the 1300 block of Goodrich Avenue on June 29.

—A vehicle was reported stolen on the 2100 block of Randolph Avenue on June 29.

Arson—A garage was burned down on the 1500 block of Grand Avenue at 11:56 a.m. Saturday, July 3.

Weapons—A 57-year-old man was arrested for felony threats of violence and reckless discharge of a firearm after threatening someone with a rifle and then firing the weapon into the ground at 8:15 p.m. Monday, June 28, on the 1200 block of Palace Avenue.

Mendota Heights

Burglary—A vehicle was reported stolen and several items were taken during a burglary on July 7 on the 1000 block of Highway 13.

Theft—Catalytic converters were reported stolen from vehicles on the 1400 block of Mendota Heights Road on June 25, and the 700 block of Stanwich Lane on June 27.

—A utility company reported the theft of equipment from a work site on Highway 13 at 10:14 a.m. Saturday, July 3.

—A construction trailer was stolen on the 700 block of Linden Street over the July Fourth weekend.

Assault—A suspect was arrested after assaulting a victim and stealing a car on the 1300 block of Northland Drive at 1:12 p.m. Sunday, June 27.

Miscellaneous—A vehicle's tires were slashed on the 1300 block of Northland Drive at 4:58 p.m. Wednesday, June 30.

Merriam Park

Robbery—A man being treated at the hospital said he was robbed and shot while trying to purchase marijuana on the Snelling Avenue Green Line light-rail platform at 1:42 a.m. Saturday, July 3.

Burglary—Residential burglaries were reported on the 2000 block of Marshall Avenue on June 29 and July 5, and on the 100 block of North Cretin Avenue on July 1.

Theft—A 40-year-old man was arrested for receiving stolen property, felony gun and drug possession, and other offenses after he was seen exiting a stolen vehicle at 5:14 p.m.

Tuesday, June 29, on the 1900 block of University Avenue.

—Four vehicles were reported stolen between June 29-July 11, including on the 1700 block of Ashland Avenue, on Fairview and Marshall avenues, on Dayton Avenue and Moore Street, and the 300 block of North Wheeler Street.

Sex crime—A rape was reported on the 1900 block of University Avenue at 2:23 a.m. Wednesday, July 7.

Assault—An aggravated assault with a gun was reported at the Holiday Station, 281 N. Snelling Ave., at 6:37 a.m. Wednesday, July 7.

Miscellaneous—A male threw a brick at a passing vehicle, shattering its back window, at 10:53 a.m. Sunday, July 4, on Prior and University avenues.

Snelling-Hamline

Burglary—Starbucks, 234 N. Snelling Ave., was broken into at 2:19 a.m. Monday, June 28.

Theft—Catalytic converters were reported stolen from vehicles on the 1300 block of University Avenue on June 30, and on Iglehart and Snelling avenues on July 8.

—A vehicle was reported stolen on the 1500 block of Carroll Avenue on Sunday, July 4.

—A scooter was stolen on the 1500 block of Portland Avenue on July 5-7.

Miscellaneous—A hit-and-run accident with injuries was reported on Marshall Avenue and Pascal Street at 1:21 p.m. Thursday, July 1.

Summit Hill

Robbery—Three victims reported being robbed at gunpoint on Grand Avenue and Avon Street at 3:54 p.m. Sunday, July 4.

Theft—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 100 block of South Dunlap Street on June 24, and the 1000 block of Linwood Avenue on June 29.

—Catalytic converters were reported stolen from vehicles on Dale Street near Grand Avenue on June 29, the 800 block of Fairmount Avenue on June 30, and the 600 block of Goodrich Avenue on June 30.

—Someone in a light-colored SUV stole a scooter on Crocus Hill near Dale Street at 5:16 p.m. Sunday, July 4.

Summit-University

Robbery—A purse-snatching at knifepoint was reported on Selby Avenue and Victoria Street at 8:15 p.m. Wednesday, June 30.

Burglary—Two buildings were broken into on the 300 block of Dayton Avenue on

Monday, June 28.

Theft—Vehicles were reported stolen on the 900 block of Selby Avenue on June 22, and the 1100 block of Ashland Avenue on July 6.

—Catalytic converters were reported stolen on the 200 block of Dayton Avenue on June 28, from two vehicles on the 900 block of Laurel Avenue on July 1, the 800 block of Hague Avenue on July 2, and on Ashland Avenue and Saint Albans Street on July 7.

Weapons—Three vehicles were struck by gunfire on the 1000 block of Carroll Avenue at 3:05 a.m. Wednesday, June 30. No injuries were reported.

West End

Robbery—A robbery at gunpoint was reported on West Seventh Street and Grand Avenue at 12:57 a.m. Tuesday, July 6.

Burglary—A residence was broken into and a weapon was stolen on Douglas Street and Harrison Avenue at 11:02 p.m. Monday, June 28.

—Break-ins were reported at the Eagle Street Grille at 174 W. Seventh St. on July 3, West Seventh Cars & Credit at 834 W. Seventh St. on July 4, and Saint Paul Automotive at 910 Randolph Ave. on July 6.

—A home break-in was reported on Douglas near Forbes Avenue at 10:57 a.m. Wednesday, July 7.

Theft—Eleven vehicles were reported stolen between June 28-July 10, including on the 500 block of Randolph Avenue, from Bonfe's Auto Body at 380 West Seventh St., the 200 block of Goodrich Avenue, the 200 block of Grand Avenue, the 400 block of Banfil Street, the 1100 block of West Seventh, the 1000 block of Randolph, the 200 block of West Seventh, the 600 block of Stewart Avenue, the 600 block of Jefferson Avenue, and at United Hospital, 333 N. Smith Ave.

—The catalytic converter was reported stolen from a vehicle on Chestnut and Smith avenues on Wednesday, June 23.

—A wallet and gun were reported stolen from a vehicle on the 200 block of West Seventh Street at 8:15 p.m. Wednesday, June 30.

Sex crime—A rape was reported on Chestnut and Eagle streets at 8:39 a.m. Friday, June 25.

Assault—A man was treated at the hospital after being stabbed near Burger King, 244 Grand Ave., at 9:16 p.m. Saturday, July 3.

Miscellaneous—A pedestrian was taken to the hospital for minor injuries after being struck by a vehicle on West Seventh Street and Smith Avenue at 4:35 p.m. Tuesday, June 29.

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ON THE TOWN

Paper to the people

Hark draws on her neighbors' talents in turning out public art

BY ANNE MURPHY

During the past year of social unrest across the U.S., Saint Paul book artist Mary Hark was reminded of something author Toni Morrison said four decades ago as a guest speaker at the Walker Art Center: "One of the strongest political statements you can make in America is where you choose to live."

Hark was just out of graduate school at the time. Years later, "I found myself living in Frogtown," she said, "but I understand now what Morrison meant. Given the opportunity to build my creative practice in a diverse area with many immigrant families, I've learned much from my neighbors. And in a most unexpected and organic way, I've been able to share the things that I know. I hope I've made a small contribution living and working and making art together here at my paper studio."

Hark's life as an artist has been a work in progress from the time she moved to Frogtown into a home that also serves as her Hark! Handmade Paper Studio. "Our home is the result of a project organized by Art Space 20 some years ago," she said. "It helped low-income artists purchase homes in emerging neighborhoods with a commitment to being there for at least 10 years. Now, adjacent to my own papermaking studio, is Hark-Weber Studio, my daughter's shoemaking workshop."

Hark was recently named a 2021 McKnight Book Artist Fellow. A partnership between the McKnight Foundation and the Minnesota Center for Book Arts, the \$25,000 fellowship "will allow me time and space to reflect on the knowledge I've accrued and to respond with a new body of work," Hark said. "The McKnight funding will support the production of a limited-edition fine press artist book that reflects on the practice of hand papermaking and presents the palette of papers that my practice has developed. Accompanying the book will be a series of constructed paintings, rich in color and texture, complementing and extending the text, materials and form of the book."

Hark has produced limited edition flax and linen handmade papers in collaboration with book designers and artists, as well as wall-size and smaller paper works that have been exhibited locally, nationally and internationally. Her work is in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Smithsonian Museum of African Art and the Ginsberg Book Arts Collection in Johannesburg, South Africa.

A professor of design in the School of Human Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Hark taught a class in fiber art at Macalester College for 18 years. She spearheaded the effort to build the first hand paper mill in West Africa, a facility in Ghana that produces high-quality paper using local plants and textile waste. And as an artist committed to "sustainable practice and community," she said, she has collaborated with her Saint Paul

Hark's studio has trained local residents in becoming excellent papermakers. "There've been times when three different languages were being spoken in my driveway, with neighborhood kids bringing their folks over to explain the papermaking process," she said.

neighbors to produce and install public art at Rondo Library just a quarter-mile from her home.

Hark said it took years for her to build her studio. "Accruing my equipment over a couple of decades, I was supported by colleagues, teachers, students and friends who helped me locate, refurbish and fabricate what I needed," she said. "I discovered by luck a Hollander paper beater, the machine used to turn raw material into paper pulp. And with the help of Macalester colleagues, I was able to refurbish it."

Hark worked in her driveway, her basement and in distant studio spaces initially. "Then, several years ago, I decided it was time to invest in a permanent space," she said. "With the help of friends, I transformed my garage into a professional papermaking studio."

Being a local papermaker has been exceptionally rewarding, Hark said. "Neighborhood kids and adults have worked in my shop and assisted on large projects," she said. "I've had two works installed at Rondo Library. The first was a collaboration many years ago with my neighbor, artist Seitu Jones. We created a series of kite forms that were covered in handmade paper. Kids



Artist Mary Hark poses with some of her handmade paper in her Saint Paul studio. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

from the neighborhood came regularly to work with me in the shop to produce the decorative papers that covered the kite forms. These were installed in what was then the children's area of the library."

Hark also collaborated with Jones in 2014 on his Create: The Community Meal project. She led neighbors in making more than 2,000 paper placemats from biological and textile waste collected in the neighborhood. "The project shined a light on the pleasures of fine craft for people who hadn't had access to this kind of activity," she said. "They worked together with the highest standards to create a product that added to the beauty of the table."

For a second Rondo Library project, Hark collaborated with artist Tony Santoyo. "Together we filled a large corner shelf above the current children's area with several hundred book forms covered in handmade papers," she said. "The work was inspired by the community gardens in Frogtown and the wonderful diversity of our neighbors. The book forms burst with color and beautiful

patterns influenced by Tony's Mexican heritage. The piece was installed in February 2020, just before everything closed down because of COVID."

Hark's studio has trained local residents in becoming excellent papermakers, she said. "There've been times when three different languages were being spoken in my driveway, with neighborhood kids bringing their folks over to explain the papermaking process," she said. "Tony began helping out here when he was 8 years old. He eventually completed his BFA at the University of Minnesota and now holds a prestigious Core Fellow position at Penland School of Craft in North Carolina."

"My work teaching formally and informally through community activities is driven by the fundamental values that drive my teaching in art schools and professional settings," Hark said. "Working with neighbors or in local public schools, I bring the same commitment and love of the materials. I try to share the same belief in the possibilities each person has to discover beauty and personal poetry."



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ON THE TOWN *Briefly*

Music

Emilia Mettenbrink and the Eclectic Whirlwind will perform from 6-8 p.m. Wednesday, July 21, under the north end of the bridge that carries Hamline Avenue over Ayd Mill Road. Admission is free. Bring a lawn chair or blanket, and enjoy the tunes.

Summer Sunlight, a series of free outdoor concerts, is being presented on West Seventh Place in downtown Saint Paul. Cosponsored by Park Square Theatre and the Saint Paul Downtown Alliance, the schedule includes Full Circle Theater Company in a remake of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* at noon July 22; and Ready Freddie in "A Queen Experience," at 4:30 p.m. August 5. Visit parksquaretheatre.org.

Music as free as the fresh air in which it is performed is being presented at 7 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays in Minnehaha Falls Park, 4801 S. Minnehaha Drive. The schedule includes Mother Banjo on July 22; Eli Gardiner, July 23; Yo Jimbo Jazz, July 29; Trevor McSpadden, July 30; the Strum Brothers, August 5; and Kung Fu Hippies, August 6. Visit mplsmusicandmovies.com.

Como Lakeside Pavilion, 1360 N. Lexington Pkwy., will host the following free concerts. The shows are free unless otherwise indicated: Minnesota Sinfonia, 7 p.m. July 22; Hopkins Westwind Concert Band at 3 p.m. and Open Pages Presents Lydia Wagner at 7 p.m. July 25; Vox Nova Chorale, 7 p.m. July 26; Saint Anthony Park Community Band, 7 p.m. July 27; John Philip Sousa Memorial Band, 6:30 p.m. August 1; Twin Cities Show Chorus, 7 p.m. August 3; Minnesota State Band, 7 p.m. August 4; WindJammer Concert Band, 7 p.m. August 5; and Choir-a-oke with Kith + Kin, 7 p.m. August 6 (\$5 donation).

Music from the Porch, a four-week series of free concerts from the front porch of Landmark Center, will return at noon on Wednesdays. Bring a lawn chair, a bag lunch, and enjoy the music of multi-instrumental folk artist Michael Monroe, July 21; Red Hot Django Peppers, July 28; and singer Lee Engele, August 4. In case of rain, the concerts will be held in Landmark Center's atrium. Visit landmarkcenter.org.

Live from Louisiana, the Cajun band Jourdan Thibodeaux et des Rodallieurs will perform from 7-10 p.m. Thursday, August 5, at the Eagles Club, 2507 E. 25th Street in Minneapolis. The doors open at 6:30 p.m. Admission is \$15.

Theater

Hair: The Concert Experience, a joyous concert version of the 1960s musical drama that launched Theatre 55 three years ago, will return at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 3 p.m. Sunday, July 23-25, in the amphitheater of Caponi Art Park, 1220 Diffley Road in Eagan. Bring your own lawn chair or blanket, beverages and snacks and sing and dance to the live soundtrack performed by the cast and a four-piece band. Tickets are \$8 for individuals, \$20 for car loads and \$50 for van



'A Queen Experience' featuring the band Reddy Freddie will be presented at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, August 5, in downtown Saint Paul as part of the Summer Sunlight series. For details, see the music listing at left.

loads. For reservations, visit theatre55.org.

Minnesota Fringe Fest, the 28th annual performing arts festival, returns August 5-15 with over 125 shows, including 13 in-person, 27 live-streamed and 65-plus recorded online shows. For ticket information, the complete schedule and links to the online shows, visit minnesotafringe.org.

Dance

South Minneapolis' Zorongo Flamenco Dance Theatre and School will present a free show at 7 p.m. Friday, July 23, at Como Lakeside Pavilion, 1360 N. Lexington Pkwy. "Volvemos (We Return)" will feature Twin Cities flamenco guitarists, singers and dancers from Zorongo Flamenco, Anda Flamenco and Sachiko "La Chayi" Flamenco.

Exhibits

"After Promontory: 150 Years of Transcontinental Railroad," historical photographs that illustrate the lasting impact of the transcontinental railroads in the American West, are on view through August 31 in the Head House of Saint Paul's historic Union Depot, Fourth and Sibley streets. More than 60 images by such photographers as William Henry Jackson, Timothy H. O'Sullivan and Carleton E. Watkins are included in the free exhibit. A photographic history of Union Depot and railroading in Minnesota is also featured. Visit uniondepot.org.

Free walking tours in and around downtown Saint Paul are being offered at 10 a.m. on Wednesdays this summer by Landmark Center. The schedule includes the Rice Park area on July 21, August 4 and 18; and the Great River Tour on July 28, August 11 and 25. Tours are limited to 10 participants. Reservations are required. Visit landmarkcenter.org or call Sydney at 651-292-3063.

Photographer Joe Linn is displaying his landscapes, cityscapes, astrophotography and macrophotography throughout August 1 at the Argyle Zebra Gallery, 308 Prince St. The gallery is open from 5-8 p.m. on Fridays and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Linn will be in the gallery to discuss his art from 1-3 p.m. Sunday, August 1. Visit theazgallery.com.

org or joellinnphoto.com.

The Truly Unruly Fiber Art Collective is displaying its diverse creations through August 29 in the North Gallery of Landmark Center. "Following the Thread" combines traditional and contemporary quilting stitchery with unique fabric treatments. Admission is free and open to all during regular building hours. Visit landmarkcenter.org or call 651-292-3063.

The Catherine G. Murphy Gallery at Saint Catherine University is displaying the creations of 17 members of the 2021 Women's Art Institute Summer Studio Intensive. Participating artists include Courtney Miller Bellairs, Heather Abel Kemper, Tina Chagnon Anderson, Shannon Dallenbach Durbin, Kylee Danks, Christy Dickinson, Blue Edwards, Mary Gallagher, Susan Gangsei, Georgia A. Greeley, Alyssa Hahn, Lin Lacy, Ellie Leonard, Megan McNinch, Sydney Ockenga, Rebecca Oehler and Amy Usdin. Their art is on view from 1-6 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays through July 31. Visit gallery.stkate.edu.

"Many Waters: A Minnesota Biennial," illustrating the ways in which artists across the state are engaging with water, will be displayed from July 24 through October 2 in the Minnesota Museum of American Art's window galleries at Robert and Fourth streets, at its skyway entrance and at NewStudio Gallery, 2303 Wycliff St. Zamara Cuyun's kaleidoscopic painting "Midwife" reflects on the relationship between women and water as life givers and sustainers. Karen Goulet's quilt honors the journeys of her Ojibwe, Métis and Sámi-Finnish ancestors. Presley Martin's sculpture is made up of hundreds of pieces of foam collected from the banks of the Mississippi. An opening reception will be held from 5-8 p.m. Saturday, July 31, at NewStudio Gallery. Visit mmaa.org and newstudiogallery.com.

Mill City Museum, 704 Second St. S. in Minneapolis, is offering a series of programs on the history of the area. Guided walking and bike tours of the Minneapolis riverfront, historic Main Street, local labor history and Codswallop: Fact vs. Fiction are being held on weekends through September. The tours cost \$14-\$20. Open Courtyard Family Days

with hands-on activities, exhibits, puppet shows and take-home crafts will answer the question, What Makes Minneapolis Minneapolis?, on August 14 and 15. Visit millcitymuseum.org.

Books

A free poetry workshop will be offered from 10 a.m.-noon on Saturday, August 7, outside of the East Side Freedom Library, 110 Greenbrier St. Bring a lawn chair or blanket and about five copies of a poem to the workshop, which is sponsored by Cracked Walnut. For more information, email Donna Isaac at donna@donnaisaacpoet.com.

Family

Madagascar: A Musical Adventure Jr., a stage adaptation of the film, will be performed outside from July 27 through August 8 on Seventh Place between Saint Peter and Wabasha streets. The SteppingStone Theatre production tells of four friends who embark on a high-stakes adventure. Performances are at 10 a.m., noon, 2 and 4 p.m. on select Saturdays and Sundays. Tickets are \$12 and \$16. Visit steppingstonetheatre.org.

Circus Juventas' summer spectacular, the outer space adventure *Galaxium* will blast off from July 30 through August 15 under the big top at 1270 Montreal Ave. In 16 public performances, the circus' most advanced students will lead audiences to a lush planet on the edge of the universe where they uncover the answer to an age-old question. Show times are 1 and 7 p.m. Thursdays through Sundays. Ticket are \$30-\$50, free for children age 2 and under on a lap. All CDC COVID safety protocols will be followed. Visit circusjuventas.org.

Film

Free movies are rolling at dusk this summer in Minneapolis parks. The schedule includes *Harriet* (PG-13) on July 23 at the Lake Harriet Bandshell; *The Goonies* (PG-13), July 29, Keewaydin Park, 3030 E. 53rd St.; and *Little Shop of Horrors* (1986, PG-13), August 6, Lake Harriet Bandshell. Visit mplsmusicandmovies.com.

Et cetera

Highland's old pool house at Montreal Avenue and Edgumbe Road will be the site of a summer celebration from 6-11 p.m. on Thursday, August 5. Cosponsored by the Highland District Council (HDC) and the Highland Business Association, the free event will feature lawn games, live music by Lena and the Love Kills, hands-on art activities, Open Eye Figure Theater's *The Amazing Cowboat* puppet show, and the 2020 movie *The War With Grandpa*. Refreshments will be offered by the Rustic Chef food truck and the Cold Front ice cream shop. Attendees should bring their own lawn chairs. Changes due to inclement weather will be posted on the HDC's Facebook page.

for beginners from 5-6 p.m. Use djembes to explore pulse and rhythm and learn the foundations for African music. The cost is \$10. Drums are provided. To register, email info@womensdrumcenter.net.

SUNDAY/AUGUST 1

THE SAINT PAUL FARMERS' MARKET at Fifth and Wall streets will celebrate National Farmers' Market Week from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. with live music, a cooking demonstration, children's activities, games and contests including zucchini car racing, free giveaways and prize drawings.

THURSDAY/JULY 22

AN ICE CREAM SOCIAL will be hosted by the Fairmount Avenue United Methodist Women from 5:30-7:00 p.m. on the lawn of the church, 1523 Fairmount Ave. The public is invited. They will be serving ice cream cones for \$2 and plates of pie and ice cream for \$5.

SATURDAY/JULY 24

TAKE PART in a small mammal survey from 8-10 a.m. in Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation staff and University of Minnesota researchers will

THE KIOSK

lead this study of the habits of urban wildlife. The free program is open to anyone age 8 and older. Pre-registration is required. Call Mary at 651-248-6500.

THE FARMERS' MARKET has returned from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. every Saturday outside Saint Luke Lutheran Church, 1807 Field Ave. Fresh produce, coffee beans, organic beef, soaps, candles and other handcrafted products will be available.

TUESDAY/JULY 27

FRESH PRODUCE will be distributed free of charge by the Fabulous Friends Club from noon-1:30 p.m. today and the second and fourth Tuesday of every month at the corner of Saint Paul Avenue and Davern Street. The public is asked to bring their own bags.

WOMEN'S DRUM CENTER, 2242 University Ave., will offer a class in hand drumming

SPORTS



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

Highland grad will have quite a tale to tell at college

In slightly more than a month, Natalie Braga will be like many other teens heading from home to pursue a higher education. The recent Highland Park graduate will be off to Chicago, where she'll join approximately 2,500 other incoming freshmen at Loyola University. She intends to major in criminal justice and possibly minor in Chinese, the latter a tribute to her country of birth.

Like all newcomers, she'll have stories to tell of her summer exploits. However, her stories will have some interesting twists, ranging from teaching 5-year-olds about the fundamentals of golf to a five-day leadership summit at a ranch in Montana.

Since she was old enough to swing a driver, Braga has been a member of First Tee of the Twin Cities, a youth development organization based at Highland National Golf Course that teaches life skills and helps youngsters build their strength of character through golf. She's gone from being a participant to serving as a coach and mentor.



Natalie Braga

In early August, she'll join 39 other teens at the inaugural First Tree Leadership Summit at West Creek Ranch in Emigrant, Montana. The ranch, located 30 miles north of Yellowstone National Park, is owned by Arthur Blank, the cofounder of Home Depot and owner of the Atlanta Falcons football team and the Atlanta Force soccer team. Blank also owns several PGA Tour Superstores, which works with First Tee. (Matthew Stolte, who will be a senior at Highland Park this fall, will also attend the summit as a fill-in for a student who had to drop out at the last moment.)

"I've learned a lot through First Tee," Braga said. "I found out where my strengths as a person are."

Franco Zerna, who's been the local First Tee director for 15 years, was Braga's golf coach at Highland. He's watched Braga's growth on and off the course, and views her invitation as a just reward for a job well done.

"It's in her DNA to be helpful," Zerna said. "She's been a great mentor for the young golfers."

For most of the summer, Braga can be found on the Highland 9-Hole course teaching golf and life skills to youngsters of all ages. When asked about her own golf game, Braga said, "I try to get out twice a week to relax." Her handicap? "I really don't keep that close of a track," she said.

Braga was a flurry of perennial motion while at Highland. In the winter, she was a member of the school's highly successful gymnastics team. (The Scots have finished first in the Saint Paul City Conference 18 of the last 19 seasons.) Come spring, she picked up her clubs and held her own nicely with Highland, which won its ninth straight league title this year. She saw a lot of familiar faces on the course, since she recruited several of her gymnastics teammates to join her on the links this spring.

Last winter, she was invited to apply for the summer summit in Montana. It was a lot more than just filling out paperwork. She had to take part in a five-week leadership series online.

"We did several Zoom meetings with other teens around the country," Braga said. "We talked about what we want in our careers. We had quizzes about our personal values. We did networking. We answered a lot of questions."

Braga will be kept busy when she gets to Montana. She'll hear from such motivational speakers as former NFL quarterback Michael Vick. She'll take part in several seminars. There'll be time as well for such activities as horseback riding, yoga, whitewater rafting, hiking and fly fishing.

WRIGHT CALL ►16



Minnesota Vixen head coach Ryan McCauley of Merriam Park leads the American Conference champions during practice as they prepare for the Division I national title game on July 24 in Canton, Ohio.

PHOTOS BY BRAD STAUFFER

Women's pro football

Unbeaten MN Vixen ready to tackle nationals

BY BILL WAGNER

The Minnesota Vixen women's professional football team is now one win away from claiming its first Division I national championship in the Women's Football Alliance (WFA). But it won't be easy.

The Vixen defeated Cali War from Los Angeles 33-22 on July 10 to claim the American Conference title. They will now face the two-time defending national champion Boston Renegades on July 24 in Canton, Ohio.

While the Renegades are considered the favorite in this battle of unbeaten—they haven't lost a game since 2018, though there was no 2020 season because of COVID-19—the Vixen are solid, too. Just ask Minnesota coach Ryan McCauley, who saw his team trailing briefly in the second quarter of the conference title game.

"That was a wakeup call for us," said McCauley, a local teacher who lives in Merriam Park. "But we were able to stick with our stuff and come back."

The Vixen play their home games at Sea Foam Stadium at Concordia University, but they were at Edina High School for the conference title clash. An estimated 700 fans turned out for that contest. Minnesota gymnast Grace McCallum, who will represent the U.S. in the Olympic games in Tokyo later this month, was the honorary Vixen captain and took part in the opening coin toss.

The Vixen (8-0) have put together quite a season, though coach McCauley knows what a tall order it will be to put away the Renegades. However, he said his players definitely plan to show up in Canton, home of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. "We're going to put everything we've got into it," he said.

The Vixen have some serious weapons of their own on both sides of the ball, including 10 all-Americans. They come from a wide variety of athletic backgrounds. As one might guess, many grew up playing something other than tackle football.

Running back Grace Cooper, a Twin



The message on Vixen wide receiver Adri Juszcak's T-shirt says it all.

Cities school teacher, is perhaps the best running back in the league. Cooper will enter the national championship game only 4 yards shy of 1,400 for the season. She is a dual threat who can run between the tackles and also break outside for a big gainer. She graduated from Bethel University, where she also ran track.

Wide receiver Sam Barber, who can go up high for catches, played basketball at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. She followed that up with a stint playing semipro hoops for the Saint Louis Surge before moving to the Twin Cities.

Fellow wideout Kaiya Sygulla, who played basketball at UM-Duluth, also can tack on acreage after she makes the catch.

Quarterback Errin McIsaac is a threat with her arm and her feet. She had just under 300 yards rushing and 800 yards passing for the season, while completing 72 percent of her pass attempts.

There are also plenty of other talented Vixen on defense. McCauley, who serves as his own defensive coordinator, gets especially upbeat when talking about that side of the ball.

Linebacker Crystal Ninas leads the team in sacks, hits for loss and tackles. Middle linebacker Cil Winton's athleticism makes her an effective blitzer who clogs up offenses.

Cornerback Amy Mugaas, who ran track in high school, leads the team in interceptions. Defensive end Molly Blesi is just a rookie, but she's second on the team in sacks. She is a former soccer player.

Perhaps the most amazing player of all is nose tackle Cynthia "Red" Bryant, who has achieved all-American status. The 49-year-old Bryant is a grandmother, but a majority of offensive linemen can't block her. "She takes immaculate care of herself," McCauley said.

Bryant has been a Vixen since the team's founding in 1999. Only linebacker Jodi "Moose" Rehlander can make that same claim, though Rehlander's tenure has not been continuous.

The Vixen are the longest continuously operating women's tackle football team in the nation. They started as part of a cross-country barnstorming tour with the Lake Michigan Minx that led to the formation of the Women's Professional Football League in 2000.

The team had several ownership changes over the next few seasons. It joined the Independent Women's Football League in 2013 and was purchased by Laura Brown and her husband in 2014. The team left that league to join the WFA in 2017. They won the Division II American Conference title the next year, but lost the national title game by six points.

The Vixen now have around 60 athletes on their roster and compete in Division I of the WFA, which claims to be the largest and longest running women's tackle football league in the world.

Brown is optimistic heading into this week's title game. "This 2021 team is probably the most talented one I've seen in my tenure here," she said.

While the women's league's caliber of play is solid, once in a while there are reminders that the circuit is not quite the NFL. McCauley said that he'd be making the long trip to Canton by car with a staff member.

15 WRIGHT CALL

"I know the agenda, but I really don't know what to expect," Braga said. "I know we'll be outdoors a lot."

All of which will make for quite a story to tell her new classmates when she gets to Chicago. When Braga settles into the classroom, she'll probably recall some of the things she learned from mentors like Zerna, who uses what happens on the golf course as a lesson in life itself.

"There are things in life you can't control," he told *Golf Digest* earlier this year. "It's like in golf. You can't control the wind. Well, you can't control other people, either. You can only control how you approach stuff and what you do."

If all goes well, there could be another reward for Braga. At the end of the summit, four participants will be selected for the First Tee College Scholarship Program where they'll receive financial support in addition to more mentoring and professional development opportunities.

Parting is financially sweet for Wild duo

It was always just a matter of time. Even such hockey luminaries as Gordie Howe, who was the face of the Detroit Red Wings for a quarter of a century, and Wayne Gretzky, who was the primary reason that Edmonton became an NHL power, finished their careers with different teams.

Hockey at the professional level has always been a game of speed and finesse. In 2021, add financial considerations and the upcoming expansion draft to the equation and you have some of the reasons why the Minnesota Wild last week jettisoned their two highest salaried players—Zach Parise and Ryan Suter.

It wasn't for lack of ability. Although Parise contributed only sparingly during this past regular season, he was a solid performer during the team's first-round playoff series against Las Vegas. Suter, as he did during the regular season, was a

steady blue line presence in that playoff series as well.

Still, the millstone of having to pay guaranteed salaries to the pair (they each had four years left on matching \$98 million contracts signed in 2012) was simply too much for Wild general manager Bill Guerin to shoulder.

"We had to make a move," he told reporters when the pair's release was announced on July 13. "We needed room to get a complete roster for next season."

In making the announcement, Guerin, who still played in the league at age 40, said all the right things. He noted that it's highly likely Parise and Suter will find new homes this fall. The simple reality was something had to give in order to pay younger players, such as Kirill Kaprizov and Kevin Fiala, what they wanted to stay.

Loyalty is a fine thing, but in today's pro sports market it's well down the list of priorities. Parise and Suter will be well-regarded as the guys who helped bring a lot of disgruntled hockey fans back to the stands at Xcel Energy Center. The reality, however, is their on-ice achievements were modest at best.

It also needs to be noted that age can sneak up on a team in short order. Tampa Bay, which won the Stanley Cup recently, had just two players of note, Steven Stamkos and Cretin-Derham Hall graduate Ryan McDonagh, who are 30 or older.

Parise turns 37 next week and Suter is 36. Those advancing years make a difference when you're facing a two-month playoff grind and playing potentially 28 games. More than perhaps any professional sport, time marches at a faster pace in hockey.

A couple of years ago, superb Los Angeles Dodgers announcer Vin Scully noted that a certain player was listed as day-to-day. Scully then sighed and said, "Aren't we all?"

Add Parise and Suter to the list of believers in that.

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

Sports Shorts

Khalid El-Amin has been chosen as the new head basketball coach at Saint Thomas Academy. El-Amin helped lead Minneapolis North to three state champions and was named the state's Mr. Basketball in 1997. He went on to win an NCAA national championship at the University of Connecticut before having a long professional basketball career. Recently, he served as an assistant high school basketball coach at Burnsville and Minneapolis North, and has led training camps for young players. He was part of the initial class inducted into the Minnesota High School Basketball Hall of Fame in 2018.



Mendota Heights will host its first pickleball tournament from 8-11 a.m. Sunday, August 15, at Marie Park, 1780 Lilac Lane, during its city parks celebration. The doubles tournament is open to pairs of any age. One team member must be a resident of Mendota Heights. There is a limit of 32 teams. Register by August 10 by visiting tinyurl.com/s4hc5jym.

Composer Scott L. Miller has released a SonAR II app that provides users with an immersive audio experience as they walk around Minnehaha Park in Minneapolis. Using GPS and headphones, people can follow a map on the app while listening to Miller's music that was inspired by the sounds of Minnehaha Falls and the park. Miller is a professor of music at Saint Cloud State University. SonAR II is available through the Apple App Store and Google Play. Visit scottlmiller.net/sonar-ii.

District Councils

Highland Park

highlanddistrictcouncil.org • 651-695-4005

Ford site hearing—The Saint Paul Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on proposed amendments to the open space standards in the Ford site's master plan and zoning at 8:30 a.m. Friday, July 23. The staff report can be viewed at stpaul.gov/planning-commission. More about the meeting and how to comment is at bit.ly/OpenSpaceMtgJuly23.

National Night Out—This year's National Night Out will be celebrated on Tuesday, August 3. The Highland District Council has four street barriers available for rent at \$10 each for those who are hosting a block party. Call the HDC or email info@highlanddistrictcouncil.org for information. Those who register their block party at stpaul.gov/departments/police/national-night-out will be entered in a drawing for a chance to win a visit from Sergeant Fuzz and a disc jockey.

Pool House music and more—Join the HDC at the old Highland Pool House on Montreal Avenue and Edgumbe Road from 6-11 p.m. Thursday, August 5. The event will include the Rustic Chef food truck, ice cream from Cold Front, lawn games, an art activity, Open Eye Figure Theater's *The Amazing Cowboat* puppet show, live music from Lena & The Love Kills, and the 2020 movie *The War With Grandpa*. The event is sponsored by the HDC, Highland Business Association, Friends of Highland Arts, and the Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation. Bring your own lawn chairs.

Jazzed About Highland—Music by the Selby Avenue Brass Band, food and fun will continue from 6-9 p.m. Thursday, August 12, in the parking lot of Langford & Karls Chiropractic Clinic, 730 S. Cleveland Ave. The event is sponsored by the HDC and Highland Business Association.

Upcoming meeting—Community Engagement Committee, 7 p.m. Monday, July 26. Visit highlanddistrictcouncil.org/calendar for the link to join the Zoom meeting.

Macalester-Groveland

macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

Garage sale—The Great Macalester-Groveland Garage Sale is now accepting registrations. The garage sale will be held from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, August 24. The fee is \$20 for households and \$30 for businesses. The registration deadline is August 6. Learn more at macgrove.org/garagesale.

Anti-racism sessions 2021—Macalester-Groveland neighbors are organizing a series of programs focused on owning a home and creating more equitable wealth. The next session will take place at 5 p.m. Thursday, July 22. For more information, visit macgrove.org/events.

Alley Garden Awards—Judging is taking place through July 22 for the community council's annual Alley Garden Awards.

Those who believe their alley garden was missed can contact alyssa@macgrove.org after the judging period is over.

Century building plaques—All owners of buildings in the Macalester-Groveland neighborhood that were constructed in 1926 or before are eligible for century building plaques. Learn more by visiting macgrove.org/100years.

Upcoming online meetings—Transportation Committee on Monday, July 26; and Housing and Land Use Committee on Wednesday, July 28. Both meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m. For notices and Zoom details, visit macgrove.org/participate.

Summit Hill

summithillassociation.org • 651-222-1222

SHA office reopens—The Summit Hill Association's offices at the Linwood Recreation Center, 860 Saint Clair Ave., reopened for regular hours on July 12.

Home tour canceled—The Summit Hill House Tour that had been rolled over from 2020 and was scheduled to take place this fall has been canceled. The SHA will be contacting those who purchased tickets to explain their refund options. The Development Committee is now seeking public comments and volunteers for a fall social and fundraising event to replace the house tour.

Board openings—Two positions are open on the SHA's board of directors. Application forms are available at summithillassociation.org/become-a-board-member and are due by 7 p.m. on August 11. Candidates are being encouraged to attend the August 12 board meeting to answer questions and campaign for appointment.

Community Thinkers—The SHA's Community Thinkers' series will hold a live Facebook event from noon-1 p.m. Friday, July 23. Guest speakers will be Carol Carey, executive director of Historic Saint Paul, and Erin Hanafin Berg, policy and deputy director at Rethos. They will answer questions on historic preservation and its implications for the Summit Hill neighborhood. For details, visit summithillassociation.org/calendar.

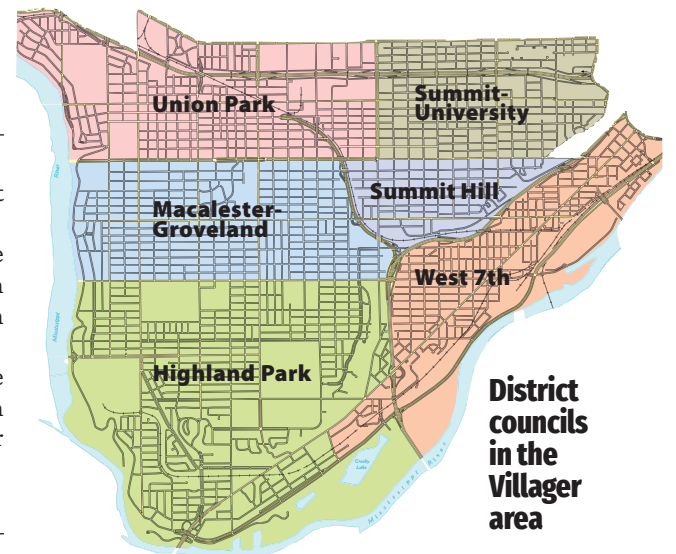
Upcoming Zoom meetings—Pedestrian Safety and Traffic Calming Committee, 5 p.m. Wednesday, July 21; and Zoning and Land Use Committee, 7 p.m. Tuesday, August 3. Meeting details are available at summithillassociation.org/calendar.

Union Park

unionparkdc.org • 651-645-6887

Sign up to volunteer—The UPDC is canvassing its neighborhoods to inform residents of local activities and considerable volunteer assistance is needed. People who are interested in helping staff distribute flyers in the neighborhoods are being asked to email jonah@unionparkdc.org.

Upcoming meetings—Environment and Parks Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 21; Neighborhood Involvement



District councils in the Villager area

Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, July 26; board of directors, 7 p.m. Wednesday, August 4; and Transportation Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, August 9. To access the Zoom meetings, email wako@unionparkdc.org or jonah@unionparkdc.org or click on the links at unionparkdc.org/calendar.

Contact us—The public is invited to "like" the Union Park District Council on Facebook, follow it on Twitter at @UnionParkDC, and subscribe to its e-newsletter, "Neighborhood Matters," by emailing jonah@unionparkdc.org.

West Seventh

fortroadfederation.org • 651-298-5599

Board update—At its July 12 meeting, the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation's board of directors approved a fiscal sponsorship agreement for public activities at Keg & Case Market, 928 W. Seventh St., pending legal review. The board also accepted the resignation of Area 2 board member Emma Pearl. People interested in the position should email Emily@fortroadfederation.org. Candidates must be 16 or older and live, own property or own a business between Saint Clair and Armstrong avenues.

Journalism and social media—A neighborhood discussion on journalism and how to decipher if information is true on social media will be held at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 27, via Zoom. Speakers will include Kelly Smith and Jim Walsh from the *Star Tribune*, Jane McClure from the *Villager*, and David Lamb from the *Community Reporter*. Register and get log-in information at FortRoadFederation.org.

National Night Out—This year's National Night Out will be celebrated on Tuesday, August 3. If there is no party on your block, consider taking a walk around that evening to see who is gathering nearby.

Upcoming Zoom meetings—Community Discussion: Journalism and Social Media, 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 27; Transportation and Land Use Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, August 4; Community Engagement Committee, 6:30 p.m. Thursday, August 19; and board of directors, 7 p.m. Monday, September 13. Details are at fortroadfederation.org/calendar.

CLASSIFIEDS

SPECIAL EVENTS

OUTDOOR WALKING group. Meet on Monday mornings at 10:00 AM outside the Highland Park Library. 1974 Ford Parkway. Contact Liz, 651-698-7019.

REAL ESTATE WANTED

All real estate or rental advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing Act. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising which is in violation of the law. Equal housing opportunity.

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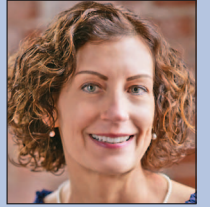
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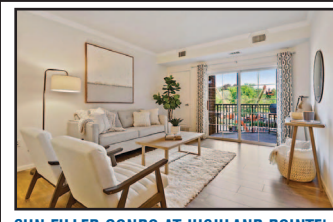
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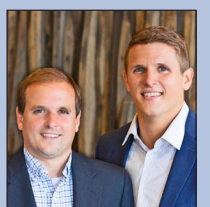
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1034 ASHLAND IS A PIECE OF AMERICANA...
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Rare opportunity offers spectacular location w/panoramic views in this late 20's Clarence Johnston design. Stately stone 4BR, 4BA 2 story w/state-of-the-art improvements from roof to windows to mechanicals. Sun-drenched formal and informal areas await. Absolutely captivating!

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5913 11TH AVE S, MINNEAPOLIS
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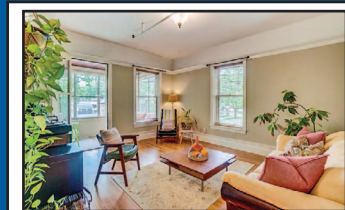


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CHARMING HOME ON OSCEOLA AVE!
This 3 story home is sure to impress with its generous sized spaces, including the large mud-room off the back door, the informal dining room off the kitchen, the screened porch off the living room and the main floor family room.

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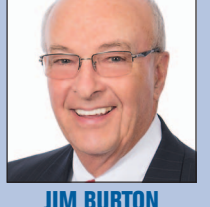
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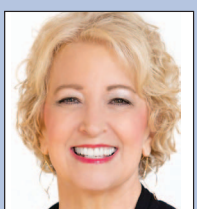
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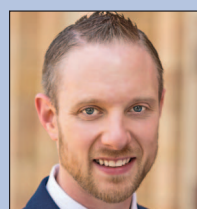
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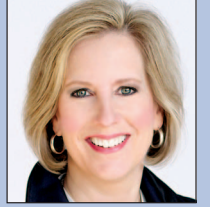
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