



Big wheels keep on turning. Cyclists of all ages took to Summit Avenue on July 1 for the Union Park District Council's second annual Slow Roll bike ride. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Impact of stadiums evaluated

Highland Bridge project would require minor changes in noise, traffic, lighting

By Jane McClure

A study of the environmental impact of the 135-acre Highland Bridge development in Highland Park has been updated in conjunction with the University of Saint Thomas' plan to build new baseball and softball stadiums there. The new stadiums will have an impact on traffic, lighting and noise in the neighborhood, and those impacts ought to be addressed, according to the Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR). However, the stadiums will not require major changes to the strategies for mitigating the overall impact of Highland Bridge, the AUAR stated.

The Highland Bridge AUAR update was prepared by the consulting firm of Kimley Horn working with the city of Saint Paul, UST and Highland Bridge master developer Ryan Companies. Ryan Companies paid for the update and it was approved by city staff in late June.

The AUAR recommends that a separate study be conducted to model noise

levels around the stadiums during typical baseball and softball games and identify measures to reduce the noise if the levels exceed 65 decibels.

Traffic is expected to increase with the opening of the 1,500-seat baseball stadium and 1,000-seat softball stadium, according to the AUAR. Daily trips in and out of Highland Bridge are expected to grow from 21,791 under the Highland Bridge master plan's current scenario to 23,890. Traffic control improvements will be needed at the intersection of Montreal and Saint Paul Avenues in the next five years, the AUAR states, especially with the removal of two traffic lanes on Saint Paul Avenue to make way for new bike lanes.

Highland Bridge's original AUAR in 2019 recommended changes in traffic signal timing, turn-lane design and other strategies for handling the overall increase in traffic in the surrounding area, and those recommendations are included in the updated AUAR. However, the AUAR noted, "even with

HIGHLAND BRIDGE ►3

For Snelling Ave. salon owner, hard work was always in style

Ambourn grudgingly retires after 60+ years in business

By Janet Lunder Hanafin

Rita Ambourn, the flamboyant stylist who brought blue hair to the Twin Cities more than 50 years ago, has closed her landmark salon and day spa on Snelling Avenue. She leaves behind a legacy of cutting-edge hairstyling, innovative glamour services and creative sales techniques in addition to a legion of clients.

A farm girl from Wisconsin who did not have the money to pursue her dream of art school, Ambourn instead worked multiple jobs to put herself through beauty school in the early 1960s. "I thought beauty school would be easy, but it wasn't," she said.

She earned her tuition by stuffing teddy

bears, jerking sodas and toting boxes of motor oil. A fourth job working at a pizza parlor on University Avenue also snagged the man of her dreams. Ambourn took a fancy to a diner and made him a heart-shaped pizza. "And that was it," she said.

While she built a business attracting clients from all over the metro area, her husband cared for their home and two children. "He said he had everything he wanted, and I did, too," she said.

Ambourn started cutting hair at Helene's French Flair on Randolph Avenue. By the early 1970s, she had opened her own salon on Grand Avenue, and in 1987 she bought a former appliance store at 464 S. Snelling Ave. and converted it to her signature Rita Ambourn Hair and Day Spa.

"I've been with Rita for over 50 years," said Judi Klepperich, a client of Ambourn's since her days at Helene's. "I not only enjoy what

she does in terms of her profession, but she's just an extraordinary person, as dear a human being as anyone could ever meet."

Ambourn loves customer service and was quick to recognize the unique needs of her clients. For years her salon on Snelling offered services around the clock, seven days a week, with three shifts of stylists. Women who were homemakers could come in at night to have their hair and nails done while their husbands cared for the children. Professional performers who were in town for just a few hours could stop in for a trim or hair extensions.

Ambourn offered valet parking and a drive-up window for the products she sold. When COVID-19 closed down many beauty shops, Ambourn said she "put on my mask and went out to homes and gave skin care and haircuts. I worked hard."

RITA AMBOURN SALON AND SPA ►2



Rita Ambourn was a walking advertisement for her salon services in the 1970s.

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Rita Ambourn in front of her hair and day spa on Snelling Avenue in 2011. PHOTO BY ANNE BRANDRUD

1◀ RITA AMBOURN SALON AND SPA

In 1979 Ambourn was inducted into Intercoiffure, an international organization of elite hairstylists. At the time, the membership of Intercoiffure was only 3 percent women. She produced two New York shows for Intercoiffure, earning standing ovations at both. Artist Andy Warhol proclaimed one of her futuristic head sculptures “a true vision of creative art.” She became known not only for over-the-top styles and colors, but for workable, fashionable cuts for everyday people.

Ambourn expanded her services on Snelling to include wigs with free styling at the time of purchase. She styled wigs for everything from daily wear to medical needs and even the stage. Klepperich, a two-time survivor of breast cancer, went to Ambourn to have her head shaved when her hair began to fall out. “Rita came in in the evening, and I came with two of my friends when no one else was there,” Klepperich said. “She wanted me to adjust to my new look. She’s wonderful. She ended up getting me several wigs. She took care of the wigs and took care of me.”

Early on, Ambourn studied under wig designer Eva Gabor. She once entered a Gabor styling competition in Las Vegas. Her competitors, nearly all men, created “all these love locks and big hair,” she said. Ambourn took a wig, styled it with a charming pixie cut, and foiled it. The judge announced, “this is what a wig should look like—like hair, not a wig.”

Her first-place prize came with \$5,000, a trip to London and a chance to meet the queen of England. Ambourn asked to meet Vidal Sassoon instead. Though he was not well known yet, she pronounced Sassoon the best haircutter in the world. She ended up studying with him for a month.

Ambourn went on to train with several internationally acclaimed hairdressers. She traveled across much of the world and

Ambourn studied under wig designer Eva Gabor. She once entered a Gabor styling competition in Las Vegas.... Her first-place prize came with \$5,000, a trip to London and a chance to meet the queen. Ambourn asked to meet Vidal Sassoon instead.

taught classes herself. She brought back Crazy Color hair dye from London, created hair extensions years before they were widely used, and offered sculptured nails.

Another longtime client, Tom Hamlin, would drive to her salon from Minnetonka every few weeks for a haircut. “Rita was an artist,” he said. “I have lots of hair and still get compliments. She loves people and was a great friend. I always looked forward to visiting her salon, and I was never disappointed.”

Ambourn punctuated the tale of her career with chuckles and outright laughter. “I’ve done three generations of hair,” she said, “grandmas, moms and now daughters. I’ve had clients for 40 or 50 years.” Twenty-two-hour days were not unusual for Ambourn. “You do as much as you can do, and God does the rest,” she said.

Now at nearly 81 years of age, Ambourn said she would still be working if not for the serious health issues that forced her into retirement. Nevertheless, she is looking forward to a quieter life on her acreage north of the Twin Cities, enjoying the orchard, gardens, the swans on her small lake, walks in the woods and painting, a hobby for which she has had little time. She also hopes to see her off-the-grid, solar-powered home—what she calls “a slice of heaven”—featured in *House Beautiful* or *Better Homes and Gardens*.

“It’ll be a whole new chapter,” she said.

City names 11 to reparations commission

By Jane McClure

Members of the new Saint Paul Recovery Act Community Reparations Commission were appointed on June 28 by the City Council. The 11 members will serve terms of one, two or three years to start. Almost 50 people applied to be on the commission.

The commission is expected to begin meeting regularly later this year. The group will advise the mayor and council on racial injustices and bring forward short- and long-term measures for making reparations to Saint Paul descendants of slaves.

Although racial reparations have been discussed at the state and federal levels, City Council members noted that Saint Paul has been a leader in such efforts.

Commission members include Trahern Crews, who led the efforts to study reparations, and Nathaniel Khaliq, a former Ward 1 City Council member and a longtime leader of the Saint Paul NAACP. The other members are Jamila Pickett, Khulia Pringle, Carla Robinson, Idman Ibrahim, Joseph Bloedorn, Nick Muhammad, Arthur McCoy, Nila Gouldin and Jeremie English.

For more information on the commission, visit tinyurl.com/ywk3yrk2.

Support builds for UST’s proposed stadiums at Highland Bridge

By Jane McClure

A final vote on the University of Saint Thomas’ proposed softball and baseball stadiums at Highland Bridge is expected by the Saint Paul City Council on July 19. The council held a public hearing on June 28 on the six Highland Bridge master plan amendments that are needed for the new 1,500-seat baseball stadium, 1,000-seat softball stadium, indoor practice facility and 330-space parking lot.

Melanie McMahon, who oversees major development projects for Mayor Melvin Carter, touted the stadium project for how it would clean up pollution left over from the site’s former use as a Canadian Pacific rail yard serving the former Ford Motor Company assembly plant.

UST officials also cited the public benefits of the project. According to Phil Esten, the university’s athletic director, the facilities would help UST meet the expectations of its recent move from NCAA Division III to Division I athletics.

Ward 3 City Council member Chris Tolbert praised the project for adding a vibrant new use for property that had been



The site plan for the proposed UST stadiums at Highland Bridge.

in limbo for years. While the city included the old rail yard in its original master plan for the Ford site, master developer Ryan Companies left the rail yard out.

Tolbert praised the Saint Paul Port Authority for its work to buy and clean up the property before UST assumes ownership. “We’ve found railroads to be some of the most difficult landowners to work with,” he said.

The Port Authority agreed last October to purchase the 13.66-acre site for \$6.43 million. The Port Authority is planning to sell the property to UST by December 2026. UST would pay the \$6.43 million plus the cost of any environmental cleanup above

and beyond the cleanup grants obtained by the Port.

The Saint Paul Planning Commission recommended approval of five of the Highland Bridge master plan amendments. Those centered on building setbacks, building density, the relocation of a proposed transportation corridor and changes to the plan for the proposed Mica Park.

However, the commission recommended denying the amendment that would exempt the project from the maximum of 20 spaces in any surface parking lot.

Tolbert said he supports the six amendments as well as the 330-space parking lot requested by UST and Ryan Companies. The Highland District Council supports the six amendments. The local youth sports league Highland Ball and Cretin-Derham Hall high school support the amendments. Six local residents sent letters in support of the amendments. Three local residents sent letters in opposition.

Neighbors in support said the 330-space parking lot would ease the expected parking crunch at Highland Bridge. “The 20 parking spaces that would be allowed per the master plan wouldn’t be adequate even before accounting for the stadiums,” said Finn Street resident Jeanette Bloss. “A new surface parking lot is already needed for the dog park and for Highland Ball’s two ballfields. People are parking on streets (Cleveland Avenue and Finn Street) without sidewalks and walking in the street. It’s a danger that could be resolved with a parking lot.”

Cleveland Avenue residents Marcia Avner and Wy Spano complained about the lack of information regarding the stadiums project. They were concerned about potential traffic increases on Cleveland and Montreal avenues and the possibility of UST using the stadiums for other events such as concerts. They urged the City Council to withhold approval until more information is provided.

“Our neighborhood will be changed by the development,” Avner and Spano stated. “Don’t make it impossible for us to maintain a good quality of life.”

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multiple Highland Bridge developments currently open, traffic volumes are down 15-30 percent within the study area.” Intersections in the area will need to be monitored as new developments arise at Highland Bridge, the study added.

The master plan for Highland Bridge anticipates up to 3,800 new homes, 150,000 square feet of retail space, and 265,000 square feet of office space when the re-

development is fully built out. Under the updated AUAR, the space for civic and institutional uses increases from 50,000 to 100,000 square feet.

Three area residents commented on the updated AUAR. They raised concerns about pedestrian access, tax-exemptions for the nonprofit University of Saint Thomas and the need for more affordable housing.

The Metropolitan Council testified to the potential impacts on city infrastructure and the need to coordinate city and county

transportation projects. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) raised concerns about changes in the habitat for endangered species, including the rusty patched bumblebee.

Although the AUAR states that there is no wildlife habitat within the project area, that area is in what is considered a “high potential zone” for the federally protected bumblebees. The DNR has asked project planners to seek guidance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. City officials

maintain that the area has “minimal” wild-life habitat, but that plans for the stadiums call for pollinator-friendly landscaping.

The DNR also raised concerns about stadium lighting, noting that the project is located within a corridor for migratory birds known as the Lower Minnesota River Valley Important Bird Area. The city has stated that the lighting will be planned to address concerns about birds.

The update of the Highland Bridge AUAR is available at tinyurl.com/2cdycycx.

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Editors Dale Mischke, John Wadell news@myvillager.com	Publisher Michael Mischke mmischke@myvillager.com	Circulation Craig Schuster membercare@myvillager.com
Display Advertising Gary Ball gball@myvillager.com	Classified Advertising and Legals Craig Schuster wantads@myvillager.com	Graphic Designer Craig Schuster

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

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Planning committee lead Ronald Charles Buford looks forward to the inaugural Taste of Rondo Block Party that will spread out from the Taste of Rondo Bar & Grill on Concordia Avenue and Chatsworth Street on July 15. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Rockin' the block-Food, music, fun are on menu for Taste of Rondo party

By Frank Jossi

Distraught by the absence of the popular Rondo Days festival, which has not been held for four years, a neighborhood group has come together to create a new community event called the Taste of Rondo Block Party.

Scheduled from 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, July 15, the party will feature live entertainment, food and other activities. The fun will spread out on the one-block areas east and south of the Concordia Avenue and Chatsworth Street intersection, which will be closed to traffic.

Though the party has no direct association with Rondo Days, which would have turned 40 this year, it hopes to offer the same sense of neighborhood that the festival celebrated before shutting down in 2020 due to the pandemic.

The Taste of Rondo Block Party is the brainchild of Ronald Charles Buford, a self-described jack-of-all-trades who previously served as a board member and president of Rondo Avenue Inc., the host organization of Rondo Days.

"The fourth year of Rondo Days going into nonexistence triggered me into wanting some of that celebration of community spirit the Rondo Days provided, but on a smaller level," he said.

A native of the neighborhood, Buford works as a marketing and promotions consultant and business development director of Osiris Organization, a nonprofit offering technology training to young adults. He and a small group of residents and supporters considered holding a Taste of Rondo Block Party in 2022, but decided instead to wait a year.

"We had a team comprised of several members from the Rondo community that were frustrated about the fact that we weren't having Rondo Days," Buford said. "So when I said that I was going to do a block party, I had a lot of people ready to jump on the bandwagon to help plan it together."

Entertainment lineup

The tentative performance schedule for the inaugural Taste of Rondo Block Party (subject to change) includes the following:

- DJ Britt at 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.
 - Yoga with Shontel at 11:15 a.m.
 - Thaboysincere at noon.
 - SpokenWordz at 12:15 p.m.
 - Brass Solidarity at 12:30 p.m.
 - Jordon Johnston and band at 1 p.m.
 - DJ Boom at 1:30 and 3:05 p.m.
 - Comedic magician Brodini at 2 p.m.
 - BERI at 2:30 p.m.
 - "Gotta Dance" Soul Line at 2:45 p.m.
 - XAVEIR at 3:45 p.m.
 - Rock Solid Music Group at 3:55 p.m.
 - Brent Foster (BDF) at 4:15 and 5 p.m.
 - Irreducible Grace Foundation spoken word at 4:30 p.m.
 - Dancing with Purpose at 4:50 p.m.
 - Unlimited Next Level Drum and Dance Performing Arts at 5:15 p.m.
 - Comedian Dunaste at 5:25 p.m.
 - BDF closes the party at 5:45 p.m.
- Visit tasteofrondo.com/blockparty for more information.

The event will be headquartered at the Taste of Rondo Bar & Grill, 976 Concordia Ave. Owned by Charles and Kasara Carter, the restaurant opened after COVID hit in July 2020 and has been building an audience ever since. Charles Carter sees the festival as a way to showcase the neighborhood and its history to residents and visitors from other parts of the region.

The neighborhood still feels the effect of being split in two by the construction of I-94 in the 1960s, but he wants the festival to focus on the positive.

"You've still got a lot of angry people, but that's not the way to go," Carter said. "In Rondo we heal the community with one meal at a time. Another way we can do that is to bring everybody together."

The block party will include eight food vendors, including food trucks such as Bougie Waffle, Santana's Sugar Shack and Xstream Cuisine, as well

as others who will serve from tents. "We have a nice little variety of different foods," Buford said.

Carter, a Mississippi native, hopes to introduce newcomers to his Taste of Rondo menu of Cajun catfish, Aurora Avenue fish and grits, southern fried chicken, shrimp étouffée, steak and other specialties. He said a Southern-themed restaurant in the Rondo neighborhood makes sense since many residents have family ties to that region.

A children's section will take up a good chunk of Chatsworth and include face painting, double Dutch jump roping, basketball, a bubble blower and fire truck.

"They'll be a variety of children's activities—some all day, others at part of the day," Buford said.

There will also be more than 40 non-food vendors featuring everything from clothing, jewelry and body care to health, wellness and baby products. Buford said the city's electric vehicle car sharing program and the Saint Paul Winter Carnival will also have booths.

Live entertainment will be a big part of the party, with deejays and dance groups filling in with music and performances throughout the day, he said.

Buford gave special mention to the block party sponsors: Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, Model Cities of Saint Paul, the NAACP of Saint Paul, Mississippi Market, Bremer Bank, ReConnect Rondo, Saint Peter Claver Church, Frogtown Radio, KMOJ Radio, Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties, and Minnesota History Theatre. The commercial printing company Venture Solutions is sponsoring the children's area and Macalester College the entertainment stage.

If this year's Taste of Rondo Block Party is a success, Buford said, "We'll come back next year."

Study estimates UST arena's impact on traffic and parking

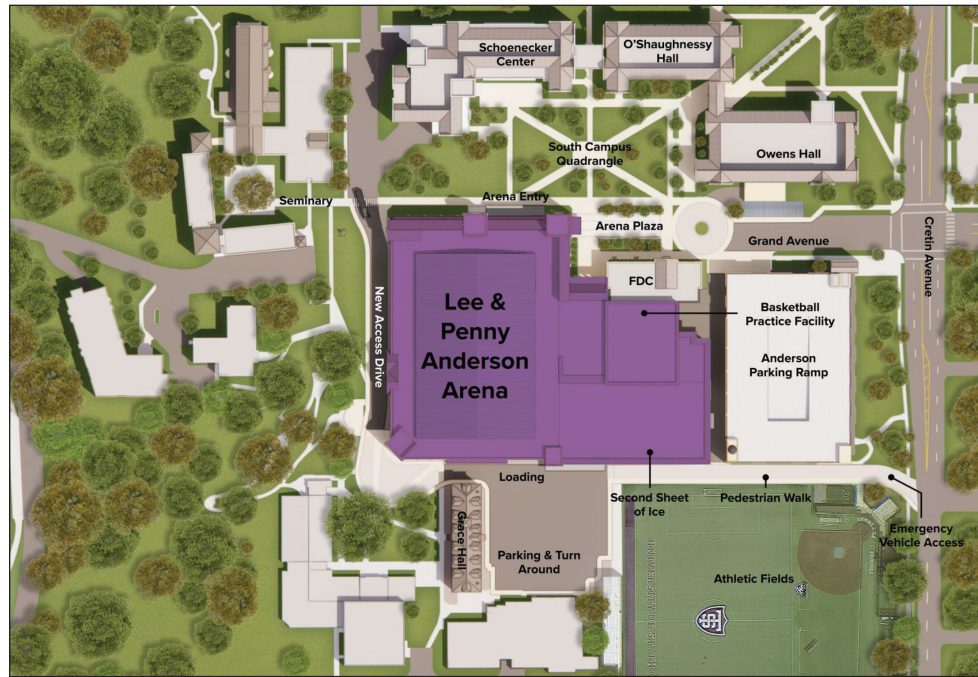
By Jane McClure

The potential environmental impact of a proposed multipurpose arena on the University of Saint Thomas' south campus will be reviewed at a public meeting from 6:30-8 p.m. Wednesday, July 12, in UST's McNeeley Hall at Summit and Cleveland avenues. Saint Paul city staff and consultants who worked on the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) will present their findings and answer questions from the public.

Reservations for the July 12 meeting are being requested by emailing neighbors@stthomas.edu. A 24-day public comment period on the EAW will continue until July 20. To view the EAW and comment on it, visit tinyurl.com/v46mu86m.

The arena is planned for a six-acre site at the center of the south campus off Grand and Cretin avenues. It would accommodate 4,000 seats for hockey games, 5,000 seats for basketball games and 6,000 seats for graduation ceremonies and other large gatherings. Practice facilities for hockey and basketball, coaches' offices, locker rooms and other accommodations for student athletes would also be provided. A bridge would connect the third level of the arena to the existing Anderson Parking Ramp.

The 148-page EAW addresses the potential traffic and parking impacts of the arena. The city supervised the EAW process, but UST paid for the consulting engineers from Kimley Horn. A related transporta-



Saint Thomas' new hockey and basketball arena would occupy six acres near the center of the university's south campus just west of Grand and Cretin avenues.

tion study was prepared by the engineering firm SRF to help in drafting a plan for managing traffic related to the arena.

According to the EAW, the arena project will result in the net loss of 264 surface parking spaces on the building site. The city does not require new developments to provide off-street parking. UST officials have suggested using the Anderson Parking Ramp and other campus parking lots for spectator parking.

The EAW estimates arena parking de-

mand to be 1,050 spaces for hockey games that have the maximum attendance, 1,420 spaces for basketball games with the maximum attendance, and 775 spaces for the "typical" arena event.

Based on the current parking restrictions on campus and adjacent streets, basketball games with the maximum attendance are expected to create a deficit of 330 to 740 parking spaces. The EAW estimates there will be one or two such games every year.

Hockey games that draw the maximum

attendance are expected to occur two to four times per year, and the available parking on campus is expected to accommodate the parking demand.

Typical events are expected to have a parking deficit of approximately 100 spaces on weeknights and a parking surplus of approximately 240 to 320 spaces on weekends.

The EAW and related traffic study indicate that the intersections with the worst traffic issues will be where Cretin Avenue meets Grand and Summit avenues. The studies will be used to figure ways to mitigate parking and traffic problems. Those strategies could include new time and day restrictions in campus parking lots, pre-paid event parking for all visitor lots, and the assignment of parking spaces prior to events. The scheduling of more popular events when there is less demand for campus parking is another idea. Off-site parking with a shuttle service and a partnership with a rideshare company have also been suggested.

UST's Cretin Hall dormitory, McCarthy Gym and a nearby service center building would be demolished to make way for the arena. The EAW notes that while the three buildings may be eligible for historic designation, they have not been designated as such. However, the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission will be reviewing the northern portion of the project site since it is located within the Summit Avenue West Heritage Preservation District.

Met Council begins its review of controversial Summit bike trail

By Jane McClure

The Metropolitan Council Parks and Open Space Commission will begin its review of Saint Paul's plan for raised and separated bike paths along Summit Avenue on July 13. The full Met Council could vote on the plan as early as August 23. Meanwhile, a civil case continues in Ramsey County District Court. Save Our Street (SOS) attorney Robert Cattana-

ach and the Summit Avenue Residential Preservation Association filed suit seeking the release of city documents related to the proposed Summit Avenue Regional Trail. Approximately 3,295 people have signed a petition at savesummitavenue.org in opposition to the city's plan for the regional trail. The two bike paths would be constructed largely within the existing curb lines on both sides of Summit between Mississippi River Boulevard and Kellogg Boulevard.

The 5.4-mile bike trail was approved by the City Council in May on a 6-1 vote. Supporters argue that it would be safer than the existing bike lanes on Summit. Opponents contend that the bike paths would harm the historic character of Summit,

require the removal of more trees, lead to more bike-and-car crashes at Summit's many cross streets and driveways and ultimately prove to be too slow for serious bicyclists. The paths would also mean the removal of half of the on-street parking east of Lexington Parkway.

Cattanaach filed his latest motion in district court on June 26, contending that the city has not fully complied with the plaintiffs' requests under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. That is despite an order by Ramsey County District Court Judge Patrick Diamond in May and the court's appointment of a facilitator to aid in the document search.

"Minnesotans have a right to access all public government data under (the Data Practices Act)," Cattanaach said. "The city continues to drag its feet on several searches we've asked them to do, and is stonewalling on disclosing even public portions of documents being withheld. It's obvious that they will continue to withhold data that should be made public until the judge again gets involved."

City officials declined to comment on Cattanaach's latest court motion. The next hearing in Ramsey County District Court is

scheduled for August 8.

In his motion, Cattanaach raises two issues that he contends have created an impasse. One is that the city has no regular system for keeping electronic records that are not emails, so it asserts that it does not have to disclose them. According to Cattanaach, the city claims the lack of any filing system means that city staff can simply decide how hard they want to search and where without disclosing to the public how they carried out the search. According to him, that is a violation of Minnesota's Data Practices Act.

The city claims that it can withhold entire documents based on "privilege" without disclosing even the public portions of those documents or explaining why the documents are being withheld.

According to Cattanaach, city officials are withholding documents based on "attorney-client privilege," but they have refused to explain the basis for that claim and the number of documents being withheld. Even the public portions of those documents are being withheld, Cattanaach said, including the date, the general subject matter, who they were from and to whom they were sent, all of which should

be made available to the public.

"Minnesota law clearly requires that if a document contains classified or non-public data, the government entities must immediately notify the requestor, and certify in writing as to why the data is being withheld," Cattanaach said. "None of that has been done here. What is the city trying to hide?"

Cattanaach contends that the city is hiding documents that are needed by the Metropolitan Council as it prepares to take action on the regional trail plan. According to SOS, the data that has been released by the city shows preferential treatment for cycling advocates and other groups that are supportive of the trail. That data is available at savesummitavenue.org/blog.

The next meeting of the Metropolitan Council Parks and Open Space Commission will be held at 4 p.m. Thursday, July 13. The Met Council's Community Development Committee is scheduled to review the Summit Avenue Regional Trail on August 7. Those meetings are open to the public. Comments on the trail plan may also be sent to the Met Council and its committees. For more information, visit metro council.org/Council-Meetings.aspx.

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Council reworks STAR guidelines

Makes changes in time for
this year's funding rounds

By Jane McClure

Businesses, nonprofits, and arts and cultural organizations will have an easier time accessing the city of Saint Paul's Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) dollars this year with rule changes adopted on June 14 by the City Council.

Changes to the city's Cultural and Neighborhood STAR programs were adopted after discussions at committee meetings in June. Ward 2 council member Rebecca Noecker, who chairs the City Operations Committee, said the changes should streamline the application and allocation processes that some applicants have complained are too complex.

Neighborhood STAR funds, which pay for brick-and-mortar or capital improvement projects, will shift from grants and loans to a grants-only program this year. The minimum grant request will increase from \$5,000 to \$15,000. The 1-to-1 funding match requirement has been eliminated for grant requests of up to \$50,000.

For Cultural STAR dollars, which can be used by arts and cultural groups for various activities, the number of annual funding rounds will be dropped from two to one. For many years Cultural STAR funds have just been grants. The minimum grant request will be \$10,000 instead of \$5,000. The match requirement will be eliminated for grant requests up to \$50,000.

The City Council also set separate application timelines for different arts and cultural programs. For special projects or organizational developments, applicants can seek a one-year contract. Capital projects can seek two-year contracts.

The changes mark the most extensive reworking of the STAR guidelines since the program was launched in 1993. STAR is funded through an extra half-percent city sales tax. The changes will go into effect for this year's funding rounds. City staff will evaluate the changes and may suggest additional changes in the future.

Several council members said they have heard constituents complain about the complexity of the STAR processes. In a few cases, successful applicants have returned funds rather than try to spend them.

A report to the City Council noted the complexity of the programs' administrative work for applicants. "The cost of staff time across several departments over several years is far more than the amount of the smaller awards, especially for loans," the report stated.

The historical intent of STAR loans was to recycle money for new applications. But the council report stated that many STAR loans become past due, needed restructuring or ended up being written off.

Another challenge for applications has been the 1-to-1 match requirement, which some could not meet. Matches could be monetary, donated services and materials, or "sweat equity."

Another complaint about STAR was the complexity of compliance and reporting requirements.

The city's planning department and legal staff have met over the past year to discuss additional changes to STAR, including exemptions to some technical requirements. Those recommendations will be brought back to the City Council at a later date.

Neighborhood STAR applications are due by July 31 and are at tinyurl.com/5n9yka9z. Cultural STAR applications are due by July 21 and are at tinyurl.com/4f2bvwxj.

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Public Works to spend \$2.55M on repairing potholed streets citywide

The city of Saint Paul recently announced that it plans to spend \$2.55 million to repair streets that were damaged by this year’s near record-setting winter weather. The Department of Public Works is in the process of “route patching” the entire city. That means filling potholes and then returning to skim streets in the roughest condition with a thin layer of asphalt.

Crews are expected to patch or skim all 530 miles of residential streets and more than 2,000 alleys throughout the city this summer and into the fall. The approach is supposed to be more efficient than responding to individual pothole complaints. On average, the city said a Public Works crew will hand shovel 15-20 tons of asphalt per day for patching city streets.

The public can help the city’s patching efforts by only reporting potholes on main, arterial streets at this time. Public Works is currently concentrating on residential streets.

Motorists are being urged to move their vehicles from the street when they see pothole patching crews in their neighborhood, since the city will not be posting temporary “No Parking” signs.



Public Works crews will be patching up all residential streets in the city this summer.

They also are being asked to put garbage or recycling carts on their boulevard or driveway apron, not the street.

Public Works will not be able to provide residents with timelines about when specific streets will be patched, since street conditions vary greatly across the city. For more information, visit stpaul.gov/potholes.

Saint Paul studies ways to improve plowing after 3rd snowiest winter

By Jane McClure

Snowplowing is not your typical topic for an 80-degree summer day, but the Saint Paul City Council on June 28 reviewed snowplowing operations and future changes with Department of Public Works director Sean Kershaw.

The city has 1,950 miles of roads to be plowed. That includes 246 miles of county roads and 122 miles of state highways, for which the city is reimbursed.

Ways to improve snowplowing are being studied after 90.3 inches fell during the most recent third-snowiest winter in city history. The snow that fell in 2022-2023 included three heavy rainstorms that complicated winter operations and “wrecked” streets, Kershaw said. Crews continue to fill potholes that were created by the weather conditions on aging streets (see sidebar).

Public Works is also dealing with the need to clear more bike lanes of snow, and changes in on-street parking patterns. One issue is that the city’s permanent and temporary impound lots are not large enough to handle all of the vehicles that are towed during snow emergencies. This past winter also brought the problem of where to store mountains of snow.

Addressing staffing and equipment needs, and making changes to the city’s longstanding snow emergency policies are among the ideas on the table.

Not every change can be implemented for the 2023-2024 snow season, Kershaw said. City staff work groups are meeting to discuss winter operations. Public Works is also talking to district councils, block leaders and others.

One pressing change is to switch from the long-time use of paper maps on clipboards for snowplow drivers tackling the city’s 35 night plow and 37 day plow routes.

Another idea being considered is more use of one-sided residential parking, though that means helping people find other places to put their vehicles. Down-

town city-owned parking ramps were pressed into service this past winter.

“We have parking problems, not plowing problems,” Kershaw said.

Council members said they would like more involvement in any changes being discussed. Ward 4 council member Mitra Jalali said she would like to see a more proactive approach to get residents to move their vehicles, rather than punitive actions.

A big challenge is staffing. Public Works needs about 70 people per night plow and day plow shifts to write tickets. This past winter the ticket crew was one-third to one-half its usual size. Contracting with staffing agencies or recruiting nonprofits to help are being considered.

There is also the need for about 70 snowplow drivers per shift. Staff is brought in from other city departments, and some Public Works retirees are stepping in. The city is doing more to help people get the commercial driving licenses needed to operate plows. The types of plows used are also being studied, especially for residential streets.

One change that could be made is to more severely penalize private operators who plow snow from alleys, driveways and parking lots into city streets.

Public Works defines a “winter event” as a response to any winter weather condition. That ranges from treating bridge decks overnight for frost to declaring an emergency after 3 or more inches of snow falls. Saint Paul averages about 20-30 winter events per season.

In the past five years, the number of winter events ranged from 17, including two snow emergencies, in 2020-2021 to 44, with seven snow emergencies, this past winter. Twenty days of one-sided residential street parking were also implemented this winter.

The cost for snow emergencies varies from \$400,000-\$800,000. The city budgets for four of them each year.

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VIEWPOINT

Bike paths are best practice

Two letters objecting to the proposed separated bike paths on Summit Avenue raise misplaced or exaggerated concerns (*MyVillager* Inbox, June 28).

First, the imagined scenario of “concrete replacing hundreds of mature trees” is unfounded. According to Saint Paul officials, nearly all reconstruction-related tree loss will be due to the deep excavation needed to replace under-street utilities and the entire deteriorating roadway. This will occur whether or not the street surface includes separated bike paths. There is no plan to significantly widen the street or replace trees with concrete.

Second, regarding climate change, separated paths that encourage biking should help to reduce automobile use, which is a major contributor to climate change. Additionally, placing bike lanes at the outside margins of the street should allow a thinner street surface there. This should facilitate tree root growth.

Third, nearly all safety studies have found that separated bike paths yield fewer serious bike crashes and a greater sense of cyclist security when compared with on-street bike lanes. The fact that many locales still have no bike lanes or only on-street non-separated bike lanes is little reason not to adopt separated bike paths here. Multiple national associations and federal and state departments of transportation now regard separated bike paths as best practice.

Fourth, driveways create a potential for bike-auto conflicts regardless of whether cyclists are on the street or in separated bike paths. With separated paths, however, a startled cyclist can escape onto a grassy buffer strip rather than veering into traffic. Whether cyclists who were seriously injured or killed in motor-vehicle crashes wore helmets or observed safe cycling behavior is not germane to the question of what sort of accommodation for cyclists along city streets yields optimal real-world results. The answer clearly is separated bike paths.

The large number of cross streets along Summit, compared with the relatively crossing-free bike paths to the Guthrie and the Science Museum, may make Summit less appealing for a purely recreational family bike ride. But if a family desires to bike on Summit, separated bike paths would make it safer than on-street bike lanes despite the cross streets.

With separated bike paths, the crash risk is slightly higher at intersections but lower mid-block where crashes, being higher-speed, are more injury prone. This gives separated bike paths their lower overall serious injury crash risk.

*James Johnson
Merriam Park*

For news of Highland Bridge

I was a 37-plus-year resident of Macalester-Groveland and am now a resident of Marvella at Highland Bridge. I always look forward to receiving *MyVillager* to keep me updated on local news. Many thanks for your recent news about Highland Bridge. I had not been aware of potential steps to add a Marvella Two. *MyVillager* has been the only source of information on the University of Saint Thomas’ proposed softball and baseball stadiums at Highland Bridge.

I and many other local residents have lots of questions about future plans for Highland Bridge, our new neighborhood. The Highland Bridge website is outdated. It is difficult to find any links that might inform us on planned additions. Marvella staff are generally unable to provide updates. If *MyVillager* could provide periodic updates, perhaps a Highland Bridge Updates column, that would be most helpful for current residents and neighbors. What happens at Highland Bridge affects the entire neighborhood.

Here are some questions many of us have:

- Who is responsible for the maintenance of the water feature, the plaza and common grounds, excluding the new city parks?
- Why isn’t the waterfall at the beginning of the marquee water feature operational?
- What is the status of apartment developments? Is it correct that Weidner has pulled out of the partnership? If so, what was the cause—rent control, interest rates?
- What is the status of filling mixed-use buildings with retail? Why have potential retailers pulled out? Are new ones signing on?
- Are there any plans for condo developments at

INBOX

Highland Bridge? If not, will these lots remain vacant?

- What is the status of the Pulte rowhouses? Are those under construction being sold? Is there a market for Pulte to continue to build the planned rowhouses?
- What is the status of the lots for private homes along Mississippi River Boulevard? Last winter there were quite a few “sold” signs. Now there are only several. Have potential buyers pulled out?
- Marvella is installing solar panels. Are they for Marvella only or for the solar gardens to support Highland Bridge?

I love my neighborhood and appreciate the value of your reporting. Many thanks for anything you can do to keep us connected.

*Mary Welfling
Highland Park*

Retreat on transit orientation

In the early stages of planning for the Highland Bridge project on the former site of the Ford Motor Company assembly plan, we heard a lot about minimizing car traffic by promoting bicycling, walking, public transportation and shuttle services. How does that square with the 330-space parking lot that has been proposed for the University of Saint Thomas’ new baseball and softball stadiums?

*Peter Thomsen
Highland Park*

The lifeline of landlines

I strongly oppose the shutdown of landline phone service and encourage our local leaders to look out for our vulnerable senior population and stand up to the big telecom companies.

My father relies on his landline to communicate. Though cell phones and internet-based phone services have replaced landlines, he still needs his old-fashioned landline as much as he ever has. That’s why I was shocked to learn that the FCC deregulated the telecom industry last August and now allows phone companies to shut down copper wire landline service completely, replacing it with internet-based alternatives.

While mobile and internet-based communication technologies offer undeniable advantages, we cannot disregard the unique benefits landline systems provide to almost 740,000 seniors in Minnesota like him. These time-tested systems have been lifelines during emergencies or power outages when cell networks falter. Their familiarity and ease of operation help folks like my father who may feel uncomfortable using smartphones or internet-based phone services to stay connected.

The FCC may not look out for seniors in Minnesota, but our local officials should. If there’s anything that can be done to require phone companies operating in Minnesota to provide good old-fashioned landline phone service, our legislators should do it. I’m not a stick in the mud. I understand that landlines are going the way of the dodo. But there must be a way to find balance in progress. By embracing balance, we can ensure that the unique benefits of these systems are not lost, fostering an inclusive, resilient and connected society.

*Daniel Clark
Greater East Side*

For better forest management

In recent weeks, you may have noticed the sky was no longer blue, stars were harder to see at night, and landscapes were discolored by a grayish hue. Wildfires in Canada and northern Minnesota have been worse than ever, and it has had real consequences for our jobs and health. As a farmer and educator, I notice the effect on my lungs after a long day outside. Heavy smog means it’s harder to grow crops, and folks may begin to see rising prices for food at the grocery store.

The wildfires in Canada have already displaced a staggering 120,000 people and burned 5.4 million acres of forest. If the fires continue at their current pace, it will be the worst wildfire season in Canada in recorded history.

But this isn’t just a Canadian problem. Numerous wildfires have burned this year in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area and Superior National Forest in northern Minnesota. While fire is a natural part of ecosystems, the harsh reality is that severe weather, a changing climate

and increasing heat and dryness have created fertile ground for frequent, large and severe wildfires.

The U.S. Forest Service manages 193 million acres of national forests and grasslands nationwide. The agency is trying to ensure that forests and grasslands are more resilient to the growing threat of climate-induced fires and other natural disasters with better pest management, prescribed burns, diverse tree species and vegetation management that addresses overcrowding and supports forest health.

We need to get this right before the problem grows much worse. Our national forests and grasslands support us in so many ways, including hunting, fishing, recreation, wood production, cleaner air and water, and quiet places to reflect and be grateful for all we have. Having more resilient national forests and grasslands means a stronger America.

*Rick Hall
Moorhead*

Student debt and the high court

Though they were in the minority, U.S. Supreme Court justices Elena Kagan, Sonia Sotomayor and Ketanji Brown Jackson all ruled that Joe Biden has the requisite power and authority on his own to tell over 40 million former college students they don’t have to pay the debts they took on to attend a university. It’s so good to know those three stalwarts will be on our highest court for the rest of my life. Constitutional scholars like these are hard to find.

*T. J. Sexton
Highland Park*

Take action on climate change

Does the recent spate of hot weather, smoke and air quality alerts have you worried about climate change? It does me. But it’s hard to talk about it. It seems depressing, and what can we do about it?

I recently read this advice: “Do the next easiest thing.” So you can’t afford an electric car or solar panels on your roof? How about turning your air conditioning two degrees warmer? Composting your food scraps? Planting a tree? Then talk to your friends and neighbors about it and think of the next easiest thing. And maybe most importantly, vote for representatives who are taking the problem seriously.

We need government to make the big changes, like investing in battery research, improving the power grid and finding efficient ways to sequester carbon. Do what you can, and encourage others to do what they can.

*Cathy Ruther
Highland Park*

Working together on abortion

I just read the two letters to the editor about abortion (*MyVillager*, June 14). Eliminating abortion is a worthy goal. Unfortunately, it’s not realistic. But working together is. Let’s work for good contraception and to educate men about their responsibility in the matter.

I feel sad for the women on both sides of the issue. It’s a painful choice for many. May we work together for peace and more understanding of those on the other side.

*Sharon McCord
Highland Park*

Do unto others...

Regarding “Monsters on the right” (*MyVillager* Inbox, June 14): The writer opens his letter with the statement, “I’m confused.” An observation by former president Ronald Reagan may help clear his brain fog: “I have noticed that everyone who is for abortion has been born.”

*Anne Collopy
Saint Anthony*

MyVillager welcomes letters to the editor and longer guest editorials. However, they must be signed, indicate the neighborhood of the writer and include a phone number for verification purposes. Send your commentary to MyVillager, 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.

CIB recommendations include improving Carty Park playground

By Jane McClure

Carty Park would have its 26-year-old play equipment replaced if a recommendation by the city’s Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) Committee becomes part of the 2024 city budget. The committee unanimously approved its recommendations for the 2024-2025 funding cycle on June 26 and forwarded them to Mayor Melvin Carter and the City Council. The mayor will announce his proposed budget in August.

The vote ended weeks of deliberations by the committee. The projects vying for funding were chosen following presentations this spring, a June 12 public hearing and rankings by committee members. The committee is drafting a letter to the mayor and council outlining the highlights and potential problems with this year’s process. One concern is



Carty Park, 705 Iglehart Ave., is recommended to receive \$624,000 in CIB funding.

that district councils, which historically have had a great deal of input on projects, were largely absent this year.

“That’s a significant change in my mind,” said committee member Jack Fei. Other committee members agreed, saying they would like to see more public involvement in the decision-making process, even on proposals from city departments.

Projects are paid for through

either federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars or capital improvement bonds. Committee chair Darren Tobolt said many requests had to be pared down due to available funding.

More than \$15.4 million was sought for CDBG funding. The committee recommended funding 19 projects and splitting a total of \$8 million between 2024 and 2025.

The highest-ranked local project is the NeighborWorks Home Partners’ home Repair fund for neighborhoods along the light-rail Green Line. It ranked sixth. NeighborWorks sought \$500,000 and was recommended to receive \$400,000.

Ranked seventh was the Rondo Community Land Trust’s request for home rehabilitation funding. It requested \$800,000 and was recommended to receive \$300,000. A second land trust request for \$2 million for property acquisition was turned down.

Carty Park, which is bounded by Carroll and Iglehart avenues and Saint Albans and Grotto streets, ranked 19th. It was recommended to receive \$624,000 between 2024 and 2025. Carty Park has two playgrounds that date from 1997. The play equipment is considered to be in poor condition and its replacement has been deemed urgent.

Committee members said they wanted to fund at least one playground, and settled on Carty Park as the final project added to the list. If a playground is in an area with lower median incomes, it can be funded with CDBG.

The city’s Department of Parks and Recreation oversees 85 playgrounds. Four are owned and operated by the Saint Paul Public Schools, and the others by the city. About a dozen parks have been deemed to be in urgent need of replacement. They include Merriam Park, Dunning, Groveland and Homecroft.

The committee recommended spending almost \$8.7 million on capital bond projects in 2024-2025. Most of that funding goes toward annual programs, such as maintenance to sports courts, trails, sidewalks, bike and pedestrian accommodations, and park and library facilities.

Crime Report

The following criminal incidents were compiled from Saint Paul and Mendota Heights police reports. For car and catalytic converter thefts and other crimes not referenced in this print edition, go to MyVillager.com.

Highland Park

Theft—Items were reported stolen from vehicles at Highland National Golf Course on June 23, the 2200 block of Rockwood Avenue on June 29-30, and on Hidden Falls Drive on June 30.

Assault—An assault with a gun involving two motorists who were chasing each other was reported on Ford Parkway and Cleveland Avenue at 5:46 p.m. on July 2.

Lexington-Hamline

Theft—Criminal activity at the Midway Target included a more than \$1,000 shoplifting loss on June 13, a 47-year-old woman cited for trying to steal more than \$350 in merchandise on June 21, a 50-year-old woman arrested for trying to steal more than \$1,000 in merchandise on June 23, a purse-snatching on June 25, a 31-year-old man cited for trying to steal more than \$320 in merchandise on June 30, and a 15-year-old boy who was caught shoplifting and damaging property on July 2.

Assault—A suspect reportedly damaged several items and threatened to shoot an employee at Speedway, 399 N. Lexington Pkwy., at 12:12 a.m. on June 28. A felony assault involving a customer threatening an employee also was reported at the station at 10 a.m. that same day.

Macalester-Groveland

Burglary—Residential break-ins were reported on the 1600 block of Stanford Avenue between June 24-27, and the 1700 block of Summit Avenue on July 2.

—Tools and a bicycle were reported stolen during a garage break-in on the 2200 block of Goodrich Avenue during the evening of July 1-2.

Theft—A pick-pocketing theft of more than \$500 was reported on Grand and Fairview avenues at 3 p.m. on June 23.

—Items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from a vehicle on the 2100 block of Sargent Avenue on the evening of June 30-July 1.

Weapons—A shell casing was recovered following reports of gunfire on the 2000 block of Summit Avenue at 10:20 p.m.

on June 28.

—Police received a report of multiple people entering an apartment with guns on Cleveland and Grand avenues at 9:04 p.m. on June 28.

Mendota Heights

Burglary—A business was broken into on the 1200 block of Mendota Heights Road at 1:38 a.m. on June 22.

Theft—Thefts from autos were reported on the 500 block of Stone Road, the 2300 block of Apache Street and the 2000 block of Patricia Street on June 24. Items were also reported stolen from vehicles on the 2100 block of South Lexington Avenue on June 25, and the 1300 block of Victory Avenue and the 1600 block of Cherry Hill Road on June 26.

Miscellaneous—A female was arrested for disorderly conduct and obstructing the legal process after officers responded to a disturbance on the 1600 block of Lilydale Road at 5:24 p.m. on June 17.

Merriam Park

Burglary—Jewelry, watches and shoes were reported stolen during a home break-in on the 1600 block of Summit Avenue between June 24-July 2.

—Residential burglaries were reported on the 1800 block of Summit Avenue on June 26, and the 100 block of North Cleveland Avenue on June 29.

—A 17-year-old girl was arrested for burglarizing an apartment on the 1800 block of Roblyn Avenue at 2:26 p.m. on June 27.

Theft—A trailer and tools were reported stolen at Our Lady of Peace, 2076 Saint Anthony Ave., at 5:48 a.m. on June 22.

—A theft of more than \$1,000 was reported from a building at the University of Saint Thomas at 5:10 a.m. on June 23.

Assault—An assault and felony damage to property was reported on the 1900 block of University Avenue at 8 p.m. on July 4.

Arson—A suspicious fire in a storage building was reported on the 1600 block of Ashland Avenue at 6:20 a.m. on June 28.

Weapons—A 21-year-old man was arrested for DWI and possession of a gun without a serial number or permit after he was seen driving with no lights on while swerving on University Avenue and Aldine Street at 1:15 a.m. on June 23.

Miscellaneous—A 26-year-old woman was arrested for DWI and drug possession

on Marshall Avenue near Mississippi River Boulevard at 2:42 p.m. on June 23.

—Felony damage to property was reported to a commercial building at 1722 University Ave. at 9:50 a.m. on July 1.

Snelling-Hamline

Burglary—A suspect broke into the manager’s office at Hardee’s, 369 N. Hamline Ave., at 4:04 a.m. on June 28.

Theft—A bicycle valued at more than \$1,000 was reported stolen on University and Hamline avenues at 7:27 a.m. on June 23.

Arson—A dumpster was set on fire in an alley on the 1500 block of Portland Avenue at 4:31 a.m. on July 1.

Assault—A woman was arrested for assault with a gun, having a weapon with no serial number and drug possession at the Midway Cub Foods at 7:39 a.m. on June 23.

Summit Hill

Robbery—A man was robbed of his cellphone on the 500 block of Lincoln Avenue at 9:11 a.m. on July 3.

Theft—Items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from a vehicle on the 900 block of Grand Avenue on the evening of June 22-23.

Assault—A 23-year-old woman was arrested for DWI and aggravated assault after she reportedly rammed another vehicle more than eight times on Saint Clair Avenue and Victoria Street before attempting to flee at 7:05 p.m. on June 27.

Miscellaneous—Felony damage to property was reported on the 1200 block of Grand Avenue on July 3.

Summit-University

Robbery—Two suspects robbed a victim of his wallet at gunpoint on University Avenue and Mackubin Street at 1:52 p.m. on June 27.

Burglary—A residential break-in was reported on the 200 block of Summit Avenue between June 21-27.

—Kingdom Pathways, 1088 University Ave., was burglarized at 11:41 a.m. on June 26.

Theft—Items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen on the 400 block of Dayton Avenue at 3 p.m. on June 27.

Weapons—Four shell casings were found after police responded to reports of shots fired on Concordia Avenue and Oxford Street at 2:59 a.m. on June 30.

West End

Truck Park shooting—Devondre Trevon Phillips, 31, of Las Vegas was sentenced on June 23 to 346 months in prison for his role in the October 10, 2021, shooting incident at the Truck Park Bar, 214 W. Seventh St., that left one woman dead and 14 people injured. A Ramsey County jury found him guilty on February 9 of this year. A separate jury found Terry Lorenzo Brown, 34, of Saint Paul guilty on all counts on June 14 for his role in the incident. He is scheduled to be sentenced on August 8.

Burglary—A PlayStation 5 was reported stolen during an apartment burglary at the Alvera, 337 W. Seventh St., at 2:24 p.m. on June 29.

Theft—A Glock handgun and six full magazines of ammunition were reported stolen from a truck at the Holiday Inn, 175 W. Seventh St., at 9:21 a.m. on June 24.

—Items valued at more than \$1,000 were reported stolen from a vehicle on the 100 block of South Western Avenue at 7:39 p.m. on June 26.

Weapons—Multiple calls about gunfire were reported on the 700 block of Scheffer Avenue at 9:56 p.m. on June 26.

Assault—A son reportedly tried to strangle his mother while she was driving on Randolph Avenue and Shepard Road at 10:27 p.m. on June 26. The suspect fled before police arrived.

—A 39-year-old man was cited for assaulting security after he was found trespassing at the Nasseff Medical Center, 255 N. Smith Ave., at 6:26 a.m. on July 3.

Miscellaneous—A male driver was arrested for DWI following a hit-and-run accident on Randolph Avenue and Chatsworth Street at 2:57 p.m. on June 22. His blood alcohol content was nearly three times the legal limit.

—A driver was taken to the hospital after passing out and crashing into a light pole on Smith and Grand avenues at 12:02 p.m. on June 29.

—A 45-year-old male was arrested for driving after cancellation of his license after being found slumped over behind the wheel of a vehicle on Clifton Street and Palace Avenue at 11:27 p.m. on June 29.

—A man was stopped for speeding and arrested for DWI and drug possession on Cliff Street and Smith Avenue at 10:15 p.m. on June 30.

ON THE TOWN

Second shot at stardom: Theatre 55 triumphs in 'A Chorus Line'

By Anne Murphy

Not long after *A Chorus Line* first opened on Broadway in the summer of 1975, it was deemed by critics to be “one of those musicals you will sing about to your grandchildren.” That sentiment will surely ring true with Theatre 55’s production of the Tony Award-winning show, which runs from July 14-23 in the amphitheater at Caponi Art Park in Eagan.

A Chorus Line revolves around the lives of dancers auditioning for a show. As they vie for a spot in the chorus line, the young hopefuls tell of their fears about body image, remaining invisible or unsung, aging out of the profession, and being gay in a heterosexual world. Theater 55 artistic director Richard Hitchler chose the show because of the score by Marvin Hamlisch as well as its still-relevant themes.

Hitchler, who lives in Summit Hill, founded Theatre 55 four years ago to provide actors age 55 and older with a stage to showcase their craft. Since *A Chorus Line* was first produced, society has evolved in the areas the musical explores, according to Hitchler. “But we’ve also seen the pendulum swing back,” he said.

Hitchler said the statements made by the show “really resonated with me. That’s where I felt the connection. Obviously, there’s the dancing, the singing and the stories, both sweet and difficult, but it’s the themes—everyone who’s in this show has told me how they connect to the themes.”

The Theatre 55 production is being staged in concert form. It features 18 singers and seven dancers. “The reason we have separate singers and dancers is so we can amplify the singers while the dancers are dancing,” Hitchler said. Standing microphones will be used to provide the amplification.

Following the auditions for *A Chorus Line*, Hitchler asked everyone in the cast what they were doing in 1975 when the show made its Broadway debut. “It was interesting,” he said. “Everybody had



Kicking up their heels in *A Chorus Line* will be MyVillager area cast members (clockwise from upper left) Brenda Starr, Jan Joseph, Pam Scott, Cathy Brennan, Bob Sime, Mark Doerr, Lisa Ramos, Heather Foxx.

the same story, whether it was going to an audition or a job interview, facing rejection or fighting to be recognized. Now they’re on the other end of (their careers), having time to reflect on what everything meant.”

Catherine Brennan sings the part of a dancer who is talented and well trained but has never been in a show. “I remember when *A Chorus Line* was on Broadway,” said the Merriam Park resident. “At the time, I was an aspiring actor. In my 20s, I worked for a couple of years as a modern dancer. Then, I gave in to the realities of survival and pursued other work. Last year, after a 30-year hiatus from performing, I auditioned for Theatre 55’s production of *Rent* and was offered a role. It was as if the lights went on in my brain. It was so joyous.

“*A Chorus Line* speaks to the aspirations of dancers and the difficulties of that life, making enough to live on while training daily and participating in auditions,” Brennan said. “It also looks squarely at the inevitable process of aging out as a dancer.

If you look older than springtime, it counts against you.”

Brenda Starr plays a singer in the show. At 75, the Summit-University resident is the oldest member of the cast. “When *A Chorus Line* first opened on Broadway,” she said, “I was living in New Jersey just across the river from New York. Now I’m thrilled to be learning, thriving and performing in Theatre 55’s rendition.”

In the production, Starr performs “Sing,” a song that “encourages folks to sing even if they don’t think they can or don’t know how,” she said. It is one of the central messages of *A Chorus Line*, according to Starr, and it is similar to how “Theatre 55 gives elders voice and opportunities to showcase our talents, urging us to pursue life to the fullest regardless of age, insecurity, adversity or stereotype.”

Theatre 55 and *A Chorus Line* have reawakened Heather Foxx’s passion for dance. The Macalester-Groveland resident loved to dance as a child but did not pursue that in adulthood. Playing the role

of a dancer in *A Chorus Line* “is about being in an audition, not being perfect, making mistakes, eventually making the cut, then nailing the dance,” Foxx said. “Our choreographers have designed beautiful movements that allow us to live the iconic dances that *A Chorus Line* is known for.”

“*A Chorus Line* is a feast of singing, dancing and acting,” said West End resident Pamela Scott, who also plays a dancer. “Everyone will find something to enjoy in this show. The message is one of perseverance and the triumph of the human spirit over self-doubt. For Theatre 55 actors, this resonates loudly. Haven’t we all had to persevere just to make it to this stage of life?”

“What’s so enjoyable about *A Chorus Line* is that it’s so rich musically,” Scott said. “Its score has stood the test of time. My favorite song is ‘Nothing,’ a poignant number about a girl who realizes early on that there’s more than one way to become an actress.”

Lisa Ramos, who lives in Macalester-Groveland, plays the actress who sings that song. “My character tells about a situation that led her to become an actress and how she overcame doubt and frustration,” Ramos said. “Then later, she is asked what she’d do if she had to stop dancing. Her response in ‘What I Did for Love’ is so powerful for so many that it became a hit song. The lyrics, ‘I’ll keep going on to whatever tomorrow brings with no regrets. The passion, the love will always be there,’ is what we all have done and still do.”

The music in the Theatre 55 production will be performed live by an ensemble of keyboard, bass, brass, woodwinds and drums under the direction of Raymond Berg. With a few exceptions, the lyrics are suitable for younger audiences, according to Hitchler.

Show times are 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 5 p.m. Sundays in Caponi Art Park, 1220 Diffley Road in Eagan. Tickets are \$15 for individuals or \$30 for a car load of up to six patrons. For information, visit theatre55.org.

ON THE TOWN Briefly

Books

Poet Courtney LeBlanc will read from her new collection, *Her Whole Bright Life*, in a free program at 6 p.m. Tuesday, July 18, at Next Chapter Booksellers, 38 S. Snelling Ave. The poems tell of the exhaustion of battling inner demons and the grief of losing a father. Call 651-225-8989.

Poets Sonia Greenfield and Courtney LeBlanc will discuss their latest collections, *All Possible Histories* and *Her Whole Bright Life*, respectively, in a free program at 7 p.m. Thursday, July 20, at SubText Books, 6 W. Fifth St. Call 651-493-2791.

Exhibits

Free historical walking tours in and around downtown Saint Paul step out at 10 a.m. Wednesdays. Sponsored by the Landmark Center Volunteer Association, the series includes the Great River Tour on July 19, highlighting the mighty Mississippi and the landmarks that made Saint Paul what it is today; and the Rice Park Tour on July 26, featuring the iconic park and

surrounding areas. Visit landmarkcenter.org or call Sydney at 651-292-3063.

“**Defying Sameness 3**,” 75 works by 75 artists that don’t meet viewers’ expectations, are being displayed through August 27 at Argyle Zebra Gallery, 308 E. Prince St. The gallery is open from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. A reception for the artists with live music and light refreshments will be held from 5-8 p.m. Saturday, July 29. Admission is free. Call 651-224-3757 or visit theazgallery.org.

Film

Hollywood blockbusters are being shown at 7 p.m. every Friday on the giant screen of the Omnitheater at the Science Museum of Minnesota, 120 W. Kellogg Blvd. The schedule includes *Men in Black* on July 14; *Apollo 13*, July 21; and *Spaceballs*, July 28. Tickets are \$9.95, free for children under age 4. Call 651-221-9444.

Twenty minutes of taiko drumming will be followed by a screening of the film *Finding Her Beat* in a free program at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, July 15, outside of

the Ordway Center. *Finding Her Beat* tells of Taiko artists Jennifer Weir and Megan Chao Smith who assemble the world’s best women taiko drummers and strive to overcome their differences in culture, age, language, and performance style to form an artistic whole. In case of rain, the program will be presented at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, July 16.

Elvis (2022, PG-13), the story of the king of rock ‘n’ roll as seen through the eyes of Presley’s controversial manager, will be shown free of charge at 1 p.m. Wednesday, July 19, at the Minnesota JCC’s Capp Center, 1375 Saint Paul Ave. Admission is free. No reservations are necessary.

Family

Outdoor games, pizza and a movie will be presented by the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, July 13, outside of Sibley Manor Apartments, Maynard Drive and West Seventh Street. The sci-fi movie, *DC League of Super Pets* (PG-2022), will be shown at dusk. Visit highlanddistrictcouncil.org.

Meet archaeologists, try your hand at interpreting artifacts and learn about the tools archaeologists use to find sites during a free Family Day from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, July 22, in the courtyard of the Mill City Museum, 704 S. Second St. in Minneapolis. Call 612-341-7555.

Music

Under the Lex, a series of free concerts, is being presented from 5:15-6 p.m. Wednesdays under the bridge next to the historic Como Park streetcar station at 1224 N. Lexington Pkwy. Bring a lawn chair if you like and enjoy the music of Kinfu on July 12, Zak Khan on July 19, and Ben Lubeck on July 26. Youa Vang of Third Daughter, Restless Daughter emcees.

Pack a picnic supper, dancing shoes and a blanket and you can be Groovin’ in the Garden from 6-8 p.m. on Wednesdays outside of the Como Park Conservatory. The free concerts will feature Mubbla Buggs on July 12; Eleganza, July 19; and the Flamin’ Oh’s, July 26. Hot dogs, ice

10◀ ON THE TOWN BRIEFLY

cream, beer and wine will be available for purchase. If it rains, the concerts will be moved inside the Como Visitor Center.

Reggae, jazz, big band, blues and Latin music are all on tap for Summer Nights in Rice. The free concerts are being presented from 5-7 p.m. Thursdays in downtown Saint Paul's Rice Park. The schedule includes the International Reggae All-Stars on July 13 and the Moonlight Serenaders on July 27. In case of rain, the concerts will be moved inside Landmark Center. Visit landmarkcenter.org.

The International Cello Institute is back after a three-year hiatus with three recitals at 7:30 p.m. Fridays in the gallery at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church, 511 Groveland Ave. in Minneapolis. The series includes Blaise Déjardin on July 14; Santiago Cañón-Valencia, July 21; and Saeunn Thorsteinsdóttir, July 28. Tickets at \$30, \$20 for seniors and \$15 for students may be purchased online or at the door. Visit internationalcelloinstitute.com.

Songs of Hope, an ensemble of children from around the world who are taking part in a local summer arts camp, will present a free concert on Saturday, July 15, in collaboration with the band Eddies on the River. The music will begin at 6:30 p.m. at Wacouta Commons, 465 Wacouta St. In case of rain, the concert will be moved into First Baptist Church, 499 Wacouta St.

Free Bands on the Boulevard concerts are being held from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Tuesdays outside of the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. Bring a lawn chair



The exhibit "The Life and Art of Charles M. Schulz" will open an 11-month run on July 22 at the Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. The late great creator of the "Peanuts" comic strip grew up in Saint Paul. He is pictured above in the second row, fourth from the left, with his fifth-grade classmates at Richards Gordon School, 1619 Dayton Ave. View dozens of examples of Schulz's art, photographs, quotes and objects from the Minnesota Historical Society collection. Children will be invited to explore books and puzzles and sketch their favorite "Peanuts" characters. Call 651-259-3000 or visit mnhs.org.

and enjoy the music of Barbaro on July 18 and Northerly Gales on July 25. Food trucks, craft activities, lawn games and dancing will all be part of the fun.

Highland Park blues guitarist Jeff Ray will perform from noon-1 p.m. Wednesday, July 26, at Landmark Center. Admission is free. Bring a bag lunch or purchase one from a food truck.

Bring a blanket and a picnic supper if you like and enjoy live music from 6-8 p.m. Saturday, July 29, in the woods behind Edgumbe Presbyterian Church, 2149 Edgumbe Road. The family-friendly lineup includes singer-songwriter Christy Merry, Mother Banjo featuring Ellen

Stanley, singer-songwriter Faith Boblett and native Ukrainian singer-songwriter YEY. The concert is a benefit for the Jessa Roquet Foundation.

Theater

Canada's Cirque du Soleil will present the enchanting *Corteo* in five performances from July 13-16 at Xcel Energy Center. *Corteo* ("cortege" in Italian) is a mix of comedy, acting and acrobatics. A clown imagines his own funeral procession, juxtaposing the large with the small, the ridiculous with the tragic, and the magic of perfection with the charm of imperfection. Show times are 7:30 p.m.

Thursday and Friday, 3:30 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, and 1 p.m. Sunday. For tickets, visit cirquedusoleil.com.

"Like an episode of 'Columbo' cast by the Coen brothers," that is how playwright Jeffrey Hatcher describes *Glensheen*. The musical about the 1977 murder of Duluth heiress Elisabeth Congdon and her night nurse is being staged through July 23 at History Theatre, 30 E. 10th St. Jen Maren, Dane Stauffer and Wendy Lehr star. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$74-\$15. Visit historytheatre.com or call 651-292-4323.

Foshay, a new musical about the rise and fall of the businessman who gave his name to the tower in downtown Minneapolis, will open on July 21 at Open Window Theatre, 5300 S. Robert Trail in Inver Grove Heights. During the Roaring '20s, Wilbur Burton Foshay was on his way to becoming one of the richest people on earth. The musical by Kevin Bowen and Lynn Bowen is the true story of a man who, by losing everything, finds himself. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 2 and 7:30 p.m. Sundays through July 30. Tickets are \$25. Call 612-615-1515 or visit openwindowtheatre.org.

Circus Juventas brings the legend of King Arthur to life in *Excalibur*, opening July 28 under the big top at 1270 Montreal Ave. The high-flying production features the youth circus' most advanced students in 13 jaw-dropping performances. Show times are 7 p.m. Thursdays, 7 p.m. Fridays, and 1 and 7 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays through August 13. Tickets are \$25-\$50. Visit circusjuventas.showare.com.

THURSDAY/JULY 13

A 90-MINUTE WALKING TOUR of Jazz Age novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald's homes and haunts in the Historic Hill District of Saint Paul will step out at 5:30 p.m. from the Commodore, 79 N. Western Ave. Fitzgerald scholar Mark Taylor will lead the tour as a benefit for Park Square Theatre. The cost is \$40. For more information and to reserve your spot, visit tinyurl.com/9x7t4x35.

FRIDAY/JULY 14

SWIMMING, DANCING, MUSIC, snacks and beverages will all be part of the Family Fun Night from 6-9 p.m. at the Highland Park Aquatics Center, 1840 Edgumbe Road. Sponsored by Friends of Saint Paul Aquatics, the program will raise funds for swimming lessons for children from low-income families. Come in a bathing suit, beach shirt or formal evening wear. Admission is \$25 per person or \$100 per family. Visit tinyurl.com/p00lnight.

KIOSK

A CO-ED FRAME DRUM and tongue drum circle will be hosted by the Women's Drum Center from 6:30-8 p.m. in Cherokee Park. No experience is necessary. The cost is \$15. Drums are provided, but bring a chair. To register, visit womensdrumcenter.org.

TUESDAY/JULY 18

THE SAINT PAUL HIKING CLUB will hold a three-mile hike around the Highland Bridge neighborhood beginning at 7 p.m. in the parking lot of Bakers Square, 2239 Ford Pkwy. New members are welcome. For more information, call Sharon at 651-207-5926.

THURSDAY/JULY 20

AN ICE CREAM SOCIAL will be served from 5:30-7 p.m. on the lawn of Fairmount Avenue United Methodist Church, 1523 Fairmount Ave. The church women will

be handing out plates of pie and ice cream for \$5 and ice cream cones for \$2. Proceeds will benefit Emma Norton's new Restoring Waters building at Highland Bridge.

A FREE CRASH COURSE FOR CAREGIVERS will be offered by the Jewish Family Service monthly via Zoom from 6-7 p.m. on Thursdays beginning today. For more information, call 651-497-8248.

FRIDAY/JULY 21

EXPLORE CROSBY FARM PARK'S nocturnal side on a guided hike from 8-10:30 p.m. sponsored by the city of Saint Paul, National Park Service and Mississippi Park Connection. Discover bats, owls and fireflies. Learn about the stars through the eyes of a Dakota storyteller. Enjoy s'mores at a bonfire on the beach and experience the soundscape Listening to the Mississippi. The free program begins at the pavilion near the parking lot. For information and to register, visit tinyurl.com/2zzxxpvw.

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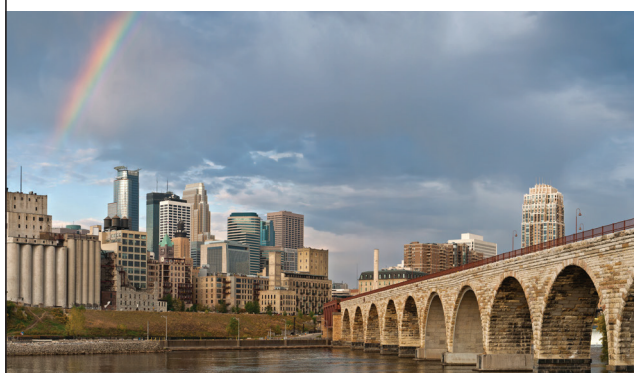
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SPORTS

Pooling resources

Buoyed by its success, Highland Fun Night is back to support kids' swimming lessons

By Bill Wagner

Last year's Highland Park Pool Family Fun Night went so swimmingly that to say organizer Martha Johnson was looking forward to doing it again this summer would be putting it mildly.

About 200 people attended last year's inaugural event. Around \$5,400 was raised for a scholarship fund to pay for swimming lessons to 70-80 youngsters through Friends of Saint Paul Aquatics. The organization's goal is to support swimming lessons at all of the city's pools and to prevent children from drowning.

Johnson, a water aerobics instructor at the pool and a retired Saint Paul schoolteacher, said the results from last year's gala were so encouraging that she is leading the planning again for the second annual gala. This summer's event will be held from 6-9 p.m. Friday, July 14, at the Highland Park Aquatics Center, 1840 Edgumbe Road. It will feature swimming, dancing, water aerobics, Zumba, art therapy, music, snacks and refreshments.

"This year we want to make at least the same (amount) as last year and more," said Johnson, a Highland Park resident. "I feel much more confident this year now that I know what I'm doing."

Johnson was moved to establish the scholarship fund after two young boys drowned while playing in the Mississippi River at Hidden Falls Regional Park in 2020-2021. Johnson said this year there was another tragedy involving a youngster who drowned at Carver Lake.

She believes such deaths are preventable. With so many lakes and rivers in Minnesota, to her swimming isn't just an enjoyable activity, it's a vital one.

While the lack of swimming skills can pose a problem for anybody, Johnson said affording lessons can be a special concern for those who come from lower-income families. "I thought that we could do better," she said.

There is plenty of reason for Johnson's optimism as the second Family Fun Night approaches. She said some 2,000 people across the Highland Park neighborhood have volunteered to help out with the event.

Johnson tells people that they might be surprised at what types of things the Friends group could find useful. "We all have things in our house to loan out or give away," she said.

A Facebook group known as Buy Nothing has provided a good resource for securing useful items for the gala. "Lifeguards



Water aerobics drew a big crowd of young and old alike at the Highland Park Aquatics Center on a steamy July 1. A gala to support swimming lessons will be held there on July 14. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

are needed, too," Johnson said.

Attendees are once again being encouraged to come dressed in anything from swimsuits to Hawaiian shirts to formal wear. The program will include comments around 6:15 p.m., Zumba on land at 6:30, water aerobics at 7, Aqua Zumba at 7:30 and dancing at 8. All of the pools at the center will be open the entire night.

The Friends group is working to provide scholarships for swimming lessons in partnership with Abbey's Hope, a nonprofit charitable foundation named for a 6-year-old girl who died after being severely injured in 2007 by a faulty drain in a wad-

ing pool. People can make their donations by cash, check or charge to Abbey's Hope, which provides the money to the city for the scholarships.

The city will help staff the Friends event on July 14. In case of lightning, it will be rescheduled for the same time and place the following evening.

Admission is \$25 per person or \$100 per family and is tax-deductible. Tickets may be purchased at the pool or in advance by visiting tinyurl.com/p00lnight. Donations also are being accepted at abbeyshope.org/donate by selecting one of the Friends of Saint Paul Aquatics options.



The Wright Call

By Dave Wright

Frank words about parents, coaches

Mike Meyers was a terrific referee and head of the Catholic Athletic Association who died way too young. However, a story he told years ago rings as true today as it was when it occurred.

Mike had moved to Woodbury when it was just beginning to be a burgeoning East Metro suburb. Youth hockey was just starting in that area and he was tapped to coach a team of youngsters ages 7-8. To get everybody ice time, Mike would send players out onto the rink in groups of three forwards and two defensemen. To be as fair as possible, he had an older son use a stopwatch to let him know when 45 seconds were up. With hockey being what it is, some shifts ended up longer and some shorter.

In the middle of one of his team's early games that first year, Mike suddenly felt a tug on his sleeve. It was the mother of one of the players. "My son didn't get 45 seconds on his last shift," she complained. "Are you going to even it out before the game's over?"

Woodbury ended up losing after giving up two goals in the final minute of play. Afterward, Mike was patiently telling a player what went wrong on the last shift and what he needed to do to fix it. The kid lapped it up and went to the locker room to join his teammates.

That player's parent then approached Mike and said, "My son doesn't take instruction very well. If he's going to play for you, you can't tell him what to do."

At that point, Mike went to the locker room and asked the players to go to the lobby for a couple of minutes. He then ushered all the parents into the room and said, "Based on what I've seen today, none of your kids are headed to the NHL. If that bothers you, I'll buy you a basketball."

That story came to mind recently when it was revealed that Larry Olimb, a former Gophers standout who led the Orono girls' hockey team to the Class A state championship game in his first season as head coach this winter, had suddenly resigned. It took a while, but it was finally revealed that a group of Orono parents apparently were displeased with the Spartans' 24-4-4 record.

One parent emailed Olimb: "You just don't have it. Sorry for the harsh words, but it needed to be said. I hope you can walk away and learn from it." Another parent was unhappy because his daughter wasn't named a captain for the 2023-24 season. There were other comments along the same lines. Olimb decided he had better things to do with his time this coming winter.

Olimb's predecessor, Mark Parrish, an ex-NHLer who guided the Spartans to a first-ever state tournament berth, gave up after three seasons for basically the same reasons—parental interference and second-guessing.

This isn't a unique story. Tony Scheid had great success coaching girls' hockey at Stillwater. The Ponies went to three state tournaments in four seasons when they had the talent. When the skill level dropped a bit, so did the wins. After 14 seasons, Scheid had endured enough grumbling from parents and waved goodbye. Cretin-Derham Hall gladly snapped him up as its head girls' hockey coach.

Highland Park athletic director Pat Auran was asked if there had ever been similar situations at his school. The Scots traditionally excel in cross-country, track and Nordic skiing. They won City Conference crowns this year in softball, baseball and tennis. There are also sports such as hockey, football and girls' basketball where they were in the middle of the pack. Simply put, talent will win out.

"For the most part, our parents are pretty realistic about our teams," Auran said. "But there are a few of them who come out of the woodwork. I had one husband and wife who had three kids playing several sports and they complained about every coach."

Before a season starts, Auran has a meeting with parents and lays down some ground rules. Among them is no emails to him complaining about playing time. If there's an issue, the player talks to the coach first. If things are still unresolved, the parents can schedule a meeting with the coach. If the parents and coach are at loggerheads, the principal is the next rung on the ladder.

Other schools have similar policies. Tom Orth was

named head football coach in 1999 at what is now Two Rivers High School. The Warriors' grid fortunes have varied over the years. In 2013, they went 4-4 in the regular season and then caught fire in the sections, scoring 106 points in winning three games to advance to state. The numbers have fallen off in recent years but Orth, who is now a co-head coach, kept a consistent pattern in how to deal with the issues that come up during a season.

"I think it's a bit cyclical when it comes to parents," he said. "When we win, you don't hear much."

Orth does have a preseason meeting with the parents where he explains the chain of command. "Most of the time, the issue is playing time," he said. "The player goes to the assistant coach first, then to the coordinator and then to the head coach. If necessary, we bring in a parent to meet with the head coach."

A discussion of playing time can often be decided by watching some of the many videos shot over the course of a football season. "The camera is a great communicator," Orth said.

There's also the matter of reasonable expectations. Last year, the Warriors won just one regular-season game, but their schedule included some powerhouse opponents such as STA and Simley, as well as some traditionally strong programs at CDH, Apple Valley and Hastings. The section tournament gives every team a second chance.

The Warriors turned the tables on Hastings in the playoffs, and a win over a strong Bloomington Kennedy team propelled them to the section final at STA. The dream of heading to state died there, but it was felt Two Rivers had gone as far—and maybe even farther—than its talent could take it.

Give credit to the Two Rivers coaches, parents and players for understanding that fact.

It's natural for parents to want the best for their children and for them to succeed at a high level. But they need to work within the school's ground rules. Complaining to school boards and on social media may feel satisfying, but it's also driving good coaches out of the game.

The bottom line is this: Despite what some parents may think, when Machiavelli famously said that "the end justifies the means," he wasn't thinking of youth athletics.

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

District Councils

Highland Park

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Pizza and movie night—The Highland District Council’s series of summer events on Thursdays will continue at 6 p.m. on July 13 at the Sibley Manor Apartments, 1300 W. Maynard Drive. Outdoor games and pizza will be provided by the Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation, followed by a showing at dusk of the *DC League of Super-Pets*.

Music at the Bridge—Save the date for live music and food trucks at 6 p.m. Thursday, August 10, at the Civic Plaza, 2219 Bohland Ave., in the new Highland Bridge development. Food trucks include the Brick Oven Bus (pizza), Cafe Cairo, and Cold Front Ice Cream. Music will be by The Space Force, a classic rock, folk and soul band playing hits from the early ’70s. Visit highlanddistrictcouncil.org/ events for updated information.

Board openings—Candidates are being sought to serve on the HDC board of directors, including a two-year term representing Grid 3 (see map at tinyurl.com/f3jd2h45) and a one-year term representing Highland businesses. Candidates must be age 18 or older. Applications are due by 5 p.m. Thursday, July 13. Visit the website or contact info@highlanddistrictcouncil.org or 651-695-4005. Elections will take place July 20-25. Vote online at surveymonkey.com/r/HDCspecialelection2023. For a paper ballot, contact kathy@highlanddistrictcouncil.org or 651-695-4005.

Upcoming meetings—Community Development Committee, 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 18 ; board of directors, 7 p.m. Thursday, July 20; and Community Engagement Committee, 7 p.m. Monday, July 24. The meetings will be held at the Highland Park Community Center, 1978 Ford Pkwy., with the option to join online. For the Zoom link, visit highlanddistrictcouncil.org/calendar.

Macalester-Groveland

macgrove.org • 651-695-4000

Garden awards—Judging for the Macalester-Groveland Community Council’s annual Alley Garden Awards will take place from July 13-20, so gardeners are being encouraged to have their properties ready. Learn more about the criteria for winning an award at macgrove.org/aga. The awards are sponsored by Green City LLC.

Century building plaques—Orders are still being accepted for the next round of century building plaques for

structures constructed in 1928 or before. Find out more at macgrove.org/100years.

Call for exhibitors and sponsors—This year’s MacGrove Fest will take place from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, September 9, at the Edgumbe Recreation Center, 320 S. Griggs St. The day will include live music, food trucks, a craft fair, free art activities and games, face painting and a business marketplace. Visit macgrove.org/macgrovefest.

Upcoming meetings—board of directors on Thursday, July 13; Inclusivity Task Force on Wednesday, July 19; Transportation Committee on Monday, July 24; and Housing and Land Use Committee on Wednesday, July 26. The meetings will be held in person at the Edgumbe Recreation Center and via Zoom beginning at 6:30 p.m. To log in and receive monthly meeting notices, visit macgrove.org/ participate.

Summit-University

summit-university.org • 651-228-1855

Taste of Rondo Block Party—An afternoon of food, music and fun is in store at the inaugural Taste of Rondo Block Party from 10:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday, July 15, on Concordia Avenue and Chatsworth Street. The party will provide a chance to connect with neighbors and celebrate the rich history of the Rondo neighborhood, while highlighting what the Taste of Rondo Bar & Grill at that location has to offer.

Central Village Park block club—The SUPC will hold a block club meeting at 6 p.m. Thursday, July 20, at Central Village Park, 457 Central Ave. All are welcome.

Upcoming meetings—The SUPC will not have any committee or board meetings in July.

Stay informed—The public is invited to like the SUPC on Facebook and sign up for its e-newsletter, “The Porchlight,” by visiting its website.

Union Park

unionparkdc.org • 651-645-6887

Neighborhood cleanups—A University Avenue cleanup will be held by the Union Park District Council’s Transportation Committee from 10 a.m.-noon Saturday, July 15. Volunteers should meet at the northwest corner of Snelling and University avenues. A No-Mow cleanup at Merriam Park will be held by the Neighborhood Sustainability and

Vitality Committee from 9-10:30 a.m. Saturday, July 22.

Upcoming meetings—Committee on Land Use and Economic Development, 6:30 p.m. Monday, July 17; Neighborhood Sustainability and Vitality Committee, 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 18; board of directors, 7 p.m. Wednesday, August 2; and Transportation Committee, 6:30 p.m. Monday, August 14. All of the meetings will be held via Zoom. For access information, email info@unionparkdc.org or see the calendar on the website.

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 info@unionparkdc.org.

Office hours—UPDC office hours are currently by appointment only. Contact executive director Leah Timberlake Sullivan at leah@unionparkdc.org.

West Seventh

fortroadfederation.org • 651-298-5599

Federation updates—The West Seventh/Fort Road Federation, along with neighbors and other stakeholders, is requesting proposals for the reconstruction and interpretation of the Justus Ramsey House. Those planning to participate must first submit a letter of intent by July 21. For information about the RFP or process, contact executive director Julia McColley at 651-298-5599 or julia@fortroadfederation.org.

Board member openings—An area coordinator is being sought to serve on the Fort Road Federation’s board of directors. Those who are interested are being asked to email fortroadfed@fortroadfederation.org.

Yoga in the park—Join Heartwild Living for a relaxing evening of yoga from 7-8 p.m. Monday, July 17, at the Bay Triangle on Bay Street and Tuscarora Avenue. All abilities and ages are welcome and admission is free, though donations will be accepted.

West Seventh social—A summer social will be held from 6-7:30 p.m. Thursday, July 20, on the lawn of the Keg & Case Market, 928 W. Seventh St. Join neighbors for a night of socializing, games and connecting.

Upcoming meetings—Transportation and Land Use Committee, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, August 2; and Community Engagement and Fundraising Committee, 6:30 p.m. Thursday, August 17. The board of directors will not meet in August. Visit fortroadfederation.org/calendar.

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Next Issue: July 26. Deadline: July 19

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Sweet one bedroom one bath condo has it all! Simple, efficient designed unit with assigned heated underground parking, semi-private outdoor patio, elevator access. Energy-efficient building. 1390 Carling Drive #203. Call or email for more information.
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Discover this tempting 4-Bedroom/2-Bath gem in a private wooded setting. Enjoy lovely hardwood, open kitchen with stainless steel appliances, inviting porch. W/O lower level, fireplace, huge garage with shop! 1049 McKnight Road South. *click on www.teamedelstein.com

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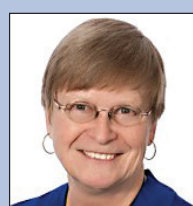
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651-755-6669 • \$499K



2118 HIGHLAND PARKWAY

Charming one level Mid-Century Bungalow. 3BR, 1BA. HW floors. Galley kitchen. Hi end appliances. Architect designed kitchen expansion. Sunroom. New Marvin Windows. New HVAC. Gracious patio/pergola. Stunning gardens. Corner lot. Attached garage.

TJ PIERRET
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WEST 7TH CHARMER! 891 BAYARD AVE

Live in the heart of the West 7th/Fort Rd corridor. Entry through the front porch perfect for sitting and enjoying the evening breeze. One BR on the main floor w/full bath plus 3 BR's w/walk-in closets upstairs and lovely outdoor space in back yard w/deck and perennials.
www.nancykmaas.com

NANCY K MAAS
651-235-8581



782 JAMES AVENUE

If you would enjoy relaxing on your front porch or entertaining in your backyard, this W 7th home is just for you! From the welcoming front porch to the original woodwork and stained-glass windows, this 3 BR, 2 bath home exudes charm.
www.nancykmaas.com

NANCY K MAAS
651-235-8581 • \$339,000



CLASSIC AMERICAN FOUR SQUARE!

Extremely well maintained and is larger than most! Lovely entertainment-sized living & dining rooms. Large updated kitchen w/4 true BR's & 2BA's on the 2nd flr & one in the LL. Stucco, roof, mechanicals have been dashed & updated as well. Lovely backyard & deck plus beautiful front porch for lazy days. Call Lolly Salmen for details.

LOLLY MCNEELY SALMEN
612-810-4138 • \$549,900



1187 BLAIR AVE

Must see exceptional arts and crafts beautifully updated bungalow, with brand new roof, newer kitchen, appliances, windows, deck, heated floors and central air, primary with 3/4 bath, 2.5 car garage with workshop. Perfect inside and out! Call Lolly Salmen for details.

LOLLY MCNEELY SALMEN
612-810-4138 • \$350,000



2085 PALACE AVENUE

Opportunity knocks! Located in demand MacGroveland, this two-story home features 3BR's, 2BA's, hrdwd flrs, FP & finished basement. The addition off of the 3rd BR would be a wonderful nursery, walk-in closet, extra BR or potential for additional BA. Enjoy the home in its current condition, or bring your renovation ideas to life.

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Carefree living within a 2/bedroom/bath condo with 1 car attached heated garage. Gleaming wood floors, light filled, superb craftsmanship finishes and design. Walkability is a ten within Ramsey Hill. 449 Portland #3.

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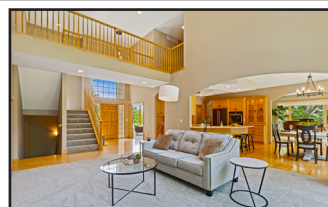
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\$1,445,000



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Nestled on 2.5 acres of private woodland, this custom 6BR, 4BA home features an open design w/2-story LR, updated kitchen w/black stainless appliances & quartz countertops, primary BR on main level, enormous LL, FR w/wet bar, 3-car gar+ tuck-under gar/workrm. 9360 195th St E. Call for details.
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