

# Gem Lake News

Gretchen Artig-Swomley, Newsletter Editor

## Special Interest Articles:

- *Flag Raising Ceremony*
- 2017 Preliminary Budget Approved
- City News Page 4
- Positions Up for Election

## Upcoming Recycling Dates:

- *September 28*
- *October 12*
- *October 26*
- *November 9*

**Tip: put out your bin the night before for 7 a.m. pick-up.**

## Flag Raising Ceremony at Heritage Hall

There was an official flag raising ceremony at Heritage Hall on July 19 at 7:00 p.m.

The ceremony was conducted by the local VFW in honor of our new flag pole, which was recently installed near the front door of the building. The flag raising was followed directly by the Gem Lake City Council Meeting.

Special thanks to the local veterans who showed up to be part of the ceremony!



## Preliminary Budget for 2017 Passed by Council

A preliminary 2017 budget for the City of Gem Lake was approved at the August City Council Meeting on August 23 at 7:00 p.m.

According to law, all cities in Minnesota must approve a preliminary budget for the following year no later than September of the previous year. This is so preliminary tax statements can be sent to county residents for their input.

Also by law, the final budget a city approves cannot exceed the preliminary budget, so most cities tend to be conservative in the number crunching.

The 2017 preliminary property tax levy is proposed at \$494,281, which is a 16.9% increase over the 2016 certified preliminary tax levy. The 2017 preliminary tax levy consists of a debt levy of \$75,986 (which is up from \$70,000 from the 2016 figures) and a general operating levy of \$418,294 (an increase of 18.6% over the 2016 preliminary tax levy).

The following changes were made from the 2016 adopted budget:

***(Continued on page 2)***



## Preliminary Budget Approved for 2017 (continued from page 1)

1. Based on the 2015 refunding bond schedule, the debt levy for 2017 is set for \$75,986.52. In 2016, the debt levy was set for \$80,724 and the city used \$10,724 from reserves to lower the levy to \$70,000. For 2017, there are no reserves available to reduce the levy at this time. This is an increase of \$5,986.52, or 8.55%.
2. The city used \$80,000 of reserves to balance the operating budget and lower the property tax levy in 2016. At this time, there are no longer reserves available for lowering the tax levy. Therefore, the proposed preliminary levy was increased \$80,000 instead of cutting expenditures.
3. The 2017 Planning and Zoning budget includes \$85,000 for the drafting of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, which is required to be done every ten years by the Metropolitan Council.
4. Based on preliminary budget numbers provided the Ramsey County Sheriff's Department, the law enforcement budget will increase 6.3% to \$113,116, compared to \$106,416 in 2016.
5. Based on preliminary budget numbers provided by the City of White Bear lake the cost of fire services could increase 6.43% to \$16,075.
6. Legal services increased \$11,500 to \$28,500, based on possible land development projects.
7. Election services increased to \$7,026 from \$4,150 based on Ramsey County Election Department budget numbers.
8. The budget for Heritage Hall increased to \$27,050 from \$18,550, based on past expenditures.
9. Salaries for staff increased 2%. This increased the budget by \$160.
10. Revenue and other expenditure line items were adjusted based on past history.



The sum total of these changes result in the Gem Lake preliminary tax levy for 2017 of \$494,281. This compares to the 2016 preliminary tax levy of \$422,655 and the final tax levy last year of \$295,026.

Using a 2017 property tax levy of \$494,281 and the City's 2016 tax capacity of \$977,703, combined with the median home value for Gem Lake of \$227,800, the property Gem Lake portion of the property tax for that median valued home would be about \$1,068, compared to the 2016 preliminary property tax amount for that median home of \$911.76, an increase of \$156.80.

The median home value in Ramsey County has increased 4.6% in 2016 and has risen from \$188,700 to \$197,300.

Again, as the city prepares its final 2017 budget, the property tax levy can be lowered from the preliminary budget, but cannot be increased. Over the course of the next few months, the entire preliminary budget will be studied to see where other cost cutting can efficiently occur.

# Positions Up for Election on the City Council

It seems there is some sort of election this year.. Yes, there appear to be a few people running for office on a federal, state and county level. But, don't forget those all-important local elections.

This year, Gem Lake has three positions open. One is the position of mayor, the other two are city council positions.

For the position of mayor, **Bob Uzpen**, current mayor, is running for re-election. Bob has served as mayor for 8 years. This would be his third term, if elected. (see photo below)



For the two spots on the city council the candidates to date are as follows:

**Faith Kuny**, current City Council Member and former Planning Commission Chairperson, is running for the other open position on the Gem Lake City Council. This would be her second term, if elected. (see photo below)



**Jim Lindner**, current council member and former Planning Commission Chairman, is running for re-election. This would be his third term if elected.



Election Day is November 8. Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Heritage Hall, 4200 Otter Lake Road.

## National Night Out Donation Received

A National Night Out Neighbor Gathering in August of Gem Lake residents on Scheueneman Road resulting in a nice donation for area school children.

A box of school supplies was collected at one of these events and dropped off at Heritage Hall. The box included crayons, pencils, folders, glue sticks, rulers, notebooks, pens and other school supplies. Thank you to our anonymous donor.



## City News Page

### New Rental Property Requirements

Effective January 1, 2016, the City of Gem Lake began licensing all rental property in the City. Persons with rental property will be required to obtain a rental license for their rental units. Licenses will be for a two-year period. The licensing fee is \$100.00 for a single family unit and for a two family unit \$50.00 per unit. All units will be subject to an annual inspection. Contact Gloria Tessier at 651-747-2792.

### False Alarms Can Get Expensive

City of Gem Lake Ordinance No. 48 which has been in effect since 1987, regulates the use of alarm systems, establishes user fees and provides penalties for false alarms. The purpose of this ordinance is to encourage alarm users to adequately maintain and utilize their alarm systems, thereby allowing the City of Gem Lake's public safety services to be available for appropriate public safety needs.

In section 3 of the ordinance – definition – the City of Gem Lake defines a false alarm as follows: A false alarm is an alarm signal that elicits a response by personnel of the Public Safety Department when a situation requiring a responses does not, in fact, exist and which is caused by the activation of the alarm system through mechanical failure, pet movement, alarm malfunction, improper installation, or the inadvertence of the owner or lessee of an alarm system or his/her employees or agents. False alarms do not include alarms caused by climatic conditions such as tornadoes, thunderstorms, utility line mishaps, violent conditions of nature, or any other conditions which are clearly beyond the control of the alarm manufacturer, installer or owner.

Under the user fee section, here is what the ordinance states: An alarm user owning an alarm system which precipitates or reports more than three (3) false alarms in a calendar year shall be subject to a penalty of \$50.00 per false alarm in excess of three (3) false alarms in a calendar year.

If your system creates more than three false alarms after January 1, 2016 you will be sent a bill for each one in excess of the limit.

### New Billing Software

The City of Gem Lake updated its software program that is used for billing for sanitary sewer, fire inspections and septic inspections. The new program allows for emailing of invoices and automatic bank drafting.

If you would like to have your invoice emailed to you, please send an email to [Gloria.tessier@Gemlakemn.org](mailto:Gloria.tessier@Gemlakemn.org). Please include your account number or address of your billing location. If you would like to have an automatic bank draft, please call Gloria Tessier at 651-747-2742 to set it up. Please note that bills now go to the City of Gem Lake at 4200 Otter Lake Road.

### Dog Licenses Due for Renewal

It's time to make your dog an official member of the Gem Lake community. Dog licenses in our fair city run from June 1-May 31. If you currently have a licensed dog, you will be mailed a new application form. The application should be returned with a \$10 fee and a copy of your dog's rabies certificate. The certificate will be returned to you.

If you need more information or another copy of the application form, call Gloria Tessier at 651-747-2792.

### Winter Parking Rules in Effect in Gem Lake

It is never too early to start planning for the snowfall. On-street parking is not allowed in Gem Lake after a snowfall of two inches or more, until after streets have been plowed, according to City Ordinance Number 86. (Section 6.4.2)

If cars are parked on city streets after a snowfall, the plows could have to make an extra trip back in the hopes that the cars would be gone.

"We want to be responsible with your money, so please get your car moved off the streets when we get a snowfall," says Mayor Bob Uzpen.

## Impressive Recycling Efforts

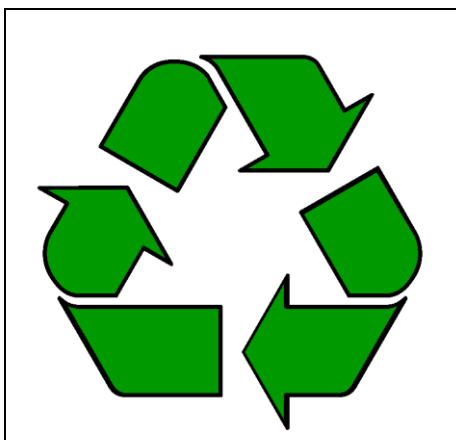
In the first 7 months of the year, Gem Lake residents have already recycled 18.5 tons of materials. Also impressive is the participation rate in the city's recycling program. So far this year, an average of 90.84% of city households participate every month by putting out their recycling bins.

This 18.5 tons of material breaks down as follows for the year to date:

- 11.6 tons of newspaper
- 2.2 tons of mixed glass
- 0.3 tons of color sorted glass
- 0.8 tons of cans, both aluminum and steel
- 2.8 tons of cardboard and mixed paper
- 0.7 tons of plastic
- 0.2 tons of scrap steel

In addition to the 18.5 tons of usable material collected, there was also a total of 1.2 tons of residue material, meaning items that could not be recycled.

For a very complete list of items that can be fully recycled, you can go to Gem Lake's web-site and click on city services, then follow the links to Waste Management.



## MS-4 Report Gets Public Hearing

A state mandated report on storm water management, called the MS-4 Report, has been completed for 2015 by engineer Ron Leaf from SEH, the company that acts as Gem Lake's City Engineer. The report will be the subject of a public hearing on September 20 during the city council meeting, as required by law.

The report details the city's efforts to educate citizens on the subject of storm water runoff. It also documents inflows and outflows of storm water in the city, as part of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. In past years, City Council Member Jim Lindner volunteered to do the leg work, walking around the city to document and inspect the storm water facilities. This year, SEH played the lead role, due to complexities in the new reporting requirements. The city also had to detail in the MS-4 report things like its post construction storm water management procedures, pollution prevention efforts, illicit discharge detection and elimination and efforts to involve the public in the process of storm water management.

Procedures for completing and filing the annual MS-4 report have become more complicated in the past year, necessitating the use of expert engineering services to get the job done. The report shows that the city has met its MS-4 requirements, including doing the inspections need and completing all suggested community education and outreach required on the subject of storm water management.

During the hearing on September 20, SEH is expected to highlighted the city's Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and the status of its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit.

The reports and documents presented at this public hearing can be viewed and inspected by the public at Heritage Hall. See page 6 for contact information



## The City of Gem Lake

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This newsletter is also posted  
on the city's web-site under the  
"Documents" section.

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We're on the Web!

See us at:  
[www.gemlakemn.org](http://www.gemlakemn.org)

## Meetings: September-November 2016

The following Gem Lake Meetings will be held at Heritage Hall for the next few months.

### September 20, 2016

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

### October 4, 2016

Planning Commission meeting at 7:00 p.m.

### October 11, 2016

City Council Workshop at 7:00 p.m. CANCELLED

### October 18, 2016

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

### November 1, 2016

Planning Commission Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

### November 14, 2016

City Council Workshop at 7:00 p.m.

### November 15, 2016

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

## Your Gem Lake City Council

### Bob Uzpen-Mayor

Phone: 651-492-5083

### City Council Members:

#### Gretchen Artig-Swomley

Phone: 651-260-9742

#### Rick Bosak

Phone: 651-426-9695

#### Faith Kuny

Phone: 612-718-4316

### Jim Lindner

Phone: 651-429-7597

For more information on meetings, city ordinances, recent events, permit procedures, etc. please consult the Gem Lake web-site. The address is [www.gemlakemn.org](http://www.gemlakemn.org)

Each Gem Lake Newsletter is also posted on the web-site under the

news section.

Please email your ideas, comments and suggestions. See box at left for detailed contact information.

**CITY OF GEM LAKE**  
4200 Otter Lake Road  
Gem Lake, MN  
55110

