

# Gem Lake News

Gretchen Artig-Swomley, Newsletter Editor

## Special Interest Articles:

- Comprehensive Plan Finished
- Council Members Sworn in
- City News Page 4
- County Commissioner Attends Meeting

## Upcoming Recycling Dates:

- *January 30*
- *February 13*
- *February 27*
- *March 13*
- *Tip: put out your bin the night before for 7 a.m. pick-up.*

## Update from Commissioner Huffman

The Gem Lake City Council was honored to have Ramsey County Commissioner Blake Huffman in attendance at the January 15 City Council Meeting. Huffman provided an update on several key projects now underway in the county.

An issue that is on everyone's mind, is what will happen to the Vadnais Heights Sports Center after the dome's roof partially collapsed last April. This is the second time the dome has collapsed during a snow storm. The first time was user error. The second occurrence caused turf damage. Due to difficulties with insurance coverage, all options are being considered, from abandoning the dome to replacing it with a better roof. Huffman favors replacement. A decision is expected within the next few months.

Rice Creek Commons, a 427 acre mixed use development project, sponsored by the County in Arden Hills is still in the planning stage.  
(Continued on page 2)



## Council Members Sworn in for New Term

Two Gem Lake City Council members were sworn into new terms of office after their election on November 6 of last year.

Gretchen Artig-Swomley and Len Cacioppo took the oath of office for their four year terms. The oath was administered by Ramsey County Commissioner Blake Huffman, who represents the first district in the county. (District #1 encompasses Gem Lake.)

Artig-Swomley is starting her fourth term, having been initially elected in 2006. Cacioppo is beginning his first full term, having been appointed to office in 2017, when a position was vacated.



## Update from Commissioner Huffman (continued from page 1)

The huge development would include multiple housing units in several types of planned neighborhoods, as well as commercial development throughout. The project would significantly increase the population of Arden Hills. The County and City are still discussing affordable housing numbers, safety issues and sewer and water issues. According to Huffman, it is getting to be crunch time, especially given the fact that the economy is strong right now, which would help get the development off the ground. The County recently hired an experienced planner from the City of Roseville, who will help drive the development project.

The Rush Line Bus Rapid Transit project is progressing through into the environmental impact stage. This project would place a dedicated bus line from Union Depot in downtown St. Paul to a station located somewhere in downtown White Bear Lake. The bus would have multiple stops along its route and would run from 5 a.m. to Midnight seven days a week.

Huffman says construction will begin in 2024 with completion projected for 2026. The project will cost nearly half a billion dollars and will serve a projected 97,000 people annually.

Other notable items that the commissioner brought up included the election of a new sheriff. Former Sheriff Bob Fletcher has retired to office after his election last November and has appointed his key staff. Also, a major initiative is underway at the county level to get businesses to do more recycling and keep more material out of the landfills. For more information on any of these projects, consult the Ramsey County website.

### Fire Department Contract Approved for 2019

The Gem Lake City Council voted to approve the fire services contract with the White Bear Lake Fire Department at the January 15 council meeting. The department services not only the City of White Bear, but also four other cities, including White Bear Township, Gem Lake, Dellwood and Birchwood. Costs were allocated on the basis of population. The department services 38,896 people in these cities.

Due to rising service requests and expectations, in addition to the purchase of new equipment, the cost of providing fire fighting and fire inspection services in 2019 has risen significantly over 2018. The major factor involved is the decision on the part of the White Bear Fire Department to end its reliance on paid on call fire and ambulance personnel in favor of full-time and part-time employees. For Gem Lake, which represents a total population of approximately 447, the increase amounts to 28% over the year before. The cost of our 2019 fire and inspection services amounts to \$21,680 per year.

### Sewer Billing

Did you know that your quarterly sewer bill can be emailed rather than sent to you via the US Postal Service? If you would like your bill emailed, contact Gloria Tessier at [Gloria.Tessier@gemlakemn.org](mailto:Gloria.Tessier@gemlakemn.org). Send the email address you want the bill sent to, in addition to the property address associated with the bill. Or, call 651-747-2792 and leave your email address and property address. The next bill will be emailed!

Don't want to write out a check four times a year? Take advantage of our automatic bill pay through your checking account. Call the above listed phone number to set it up!

### Liquor Ordinance Revised

In order to comply with new features of the State Liquor Ordinance, and allow for several local changes in liquor sales, the City of Gem Lake recently revised City Ordinance Number 9. This ordinance licenses and regulates the sale and consumption of intoxicating liquor and provides penalties for violations. The changes were approved at the January 15 City Council Meeting.

## Gem Lake 2040: A Vision for the Future

What does the Gem Lake of the future look like? While no one knows for sure, some potential answers lie in the Gem Lake 2018 Comprehensive Plan. The plan has been completed in draft form and submitted to surrounding cities for their comment. The Metropolitan Council requires that all cities within the Twin Cities Metropolitan area submit a detailed comprehensive plan every ten years. This plan covers everything from land use and transportation to parks and storm water run-off. The elements of each plan are required to follow a predetermined template. The project is extensive and typically takes multiple years and significant engineering expertise to complete.

The Comprehensive Plan highlights Gem Lake potential growth patterns for the next 20 years and lays out an accompanying infrastructure plan to accommodate that growth.



For instance, it is projected that the population of Gem Lake in 2030 will be around 500 and could grow to around 530 by 2040.

Some growth will come as a result of mixed use development that could occur in the Gateway District, which encompasses the business district and open parcels along County Road E. These parcels might have blended residential and commercial uses, as well as green space and trails for biking and walking. Perhaps a town center feeling emerges as the emphasis on car dealership changes a bit.

Over the years, it is thought that Highway 61 could become more of a transportation corridor with more housing options within walking distance. The transportation could be provided through the Rush Line Bus Rapid Transit, or other solutions.

As development happens, the concept of a livable community is always forefront in the 2018 plan. Basically, the plan lays out the strategy for Gem Lake to accommodate development that is coming from within and outside its borders, while still maintaining its place as a green oasis within the metro area.

To get the job done, the City of Gem Lake enlisted the help of two outside agencies to complete this monumental task. They are the engineering firm of SEH, which acts as Gem Lake's engineering representative, and the consulting firm of Northwest Associated Consultants, which specializes in helping cities with this type of plan.

The draft of the plan will shortly be posted to the Gem Lake web-site, where residents are encouraged to read it.

## Winter Parking Rules in Effect in Gem Lake

No parking is allowed on any city street 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.

## City News Page

### Country Lounge Licenses Approved for Renewal

Various licenses were approved by the Gem Lake City Council on January 15 for the Country Lounge. Having met all requirements set forth by the City and the State, the council approved the lounge's licenses for liquor, tobacco and charitable gambling for 2019. Liquor licenses typically expire at the end of each year and go through an annual renewal process. Licenses run from January 1-December 31.

### New Speed Limits In Effect

New speed limits were approved for Gem Lake City Streets during the October 16 City Council Meeting. Speed limits for city streets (Haven, Tessier, Scheuneman, Little Fox, Hoffman, Big Fox) were established at 25 miles per hour. The speed limit for Goose Lake Road, which is a Ramsey County Road, and Otter Lake, remain unchanged at 40 miles per hour.

### Charitable Gambling Funds Distributed

Two distributions of charitable gambling receipts were made by the Gem Lake City Council at the January 15 meeting.

This included a \$1500 donation to the White Bear Lake Area Emergency Food Shelf to fund their children's summer food program for the year ahead. A donation of \$500 was also made to New Trax, Inc. to help fund their transportation program for seniors and for people with disabilities. Charitable gambling receipts come from pull-tab sales within the city limits.

### Changes for Sewage Treatment Ordinance Approved

Minor changes to the city's sewage treatment ordinance were made at the January 15 City Council meeting. The changes to ordinance #67D (Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems Ordinance) were made after a meeting with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency last November. The agency is seeking to bring uniformity to city ordinance regarding sewage treatment. The seven changes made were mostly editorial changes in terms of definitions and deadlines.

### New Sidewalk Planned for 2019

The City plans to add a sidewalk/paved trail in 2019. The trail will follow the north side of County Road E from LaBore Road to Big Fox. It will either be made of cement or will be paved, depending on

funding sources available. Eventually, the city plans the same trail or sidewalk access all the way to the intersection of County Road E and Highway 61, as the area redevelops.

### Assignments Designated for 2019

As required by state statute, the City of Gem Lake formally appointed individuals and organizations to various city positions for 2019 at the January City Council Meeting. This included things like appointing a back-up mayor, so meetings could be conducted in the mayor's absence. Some appointments are required by law, such as the city clerk, the city treasurer, the back-up mayor, and believe or not, a weed inspector.

Other positions or appointments are usual and customary to assign to someone once a year in January. This would include things like naming an auditor, a sewer inspector, a building inspector, etc. With the exception of services the City contracts for, such as fire, law enforcement, zoning administration, animal control, city clerk, etc. most positions are what you call honorary, meaning there is no pay what so ever... Some highlights of the appointments include the following:

**Back-Up Mayor:** Gretchen Artig-Swomley

**Acting City Clerk:** Gloria Tessier

**City Treasurer:** Thomas Kelly of White Bear Township

**City Engineers:** Short Elliot Henderson (SEH)

**City Attorney:** Kelly & Lemmons, P.A.

**Zoning Administrator:** Robert Uzpen

**City Code Enforcement Officer:** Michael Johnson of White Bear Township

**City Emergency Services Director:** Jim Lindner

**Ramsey County League of Local Government Representative:** Faith Kuny

**Law Enforcement Contractor:** White Bear Lake Police Department

**Animal Control Contractor:** White Bear Lake Police Department

**Fire, Fire Marshall and Paramedic Contractor:** City of White Bear Lake Fire Department

A complete list of city appointments can be obtained at Heritage Hall.



## Sales Brisk at Gem Lake Villas

Sales are going well at Gem Lake Villas, the 30 home development started last year on County Road E in Gem Lake. Approximately one third of the available home-sites are spoken for, and a good deal of construction is currently underway, according to Katie Brown, New Home Sales Consultant for Hanson Builders.

“We are also pleased to announce that the first residents have officially moved into the project, having started construction last year.”

Hanson Builders, the official developer for this project, is also pleased to announce that they will have one of the Villas on display for the Parade of Homes, which starts on March 2.

“We thank the residents of Gem Lake for their continued support.”

For more information, contact Katie Brown at 952-270-0479. ([katie@hansonbuilders.com](mailto:katie@hansonbuilders.com))



## MS-4 Plan Approved at Public Hearing

A state mandated report on storm water management, called the MS-4 Report, has been completed for 2017 by engineer Emily Erdahl from SEH, the company that acts as Gem Lake's City Engineer. The report was the subject of a public hearing on December 18, 2018 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 needed and completing all suggested community education and outreach required on the subject of storm water management.

During the hearing on December 18, SEH 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

## Fireworks on Christmas?

Several residents of Gem Lake reported loud fireworks, or what sounding like gunshots, on the evening of Christmas Day last year. Yikes! The police were called and several individuals were cited. Gem Lake Ordinance 86, defining nuisances, comes into play here. Section 5 of this ordinance involves nuisances affecting peace and safety and prohibits all use of fireworks, except as provided by law or ordinance, all unnecessary noises and annoying vibrations and all other conditions, acts or things which are liable to cause injury to person or property of anyone.

## The City of Gem Lake

PHONE:  
(651) 747-2790  
FAX:

(651) 747-2795  
City Hall Address:  
4200 Otter Lake Road  
Gem Lake, MN 55110

GENERAL E-MAIL:  
[City@gemlakemn.org](mailto:City@gemlakemn.org)

Newsletter e-mail:  
[gretchenas@comcast.net](mailto:gretchenas@comcast.net)

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

---

We're on the Web!

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

## Meetings: February and March, 2019

The following Gem Lake Meetings will be held at Heritage Hall in February and March of this year.

### February 5, 2019

Planning Commission Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

### February 11, 2019

City Council Workshop at 7:00 p.m. This meeting is

cancelled.

### February 19, 2019

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

### March 5, 2019

Planning Commission Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

### March 11, 2019

City Council Workshop at

7:00 p.m.

### March 19, 2019

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

#### Len Cacioppo

Phone: 651-796-3222

#### 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

"Documents" and "News and Updates" 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

