



Gem Lake News



August 2022 | Volume 16 | Issue 5

Gretchen Artig-Swomley, Newsletter Editor

Special Interest Articles:

- Jack Hoeschler
- "Water Summit" in September
- City News, Page 4

Scheduled Recycling Dates:

- August 10
- August 24
- September 7
- September 21

Check the Facebook page for updates on recycling pickup.

See page 3 for the Facebook page link.

Two Graduates Awarded Gem Lake Scholarship

Two 2022 high school graduates in Gem Lake were recently awarded scholarships for post-secondary education as part of the Gem Lake Scholarship Program. This ten-year-old program is funded by charitable gambling receipts and has helped several dozen students with education expenses since its inception.

The 2022 awardees are two impressive young men - Jake Tangwall and Owen Varley. Each will receive \$1,000 to be directed to the school of their choice. The awards were made after a review of the applications submitted and a vote by the Gem Lake City Council.

Jake Tangwall graduated this year from Mahtomedi High School. He was involved in Boy Scouts during his high school career and achieved the status of Eagle Scout. In particular, Jake feels he gained

(Continued on page 2)



(Jake Tangwall)



(Owen Varley)

Life-Long Gem Lake Resident Passes Away

Long-time Gem Lake land-owner and community volunteer John (Jack) Hoeschler passed away on June 22 at his home in St. Paul of prostate cancer. He was 80 years old.

Jack and his family spent many summers in Gem Lake in a rustic home designed by famous architect Victor Lundy. He and his wife Linda spent the rest of the year at their home in St. Paul, which was remarkable for its vast Japanese Garden. Jack was a well-known attorney in the metro area, with a specialty in real estate, land development and property assessment matters.

He was active for a number of years on the Gem Lake Planning Commission, serving as the chairman of the group for a period of time. His work on the commission happened at the time that the Hillary Farm Housing Development was being planned in the early 2000's. This project required a good deal of planning and decision making by the council and the Planning Commission.

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Graduates Awarded Scholarship (continued from page 1)

significant leadership skills as a result of his involvement in the Eagle Scout program. He was also a camp counselor for day-campers at the Tamarack Nature Center and racked up over 100 volunteer hours. Jake volunteered for other organizations too, including Feed My Starving Children and Operation Christmas Child.

Jake intends to pursue a very interesting career as a storm chaser and has a plan on how to achieve his goal. He wants to complete his generals at nearby Century College and then go onto St. Cloud State University for his BS degree in Meteorology.

His interest in storm chasing began with a summer camp experience a while back, when a guest speaker focused on his own experiences as a 'chaser'. Jake says he has always loved the beauty of the natural forces around us.

Owen Varley graduated this year from Hill Murray High School in Maplewood. He had a very active school career, including four years on the Boy's Golf Team, four years as a DECA leadership member, and one year as a manager on the Varsity Hockey Team. He was an active volunteer for Special Olympics, and Feed My Starving Children. Owen was on the A or B Honor Roll all through high school, leading his counselor to call him a "great student and young man".

He intends to pursue a career in Finance and Accounting at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, where several family members have gone before him

Congratulations to Jake and Owen.



Hoeschler Passes Away (continued from page 1)

Jack was born in 1942 in Wisconsin and obtained a degree from Georgetown University. He went on to attend New York University Law School on a full-ride Root-Tilden Scholarship, which is awarded to a few exceptional students each year.

After graduation and the bar exam, he joined St. Paul's oldest law firm, Doherty, Rumble and Butler. He spent years building the firm's real estate practice, before starting his own law firm.

Jack and his wife Linda Lovas Hoeschler were married in 1966 and had two children, Kristin O'Brien and Fritz Hoeschler. Linda and Jack were very involved in local art and civic activities, world travel and many other joint interests. One of Jack's greatest passions was in being a wonderful grandfather. He had been ill for over a year before he passed away. There will be a celebration of life in August in Minneapolis.

Recycling Vendors Considered

Due to recent customer service issues, the City of Gem Lake is in the process of evaluating its recycling vendor relationship. This involves seeking a formal contract from not only the current vendor (Waste Management), but also competitors such as Republic Services.

Numerous issues with delayed pick-ups and customer service follow through have caused frustration for staff and residents.

The issue was on the agenda for the July 19 City Council Meeting.



Add Color to Your Yard, Create a Pollinator Garden

By Jim Lindner

Creating a pollinator garden is an easy way to add color to your backyard, reduce the amount of lawn you need to mow, and make a home for bees and other pollinators. Pollinators are important as they perform necessary agricultural tasks vital to crop development as they simply go about their daily routines.

What is a pollinator? Most people think of bees as the primary pollinators, and to a degree, this is correct. Bees are estimated to pollinate up to \$19 billion worth of food in the United States each year. But butterflies, moths, birds, small mammals, and bats also serve as pollinators contributing around \$10 billion worth of food crops in the US annually. That's a lot of food.

If you want to try your hand at making a pollinator garden, there are numerous resources, both online and at your local library. The Forest Service division of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers several online resources. Basically, once you've identified the area you'd like to create a garden, start by turning over the soil to break up any sod. Renting a rototiller is a quick and efficient way to turn the soil, but a shovel and hoe will also work. You may wish to add some composted soil but know that native plants have adapted to native soils. Reducing the amount of man-made fertilizers is better for the pollinators as such fertilizers may increase soil nitrogen or phosphorus levels. Also, avoid pesticides as much as possible.

Seeds or forbs are available through local garden centers or from online nurseries. Your best bet is to keep a local focus assuring your plants will thrive in Minnesota. Using a variety of seeds or forbs will provide color throughout the year. Staff at the Vadnais Lake Water Management Organization (VLAWMO) are another resource. VLAWMO staff offer pollinator garden workshops in the spring and have various cost-share programs to help with expenses. Local master gardening websites also have valuable information.

After the growing season allow your garden to remain intact over the winter months. The following spring you can clean out dead plant stalks. Know that many native bees are ground nesting and adding mulch, though helpful for plants, may be detrimental to the bees. You may also see small trees sprouting in your garden. These can be cut back to prevent them from becoming too large and taking over the garden.

The following websites are a sample of resources available to help plan and construct a successful pollinator garden:

www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/gardening.shtml

www.anokamastergardeners.org/blog/give-bees-a-chance-fall-cleanup-for-pollinators

www.vlawmo.org/



Gem Lake Has Facebook Page

Acting City Clerk Melissa Lawrence has designed and published a Facebook page for the City of Gem Lake. The address is:

www.facebook.com/CityofGemLakeMN

The Facebook pages focuses primarily on special announcements and news items, events, etc. It is intended to compliment rather than replace the city web-site. Please check it out and "like" and "follow" the page. We are also looking for a few appropriate Gem Lake photos. Your feedback is welcome!

Heritage Hall Holiday Closure

Heritage Hall will be closed September 5 for Labor Day.

All other hours remain the same. Have a safe holiday!



City News

Septic Inspections Planned for October

Annual septic inspections for Gem Lake homeowners will take place in October. These inspections are done by contracted experts who insure that private septic systems are not creating problems for public health and safety.

As October approaches, the city may be able to get more specific on the exact time frame. It will be important to be sure your septic clean out is accessible and can be easily found. The inspections are authorized by City Ordinance.

Free Notary Services

Residents of Gem Lake and White Bear Township can get notary services at Heritage Hall for no charge. The service is available only during normal business hours for our city hall—which is Monday to Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Non-residents can utilize this service for a fee of \$5.00 per document certified. License Required for Rental Properties in City

Large Donation Given to Food Shelf

The Gem Lake City Council voted to donate \$1500 in charitable gambling receipts to the White Bear Area Food Shelf. This donation was approved at the July 19 City Council meeting. (Charitable gambling receipts come from the city's portion of pull-tab sales within the city.)

This donation is being made at a time of growing demand for food shelf services and spiraling costs for the food and supplies being distributed by the organization. For instance, in any given month last year, over 1,590 families received food and support from the White Bear Area Food Shelf. That represents a 30% increase from the number of families being helped before the pandemic. There were 19,096 total visits to the food shelf in 2021. According to Second Harvest Heartland, 1 in 12 Minnesotans (1 in 8 children) don't know where their next meal is coming from. The food shelf says it is increasingly difficult for families to put food on the table due to the rising cost of living, especially for essentials such as food, rent and gas. The City of Gem Lake is committed to helping whenever possible.

Two Positions Opening on the Gem Lake City Council

There will be two positions up for election on the Gem Lake City Council. The terms of Council Members Jim Lindner and Len Cacioppo will expire at the end of 2022. Council member terms run four years.

If you are interested in running for election, you must file with the County between August 2-16 and pay a fee of \$2. You can file either at Heritage Hall or at the county. You must be at least 21, be a current resident and be eligible to vote. For more information, see the Ramsey County website under the election section.

Upcoming Primary Election

The primary election takes place on Tuesday, August 9, 2022. The polling place for Gem Lake and White Bear Township Residents is at Heritage Hall, located at 4200 Otter Lake Road. Heritage Hall will be open for voters from 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

If you are an unregistered voter or need to update your registration you can do it online with your Minnesota driver's license, Minnesota identification card, or last four numbers of your Social Security Number at www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/. You can also register the day of the elections at your polling place, you will just need proof of residence.

You are invited to bring along a donation for the White Bear Lake Area Food Shelf while visiting Heritage Hall to vote. Most wanted food shelf items:

- Diapers & Baby Wipes
- Paper Bags
- Cereal
- Cooking Oils
- Peanut Butter
- Gluten-free Pasta
- Baby Food & Formula
- Ground Coffee



Informational Meeting on Gem Lake Water Plan-9/12

Mark your calendar now. An important informational meeting will be held on September 12 at 7:00 p.m. to discuss the Gem Lake water plan, which was recently completed by SEH, which functions as Gem Lake's City Engineer.

Late last year, the City Council of Gem Lake began to look at options for dealing with the discovery of small amounts of pollution in 22 private wells in the city.

An Informational Meeting on September 12 is intended to look at the complex options that are available to the city, and to get feedback from the people who live here on what direction the city should take. These options could include installing a city-wide municipal water system, installing a smaller more targeted municipal water system in the area where wells have been affected, or doing nothing for now. Homeowners affected by the contamination could drill new wells or install sophisticated water filtration systems. Each of these options is potentially expensive and fraught with possible problems.

The process leading up to this informational meeting this September began with the commissioning of a comprehensive municipal water study. That study was meant to evaluate what options are available for obtaining water from a neighboring city, should it become necessary, and how the system might be implemented.

The first portion of the study detailed two potential sources for obtaining municipal water, The City of White Bear Lake, and White Bear Township, both of which border Gem Lake. The study concluded that a viable system that could supply the entire city efficiently is possible, from an engineering perspective, from either of these neighbors.

SEH evaluated factors such as water pressure, water quality, water treatment standards, etc. to draw their conclusions. They did not reach out to either neighbor to explore whether they would be able or willing to supply Gem Lake's water needs at this point. The ballpark cost of a system from either White Bear Township or the City of White Bear Lake was estimated at between \$11-12 Million.

At the February City Council meeting, SEH was asked to develop Part Two of this water study. This second part evaluates options for phasing in a water system to the part of the city potentially most in need of municipal water.

It also looks at possibilities for municipal water that could involve working with the City of Vadnais Heights. This portion of the water study was scheduled for discussion at the May 17 City Council Meeting.

Because many residents of Gem Lake don't currently want a municipal water system, and the majority of wells have not been impacted by contamination at present, it was the duty of the council to evaluate options such as moving from private wells to municipal water in phases on an as needed basis. Therefore, Part Two of the Water Study explores additional potential options of providing safe, reliable sources of water within the City, with a goal of prioritizing those areas with known well water contamination and the areas with a higher likelihood for potential future well water issues.

The goal would be to feed these smaller, localized water service areas by the nearest surrounding community's distribution system to limit project costs and complexities.



The Engineering Firm SEH mapped out three priority service areas and described prices and options for each of these areas. These more targeted options could cost between \$367,021 and \$3,478,076, depending upon the number of households served, and where the water would be coming from.

Now that an extensive plan has been completed, the city can pursue possible grants and loan programs that might help finance the installation of any municipal water system. (Typically, grant applications require that a study be completed first.)

Many engineering factors would have to be considered while determining the best and most feasible options for Gem Lake. These factors include water quality, system efficiency, topography, and the ability to reach agreement with surrounding communities to supply the city with water.

No decisions have been made about what direction the city should go and public feedback is encouraged. We hope to see you on September 12 at 7:00 p.m.

The City of Gem Lake

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This newsletter is also posted on the city's website under the "Documents" section and the "News and Updates" section.
www.gemlakemn.org

**After Hours Public Works
Emergency Number:**
651-755-9828

(For water main breaks, main city sewer back up, collapse of manhole, etc. Or call 911)

Meetings: August and September 2022

The following Gem Lake meeting will be held in the months of April and May. All meetings are held at Heritage Hall unless otherwise indicated.

August 8, 2022

City Council Workshop is 7:00 p.m.

August 10, 2022

Planning Commission Meeting at 7:00p.m.

August 16, 2022

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

September 12, 2022

City Council Workshop is 7:00 p.m. – **Water Summit**

September 13, 2022

Planning Commission Meeting at 7:00p.m.

September 20, 2022

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

See also the Gem Lake website for more information.

Your Gem Lake City Council

Mayor:

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City Council Members:

Laurel Amlee
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You can also reach each City Councilmember by calling 651-747-2790. After hours you can follow the prompts for the City Council directory.

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