



Gem Lake News



February 2023 | Volume 17 | Issue 1

Gretchen Artig-Swomley, Newsletter Editor

Special Interest Articles:

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Two Council Members Re-Elected

Council Members Jim Lindner and Len Cacioppo were re-elected to the Gem Lake City Council on November 8. Each will serve a four year term.

Jim has served on the Council since 2008. Prior to that, he had spent 10 years on the Gem Lake Planning Commission, including several years as Chairman. Jim has served on the Vadnais Lakes Area Water Management Organization (VLAWMO) for 14 years, and is now the Chairman.

Len was first elected to the City Council in 2018. At the time, he was serving on the council already, having been appointed to fill a vacated position. Len also has experience serving on the Gem Lake Planning Commission.

Both council members will be sworn in at the January 17 City Council Meeting.



Jim Lindner



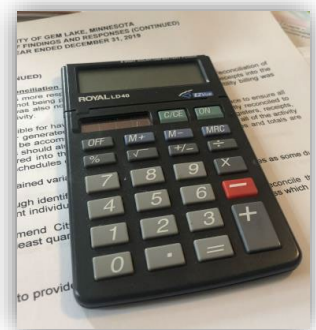
Len Cacioppo

2023 Gem Lake Budget Approved

The Gem Lake City Council approved the city's 2023 General Fund Budget and Property Tax Levy at the December 21 City Council Meeting. The 2023 Budget for expenditures is \$674,829, which is a 29.10% increase from the 2022 budget.

Major or large changes from 2022 to 2023 are as follows:

- Based on the 2015 Refunding Bond Schedule, the debt levy for 2023 is set for \$77,873. In addition, in 2018, the City issued bonds for improvements on Scheuneman Road and the debt levy for this is \$6,545. The two of these levies, makes up the city's 2023 Debt Levy of \$84,418. This is a decrease of \$2,864.
- The City Council contingency fund was increased from \$8,000 to \$9,000.
- The Police Budget was increased 21.26% to \$115,200, based on budget numbers provided by the City of White Bear Lake.



Scheduled Recycling Dates:

- February 1
- February 15
- March 1
- March 15
- March 29

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2023 Gem Lake Budget Approved

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- The cost of fire services is projected to increase 15.96% to \$34,025.
- The budget includes \$75,815 for new financial and permit software, of which \$35,270 will be paid from ARPA (COVID) funds.
- The General Government budget includes a 5% COLA increase and \$10,350 for health insurance coverage.
- The Building Inspections budget eliminated the part-time inspector, which resulted in a budget reduction of \$20,559.
- The Road Maintenance budget includes \$22,000 for sealcoating roads and \$15,000 for trimming boulevard trees.
- The salt/sand and snow plowing expenditures were left at \$15,000 and \$17,000.
- A trail/park maintenance budget of \$7,000 was added for maintain the open space and trail area on the southwestern part of the city, near the Villas of Gem Lake.
- The 2023 budget includes \$20,000 for future improvements.
- Revenue and other expenditure line items were adjusted based on past history

Based on the changes listed above, the City's property tax levy would be \$669,115, which consists of the following:

General Fund Levy	\$568,897
Fiscal Disparities	\$ 15,800
Total General Fund Levy	\$584,697
Debt Levy	\$ 82,324
Fiscal Disparities	\$ 2,094
<hr/>	
Total City Levy	\$669,115

The total City levy increased 19.86%. The other piece to the tax levy puzzle is the City's tax capacity, which increased 12.28% to \$1,601,998.

In addition, the median home value in the city increased from \$352,000 to \$395,800. Based on these increased tax capacities, and the City's property tax levy, the median valued home would have a city property tax levy increase of \$242.24 or 19.384%.

You can obtain a full copy of the city budget by contacting Melissa Lawrence at Heritage Hall. See page 6 for contact information.

County Road E Corridor Project Recommendations

Revitalization of the County Road E Corridor was the subject of month's long project between multiple cities and agencies recently. A final report including ideas and recommendations will be presented at the Gem Lake City Council meeting on February 21.

The corridor was defined as the area on County Road E between Centerville Road on the west and Century Avenue on the east. The cities of White Bear Lake, Vadnais Heights and Gem Lake worked with subject matter experts, elected officials, developers and community members to guide future development in the area.



The final report includes a community tailored action plan with medium and long-term goals and action steps. The goal is to create the concept of place-making, and a tool for attracting private investment through development and infrastructure improvements.

Each city had a special workshop devoted to ideas for a key area in the corridor. In Gem Lake, the area focused upon was the intersection of Highway 61 and County Road E, specifically Hoffman's Corner.

The presentation of ideas will take place during the council meeting, which starts at 7:00 p.m. and takes place at Heritage Hall. The public is invited to be part of this thought provoking session.



Storm Sewers: Where Does the Water Go?

Storm sewers do not get a lot of attention. We drive and bike past them on the roads. We encounter them while walking or jogging. There may even be one on a street near your home. But have you ever thought about what the storm sewer does or where the water goes?

During rain events or when the snow melts each spring, we may see water rushing down the street and flowing into the storm sewer. That is the entry point, the catch basin, which ultimately delivers the water to a public waterway, often miles away from your street. That's it. The water has a direct path from the street to a public waterway, be it a lake, river, stream, or the ocean. That's also the challenge, as this water is not treated or processed in any way.

If there is oil from a leaky engine or fertilizer or pet waste from a yard, or road salt, or numerous other contaminants from homeowners, farms, and businesses, it all is carried with the water into that public waterway. If that waterway also serves as the source for municipal drinking water, those contaminants will enter the processing facility for removal or neutralization.

Hopefully, this will prevent drinking water contamination. But that public waterway is still contaminated. Fish swim and waterfowl nest near those untreated contaminants picked up by the water on its journey. People may eat those fish or those waterfowl and unintentionally ingest the contaminants carried into the water via the storm sewer.

Cities, counties, and other governmental entities are required to have plans in place to manage storm sewers as part of their municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permits. Among the permit requirements are storm sewer catch basin inspections, but these can only go so far. To best prevent contaminants from entering the storm sewer system, make sure our automobiles do not leak oil, select environmentally-friendly fertilizers, clean up pet waste, and never dump anything into a storm sewer catch basin.

Learn more about storm sewers at:

<https://www.epa.gov/npdes/npdes-stormwater-program>

<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/business-with-us/municipal-stormwater-ms4>

<https://www.vlawmo.org/>

Why do we care about stormwater?

By being careful about what goes down our storm drains, we can keep our lakes and rivers clean.



This Stormwater graphic found at Minnesota Pollution Control Agency MS4 website.

Article written by Gem Lake Council Member Jim Lindner

City News

New Fee Schedule Approved

The 2023 Gem Lake Fee Schedule was approved at the December 20 City Council Meeting. A number of changes were made to provide more consistency between similar types of fees. For instance, window, siding and roofing permits are now flat rates, rather than fees based on the valuation of the project.

Several fees were eliminated from the schedule, due to lack of use, such as residential archery and certain kinds of grading permits.

Changes were made to ensure that fees are based on the actual costs involved, such as tying a rate structure to the projected number of visits that are typically required by the building inspector for a type of project. The entire fee schedule is available on the Gem Lake web-site.

Septic Inspection Required with Property Sale

If you sell or transfer ownership of your property in Gem Lake, you are required to have a compliance inspection done on your septic system by a qualified septic inspector. A certificate of compliance on the septic system must be submitted to Gem Lake's city clerk for any system that is more than five years old. There are some exceptions. For instance, if you are selling a property with no buildings or plumbing fixtures on it, a compliance certificate is not required. Contact the city clerk for a copy of Gem Lake's ordinance on this matter, or for more information about Ordinance No. 67D that covers private septic systems.

Charitable Gambling Donations

A donation of \$1,500 was approved by the Gem Lake City Council in December to be given to the White Bear Area Food Shelf. This donation comes from charitable gambling receipts that result from pull-tab and bingo sales within city limits. Requests for service at the local food shelf have risen over 40% in the past year, making this cause a priority for the council.



Gem Lake Has a 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 page 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!

Changes to Dog Ordinance

Several changes were made to Gem Lake's domestic animal ordinance. There is now a \$50 fine if a person fails to pick up their dog waste on public or private property other than their own. There is also now a \$50 fine if a dog owner fails to get a license for their pet. See Ordinance No.140 for more information.

Gem Lake Scholarship Program Deadline is April 30

Any Gem Lake resident who is graduating from High School in 2023 should consider applying for the Gem Lake Scholarship Program. This program is funded by charitable gambling receipts in the city and has been in existence for over 10 years.

To apply, contact your school's counselor. An application should be in to school officials by the third Friday in April and a copy should be brought to Heritage Hall by April 30 of the graduation year.

For more information, contact Melissa Lawrence at Heritage Hall. See contact information on page 6.



Winter Parking Rules are Expanded and Clarified

To assist in effective snow plowing and to add to the general sense of community safety, the Gem Lake City Council recently addressed the subject of winter parking, and on-street parking in general.

Please be aware that new on-street parking rules were put into effect based on ordinance changes that were approved on December 20.

Parking rules are spelled out in Gem Lake City ordinance No. 86, which can be found on the Gem Lake City website.

The changes to the ordinance are located in Section 6.4 dealing with parking regulations.



Please note the following additions and modifications have been made to this ordinance:

Section 6.4

Item 2. Passenger Vehicles. No passenger vehicle shall be parked on any street with the City of Gem Lake for more than seventy-two (72) consecutive hours.

Item 3. Winter Parking Restrictions. The parking of any motor vehicle upon any road or street in Gem Lake is prohibited between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. from November 1 through April 1 of each year.

Item 4. Snowfall Restrictions. No motor vehicle shall be parked on any street or boulevard within the City of Gem Lake after a snowfall of one (1) inch or more which necessitates the plowing and removal of snow from the streets and boulevards in the City until such time as the plowing and snow removal is completed. No motor vehicle, trailer, or other obstruction shall be located within two (2) feet of any street or boulevard after a snowfall of one (1) inch until such time as the plowing and snow removal has been completed.

Item 5. Enforcement. When any Community Service Officer finds a vehicle standing or parked on any street in violation of this Ordinance, such officer is hereby authorized to move such vehicle or require the driver or other person in charge of the vehicle to move the same. When any Police Officer finds a vehicle unattended and standing or parked in violation of this ordinance, such officer is hereby authorized to provide for the removal of such vehicle and remove the same to the nearest convenient garage outdoor area or other place of safety, and such vehicle shall not be removed therefrom until reasonable costs of moving and storing the same have been fully paid.

Please consult the full ordinance for more information on winter parking rules and parking rules in general. In the unfortunate event that your car gets towed, which we all hope will never happen, see below for more information.

The City of Gem Lake utilizes White Bear Lake Police for law enforcement, and therefore uses the same towing and storage arrangements. Cars would be generally towed to Twin City Towing for storage. They are located at 4787 Bald Eagle Avenue in White Bear Lake.

Towing charges start at \$125. This is their typical fee. If there are strange or unusual circumstances that require extra work, the fee goes up from there. If the car stays in the storage lot for more than 24 hours after a snow emergency, the daily storage fee is \$35.

If you would like Snow Emergency text or email alerts please sign up for the Townships Snow & Ice Control Updates at:

<https://www.whitebeartownship.org/list.aspx?ListID=237>



The City of Gem Lake

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General E-mail:
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Newsletter E-mail:
Gretchen.artig-swomley@gemlakemn.org

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: February and March 2023

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.

February 13, 2023

City Council Workshop is **CANCELED**

February 14, 2023

Planning Commission Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

February 21, 2023

City Council meeting at 7:00 p.m. – Featured topic: County Road E Corridor Project

March 13, 2023

City Council Workshop is **CANCELED**

March 14, 2023

Planning Commission Meeting at 7:00p.m.

March 21, 2023

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

See also the Gem Lake web-site for more information.

Your Gem Lake City Council

Mayor:

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City Council Members:

Laurel Amlee
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Len Cacioppo

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Jim Lindner

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You can also reach each city council member by calling 651-747-2790. After hours you can follow the prompts for the city council directory.

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