

minnetonka memo

A Newsletter from the City of Minnetonka
December 2003

Holiday Happenings



Minnetonka Historical Society

Members of the society will host a Victorian tea and tour at the Burwell House, Plymouth Road and Minnetonka Boulevard, Sunday, December 7, 1 to 4 p.m.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the house will be decorated in the holiday tradition. Everyone's invited to this free event. Parking is available at St. David's Family Center (formerly Burwell School).

Music Association of Minnetonka

Songs of the Season, a choral concert
Friday, December 5, 7:30 p.m.,
ArtsCenter Minnetonka

Messiah Community Sing Along
Saturday, December 6, 3:30 p.m.,
Ridgewood Church, 4420 Hwy.
101 So.

Sounds of Youth, a choral concert
Saturday, December 6, 7:30 p.m.,
ArtsCenter Minnetonka

Winter Concert
Minnetonka Symphony Orchestra
Sunday, December 7, 7:30 p.m.,
ArtsCenter Minnetonka*

Juletide, a choral concert
Saturday, December 13, 7:30 p.m.,
ArtsCenter Minnetonka

Winter Concert
Minnetonka Symphony Orchestra
Sunday, December 14, 3:30 p.m.,
ArtsCenter Minnetonka (repeat
of December 7 program)*

All programs are free unless designated otherwise. For more information, call (952) 401-5954.

*Admission charged

stages theatre company

"A Christmas Story" will be presented in the Mainstage Theater November 28 through December 30. Recommended for all ages, the play promises to keep everyone laughing! Call (952) 979-1111 for specific performance information, ticket prices, and reservations.

Residents invited to Truth in Taxation budget hearing HT

MINNETONKA RESIDENTS ARE invited to participate in our annual Truth in Taxation budget hearing set for Monday, December 8, at 6:30 p.m. in the city council chambers.

Last month's *Minnetonka Memo* provided information on our proposed 2004 budget, because we believe that representative democracies function best when citizens have access to timely and accurate financial information. The city council discussed these preliminary budget plans at two public meetings in August and November and plans to adopt our final budget on December 15.

Next year's budget growth will be limited to just 2%, which is less than half the normal increase, and well below the real growth and inflation that drive up service costs. In fact, the property taxes we receive to fund police, fire, streets, and parks will actually *go down by 1%* next year. Your city services will cost less.

However, the state's Truth in Taxation forms show that "City" taxes for the average homeowner will go up about 8%. Here's why your taxes will increase even though we get less money:

1. The state's making the city pay for a "market value credit" property tax relief program they decided not to fund, but didn't want to cut. Instead, the state's mak-

ing the city raise its property taxes an additional \$800,000 to pay for this unfunded mandate. Although it shows up as a "City" tax, the City of Minnetonka never sees a penny of this money.

2. The state's also phasing out its "limited market value" program that artificially held property taxes down to below the actual

increase in market value. Since they're making up for all those past deferments, that means your taxable value can go up by 12%

next year, even if the actual value of your property doesn't. And, that limit increases to 15% and 25% in future years.

3. Finally, the value of residential property continues to grow faster than commercial property as a result of the lingering recession. That shifts even more of the property tax burden onto homeowners.

In summary, the increase in homeowner property taxes next year is not caused by city spending. The City of Minnetonka will actually receive *less property tax revenue* to fund basic services. Taxes for the average homeowner will go up 8% because of changes in state law, state mandates, and market factors.

For more information on our proposed budget, please call (952) 939-8200. If you are unable to attend the meeting, but would like to offer your comments, please contact Minnetonka Mike at either (952) 939-8586 or mike@eminnetonka.com. Your input is always welcomed and appreciated!

Truth in Taxation Public Hearing
Monday, Dec. 8, 6:30 p.m.
Minnetonka City Council Chambers
14600 Minnetonka Boulevard

Voter turnout is light

JUST OVER 13 percent of Minnetonka's registered voters cast ballots in the General Election November 4. The race for council representative in Ward 1 was extremely close, and a recount was held November 14. Elected in Ward 1 was Robert L. "Bob" Ellingson; Ward 2, Tony Wagner; Ward 3, incumbent Brad J. Wiersum; Ward 4, incumbent Al Thomas. Oaths of office will be administered to the four ward council representatives at the January 5 city council meeting.

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It's time to register residential and business alarm systems

THE MINNETONKA POLICE Department reminds business and home owners that it's time to register their alarm systems for 2004. City ordinances require alarms to be registered with the police department by January 1 of each year. The annual fee is \$10.

The purpose of the ordinance is not to discourage or eliminate the use of police and fire alarm systems, but to provide standards, requirements, and sanctions for the approximate 10% of alarm users who cause over 90% of false alarm activity in the city.

Alarm systems are only as effective as the residents or employees who are trained to use them. When alarm systems are properly operated and maintained, they can contribute to increased safety, crime prevention, and apprehension of criminals. Since implementing the ordinance, there has been a 14% decrease in false alarm responses in 2002 and 10% in 2003.

Alarm registration pamphlets which contain an application have been sent to alarm owners on record. If you do not receive one by December 15, call (952) 939-8500 to have one mailed to you, or stop by the police department for an application. □

Date for storm water information meeting set

THE CITY OF MINNETONKA will hold the first annual Storm Water Informational Meeting on Tuesday, January 13, 2004 at 5 p.m. in the Boards and Commissions Room, Minnetonka City Hall, 14600 Minnetonka Boulevard.

A brief presentation will be given regarding the city's Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) and Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP). Staff will then field questions and comments from attendees regarding the city's current programs and future plans for storm water. Copies of the WRMP and SWPPP may be examined at the Minnetonka Engineering Department in city hall during regular business hours.

Contact the Engineering Department, (952) 939-8200, for more information. □

City council approves major change in fire alarm ordinance

THE MINNETONKA CITY Council recently approved changes in the city's code of ordinances regarding automatic fire alarm responses. Beginning March 1, 2004, a \$250 service fee will be assessed by the Minnetonka Fire Department in response to an automatic fire alarm initiated by a private alarm monitoring company. *This fee will not apply to general 9-1-1 calls, alarm calls where the first notification of the alarm is a 9-1-1 call from the affected property, or alarm calls originated by an automatic fire sprinkler system.*

Fire Chief Joe Wallin explains, "Our fire department has a general duty to respond to emergencies that occur within the city. Fire alarm systems with central station service are a contract between a private party and a vendor, resulting in a service being performed by an uncompensated third party—the fire department. This level of service constitutes a "special duty," which is not available to everyone unless they contract with a private alarm company.

"Because the Minnetonka Fire Department is primarily a paid-on-call department, there are definite costs associated with each call for service in contrast to a full-time department which has a fixed payroll cost whether responding to calls or not."

Using response statistics for the past three years, the \$250 fee reflects the

average additional cost incurred for each response to a fire alarm. It is significant to note that, according to Minnetonka Fire Department records, there has never been a case where an automatic fire alarm was the first notification of an actual fire, other than an automatic fire sprinkler alarm. In the unlikely event that the fire alarm system is the first notification of a true fire emergency, the ordinance provides a mechanism for the fire chief to waive the fee.

There are some strategies home and business owners can use to avoid the user fee:

- Ensure that your automatic fire alarm system is installed correctly and in good repair; old or inappropriately installed smoke detectors account for a majority of false alarms.
- Consider establishing a protocol where your alarm monitoring company contacts your home or business before notifying the fire department.
- For other than automatic fire sprinkler systems, consider discontinuing automatic notification to the fire department by your alarm service when there is no confirmed alarm.

If you have any questions about this ordinance change, contact Assistant Fire Chief Steve Anderson, (952) 939-8331, or e-mail sanderson@eminnetonka.com. □

Outdoor rinks scheduled to open Dec. 20

WEATHER PERMITTING, SKATING rinks with warming houses at eight Minnetonka locations will open Saturday, December 20: *Boulder Creek, Covington, Gro Tonka, McKenzie, Meadow and Spring Hill Parks; Gatewood and Glen Lake Schools.*

Hours are Saturdays, noon to 9 p.m.; Sundays, 12:30 to 6 p.m.; weekdays, 4:30 to 9 p.m. During school breaks, hours will be noon to 9 p.m.

Minnetonka rinks plowed on the first snow day include Meadow, Spring Hill, and Gro Tonka Parks as well as Glen Lake School. Call the weather hotline, (952) 939-TELL, weekdays after 4 p.m. for an update on rink conditions.



Hopkins and Minnetonka youth hockey associations and adult broomball leagues have reserved various hockey rinks for organized practices Monday through Thursday after 6 p.m. A schedule will be posted at each rink. To reserve outdoor ice time, please call the warming house coordinator, (952) 908-7052, after December 16. □

Public hearing will be held to consider amendment to floodplain ordinance HT

THE MINNETONKA PLANNING Commission will hold a public hearing on a proposed amendment to the floodplain ordinance. The hearing is tentatively scheduled for the planning commission's December 18 meeting. The proposed revisions are designed to update the city's floodplain ordinance as required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to better align the ordinance with the city's storm water policies.

The proposed amendment would also allow administrative approval of minor floodplain impacts, allow additional uses in the floodplain, and reduce existing floodplain setbacks. This amendment will continue to provide the same level of flood protection that would result in the same flood insurance rating that the city currently holds.

The two major changes that would affect the city's residents and businesses are these:

- New boathouses are not allowed, and reconstruction of boathouses that are substantially removed would not be allowed.
- Setbacks:

Use	Current setback regulation	Proposed setback regulation	Current required elevation above floodplain	Proposed elevation above floodplain
Principal structures	35 feet	20 feet	Lowest floor 2 feet	Lowest floor 2 feet
Decks, patios, stairways, and cantilevered building areas	25 feet	10 feet	0 feet	0 feet
Accessory structures	35 feet	10 feet	0 feet	1.5 feet
Parking and driveway areas (other than single family homes)	20 feet	10 feet	0 feet	1 foot
Single family driveway areas	0 feet	0 feet	0 feet	1 foot

If you would like more information or a copy of the proposed amendment, please contact Environmental Resources Coordinator Jo Colleran, (952) 939-8299, or by email, jcolleran@eminnetonka.com. You can also access a copy of the proposed floodplain amendment online by looking for the link on the city's website at www.eminnetonka.com. □

Would you benefit from a "File of Life"?

MINNETONKA SENIOR CITIZENS, people having a chronic medical condition, or anyone living alone should be aware of the "File of Life" program. This file is a sheet of medical and emergency information that slips into a magnetized plastic folder that adheres to your refrigerator, and it's used whenever an individual is unable to communicate with personnel responding to an emergency.

Participants of this free program complete the sheet which lists current medical conditions, recent surgeries, doctors' names and numbers, hospital preference, insurance information, family or emergency contact persons...even the name of someone who could care for your pet in the event you went to the hospital. Obviously, the information is only as good as it is current, so it's very important to

keep it updated. It's suggested that you use pencil so changes can easily be made.

File of Life information is available at the reception areas of the Minnetonka Police Department, city hall, and senior center. Replacement cards are available at these locations also. □

Holiday shoppers welcome

THE MILLS LANDING Gift Shoppe, 12810 Minnetonka Blvd., features new and unique gifts made by area seniors. You're invited to stop and browse through the great selection of items. Hours are 10 a.m. through 4 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday. □

Plastic bag recycling drop-off program returns

RESIDENTS MAY NOW deposit clean, dry, empty plastic bags in specially-designed "It's in the Bag" collection bins found at Byerly Foods, 13081 Ridgedale Dr.; Lunds, 11400 Hwy. 7; Cub Foods, 4801 Co. Rd. 101, as well as other collection points throughout the metropolitan area.

Acceptable material

- plastic retail bags with hard plastic or string handles removed
- plastic newspaper bags
- plastic dry cleaning bags
- plastic grocery bags

Unacceptable material

- sandwich bags or other plastic food packaging
- bubble wrap
- stretch wrap
- plastic bread bags
- trash bags including lawn and leaf bags

Please note!

This program is **not** operated by the City of Minnetonka. Plastic bags are **not** accepted curbside in Minnetonka and are **not** accepted at the Minnetonka / Hopkins Recycling Drop-off center.

"It's in the Bag" is a Twin-Cities based plastic bag recycling program created by SUPERVALU in conjunction with local non-profits Merrick, Inc., Minnesota Waste Wise, and Virginia-based Trex Company. A collaborative effort of both public and private industry, the program is supported by the American Plastics Council, Byerly's, Cub Foods, GreenGuardian.com, Hennepin County, Kowalski's Markets, Lunds, the Minnesota Grocer's Education Foundation, *Pioneer Press*, *Star Tribune*, and Target Corporation.

For more information log on to <http://www.itsinthebagmn.org>, or call the Recycling Coordinator, (952) 939-8217. □

Calendar

City of
Minnetonka

December
2003

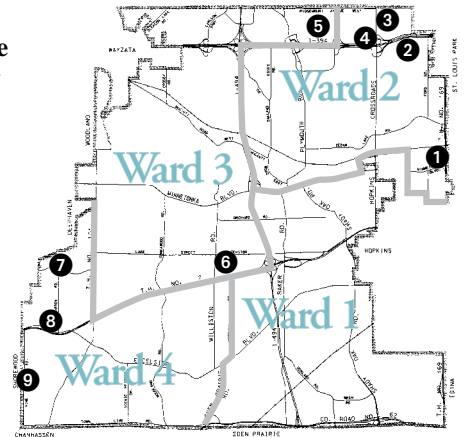
Call (952) 939-8200
for meeting
locations.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	Community Heritage Commission, 6:30 p.m.	8	Council study session – Truth in Taxation hearing, 6:30 p.m.
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	3	Park Board, 7 p.m.	15	City council meeting, 6:30 p.m.
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	4	Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.	18	Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	7	Burwell House Tea and Tour, 1 – 4 p.m.	25	Christmas holiday – city offices closed
28	29	30	31							

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The following items are tentatively scheduled to come before the Minnetonka Planning Commission in December. Please call (952) 939-8200 for updated information or visit the city web site: www.eminnetonka.com. Meeting agendas are posted on the site the Friday prior to each commission meeting.

- 1 Time extension to Dec. 31, 2004 for variance for a garage addition for Cliff Lambert at **9722 Minnetonka Blvd.** (02010.03a)
- 2 Master Development Plan, site/building plan review, conditional use permit for bank/office building for Red Stag Properties LLC at **10653 Wayzata Blvd.** (98054.03a)
- 3 Amendment to Willoughby master development plan for REC Inc. at **407-519 Willoughby Way West** (98057.03a)
- 4 Sign plan review for The Maytag Store in West Ridge Market, **11300 Wayzata Blvd.** (03073.03a)
- 5 Preliminary plat for Gonyea Development LLC at **600, 665 City View Dr.** (03077.03a)
- 6 Preliminary plat, variances for subdivision for Ruth Murman at **14593/14629 Lake St. Ext.** (03076.03a)
- 7 Wetland setback variance for screen porch for Denali Custom Homes, Inc. at **4270 Windwood Way** (03075.03a)
- 8 Guide plan amendment, conditional use permit, rezoning from B-1 to PUD, master development plan, final site/building plan review, setback variances for Sunrise, Inc. senior assisted living facility at **18605 Old Excelsior Blvd.** (03069.03a)
- 9 Floodplain setback variance for additions to home for Rob and Patti Juntunen at **5767 Vine Hill Rd.** (03080.03a)



HT Hot Topics HT

ITEMS IDENTIFIED WITH HT are listed as Hot Topics on the city web site, www.eminnetonka.com. Please refer to the site for additional information on these selected topics. For more information, call Minnetonka Mike, (952) 939-8586, leaving your name and address.

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PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
CITY OF MINNETONKA

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8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday – Friday

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Ward 4: Al Thomas (952) 949-9027 athomas@eminnetonka.com

Minnetonka Mike (952) 939-8586 mike@eminnetonka.com

POLICE-FIRE: Emergency 9-1-1

Non-emergency (952) 939-8500 or 9-1-1

ECRWSS
POSTAL PATRON