

ARDEN HILLS

notes

The Official City Newsletter for Arden Hills Residents

January/February 2016

2016 tax levy unchanged from preliminary 3.5 percent rate set in September *by Tina Kulzer*

At its December 14, 2015, meeting, the City Council adopted a 2016 property tax levy of \$3,478,775. This sets the City's property tax rate increase for 2016 at 3.5 percent, which is unchanged from the preliminary levy rate set in September 2015.

Funding from the City's share of regional fiscal disparities has increased for 2016 and will contribute \$264,113 toward the levy total. The City's tax capacity has also increased, and taxes paid by City property owners will account for the balance, or \$3,214,662.

The impact of a 3.5 percent levy – applied to a net tax rate decrease resulting from the increase in fiscal disparity dollars and increases in assessed market values of homes in Arden Hills – translates to a \$36.03 (or 4.7 percent) decrease in annual taxes paid by resident owners of median valued homes (value ranging from \$295,100 to \$300,300).

In Arden Hills, the entire tax levy goes toward General Fund expenditures in the City's budget. The property tax levy accounts for approximately 79 percent of the General Fund revenues. Due to the current economic environment, \$160,326 in reserves was used to balance the 2016 budget. This is up from \$58,305 in reserves used to balance last year's budget.

2016 General Fund basics

Revenues:

- General Fund revenues in the 2016 budget are set at \$4,510,291.
- The most notable revenue line item is the levy amount, which will result in an additional \$119,000 in revenue over last year.
- Police Aid (received as part of the Ramsey County Sheriff's Department [RCSD] contract group) and Antenna Revenues are estimated to increase.

Expenditures:

- General Fund expenditures for 2016 total \$4,670,617.
- Public Safety costs are set to increase by 7.85 percent for the Lake Johanna Fire Department, 1.81 percent for the RCSD contract, and 2.43 percent for 911 dispatch service. These costs alone represent a \$54,039 increase in the budget, or a 1.6 percent increase to the levy.
- Expenditures for City Hall maintenance and an infrastructure/capital reserve fund to address increasing repair costs for City Hall are included this year.

- A General Fund expenditure increase of \$56,614 is related to wage adjustments and health insurance increases for City staff in the operating budget. (The effects on the Salary & Benefits expenditures resulting from union contract negotiations that took place late last year are as of yet unknown.)

Other rate increases:

2016 utility fees are increasing as well. The water and sanitary sewer rates are increasing by two percent, and the surface water management rate is increasing by three percent.

The overall budget for the City in 2016 was set at \$11,102,350. The approved budget and tax levy information can be viewed in detail in the December 14, 2015 City Council agenda posted on the City's website.

What Do You Get for Your Arden Hills Tax Dollar?

Parks & Recreation 15.8 Cents	Public Safety 42.5 Cents	Public Works 11.3 Cents	General Government 26 Cents
			
Transfers 4.4 Cents			

A \$300,300 home generates \$767 in annual property taxes:
This comes to \$64.00 per month for 2016.

Arden Hills Service Directory

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Arden Hills, MN 55112-5734

Office Hours
Monday through Friday
8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.
651-792-7800
www.cityofardenhills.org

Sheriff and Fire
911
Water and Sewer Problems
(During non-business hours)
651-767-0640

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Council meetings are held at City Hall on the second and last Monday of the month at 7 p.m. Meetings are televised live on Cable Channel 16. Meetings of the Planning Commission are televised as well. Visit www.cityofardenhills.org for information about taped meeting playbacks.

Arden Hills Notes is the official newsletter of the City of Arden Hills, an equal-opportunity employer.

City Park Profiles—a series

Crepeau Nature Preserve

by Tina Kulzer

1224 Harriet Avenue

In the most recent Community Parks and Trails Survey conducted by the Parks, Trails and Recreation Committee (PTRC), 88.2 percent of resident survey respondents stated that they participate in walking/running/biking activities while utilizing Arden Hills parks. This percentage is more than twice the second-highest rated recreational activity (playground use, at 42.4 percent).

Furthermore, when asked to rank a list of eight park-related initiatives in order of importance, residents ranked trail connectivity and the development of more trails as the top two in importance. Issues related to the City's trails rank high among residents in discussions about the park system, as the City's trails and natural spaces are often cited by residents as reasons why they chose to live in Arden Hills.

Luckily, area walkers, runners, and trail enthusiasts alike can find a very unique recreation experience at Crepeau Nature Preserve, the final park profile in our City park series. Tucked away in a quiet residential neighborhood in southern Arden Hills, the trails in this minimally developed and carefully preserved natural space traverse 12.5 heavily-wooded acres and are accessible from the north at Benton Way (via Harriet Avenue) and at Dellwood Avenue (by way of Tiller Lane).

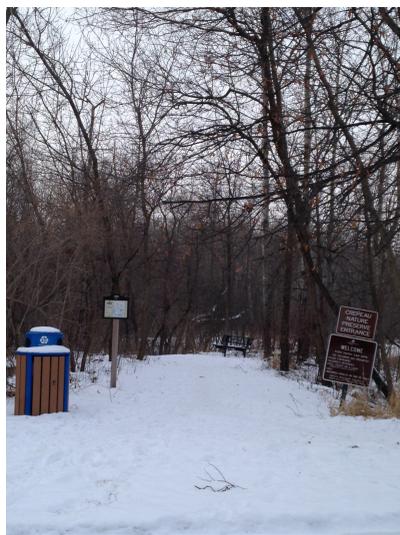
The land that was developed into Crepeau Nature Preserve was acquired through two dedications: 4.45 acres was acquired in 1975 through the Dreyfus dedication, and 9.16 acres were acquired in 1977 through the MSI dedication. In addition, .12 acre was also acquired in 1977 from Dreyfus for the Pine Tree Drive trail easement.

Crepeau Nature Preserve was named as such to differentiate this natural space and the passive recreational opportunities it offers from other City parks that possess more traditional park amenities and satisfy more active recreational pursuits. Birds and other wildlife abound, and the unpaved trails are best enjoyed at a slow, leisurely pace. It's a beautiful spot for a walk in all seasons of the year.

Developed primarily during the mid-1980s and into the 90s – with former

PTRC member Don Messerly at the helm of a large majority of the preservation efforts – Crepeau Nature Preserve is a hidden gem that is representative of the kind of tranquil, undeveloped natural space that is treasured by so many in Arden Hills.

Shown here
Top: Dellwood Avenue entrance
Center left: Benton Way entrance
Bottom right: Pine Tree Drive entrance



Benchmarks: a review of recent City Council action

November 30, 2015 (*Holden excused*)

- Approved ordinance 2015-011 in planning case 15-022 relating to accessory antennas. (3-0)
- Approved ordinance 2015-010 in planning case 15-019 relating to window transparency. (3-0)
- Approved the 2015 Pavement Management Program (PMP) pay estimate number 6 and change order number 2 in the amount of \$913,336.11. (3-0)
- Approved the 2015 Sanitary Sewer Lining payment number 2 to Hydro Klean, LLC in the amount of \$383,277.89. (3-0)
- Approved the Round Lake Road Area Improvement payment number 10 to Meyer Contracting, Inc. in the amount of \$24,063.55. (3-0)
- Approved the application of Catholic United Financial for an exempt permit to conduct a raffle with the drawing being held March 10, 2016, with no waiting period. (3-0)
- Approved the appointment of Liz Johnson to the Economic Development Commission (EDC). (3-0)
- Approved a 2015 budget amendment to move the cost for *Arden Hills Notes* from the Mayor and Council budget in the general fund to the Cable Fund. The budget amendment was for \$23,000 to cover the annual printing, publishing, and postage. The cost of *Arden Hills Notes* does not change, just the cost center that funds its operations. (3-0)
- Approved the CenturyLink Cable Franchise Agreement. This agreement enables CenturyLink to provide video service to homes in Arden Hills. (3-0)
- Approved the annual animal impound services agreement with Hillcrest Animal Hospital. (3-0)

December 14, 2015

- Cancelled the December 28, 2015 City Council meeting due to lack of agenda items. (4-0)
- Approved the 2016 City contribution for employee benefits. (4-0)
- Approved the 2016 Fee Schedule and authorized the publication of an ordinance summary. (4-0)
- Approved 2016 Liquor Licenses. (4-0)

- Approved 2016 Tobacco Licenses. (4-0)
- Approved the 2016 Recycling Fee. (4-0)
- Approved a proposal from Bolton & Menk in the amount of \$44,500 for design and engineering construction services for the rehabilitation of Lift Station 11. (4-0)
- Approved change order number 1 and payment number 6 to Park Construction, Inc. in the amount of \$40,018.41 for the County Road E/Pine Tree Drive Improvements. (4-0)
- Approved a Master Partnership Agreement with MnDOT. This agreement allows the City to request MnDOT services such as construction testing, engineering design, and roadway maintenance. (4-0)
- Approved the regulatory sign replacement in the amount of \$10,413.34. This project is required to meet the federally mandated retroreflectivity of regulatory street signs. (4-0)
- Approved the stormwater outfall inspections and pond assessment proposal from Elfering & Associates Inc. in the amount of \$22,000. The City of Arden Hills has a permit to discharge stormwater issued by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The permit is known as National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and is issued to all Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4's) in the state of Minnesota. This permit requires the City of Arden Hills to complete various tasks related to stormwater. The proposal completes two required tasks for 2015 and 2016, namely Outfall inspections and Pond Assessment. (4-0)
- Approved publishing a summary of ordinance of resolution 2015-011 relating to an accessory antennas code update. The approval of the ordinance was at the 11-30-15 meeting. (4-0)
- Approved publishing a summary of ordinance of resolution 2015-010 relating to a window transparency code update. The approval of the ordinance was at the 11-30-15 meeting. (4-0)
- Approved publishing a summary of ordinance 2015-008 relating to a Cable Television Franchise for CenturyLink. The approval of the ordinance was at the 11-30-15 meeting. (4-0)

- Approved the capital expenditures for the Lake Johanna Fire Department in the amount of \$9,352.42. (4-0)
- Accepted resignation of EDC Chair Steve Heikkila. (4-0)
- Approved the quarterly special assessments for delinquent utilities. (4-0)
- Approved the 2016-2020 Capital Improvement Plan. (4-0)
- Approved the City 2016 Budget in the amount of \$11,102,350. (3-1 McClung)
- Approved the tax levy for taxes payable in 2016 in the amount of \$3,478,775, a 3.5% increase. (3-1 McClung)
- Approved ordinance 2015-009 in planning case 15-023 relating to Public Use Dedication Ordinance and approved publishing a summary of the ordinance. (4-0)
- Approved a step and pay grade change for the position of Associate Planner, and changed the title to Senior Planner. (4-0)

January 11, 2016

- Approved the 2016 organizational assignments and the official service providers for the City of Arden Hills. (4-0)
- Approved resident Commission and Committee Appointments. (4-0)
- Approved the hiring of Jolene Trauba as Customer Support Representative. (4-0)
- Approved the Mounds View High School Trail payment number 1 in the amount of \$513,577.62 to be paid through our Municipal State Aid (MSA) fund. (4-0)
- Approved wording changes to the Mounds View High School Trail Joint Powers Agreement Amendment relating to maintenance of the trail. (4-0)
- Approved the 2016 Northeast Youth and Family Services contract. (4-0)
- Approved the 2016 City Contribution for employee benefits. (4-0)
- Approved the appointment of Dan Erickson as Chair of the EDC. (4-0)
- Approved capital expenditures for the Lake Johanna Fire Department in the amount of \$12,212. (4-0)
- Approved the 2016-2017 union contract which covers Operations and Maintenance employees. (4-0)

Business spotlight: Welsch's Big Ten Tavern *by Emma Theis*

Welsch's Big Ten Tavern has called Arden Hills home for 57 years. The family-owned restaurant, bar, comedy club, and now catering company, has been passed down through five generations of Welsches since 1903. Owner Jack Welsch is getting ready to pass the baton to his son James, who is currently the head cook at the tavern and manages the catering business.

The Big Ten was originally called Welsch's Supper Club and was located on Rice Street and Maryland Avenue in St. Paul until it moved to Arden Hills in 1959. According to Jack, the Welsches have the oldest family-owned liquor license in Minnesota. The tavern also has the first liquor license issued in Arden Hills, and is the first for-profit business in Minnesota allowed to sell pull tabs. (The pull tabs at the Big Ten benefit Roseville Hockey.)

The "Big Ten" in Welsch's Big Ten Tavern comes from the bar's accessible location right on the big highway number 10. The landmark also serves as a meeting place for American Legion Post 513. A 105 Howitzer (a piece of heavy military artillery used in WWII) stands out front of the Big Ten. It was dedicated to that Legion post in 2007 in memory of their departed members.

Welsch's Big Ten Tavern is truly a stalwart tavern, as their Google profile states, that offers comfort grub and entertainment, including comedy, karaoke and live music. Its array of mouth-watering food includes house-smoked prime rib. (Yes, it even have its own smoker. Hence the giant pig statue out front.) Also on the menu are all-you-can-eat crab legs, burgers, pizza, soups, salads, pasta, and more.

Additionally, Ric McCloud's Comedy Cabaret can be found in the basement of the Big Ten. Comedy shows are every Friday and Saturday night at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$20 and can be obtained by calling 651-633-7253.

Welsch's Tavern is open every day-- Monday through Friday 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. and Saturday and Sunday 9:30 a.m. to 2 a.m.

To find out even more about Welsch's, visit welschbigten.com or to learn more about Big Ten Catering, visit bigtencatering.com.



Planned Highway 10 changes could impact Welsch's Big Ten

This spring, the center median on Highway 10 in front of Welsch's Big Ten Tavern is being closed permanently as part of a MnDOT safety project, according to Mark Lindeberg, a north area engineer for MnDOT. This means that traffic coming north on Highway 10 will no longer be able to make a left turn into the tavern and the neighborhoods behind.

The frontage road adjacent to the tavern (which also serves as the entrance to Big Ten) will still be accessible as a right-in-right-out from Highway 10 southbound. Northbound travelers will have to bypass the tavern and make a U-turn at The Mermaid in Mounds View or navigate through the neighborhood entrance off Highway 96.

"They're gonna cut off at least 50 percent of my business," said owner Jack Welsch.

If that happens, Welsch said he would most likely have to leave Arden Hills. The median closure would also cut off Big Ten from the Rice Creek Commons development going in across Highway 10 at the old TCAAP site. The development will bring approximately 3,000 more residents to Arden Hills and business for Welsch.

Welsch said he plans to unite with the neighborhood and petition for a stoplight at his entrance onto Highway 10. Unfortunately, that outcome is unlikely for the non-stop double lane throughway, which will presumably have a third lane added from I-35W to Highway 96 in the near future, according to Lindeberg.

To find about more about the upcoming MnDOT projects on Highway 10, visit <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadwork/current.html>.

City staffers honored

Two Arden Hills City staffers, **Sue Iverson** and **Matthew Bachler**, finished 2015 with significant accomplishments.

Sue Iverson, Director of Finance and Administrative Services and Acting City Administrator, received the prestigious Thomas J. Moran Award. This was presented by the Minnesota Government Finance Officers Association for her "outstanding contributions and services rendered to the improvement and advancement of the quality of public finance administration." Since the inception of this award in 1980, Sue is only the 16th recipient of this honor.



Matthew Bachler, Senior Planner for the City, passed the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) exam, a rigorous assessment of a planner's abilities, and was awarded AICP certification in November, 2015. AICP provides the only nationwide independent verification of a planner's qualifications. In addition to the exam, candidates complete criteria for education and experience and write essays demonstrating a comprehensive approach to planning. Those certified "commit to upholding high standards of practice and ethics and to keeping their skills up to date by continuously pursuing advanced professional education."

by Susan Cathey

Improvements planned for I-35W North by Bobbi Dahlke, Minnesota Department of Transportation

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) is currently studying I-35W for the addition of MnPASS Express Lanes between Highway 36 and Lexington Avenue, in order to address capacity and mobility needs in the corridor. MnDOT is working to develop an overall design for I-35W that:

- Improves safety on the highway
- Increases the number of people that move along the highway during peak hours
- Provides reliable travel times for commuters during peak drive times
- Optimizes and reuses existing roads and bridges (without needing to acquire homes and properties)

With 53,000 to 127,000 vehicles (and increasing) using I-35W between Rosville and Blaine each day, travel time is becoming more unreliable for peak period travelers. There is enough room in the middle of the existing road to add one lane in each direction, and MnDOT is analyzing the addition of MnPASS Express Lanes to provide a long-term benefit to the corridor.

What are MnPASS Express Lanes?

MnPASS Express Lanes provide a congestion-free travel option during peak drive times, improve efficiency by moving more people through a corridor, provide better travel time reliability, and enhance transit usage, service, and reliability. MnPASS Express Lanes are always free for transit users, carpoolers (HOV 2+) and motorcycles. During peak drive times, (weekdays 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.), motorists driving alone can choose to use the MnPASS lanes for a fee. Outside of peak drive times, the MnPASS lanes are free for everyone to use. Fees vary between \$0.25 and \$8, increasing when there is more congestion in the MnPASS lane. The fees keep traffic in the MnPASS lane moving at 50 to 55 mph.

What's next?

The preliminary engineering and environmental review will be completed by mid-to-late 2016. This work includes analyzing the need for spot improvements along the corridor and the need for noise walls along the freeway. Funding for a construction project is not yet identified. If funding becomes available, construction could start as early as 2018.

Get involved

The best way to stay updated is to visit mndot.gov/metro/projects/i35wroseville/, where you can learn more and sign up for project email updates. Keep an eye out for public meeting announcements in 2016, when MnDOT will be presenting information about proposed noise walls and the Environmental Assessment. Questions about the project or requests for additional information can be directed to Jerome Adams, at 651-234-7611 or Jerome.adams@state.mn.us.



About those plastic shopping bags

from Rethink Recycling

Plastic shopping bags are one of the hardest materials for recycling facilities to handle as they tangle in machinery, clogging machines and stopping the recycling process for hours at a time. Fortunately, plastic bags can easily be recycled at drop-off locations. Plastic bags are accepted at various retailers including Lund's/Byerly's, Cub Foods and Target as long as they are clean and dry. Find additional retailers through the Recycling Association of Minnesota's *It's in the Bag* program. **Plastic bags in residential recycling bins or carts are no longer permitted.**

You can reuse plastic bags as garbage bags or to pick up pet waste. To limit the amount of plastic bags you end up with, use reusable shopping bags and avoid products with excessive plastic wrapping.

Fix-It Clinics scheduled

Get household items fixed for free and learn valuable repair skills at an upcoming Fix-It Clinic!

- **Saturday, February 27**, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Shoreview Library, 4570 Victoria Street North, Shoreview
- **Saturday, March 26**, from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. at Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Avenue St. Paul

Reduce and recycle: A resolution you can keep

According to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, paper, plastics, and organics are the top three components of our garbage in Minnesota. Reducing and recycling means less waste in landfills and more resources to make new products. To learn more, visit RamseyRecycles.com or call 651-633-3297. Calls answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Free small business workshops begin March 17

The City of Arden Hills is collaborating with the cities of Vadnais Heights and Shoreview to hold a series of small business workshops. The first one will be held on Thursday, March 17, 2016, at the Vadnais Heights Fairfield Inn. The topic is Content Marketing – how it has put the consumer in control of the buying process and what that means for your marketing. The workshop will show how to plan, create, and promote content that delivers a return.

Networking begins at 7:30 a.m., and the workshop and interactive panel session are scheduled from 8:00 to 9:30 a.m.. This event is free to Arden Hills businesses.



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2016 tax levy set

Staffers honored

Welsch's Big Ten Tavern

I-35W changes studied

News from the City Council

In the January/February *Arden Hills Notes* for 2016, we look back to the notable events of 2015 and ahead to the future.

Rice Creek Commons (also known as the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant/TCAAP) The most exciting project in the City is the progress we are seeing at Rice Creek Commons. The City Council approved the TCAAP Redevelopment Code and Master Plan, laying the groundwork for the redevelopment of the 427-acre Rice Creek Commons into a vibrant mixed-use community. Environmental clean-up of the site is concluded, and the next step is for the road infrastructure in 2017. Redevelopment is planned for the next ten years. City Staff and City volunteer groups, most notably the Planning Commission and the Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee, have been intently focused on this project for the last several years.

New Developments in Arden Hills

- **Red Fox Business Center** – Two light industrial buildings will open for business in early 2016 on Red Fox Road for a combination of office, light industrial, manufacturing, and commercial uses.
- **Johanna Shores Brownstones** – Two brownstone-style buildings with forty independent senior units are in the process of being built for the Presbyterian Homes redevelopment at County Road D and Lake Johanna Blvd.
- **Valentine Bluff** – Seven single-family custom homes are planned for this new development on County Road E2 at the site of the former Arden Hills Library.

Postal Customer

- **Goodwill Industries** – Located on the corner of Lexington Avenue and County Road E, half of the building is devoted to a Goodwill retail store; the remainder will be divided into employee offices, a donation processing area, and a drive-thru donation center.
- **The Tavern Grill** – Preliminary work has begun for this sit-down restaurant that will include an attached outdoor patio for seasonal seating. It is located in the Arden Plaza Retail Center (south of Walgreens).
- **Frattallone's Corporate Headquarters** – Frattallone's Ace Hardware purchased the former Carroll's Furniture site on County Road E, and is using the building for corporate offices and storage for off-season merchandise.
- **New Businesses** – A number of new businesses have opened in existing Arden Hills buildings, and we welcome them.

Road Construction

- **County Road E** – This project rebuilt the bridge over Highway 51 and now provides a pedestrian walkway over the bridge, with improved sidewalks and paving, new decorative streetlights and shade trees along County Road E, and double turn lanes at Lexington Avenue.
- **Highway 96** – The bridge over I-35W was rebuilt using the double diverging diamond interchange where lanes cross over at each end of the bridge eliminating left-hand turns across opposing traffic. Pedestrians cross and walk in the middle of the bridge with protective barriers on either side.

- **Lake Valentine Road** – This project rebuilt the bridge over I-35W and added a trail from Mounds View High School over the bridge, which connects with the New Brighton trail.

In Other Accomplishments, the City:

- Added a video tour to its website. Please take the time to view it.
- Went to single sort recycling, including the distribution of the well-received roller bins for the convenience of residents.
- Implemented a Business Retention and Expansion Program for which the City was awarded the Leaders in Local Government Award by the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce.
- Received three Government Finance Officers Association Awards.
- Held our first Bark and Rec Day, to highlight the popular off-leash dog park at Hazelnut Park.

To Conclude...The City extended its sincere sympathy to the family of Council Member Robert Woodburn, who died while in office in October, 2015. The City said good-bye to City Administrator Pat Klaers and Public Works Director Terry Maurer; both retired in October, 2015. The City Council thanks everyone who makes our City work: residents and businesses who serve on our City Committees, those who provide input, and our City Staff.

Warmest regards,

Fran Holmes

Fran Holmes
Arden Hills City Council