

Edition: Edina

Volume 1, Issue 12

The City of Edina



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Legend:

- Infrastructure
- Commercial and Mixed-Use Redevelopment
- Workforce
- Communication and Engagement
- Community Vision
- Aviation Noise

Speak Up, Edina!

The City's next online discussion is now available at www.SpeakUpEdina.org. The discussion, which focuses on liquor laws, is available until Jan. 30.

In November, Minneapolis residents voted to repeal a local ordinance that required restaurants outside of downtown Minneapolis and major commercial areas to adhere to a 70-30 food-to-liquor sales ratio, which affected about 70 neighborhood restaurants. Other restaurants in the City were limited to a 60-40 ratio which was also repealed. Edina requires a food-to-liquor sales ratio of 60-40 percent.

In the discussion, the City asks whether residents think Edina's liquor licensing standards should be changed to eliminate the connection between food sales and alcohol sales, whether residents would welcome bars or taprooms in Edina if such a change were made and what sort of concerns they have if the City's food-to-liquor sales ratio was to be eliminated.

In early 2014, the City also held a similar discussion asking residents' opinions about adjusting the existing ratio. Comments received in the discussion were generally supportive of a change in the ratio.

"The context of this discussion is much different than the last," said City Manager Scott Neal. "Our neighboring City got rid of their sales ratio entirely, so we want to know what Edina residents would think if we made a similar change."

This month, the City has been gathering feedback on plastic bags. Questions posed range from whether Edina should ban plastic bags, whether to impose a fee or a tax on plastic bags and how the City can educate shoppers about plastic bag waste. The discussion is open until Monday, Jan. 5. Feedback from the discussion will be presented to the City Council Jan. 20.

To weigh in on a discussion, visit www.SpeakUpEdina.org.

City of Edina Directory

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Police K-9 Diesel To Retire



Photo by Kaylin Eidness

Officer Mike Seeger's K-9 partner, Diesel, will retire Dec. 27.

After eight years on duty with the Edina Police Department, Officer Mike Seeger's K-9 partner, Diesel, will retire Dec. 27.

"He's my partner. Think about spending every waking hour with a dog. You start to learn what he's thinking," said Seeger. "It's going to be a huge change not to have him by my side."

Diesel, a black German Shepard who will turn 10 years old in January, was imported from Slovakia and joined the Department in March of 2006. He's the last of the 16 dogs in his class from the St. Paul Police Department's K-9 Academy that is still working.

Seeger laughs when he recalls the first time he met Diesel. "He was 55 pounds, skinny, matted and looked as if he just came from the pound. Next to him was a regal black-and-tan German Shepard. I point to the black-and-tan dog and ask if that was my dog, and the instructor said, 'no, the other one,' and I thought, 'oh boy.'

"But we got him fed, bathed and up to speed. He ended up graduating top of his class and turned out to

be a really smart dog. We just really clicked."

The duo have won numerous awards, but one that stands out to Seeger is when they placed in the top 20 for narcotics detection at the 2012 United States Police Canine Association's National Detector Trials in Florida.

However, Seeger said that even though they work well together, they each have their good days and bad. He remembers a time when Diesel alerted that there were drugs near the passenger seat of a vehicle and after a few minutes of searching that area of the car, Seeger could not find them.

"I'm talking to him, saying 'you're not a very smart dog today. You don't understand, there are no drugs in here,'" he recalled. "And I look up and the tow truck driver is looking at me and I said, 'can you give me a minute, I'm talking to my dog here?' And we went through this for another minute or so and finally I said, 'there's nothing here!' Then he grabbed hold of the arm

rest and ripped it off and out dropped the drugs. Then he looked at me like, 'I told you they were here.' It was funny."

Diesel will also be missed by others in the Department.

"They were great together," said Sgt. Dan Conboy, who has worked with the team. "Mike was always listening [on the radio] to see if there was a scenario where they needed the K-9 or if another agency needed a K-9. Having the team has been extremely beneficial. We can only hope that the next K-9 and handler can be as effective of a team as Mike and Diesel."

Not only did Diesel work with other officers while on the job, but he made many visits to local elementary classrooms. Seeger estimates that Diesel has met more than 2,000 children.

"Diesel loves kids," said Seeger. "He knows the routine, whether he's working or visiting the kids."

For more information, call the Edina Police Department at 952-826-1610.

Eagle Scout Builds Little Libraries for Edinborough Park



File photo

Will Burns with his Eagle Scout project, little libraries.

Fifteen year-old Edina resident Will Burns Jr. wanted to transform young children's down time into educational moments through his Eagle Scout service project. With this idea in mind, he created "little libraries" to be placed throughout Edinborough Park, 7700 York Ave. S.

Burns has grown up swimming competitively at Edinborough Park with the Edina Swim Club. During one of his practices, he noticed kids just sitting around – swimmers on break or siblings of the swimmers waiting for their brothers or sisters to finish practices. At that moment, a light bulb went off in his head; he had an idea for how this "lost time" could be better utilized.

"My Eagle Scout project addresses youth literacy – specifically, how to take advantage of the 'lost time' kids have today and turn [it] into an opportunity to improve their reading skills," he explained.

Since Burns spent so much time at Edinborough Park as a young boy, he thought placing mini libraries throughout the park would be the best way to reach other young children. He shared his idea with Patty McGrath, General Manager of Edinborough Park. McGrath and her team were eager to help Burns bring his plan to life.

"Kids think of Edinborough Park as a really fun place to be, so if kids discover reading is fun while they are here, then it is a win-win for everyone," said McGrath.

Edinborough Park has three permanent libraries and one mobile library that will be moved throughout the park. Children can take a book home from one of the libraries and bring the book back the next time they visit or they can keep that book and bring one of their own books to the library instead. The idea is to maintain an appropriate amount of ever-changing books in the library.

Both Hitachi Foundation and Cargill Foundation helped fund Burns' project and many volunteers helped with the book drive that was held to stock the libraries. Southwestern Publishing also donated a significant amount of reading materials.

"I hope kids visiting Edinborough Park will take advantage of the libraries to get in a little extra reading time and be better prepared to succeed in school," said Burns.

For more information about the park, contact McGrath at 952-833-9542.

City Looks Ahead with the 2015-2019 Capital Improvement Plan



Photo by Michael Braun

This month, the City Council reviewed and approved a plan for capital maintenance and improvements in 2015 through 2019. The plan, called the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), represents a framework for planning the preservation and expansion of infrastructure, facilities and equipment in Edina.

Finance Director Eric Roggeman explained that the City operates under a two-year budget process. Last year, Edina set the overall budget for operating services, such as the services offered by the Police, Public Works and Parks & Recreation departments. That budget it set for two years. This year, the City reviewed its CIP which is also reviewed every two years, but looks ahead four years at a time.

"There is not much changing with the services we provide to residents and the taxes we assess for those services. This year, we took a look at the capital side," explained Roggeman. "The big thing that's going to affect people in the community and in their taxes is the Braemar Field project. ... We're also going to continue our neighborhood street reconstruction program, street improvements, utility improvements and sidewalks."

The construction of Braemar Field, the Backyard rink at Braemar Arena and the Pamela Park project resulted in the City imposing a new 20-year levy for about \$1.1 million, annually. Looking ahead, Braemar Field and the Backyard are expected to collect income sufficient to pay for their operating costs. Roggeman explained that this initial levy is only required to help cover costs of construction.

In recent years, the City has addressed many pressing capital improvement projects, such as the

construction of City Hall and the Public Works & Park Maintenance Facility, Fire Station No. 1 and the two new gymnasiums on Edina Public Schools property. Despite these projects, Edina continues to provide one of the lowest city tax rates in the metro.

"The budget is really a process to balance what are our priorities of the services we want to provide to residents and things we want to accomplish," said Roggeman. "We have to balance those service priorities with the tax priorities; we don't want to raise taxes too much and we want to keep it consistent for people. It's a balancing act."

The 2014-15 Budget and the 2015-19 CIP can be found on the City's website at www.EdinaMN.gov/finance. The documents offer several hundred pages worth of detail and explanation, and both Roggeman and City Manager Scott Neal believe these documents will provide a thorough look into the City's projected finances.

"One of the things I have watched evolve during my 25 years as a City Manager has been the desire of residents and taxpayers for more transparency in local government," noted Neal in regards to the City's budget documents. "[Edina's Budget and CIP] is a strong step in the direction of what I call 'informed transparency.' It provides its readers the numbers, but those numbers are accompanied with many different kinds of context."

For more information about the Edina Budget and CIP, contact the Finance Department at 952-826-0366 or FinanceDepartment@EdinaMN.gov.

Edina Works Toward Providing Affordable Housing Options

As the Twin Cities affordable housing shortage continues to grow, the City of Edina is working to offer additional options. Approximately 900 affordable housing opportunities have been created in Edina and the City Council has approved about 190 additional units since 2011.

In 2006, the Metropolitan Council and the City of Edina agreed on a goal to build 212 affordable housing units between 2011 and 2020. After only a few years, the City has already approved over 80 percent of that goal.

Of the subsidized affordable housing units in Edina, 77 percent of those are available for senior living while the remaining 20 percent are allotted for families. Senior Planner Joyce Repya explained that allocating affordable housing units for income-eligible families is a priority for the City.

"We have some unique conditions. Land values are high, which raises the cost per unit. Generally speaking, in order to make an affordable development fly, you've got to have higher density and more units," Repya explained.

While the City has made significant progress on the goal issued by the Metropolitan Council, major roadblocks still exist. Of the approved units, only a handful have been built. Financing continues to be difficult for builders to obtain, so approved projects sometimes don't get off the ground.

Recently, the City approved 39 affordable housing units for a new development called 66 West. 66 West, being built by a partnership between Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative and Edina Community Lutheran Church, will be designated for homeless youth who will sign leases, pay rent and are encouraged to move on to independent housing after one to two years.

"It's huge that [the Edina City Council approved the project], but it doesn't mean it opens up in a year," said Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative Executive Director Lee Blons in a recent interview with *The Atlantic*. She explained that the group will need to obtain \$9 million in order for the project to proceed.

Repya hopes that 66 West and the other affordable housing properties in Edina are successful. "People used to be wary of [bringing affordable housing to Edina]. They didn't know who those people were, but now they're realizing that those people are the nurses and the teachers and the young families," she said. "When people need to spend 30 percent of their gross income on housing, we could all reflect on what that would be for us."

For more information about affordable housing in Edina, contact the Planning Division at 952-826-0369.

'Obstructed Vision' is Police Focus for January

Due to the success of the "Focus In" campaign, the Edina Police Department has decided to continue the initiative. Edina patrol officers will focus efforts on obstructed vision during January.

"During the winter months, motorists are often in a hurry, because it's cold outside. They don't take the proper time to clear their windshields and back windows of snow or frost," said Lt. Brian Tholen.

Education will include a warning to those who violate the statutes or codes. In extenuating circumstances, a citation may be issued. In 2014, around 800 verbal or written warnings were issued for the Focus In campaign.

Each month, patrol officers focus police efforts on a specific statutory violation in order to educate the public and gain compliance.

In upcoming months, police will "Focus In" on unsafe equipment, failure to display headlights, bike safety, curfew violations, pedestrian safety, child and seatbelt

safety, distracted driving, speed in school zones, night and snow parking, and the "move over" law.

The violations the Police Department "Focus In" on have seasonal relevance, affect the quality of life in Edina or pose safety risks to residents. All statutes are enforced year-round, but additional attention will be paid to the focus of the month.

"This program is a great opportunity to educate the public on state statutes and local ordinances," said Tholen. "We hope this makes for safer roadways in Edina."

For more information, contact the Edina Police Department at 952-826-1610.



Upcoming Events

Tuesday, Jan. 6, 6:30 p.m.

Community Health Commission Meeting, Edina City Hall

Tuesday, Jan. 6, 7 p.m.

City Council Meeting, Edina City Hall

Thursday, Jan. 8, 7 p.m.

Energy & Environment Commission Meeting, Edina City Hall

Sunday, Jan. 11, 1-5 p.m.

Winter Ice Festival, Centennial Lakes Park
Visitors can enjoy a horse-drawn sleigh ride that will take riders on a tour of the north park, view an artist carve big ice blocks into a fantastic work of art and have their faces painted indoors! All three fireplaces will be on to keep our visitors warm and give ice skaters a break from the cold. A full concessions stand will be available throughout the festival for park goers to enjoy hot chocolate, hot dogs, popcorn and many more snacks. Skate rentals are \$6.

Tuesday, Jan. 13, 7 p.m.

Park Board Meeting, Edina City Hall

Tuesday, Jan. 13, 7 p.m.

Heritage Preservation Board Meeting, Edina City Hall

Wednesday, Jan. 14, 7 p.m.

Planning Commission Meeting, Edina City Hall

Thursday, Jan. 15, 6 p.m.

Transportation Commission Meeting, Edina City Hall

Saturday, Jan. 17, 9 a.m.

Walk with the Mayor, Southdale Center
Walk and talk with Mayor Jim Hovland.
Meet at Caribou Coffee.

Monday, January 19

Martin Luther King Day, Edina City Hall will be closed

Tuesday, Jan. 20, 7 p.m.

City Council Meeting, Edina City Hall

Thursday, Jan. 22, 6:30 p.m.

Arts & Culture Commission Meeting, Edina City Hall

Tuesday, Jan. 27, 7 p.m.

Commission Meeting, Edina City Hall

Wednesday, Jan. 28, 7 p.m.

Planning Commission Meeting, Edina City Hall

January Edina 16 Broadcast Schedule

Edina City Council (shown until the next scheduled meeting – generally two weeks)

- Sundays – 3 a.m., 11 a.m.
- Tuesdays – 7 p.m. (live broadcast on first and third Tuesdays of every month)
- Wednesdays – 3 a.m., 11 a.m.
- Saturdays – 7 p.m.

Planning Commission (shown until the next scheduled meeting – generally two weeks)

- Wednesdays – 7 p.m. (live broadcast on second and fourth Wednesdays of every month)
- Thursdays – 3 a.m., 11 a.m.
- Fridays – 7 p.m.
- Saturdays – 3 a.m., 11 a.m.

Human Rights & Relations Commission (airs Dec. 1 – Jan. 8)

- Sundays - 7 p.m.
- Mondays - 3 a.m., 11 a.m.
- Wednesdays - 10 p.m.
- Thursdays - 6 a.m., 2 p.m.

Transportation Commission (airs Jan. 15–Feb. 12)

- Sundays - 7 p.m.
- Mondays - 3 a.m., 11 a.m.
- Wednesdays - 10 p.m.
- Thursdays - 6 a.m., 2 p.m.

Arts & Culture Commission (airs Jan. 22–Feb. 19)

- Sundays - 7 p.m.
- Mondays - 3 a.m., 11 a.m.
- Wednesdays - 10 p.m.
- Thursdays - 6 a.m., 2 p.m.

Agenda: Edina (new episode on the 1st and 15th of each month)

- Daily at 2:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:30 p.m.

Beyond the Badge (new episode on the 1st of each month)

- Daily at 2 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m.

Enterprise Edina (new episode on the 15th of each month)

- Daily at 2:15 a.m., 10:15 a.m., 6:15 p.m.

Rotary Club of Edina Meetings (new episode weekly)

- Daily at 1 a.m., 9 a.m., 5 p.m.

Programs can be watched on cable channels 16 (standard definition) or 813 (high definition). All content is also streamed online at www.EdinaMN.gov and www.youtube.com/EdinaChannel16.