

# Council Connection



## Upcoming meetings:

- Human Rights & Relations Commission, 7 p.m. Aug. 23
- Art Center Board, 4:30 p.m. Aug. 25
- City Council & Park Board, 5:30 p.m. Aug. 30
- Planning Commission, 7 p.m. Aug. 31
- City Council & HRA, 7 p.m. Sept. 6

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**We'd like to hear from you ...**  
If you have any comments, call Communications & Marketing Director Jennifer Bennerotte at 952-833-9520. The text of this publication will be available online at [www.CityofEdina.com](http://www.CityofEdina.com).



## A summary of the Aug. 16 Edina City Council & HRA meeting

### Council begins 2012 budget talks

The Council began discussing the 2012-2013 budget at a work session prior to its regular meeting.

Staff presented the Council with two options for the 2012-2013 General Fund. The first option was a proposal that extends current City service levels into 2012 and 2013 with estimated changes in employee compensation, energy costs, equipment upgrades and other miscellaneous costs. The scenario would increase the tax levy by 2.8 percent.

The other option included increases in staff, service levels, new programs and other new ideas recommended by department heads. Scenario 2 would increase the City's tax levy by 6.7 percent.

Generally, the Council members indicated support for a preliminary tax levy ranging from 2.75 to 3.5 percent. City Manager Scott Neal will work to prepare a 2012 budget proposal that attempts to balance input and feedback from Council Members and department heads. The proposal will be presented at the Sept. 6 Council meeting, when the Council is expected to set the preliminary tax levy for 2012.

### Council honors photographers

Six photographs and five photographers were honored by the Council as winners of the City of Edina's eighth-annual "Images of Edina" photo contest.

Contest winners were chosen by a panel of judges from among 140 submitted photographs. Judges chose winning photographs in five categories that represent the City's vision statement, which proclaims Edina as "the preeminent place for living, learning, raising families and doing business."

The winners of the 2011 Images of Edina Contest were Rebecca Schmoll, winner of the "Doing Business" and "Learning" categories; Matthew Casey, "Living: People;" Martin Freeman, "Living: Plants/

Wildlife;" Lindsey Koch, "Raising Families;" and Britt Rogers, "Readers' Choice." One of Schmoll's photos was selected as "Best in Show."

Winning photos will be framed and hung in the Finance Department at City Hall, along with the winners of the 2010 contest.

### Council grants preliminary plat approval

The Council approved a new subdivision on Brookview Avenue.

Kirby Herman requested preliminary plat approval with variances for lot width and lot area variances for his property at 5829 Brookview Ave. Herman plans to split the property, raze the existing home and build two new homes on the new lots.

To create the subdivision, lot width variances are needed for what would be 50-foot lots, as well as lot area variances. The lots would measure 6,703 and 6,703 square feet. Because the majority of the parcels on the block and in the neighborhood are made up of 50-foot wide lots and because the variances will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood, the Council approved the preliminary plat with variances.

### City to consider local PACE program

The Council directed staff to develop a program for financing energy efficiency investments.

Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) is a method of financing energy efficiency investments through special property tax assessments. Minnesota State law allows cities to establish such a program with 11 program requirements, including establishing financing terms that do not exceed the useful life of the project or 20 years; completing an energy audit or feasibility study and an inspection and performance verification of at least 10 percent of the energy improvements; and disclosing to borrowers the risks involved in

borrowing, including risk of foreclosure if taxes are not paid.

The City can use a third-party lending institution or act as the lender by issuing bonds.

Staff will develop a local PACE program proposal and present it to the Energy & Environment Commission for members' review and comment. Then, it will advance to the City Council for final review and consideration later this year.

### Council moves forward with solar panel project

The Council voted to continue to move forward with a solar panel project for one of the City's public buildings.

The Energy & Environment Commission worked with staff to procure a grant from the Department of Energy in 2010. City staff hired the consulting firm of McKinstry earlier this year to develop a request for proposal (RFP) for the solar project and develop a preliminary cost breakdown.

Because the overall project's rate of return could not exceed financing terms, McKinstry investigated various City facilities for energy-saving measures. These projects were bundled into an energy efficiency package, which included the solar panels. Even with the bundling, it did not look as if the project would be economically feasible due to the low energy rates paid for City Hall.

However, after the July Commission meeting, staff was approached by the solar supplier and installer stating that the product had decreased in price. McKinstry quickly put together another RFP with updated bidding requirements. Prices were substantially lower than the previous bid. After applying the Local Government Renewable Energy Grant and energy rebates, the low bid will result in no out-of-pocket costs for the City and a positive cash flow of about \$1,450 per year.