

# Council Connection



## Upcoming meetings:

- Human Rights & Relations Commission, 7 p.m. Dec. 27
- City Council and HRA, 7 p.m. Jan. 3
- Transportation Commission, 6 p.m. Jan. 9
- Heritage Preservation Board, 7 p.m. Jan. 10
- Park Board, 7 p.m. Jan. 10

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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 Dec. 20 Edina City Council meeting

### **Council OKs vacation of easement**

The Council approved the vacation of an existing utility and drainage easement, conditioned on dedicating a utility and drainage easement at the new lot line.

The home located at 5023 Nob Hill Drive was constructed over the existing utility and drainage easements. The request to vacate the utility and drainage easement was initiated as a result of the lot line shift that the City Council approved in the fall. The applicant has agreed to re-establish the utility and drainage easement on the new lot line.

### **Council approves 2012 budget**

The Council adopted the 2012 City budget – a budget that will result in City property taxes for the median value single-family house in Edina being significantly lower than those in neighboring communities.

The approved 2012 budget includes a 1.79 percent increase in the City's property tax levies, increasing the 2012 General Fund budget to just over \$30.8 million. Because of some property tax relief planned in the budget, one-third of single family properties will see no property tax increase from the City for 2012 and Edina is sure to retain its position as having the lowest municipal taxes in the area. In 2011, City taxes for the median value home in Edina were \$1,040. That compared to \$2,967 in Minneapolis, \$2,260 in Richfield and \$1,704 in St. Louis Park.

The approved budget includes funding to continue current service levels, add new vehicles and equipment and make capital improvements. It also includes funding for technology upgrades in human resources and a public Wi-Fi System at major City facilities.

The 2012 budget includes sufficient funding for a 2 percent wage increase for all regular employees as well as funding for three new positions: an Economic Development Director, a new position in the Engineering Department dedicated to Environmental Protection Services, and a Facilities/Property Manager position to assist in maintaining the City's public buildings and facilities. Even with the three new positions, staffing levels remain below that of 2009.

### **Council reaffirms Edina Swim Club as City's official swim club, directs staff to create new policy**

The Council discussed the Edina Swim Club's appeal of the Park Board's November decision not to have a policy for 2012 defining priority access to the Edina Aquatic Center. After discussing

the issue, the Council decided to honor the current Park Facilities Use Permit that grants the Aquajets Swim Club access to the Edina Aquatic Center in 2012; however, the Council reaffirmed that the Edina Swim Club is the City's recognized official swim club, which will likely grant them priority access in 2013.

There are two swim teams in Edina: the Edina Swim Club and the Aquajets Swim Club. In the past, the Edina Swim Club has rented the Aquatic Center 3.5 hours per day (6 to 9:30 a.m. Monday through Friday) for its program use. For the past nine years, the Aquajets Swim Club has rented the Aquatic Center 2 hours per day (9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Monday through Friday).

The Edina Swim Club approached staff earlier in 2011 requesting an additional 2 hours of Edina Aquatic Center pool time (the 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. time slot) to expand its program offering. Because there was no policy in place regarding priority access to Edina Aquatic Center, staff proposed to the Park Board a new policy that would grant the Edina Swim Club the right of first refusal to all of the hours that are available for rent. The Park Board voted not to have a policy in 2012, but to bring the matter back to establish a new policy for 2013 and beyond.

The day after the Park Board meeting, the Aquajets Swim Club requested and received two Park & Recreation Department Facilities Use Permits granting the club pool time at the Edina Aquatic Center. One Facilities Use Permit includes pool time Monday through Friday from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. from June 11 through Aug. 10, 2012. The other Facilities Use Permit includes pool time Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. from June 12 through July 26, 2012.

The Edina Swim Club appealed the Park Board's decision. Since the Aquajets had already received the 2012 facilities use permits, the Council felt the City would be in breach of contract if the Facilities Use Permit was not honored and the time was taken away from the Aquajets. However, in keeping with the findings and recommendations of the Edina Youth Sports Task Force that stated, "It is the City of Edina's view that the public is best served when there is only one independently incorporated youth athletic association per sport," members identified the Edina Swim Club as the City's official swim club. Such status will be to that club's benefit when a policy is in place.

Staff was directed to create for the Council's consideration a new Priority Access Policy for the Edina Aquatic Center that mirrors similar policies that are already in place for Edina's athletic fields, outdoor hockey rinks and gymnasiums. If approved by Council, the new priority access policy would go into effect in 2013.

### **Council gives green light for larger real estate signs**

The Council approved an ordinance amendment that will permit larger real estate signs in the community.

The City recently received a complaint about the size of a real estate sign in the "R-1, Residential" zoning districts. Upon investigation of the complaint, it was discovered that most all of the existing "For Sale" signs in Edina don't conform to the City's maximum size requirement of six square feet. A traditional "For Sale" sign is six square feet in size. However, over time, it has become standard to add signs to the original sign, including open house information, website information and real estate agent names. The combination of all of these signs exceeds the maximum size requirement.

The Council settled on an amendment that will allow real estate signs up to 10 square feet in size in the R-1 and R-2 Residential zoning districts.

### **11 named to Neighborhood Identification Steering group**

The City Council appointed 11 people to a Neighborhood Identification Steering Committee.

Members of the Committee are Rob Erickson, Bob Paciecznik, Bob Moore, Hope Melton, Gene Persha, Jennifer Janovy, Bright Dornblazer, Dick Brozik, Bob Miller, Laura Ericksen and Bruce Carlson.

The committee is expected to work over the course of the year with resident teams organized geographically in relation to their homes. They will identify and name Edina neighborhoods – the first step toward a greater City initiative to promote neighborhood associations.

When the initiative is complete, all Edina residents will have the opportunity to form and join a neighborhood association recognized by the City. A similar neighborhood program has existed successfully in St. Louis Park for several years.