

Edition: Edina

Volume 2, Issue 7

The City of Edina



4801 W. 50th St.
Edina, MN 55424
952-927-8861
mail@EdinaMN.gov
www.EdinaMN.gov

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 how residents interact with elected officials, is available until Sept. 1.

Edina's elected officials make decisions based on staff recommendations and on resident feedback. Their goal is to represent the residents of Edina. In order to understand community sentiment, they often rely on feedback they receive from the community. The Mayor and City Council interact with the public through "Community Comment" and public hearings during meetings; other public meetings, open houses and events; "Walk with the Mayor" events; written communications, including letters and emails; www.SpeakUpEdina.org; and others.

In this discussion, the City asks how often residents contact their elected officials, how they prefer to interact or express their opinions to them, and what other opportunities they would prefer to see for interaction with the Council. The feedback from this discussion will be compiled and presented to the City Council Sept. 16.

This month, the City has been gathering feedback on the City's transportation network. Questions asked include whether or not residents think there are enough transportation options, what they use to travel other than driving, and their favorite part of Edina's transportation network. The discussion is open until Aug. 3. Feedback will be compiled and presented to the City Council Aug. 18.

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

Police to Focus In on Child Safety, Seat Belts

As a part of the Edina Police Department's monthly "Focus In" campaign, officers will "Focus In" on child safety and seat belt use in August.



"Often the requirements, use and proper installation of a child passenger restraint system are not clearly understood by those transporting children," said Sgt. Nate Mendel.

Edina Police Department will enforce the use of seatbelts and encourage residents to properly install children's car and booster seats.

"It's simple. Seat belts save lives," said Mendel.

Each month, patrol officers focus police efforts on a specific statutory violation in order to educate the public and gain compliance. Education includes a warning to those who violate the statutes or codes. In extenuating circumstances, a citation may be issued. 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 is paid to the focus of the month.

Last August, 28 verbal or written warnings were given out for child safety and seat belt use.

This year, Police have already focused on obstructed vision, failure to signal, unsafe equipment, failure to display headlights, bike safety, following too close and pedestrian safety. In the coming months, police will "Focus In" on distracted driving, speeding in school zones, night and snow parking, and the "move over" law.

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

Residents Gear Up for Night to Unite

This is the second year Elizabeth Bellas has organized the Night to Unite party for the Strachauer Neighborhood.

"Getting to know your neighbors is the biggest and easiest way to really improve neighborhood safety and your quality of life," said Bellas, who's expecting around 150 to attend this year's block party. "It makes the community much more interesting, vibrant and safe."

Every year, the State of Minnesota joins together to celebrate Night to Unite the first Tuesday of August. Whether it's attending an organized party or just spending the evening with a few neighbors, the Edina Police Department encourages residents to lock their doors, turn on outside lights and spend the evening outside with neighbors Aug. 4.

"Part of what makes Edina a great community is the fact that we have very strong neighborhoods," said Sgt. Brian Hubbard. "This evening is a great opportunity for neighbors to interact with each other and law enforcement, get questions answered and just have a positive experience with their local Police and Fire departments."

Last year, more than 50 Night to Unite block parties were registered with the City of Edina. The Police and Fire-Rescue & Inspections departments try their best to attend parties around the community to answer questions and visit with neighbors.



File photo

Fire Chief Tom Schmitz poses with a young girl dressed in Edina Fire gear at a Night to Unite party last year.

"If you want to improve the quality of life, get out and meet your neighbors," said Bellas.

Night to Unite was created to promote neighborhood spirit, increase awareness in crime prevention and build a stronger partnership between the Police Department and community members.

To find out if there's a party in your neighborhood, call the Edina Police Department at 952-826-1610.

HR Director Promoted to Assistant City Manager

Lisa Schaefer was promoted to Assistant City Manager in June after Karen Kurt resigned to become the City Manager of Platteville, Wisconsin.

Schaefer has over a decade of experience, but her familiarity with local government runs deeper. Local government and public service isn't something Schaefer has only encountered in her profession; it's always been a part of her life.

"My family has always been active in local government," said Schaefer, whose father was Mayor as well as a volunteer firefighter along with her grandfather and brother in Rockville, Minnesota, where she was raised.

Passionate about the services provided by local government and being a responsible, strategic and fiscally prudent public servant, Schaefer is excited for this opportunity.

"It's about improving how we provide services to the public. In local government, you can directly see the results of that very quickly," she said. "You can see the parks that people are using, the clean water that they're drinking and the emergency services that are critical to the public."

Schaefer was hired by the City in August 2011 as Director of Human Resources (HR) where she oversaw recruitment, compensation, benefits, payroll, employment policies, risk management and leadership development. Prior to working for the City of Edina, Schaefer worked for the League of Minnesota Cities and the City of Eden Prairie.

Though her experience is primarily in the realm of HR, Schaefer says she's always been excited about both HR



Photo by Michael Braun

Human Resources Director Lisa Schaefer was promoted to the position of Assistant City Manager in June.

and administration of local government. "My career path to this point has been more focused on HR," she said. "What I'm really excited about is being able to take a bigger-picture look at the operations within the City and how to make that more efficient and effective."

"Because [Lisa's] core discipline is Human Resources, she has had in-depth exposure to all aspects of city government operations, and it's her operational management where I expect her to make her initial mark with the City of Edina," said City Manager Scott Neal. "I've worked with Lisa for the past four years. We know each other

well. She has complementary strengths to my own. I am confident that we are going to be a good team."

As Assistant City Manager, one of Schaefer's goals is to better align departments with one another to increase efficiency. Another of her core initiatives will be technology and how to better incorporate it into every department's daily tasks.

Schaefer holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Psychology from St. Cloud State University and a master's of business administration from the University of St. Thomas.

Schaefer assumed her new duties as Assistant City Manager on Monday, June 8, but will continue the transition from HR through the summer as the City completes the hiring process for a new HR Director. The City hopes to have a candidate selected by the end of August.

For more information, contact the Administration Department at 952-826-0364.

Assistant City Engineer Begins Work

The leaders of Edina's Engineering Department have crossed paths many times in their careers.

Carter Schulze recently joined the City staff as Assistant City Engineer. A Wisconsin native, Schulze attended the University of Minnesota with Engineering Director Chad Millner. Both have bachelor's degrees in Civil Engineering.

Schulze began his career with Granite Construction, working as a Quality Control Engineer on the Hiawatha Light Rail, now known as the METRO Blue Line. After, Schulze worked for Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. (SEH) for seven years; both Schulze and Millner were employed by the consulting firm. It was in this position that Schulze became acquainted with the City of Edina.

"Some of our clients were cities around the metro area, one being Edina," said Schulze. "I met a lot of Edina staff when working on neighborhood projects for the City."

Schulze served as Senior Project Engineer for the City of Eden Prairie before being contacted by Millner about an open position with Edina. Schulze succeeds Patrick Wrase as Assistant City Engineer.



Photo by Michael Braun

Carter Schulze recently began work as Assistant City Engineer.

"I think we will be able to use Carter's varied background to improve processes specifically related to our Capital Improvement Plans," Millner said. "He has experience in the construction industry, a private engineering firm and in the public sector. I look forward to seeing how our CIP projects can be successfully implemented under Carter's direction."

"It was a natural progression. The City of Edina offered the 'next step' up for me," said Schulze. "I look forward to working with the staff. I can already tell they are energetic, work hard and are intelligent."

When he has time off from engineering duties, Schulze fights fires. Schulze has served the Eden Prairie Fire Department for over three years on a volunteer basis.

"Every kid dreams of being a part of the Fire Department; it's a new challenge and hobby," said Schulze.

Schulze currently resides in Eden Prairie with his wife and two children, spending free time up north at their cabin.

For more information on the Engineering Department, call 952-826-0371 or visit www.EdinaMN.gov/Engineering.

MnDOT Begins Work in Edina on Highway 100

While work on Highway 100 is nearing its halfway point in St. Louis Park, work through Edina is just beginning. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has begun a two-year road-and-bridge repair project on the highway between Interstate Highway 494 in Bloomington and West 36th Street in St. Louis Park.

During the project, lanes and ramps will periodically close to allow for the work to be done on the road surface and bridges. Sections of the highway will also close completely several weekends this year.

"This section of the highway is heavily utilized and the pavement is currently in poor condition," said Bobbie Dahlke of MnDOT. "The repairs to the road and the ramps will make the road smoother and replacing the guardrails will improve the safety of the road."

For the rest of 2015, the project will focus on the southern portion of Highway 100 between American Boulevard in Bloomington and Benton Avenue in Edina. Work on the highway north of Minnesota Highway 62

to 36th Street is anticipated to occur in 2016. Most immediately, MnDOT expects the following traffic impacts through late August:

- Both directions reduced to two lanes between West 70th Street and Highway 62.
- Eastbound West 66th Street over Highway 100 to close for up to 10 days.
- Short-term, off-peak closures of West 70th Street at Highway 100.
- Short-term, off-peak closures of Highway 62 under Highway 100.
- Benton Avenue over Highway 100 to close for two consecutive days.

The entire project is anticipated to be complete in late 2016.

For more information about the project, visit www.mndot.gov/metro/projects/hwy100slp.

Construction Begins at Braemar Golf Course

Construction is well under way at Braemar Golf Course to renovate the driving range and create a Par 3 course. The driving range and former executive course closed on July 6, when construction began.

"The Driving Range expansion and the Executive Course renovation will make Braemar one of the premier practice and short course facilities in the Twin Cities," said General Manager Joe Abood. "To do that, we had to expand the range into the executive course" and convert it to a Par 3 course.

The grass area of the driving range will nearly double to 300 yards long and will accommodate up to 58 golfers at a time. Golfers who wish to practice while the driving range is under construction are able to use the Braemar Golf Dome, 7420 Braemar Blvd., which is normally closed until October. The Golf Dome is open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

To make room for the new layout of the driving range, the executive course will be reworked as a Par 3 course. The Par 3 has been designed to be more welcoming to all players and incorporates features golfers liked about the now-closed Fred Richards Executive Golf Course.

"The driving range is being expanded to increase its capacity and to enhance turf conditions to provide the

best practice experience for its patrons," Abood said. "Similar to the Fred Richards course, the updated Par 3 course will have larger greens and fewer forced carries, which will make the new course much more playable for golfers of all ages and abilities."



For golfers who want to play an executive length course, extra tee boxes have been added to the Clunie 9. The Silver Player's Card can also be used on the Clunie Executive for the remainder of 2015. Additionally, cart specials are available to assist golfers with the longer green to tee walks.

"I'm very excited for the improved Par 3 and driving range," said Percy Erck, who is part of Braemar's 18-hole women's league and who worked at Braemar when it first opened. "It's been 50 years, and the new improvements will be sensational. I'm most excited for the Par 3 in that all ages and abilities can play on it. It's making it for all levels to feel good about playing golf and to have fun."

The \$1.8 million in upgrades are expected to be completed as early as late spring of 2016.

For more information, contact Abood at 952-903-5754 or jabood@EdinaMN.gov, or visit www.BraemarGolf.com.

Braemar Retains 'Audubon Sanctuary' Status

The many amenities available to golfers at Braemar Golf Course are not only designed and sustained for performance, but environmental quality.

"A lot of people view [golf courses] as environmentally unfriendly, and [Braemar Golf Course] wanted to prove to people we are [environmentally friendly]," said Maintenance Operations Coordinator Bob Atol. "We have a variety of projects that enhance this effort."

With an eye toward being more "green," Braemar staff focuses on wildlife and habitat management, chemical use and reduction, growing a strong outreach and education program, water conservation and water quality management, among other things.

Efforts to maintain high standards of environmental quality have led to Braemar retaining status as a "Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary" through its continued commitment to enhance wildlife habitat and protect environmental quality. "Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary" status is awarded to golf courses by Audubon International for preserving the natural heritage of golf through improving natural areas and

wildlife habitats, improving efficiency and minimizing potentially harmful impacts of golf course operations.

"Braemar Golf Course has shown a strong commitment to its environmental program. They are to be commended for preserving the natural heritage of the area by protecting the local watershed and providing a sanctuary for wildlife on the golf course property," said Director of Cooperative Sanctuary Programs at Audubon International Tara Pepperman.

Atol spearheaded Braemar's environmental efforts.

"It's been 100 percent Bob's project since day one. It was his initiative and his efforts," said Superintendent Tom Swenson. "It's more of a personal goal and an effort on behalf of the City for Bob."

The Audubon International recertification process occurs every three years. Braemar Golf Course was last granted "Sanctuary" status in 2004 and is currently one of 907 courses in the world with the certification.

For more information on the course and its features and upcoming events, call 952-903-5750 or visit www.BraemarGolf.com.

Lawsuit Concludes in City's Favor

A judge recently affirmed Edina's zoning ordinances and residential redevelopment practices when it ruled in favor of the City in a lawsuit.

A lawsuit filed in the Hennepin County Fourth Judicial District Court claimed redevelopment and grading of Edina properties near a City-owned lot at 4236 Crocker Ave. created excessive water run-off, damaging the petitioners' property.

In December 2014, the petitioners sought a writ of mandamus, or an order for the City to "correct an abuse of discretion," by "initiat[ing] condemnation proceedings under Chapter 117 of the Minnesota statutes," according to the court's memorandum.

In Minnesota, inverse condemnation can be used against a municipality to compensate for both taking and damaging property. In order to receive compensation, the petitioner must sue the City.

The petitioners claimed that by approving the development plans of the surrounding properties, the City adopted elevation changes that caused water run-off to be directed to their property. The court found that the City is not liable because it approved the development plan. The court said in a footnote that action could be taken against the neighboring property owners who actually caused the alleged harm, but not against the City as a permitting agency.

The court holds that a private landowner may reasonably divert run-off from their property, even at the detriment to

another; however, there is no municipal easement located on or near the involved properties. Therefore, since public land is not involved, the City is not held liable.

The petitioner also argued that the City should also be liable for all drainage problems within the drainage system since the property is located within the city, which has a "complex and comprehensively managed drainage system." The City pointed out that, given those facts, it would be like "making the City liable for every drop of rain that falls within the city's borders," according to the memorandum.

The court's opinion states the petitioners' arguments do not support their claim to "seek inverse condemnation damages against the City where the alleged water drainage damages do not arise from actions by the City on property under its ownership or control."

"Residential redevelopment projects can be frustrating experiences for nearby neighbors," said City Manager Scott Neal. "The City's management of residential redevelopment is guided by City Code and State and federal laws and regulations. We do our best in our enforcement of those regulations to respect the rights of all parties. Overall, I think the court reaffirmed those decisions."

For more information, contact the City's Administration Department at 952-826-0364.

Upcoming Events

Friday, July 31, 6:30 p.m.

Music in Edina concert featuring Alex Rossi, Rosland Park

Tuesday, Aug. 4

Night to Unite

Tuesday, Aug. 4, 6:45 p.m.

"Evening with Kasy Lansdale" lecture and concert, Edina Art Center

Wednesday, Aug. 5, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Battle of the Badges Blood Drive, Edina City Hall

Wednesday, Aug. 5, 7 p.m.

City Council Meeting, Edina City Hall

Sunday, Aug. 9, 6 p.m.

Lighthouse Night, Centennial Lakes Park

Tuesday, Aug. 9, 7 p.m.

Stroll n' Roll, activities along France Avenue

Tuesday, Aug. 11, 7 p.m.

Heritage Preservation Board Meeting, Edina City Hall

Wednesday, Aug. 12, 7 p.m.

Planning Commission Meeting, Edina City Hall

Thursday, Aug. 13, 7 p.m.

Energy & Environment Commission Meeting, Edina City Hall

Tuesday, Aug. 18, 7 p.m.

City Council Meeting, Edina City Hall

Thursday, Aug. 20, 6:30 p.m.

Walk With the Mayor, Yorktown Park; meet at the Community Garden

Tuesday, Aug. 25, 7 p.m.

Human Rights & Relations Commission Meeting, Edina City Hall

Wednesday, Aug. 26, 7 p.m.

Planning Commission Meeting, Edina City Hall

Thursday, Aug. 27, 4:30 p.m.

Arts & Culture Commission Meeting, Edina City Hall

City Asks Residents to Aid Firefighters by Adopting Hydrants

It takes exactly 20 turns with a two- or three-foot wrench to access water from the 1,876 fire hydrants in Edina, and it's important each and every one of them is accessible to responding firefighters hastily attempting to attach a hose to battle a fire.

During the winter months, snow-capped hydrants can hinder firefighters. Edina's Adopt-A-Hydrant program educates residents how to claim responsibility for the accessibility of a hydrant, benefitting firefighters who need to quickly access it in an emergency. Caring for the hydrant consists of keeping it clear of snow after snowfalls.

Residents can sign up at www.EdinaMN.gov/adopt-a-hydrant to receive email reminders after large snowstorms to shovel out a hydrant in their neighborhood.

"The biggest thing we would like is to have residents keep hydrants clear for emergency use," said Public Works Coordinator Dave Goergen. "There are over 1,800 hydrants in the city, and there is no way in terms of manpower we can undergo this on our own."

Residents looking to spruce up their yard sometimes attempt to camouflage the hydrant behind decorative landscaping or flowers to make their yards look more attractive; however, this may hinder attempts to access the utility. Fire Code requires a clear three-foot radius around a fire hydrant, allowing responders to easily approach the critical resource in an emergency.

Fire Marshal Jeff Siems emphasized the importance of keeping hydrants clear.

"It is essential for our firefighters to quickly locate nearby hydrants; it's a crucial resource," said Siems. "When residents adopt a hydrant, they aren't just taking care of a hydrant – they could be saving a life. And it's because of the valuable time they are saving by having the fire hydrant ready for firefighters when they arrive."

In addition to individual residents, many community organizations such as church groups, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, service clubs and athletic teams adopt hydrants, too.

Residents can also aid firefighters and the Public Works Department by volunteering to paint hydrants. Only one-third of all City hydrants are painted each year. Public Works will provide paint to anyone willing to re-paint a hydrant – a simple task, requiring only one can of fire-hydrant-red spray paint, which can be picked up at the Public Works & Park Maintenance Facility, 7450 Metro Blvd.

For more information, call the Edina Public Works Department at 952-826-0376 or the Edina Fire Department at 952-826-0330.