

City Council
 Date: 1-08-08
 REGULAR
 Item: 9b.
 Motion

ITEM: Designate an Official Newspaper
 SUBMITTED BY: Sharon Lumby, City Clerk
 REVIEWED BY: Susan Hoyt, City Administrator

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED: The City Council is being asked to designate an official newspaper. Five newspapers are potential candidates for this: the Lake Elmo Review, the Stillwater Gazette, the Oakdale Lake Elmo Review, the St. Paul Pioneer Press and the St. Croix Valley Press (Attachment 1- LMC Handbook requirements). After reviewing the city's history with the local papers, the paid subscriptions going to Lake Elmo residents and the amount of coverage and priorities given to Lake Elmo community news, the staff is comfortable continuing with the Lake Elmo Leader as its officially designated paper. However, in the interest of being efficient and responsive to specific requests and to be assured that the city meets mandatory planning deadlines imposed by state statute, the staff requests designating the St. Paul Pioneer Press with its 7 day a week publication and extensive circulation in Lake Elmo as a back up legal paper for use from time to time. This would be used only when the time constraints cannot be met with the Lake Elmo Leader as described below.

	City History	Schedule	Paid subscribers and directly delivered to Lake Elmo residents/businesses (2,738 households in Lake Elmo)	Focus
Lake Elmo Leader	5 years	Weekly	854 subscriptions	Primary focus is Lake Elmo
Stillwater Gazette	Used up to opening of the Leader	Daily M - F	350 subscriptions*	Greater St. Croix Valley
Oakdale Lake Elmo Review	Never used	Weekly	281 subscriptions * *	Oakdale Lake Elmo Area
Press Publications St. Croix Valley News	Never used	Weekly	19 subscriptions	St. Croix Valley
Pioneer Press (has a Stillwater office)	Never used	7 days a week	1,311 daily 1,807 Sunday	St. Paul with a Washington County Section

* Deliver 250 copies to the Post Office for distribution

**Have free newspapers available at locations in Lake Elmo

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

When the Lake Elmo Leader opened 5 years ago it was located in Lake Elmo, which according to state statute gave it priority for a legal publication. It is now located in the NW corner of Stillwater. There are no other papers located in Lake Elmo.

The City Council may want to continue with the Lake Elmo Leader as its official newspaper because of its proximity to the city limits and its specific focus on the city of Lake Elmo and the Lake Elmo community rather than a broader area. The Lake Elmo Leader has been very responsive to the city's requests and most official city notices can be planned and needs have been met with the Lake Elmo Leader.

BACK UP DESIGNATED PAPER TO MEET TIME CONSTRAINTS FOR LEGAL REASONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

However, the staff recommends that the city council consider designating the paper with the largest circulation, the St. Paul Pioneer Press, as a back up paper to be used under unique circumstances when the city needs to get a quicker turn around for a publication to serve property owners and to meet the 60 day rule in particular. Or if there is an oversight in getting an official notice published by a certain date (unlikely). The Pioneer Press gives the city a two day turn around time for publications that may be unexpected and time sensitive and can be published on weekends as long as the 10 day publication time before a public meeting.

It is never good to publish inaccurate information and, from time to time, this occurs because the staff anticipates an application might be ready for a planning commission meeting and it is not. If this occurs, not only is money wasted, the planning commission has to delay the item, which means that the applicant often needs to attend even with an incomplete application because he or she needs to be sure that no action is taken since it is not legal to do so. It is difficult for the staff to anticipate that an application will be fully ready for the planning commission several days in advance of its submission. It is important not to publish notices without accurate information about the application and also not to give the applicant and the commission something on the agenda that can't be processed. Despite the accommodations made by the Leader, from time to time, the lead time required for the weekly paper on some occasions can be a challenge. With increased land use decisions related to the Village AUAR, comprehensive plan and various zoning activities, maintaining the flexibility is in the best interest of the city. (The city could publish the notice in the Lake Elmo Leader too – this notice would not comply with the legal requirements).

For example, a notice of the public hearing on a planning application must go to the Lake Elmo Leader on Friday, Feb 1 to be considered at a public meeting on Monday February 18.(or a little over two weeks). However, if the application is ready on Tuesday, February 5, the applicant will not be able to be published prior to the Feb 18 meeting; in order to be sure the notice gets to the paper and has a ten day lead time before the PC meeting, he or she will need to wait until the March 10 planning commission meeting to be considered for action. By having the Pioneer Press with a two day legal notice requirement, the applicant could have his/her application legally published on February 7, meet the 10 day requirement by February 18 – three weeks earlier than waiting until March 10. Again, it is not anticipated that the back up newspaper would need to be used very frequently.

Suggested motions for consideration (select one).

Motion 1:Recommended option

Move to designate the Lake Elmo Leader as the official newspaper and designate the St. Paul Pioneer Press as a back up official newspaper on an as needed basis.

OR

Motion 2:

Move to designate the St. Paul Pioneer Press as the official newspaper.

OR

Motion 3:

Move to designate the Lake Elmo Leader as the official newspaper.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1 Table summarizing circulation and fees
- 2 Criteria for Official Newspapers