

Spring 2013

THE CITY OF
LAKE ELMO

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Highway 5 Road Safety Audit Complete, Council to Consider MnDOT Recommendations



Minnesota Trunk Highway 5 through Lake Elmo.

Last fall MnDOT assembled a team of experts to conduct a Road Safety Audit (RSA) to address ongoing safety concerns on Minnesota Trunk Highway 5 (MnTH) from Jamaca Avenue to Manning Avenue. Areas of specific concern included traffic speed, difficulty for pedestrian crossing, delays at intersections during peak hours, and dangerous intersections.

The audit review process included the following steps:

- Assembly and analysis of crash data from 2002 to 2011 using the Minnesota Crash Mapping Analysis Tool (MnCMAT)
- Documentation of traffic volumes for the corridor
- Two meetings; one with the City Council, elected officials, local law enforcement and residents, and one follow-up meeting with MnDOT Metro District and Washington County staff
- Field observations and discussion of possible mitigation strategies

The Road Safety Audit Report was completed and presented before Council members at the February 19, 2013 meeting. Key findings from the study indicate that Highway 5 has higher crash rates than expected in several segments, and higher density of access compared to similar roadways. Vehicle speeds were found to be reasonable based on a comparison of the char-

acteristics of speed profiles, and consistent with those typical of rural roadways.

The RSA Team developed a list of suggested improvements to address identified safety and operational deficiencies. The key components include converting MnTH 5 from a 2-lane roadway to a 3-lane roadway with a center two-way left turn lane and developing and implementing access management and street network plans for the City of Lake Elmo. The rationale in support of converting to a 3-lane roadway is to reduce rear end crashes, mitigate the effects of high access density, and drop vehicle speeds.

The RSA Team considered the costs and feasibility of implementing specific strategies at specific locations in the corridor and suggests a potential implementation plan for the Short Term (1 to 5 years), Mid Term (5 to 10 years) and Long Term (more than 10 years) Actions. City Council is expected to act on all of these measures within the next three months.

Mayor Reads To Elementary Students



Mayor Mike Pearson read to more than 300 1st through 6th grade students at Lake Elmo Elementary in February. The visit was part of the school-wide celebration of "I Love to Read Month."

Economic Development Committee Approved

The Lake Elmo City Council voted unanimously on February 5th to create an Economic Development Authority to aid the community in the financial aspects of growth. The primary powers of an Economic Development Authority, as established by Minnesota State Statutes, are to:

- **Serve and promote local business and to recruit new business;**
- **Issue double tax exempt revenue bonds related to growth;**
- **Acquire and sell property for redevelopment;**
- **Review development agreements to make sure taxpayers are not at risk;**
- **Make or review credit enhancements needed for growth.**

The City Council approved the creation of a seven member panel made up of five Lake Elmo property owners and two members of the Council. Mayor Mike Pearson has been meeting with taxpayers interested in serving on the EDA over the last two months and will be recommending the non-Council members to the City Council in April. Mayor Pearson and Council Member Nicole Park have already been appointed to the EDA.

"My aim is to appoint members to the EDA who will protect the interest of our taxpayers with their business acumen and their commitment to our current quality of life. I want business-savvy, honest citizens who can help us navigate the waters of development we must travel to honor our understanding with the Met Council", said Pearson.

The Lake Elmo Economic Development Authority's first orders of business will be to review the City's recently approved Developers Agreement, whether or not to create a redevelopment district in the Old Village, and determine the best way to finance sewer and water projects throughout the City.

Message From the Mayor



Hello Neighbors,

I hope you will find the pages of this newsletter filled with valuable information. While specific topics are covered in depth, I would like to take the opportunity to convey a bit of a broader perspective on the City's direction moving forward.

Even to a casual observer of Lake Elmo, it is evident that our town is embracing significant changes, including development proposals percolating for both the "South 10th" area and within our Village Area.

These developments are welcomed for a variety of reasons. Over time these changes will offer a revitalized downtown, an increased tax base, lifecycle housing options, and additional jobs.

More tangible benefits include sewer availability for residents with problematic septic systems, and the stabilization, and possible reduction, of water rates for existing residents through shrinking the "gap" in the water debt fund.

While the benefits of change can be compelling; change is often accompanied by concern. It should be clear that this concern is not lost on the council or City staff. We recognize that specific areas of our city will be more impacted than others. Much effort has been expended to ensure these changes are financially, environmentally, and logistically sound throughout our City and within specific neighborhoods as well.

Again, given the confines of our situation, I am a firm believer that these changes will bring an overall benefit to our city.

I know the Council joins me in offering many thanks for the hard work that past and present work groups, park commissions, and planning commissions have offered in order to keep Lake Elmo the wonderful community it is.

Mike Pearson, Mayor

City Wide Clean-Up Day Scheduled for June 8

Lake Elmo residents will have the opportunity to dispose of larger household items at the annual City Wide Clean-Up Day on June 8, 2013.

Accepted items include household items, carpet, furniture, lawn mowers, bicycles, mattresses, and appliances.

The fee, which includes one free appliance per residence, is \$40 for the first load and \$35 for the second load. Additional fees may be required for certain



paints, fluorescent bulbs, and electronics or computers. Those wishing to dis-

pose of hazardous waste or electronics are advised to contact the Washington County Environmental Center at 651-430-6655.

Items that will not be accepted include brush, propane and LP tanks, construction material, batteries,

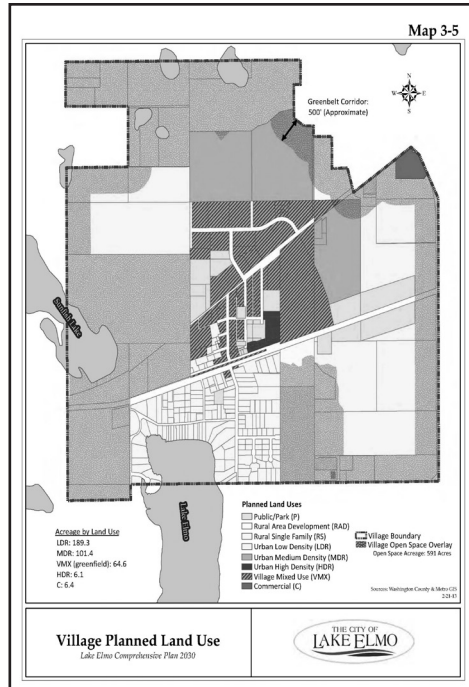
pose of hazardous waste or electronics are advised to contact the Washington County Environmental Center at 651-430-6655.

The City Wide Clean-Up Day will take place from 8 a.m. to noon, on Saturday, June 8, 2013, at Lake Elmo Public Works, 3445 Ideal Avenue (on the corner of Highway 5 and Ideal Avenue). Contact City Hall for more information at 651-747-3900.

Village Land Use Plan Authorized for Distribution by the City Council

At the meeting on March 5, 2013, the City Council authorized distribution of an amendment to the City's Comprehensive Plan pertaining to the future land use of the Village Planning Area to adjacent communities and jurisdictions for review. This is an important step in completing a major Comprehensive Plan Amendment. After the Village Land Use Plan is reviewed by adjacent communities and jurisdictions, the plan can be forwarded on to the Metropolitan Council for review and approval. The City anticipates the review process to be completed sometime in late summer of 2013. After the review process is completed, and there are no glaring deficiencies in the plan, the Council may officially adopt the Village Land Use Plan and proceed with execution.

The vision for the Village Land Use Plan is the product of significant work and public engagement aimed at selecting the best future land use scenarios for the Village. This process built off of previous planning efforts for the Village and was led by the Village Work Group, an advisory committee mostly comprised of Planning Commissioners and City Council members. In collaboration



The Village Land Use Plan, including a mixed-use district, open space, and community recreational facility, was designed to offer residents a high quality of life.

with City staff, the Village Work Group participants helped to make a variety of policy recommendations pertaining to land use, open space, parks, trails and transportation improvements, which were directly translated into the Village Land Use Plan. These considerations provided a roadmap for the City to ensure that the development that occurs in

the Village will contribute to a high quality of life in the Village.

As far as the key features contained within the Village Land Use Plan, there are several concepts that should be noted. In terms of land use, the highlight of the plan is the inclusion of a Village Mixed-Use district (VMX) in the downtown area of the Village. This district is intended to provide opportunities for both residential and commercial activity within a downtown setting, building off the existing mainstreet or historic downtown pattern. In addition to the mixed-use district, the plan offers two zones of sewer residential development of varying densities located in the areas to the north and east of downtown. These residential areas will be the primary areas of growth within the Village. Regarding other important features, the Village Land Use Plan also includes areas designated for open space or rural development, as well as a community recreational facility in the Eastern portion of the Village.

As new efforts or projects related to Village planning arise, the City will continue to engage the community on how to best address growth in downtown Lake Elmo.

Met Council Approves I-94 Comprehensive Plan Amendment

The Metropolitan Council unanimously approved the City of Lake Elmo's Comprehensive Plan Amendment for the I-94 Corridor planning area at its February 27, 2013 meeting. This action allows the City to formally adopt and implement the updated plan for the corridor. In addition to identifying areas for new residential, commercial, and business park development south of 10th Street, the plan also incorporates revised projections for the timing related to future growth in the City and the anticipated staging for utility extensions. This important step paves the way for the City to adopt changes to the Zoning Map that will ultimately guide how land in the I-94 Corridor may be developed.

The Met Council approval also addressed the previous agreement between the City of Lake Elmo and the Met Council concerning the timing of future development that will be required to connect to the regional sanitary sewer system. This recent action extends the City's original deadlines and grants the City an additional five years to achieve the required levels of construction. The Met Council has also committed to continue working with the City on its growth projections as the population forecasts for the entire metro region are updated in the coming years.

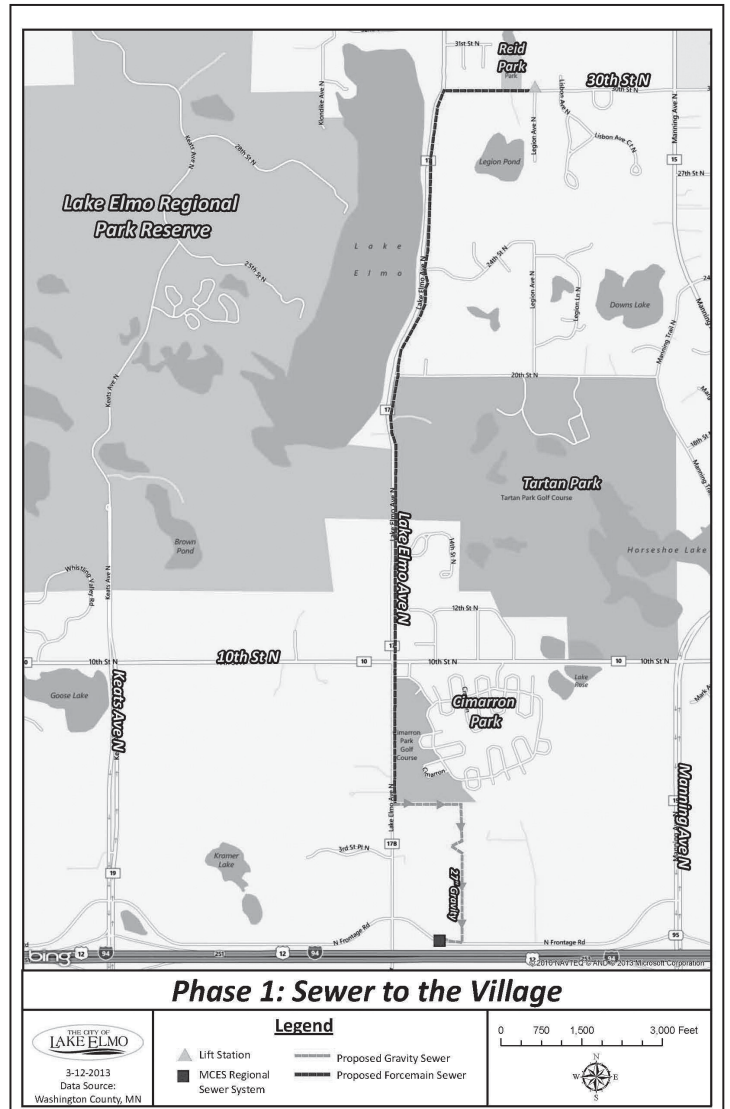
For further information, please contact the Lake Elmo Planning Department.

Extending Public Sanitary Sewer to the Village

The City Council recently approved the Comprehensive Plan Amendment for the Village and indicated a readiness to begin implementation. One of the first steps in plan implementation is to bring public sanitary sewer service to the Village. This is partially in response to growing pressure to get sewer to the Village. Surveys completed in 2012 for the Village area indicated strong support for public sanitary sewer. The City has also received a growing number of requests from existing Village properties with distressed on-site septic systems and limited options for replacement. This has resulted in the need to grant variances and allow temporary sewage treatment solutions until public sewer is provided. Public sanitary sewer is needed to replace these aging, non-compliant and failing septic systems including the aging 201 systems the city constructed in the 1980's. The sewer service is also needed to support new growth and development as provided for in the Village Plan.

A three phase plan has been developed to extend public sewer to the Village. Phase 1 includes the installation of a lift station and connecting forcemain from the Village to the Met Council facilities, a large metering station located along the I-94 corridor just east of the Lake Elmo Avenue and Hudson Boulevard intersection. From this lift station, two separate gravity sewer systems will be constructed into the Village. One system, Phase 2, will extend north along Lake Elmo Avenue into the Downtown District to serve the western Village area including existing businesses and properties. The other system, Phase 3, will extend into the new growth area and serve the eastern Village area including new development. Preliminary plans are underway for these future extensions with the Phase 2 western gravity system targeting 2015 construction. The Phase 3 eastern gravity system will be constructed as development projects come forward.

Meanwhile, the Phase 1 sewer plans have long been in place including a completed environmental review and design, and sewer easements have recently been negotiated to facilitate its construction. This project will be constructed in 2013 and 2014 in order to utilize a \$1 million state grant and to initiate the implementation of



the Village Plan. The project will construct a lift station near the southeast corner of Reid Park just north of 30th Street with three miles of connecting forcemain. Once the forcemain extends south of 10th Street a trunk gravity sewer system will be constructed in the I-94 corridor area to provide properties the opportunity to receive sewer service and begin development projects. The construction of gravity sewer with this project will save between \$300,000 - \$400,000 by eliminating over 3,500 feet of redundant forcemain pipe.

City News Delivered Weekly to Your Inbox

fresh
Weekly News and Information

Keeping up with what's happening in your city and community has just gotten easier. You can now sign up to have the City's weekly e-newsletter, 'Fresh' sent directly to your inbox every Friday. Each issue of 'Fresh' includes the most recent council and commission meeting updates, and community and event news.

To Subscribe, visit www.lakeelmo.org and click on the 'Fresh' link

The Truth About Septic Systems

OH NO, what is wrong with my septic system? When that question hits the majority of people, it is usually caused by one of several happenings.

These can be as wide-ranging as the toilet will not flush, sewage is backing up into the house or out in the yard, or it was just pumped and now the system has some problems. It may also be that you are thinking of selling your house and your real estate agent has told you to get an inspection to see if the system is up to code. Any of these situations could cause panic and terror in us.

What do we really need to know?

To be in compliance, an existing individual sewage treatment system (ISTS) must meet the following criteria:

1. The ISTS must be compliant with public health and safety. This means that it cannot discharge water to the ground surface, drainage systems, ditches, or storm water drains or directly to surface

water. It cannot cause reoccurring sewage backups into your house or building. Furthermore, the system must not have electrical hazards and it must have a secure maintenance hole cover.

2. The system must be "water tight." This means your tank cannot leak for any reason. It can be concrete, fiberglass, plastic or other watertight materials. It just cannot leak.

3. The septic system must meet performance standards, and be operated and managed according to its operating permit. Call the City to ask what your requirements are.

4. There must be "adequate separation" of the bottom of the drainfield from "mottled" (redoximorphic) soils. Mottled soils indicate where the soil is too wet to treat the water coming from your tanks. This requirement can vary from two (2) to three (3) feet. For areas within 1,000 feet of a lake, all systems require three (3) feet of separation. Systems installed

from 1996 through the present require three (3) feet of separation. Systems installed before 1996 require two (2) feet of separation as long as they are more than 1,000 feet from a lake.

In summary, your septic tank must not leak or be a hazard, and you need to have "good" soil in the area of the drainfield.

Who should you call to inspect your system? You can use any business licensed to do so. I recommend that you get the best qualified business and person to do this because replacement systems can now cost up to \$20,000.

Mr. Brandt is a licensed Soil Scientist and an Advanced Designer and Advanced Inspector. He is an owner of Soil Investigation & Design, Inc., a firm that deals with inspecting/designing septic systems, and inspecting homes and testing wells. Brandt can be contacted at pbrandt@soilinvestigations.us or 651-260-3783.

Spring Cleaning Tips to Keep Waterways Clean

Spring weather can make a mess of your yard and our local waterways. Here are a few tips for getting your landscape back in shape and keeping local lakes, streams, and rivers clean:

- Avoid putting any permanent structures in flood prone areas of your yard and try to keep those areas clear during the spring. Melting snow and spring storms can create standing water and voluntary streams that wash loose dirt and debris out of your yard and into creeks and roadside ditches where they are carried downstream to local waterways.
- Keep grass clippings, leaves, and debris out of local streams and wetlands. Compost your yard waste or dispose of it in your street-side pick-up. Yard waste that ends up in wetlands or streams contributes to algal growth in the summer, making the water green and smelly.

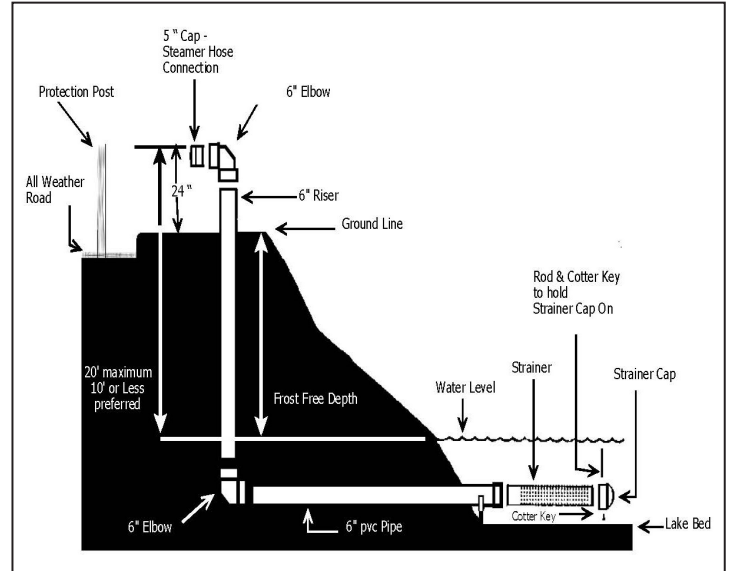
- Stabilize your soil and increase infiltration by planting deep-rooted native plants or trees. The roots of turf grass extend only two to three inches into the soil, giving it little ability to hang on when the water flows. Native flowers and grasses, on the other hand, can have root systems four to twelve feet deep! These deep roots anchor the plants and keep soil from washing away. They also increase the amount of water the soil can absorb, meaning that more water sinks in to recharge groundwater aquifers and less ends up in the storm drain.
- If you live along a stream or wetland, it is important to maintain a healthy un-mowed buffer along your shoreline. A shoreline or stream bank planted in trees and native plants will hold the soil steady when it rains. Buffers also catch and filter many of the pollutants found in melting snow and stormwater runoff.

For information about native plants, raingardens and shoreline stabilization, visit www.BlueThumb.org.

Where Does the Water Come From if There is No Hydrant?

In the event of a fire, the most reliable and accessible source for water is a fire hydrant. The question is raised, where does the water come from when there is no hydrant in the immediate vicinity of the fire? Even though there may not be a fire hydrant directly adjoining the property there are several options for access. If a hydrant is located within 1000-2000 feet, pumper engines with large diameter hoses can be used to “relay pump” the water to the scene. Depending on how far, several pumpers may be required to accomplish this. The second best option is to place a pumper at the nearest hydrant to pump water into a tender truck (also called a tanker) and shuttle the water. In this case, it is likely that tenders from neighboring departments will be called to help shuttle water and ensure an uninterrupted water source. Once the tenders are filled they return to the scene and dump their water into tanks positioned there, which acts as a pumper to “draft” water from to supply fire fighting efforts.

While very unlikely, there may be situations where no hydrant within a reasonable distance from the scene. In this case, there are alternate water sources that can be utilized. The fire department has the ability to draw water from sources including lakes, swimming pools, etc. This method requires more extensive set up and is less reliable. Another solution, which the Lake Elmo Fire Department is currently exploring, is the installation of “dry hydrants” in areas of Lake Elmo. A “dry hydrant” is a pipe that extends into a “suitable” body of water, such as a lake, with a fitting on one end that attaches to a pumper, and the other end is under the water with a



Dry hydrants involve installing a pipe into a body of water to create a water source in areas where hydrants are not available.

strainer attached. Dry hydrants allow water to be sucked from the lake year round in non-hydranted areas. Lake Elmo is currently in the process of finding suitable locations to install dry hydrants in order to provide quicker response. The installation of dry hydrants would also likely increase the fire department’s ISO rating.

Contact Lake Elmo Fire Station 1 at 651-770-5006 for more information.

**JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH
EMERGENCY CALL RESPONSE
Fire: 25, Rescue: 9, Medical: 33**

From the County Sheriff Department: Spring Safety Concerns

As the snow starts melting and spring fever kicks in, we wanted to offer a few reminders about boat safety and ordinances within the City of Lake Elmo. Per ordinance, boat traffic must move in a counter-clockwise fashion. There is also a no wake restriction on all lakes from sunset through noon the following day with the exception of Lake Jane. Lake Jane’s no wake restriction is from sunset through nine a.m. the fol-



lowing day. Boats 16 feet or longer need life jackets readily accessible for everyone on the boat. Children under ten are required to wear a life jacket at all times.

Mail theft also becomes more prevalent as the weather gets warmer. This problem can be minimized by following a few of these tips:

- Do not leave outgoing mail in your unlocked mailbox.
- Deposit mail in a blue collection box or inside your local post office. Don’t leave mail in a collection box that is full.

- Promptly pick up your incoming mail after it is delivered.
- Have regular income checks deposited electronically into your bank account via direct deposit.
- Be observant of activities on your street, including those near your letter carrier, the postal vehicle, residential mailboxes, and collection boxes.
- If you see suspicious persons or activity, call 911 while the suspects are still present.

We hope you have a safe and enjoyable spring!

Three Generations Committed to Client Service and Community

If you ask the Zignego family what the key to a successful and sustainable business is, the answer will be unanimous. The key is client service. When you call the agency you can expect to be greeted with a friendly voice instead of an answering machine. When you have a question, you can expect to receive the answer within 24 hours. Clients can also depend on agents to review their accounts each year and recommend alternative products and services that would offer a cost savings.

“Our clients are our primary focus,” said founder John E. Zignego. “We pride ourselves on providing the high level of service and attention that our clients deserve, and are proactive in meeting their needs.”

The agency also prides itself on being family owned and operated. John E. Zignego acquired the business in 1975. His son, John J. (Rusty) Zignego, current president,



Zignego Agency, Inc. is proud to be a third generation family-owned business. Pictured top to bottom: founder John E., current president John J. (Rusty), John R. and Josh Zignego.

joined the agency in 1985. The company is now in its third generation with the addition of grandsons John R. and Josh, who joined the team in January 2013. All four are actively involved in the community and have a personal connection to Lake Elmo.

John E. has been a resident since 1968, and Rusty, John R. and Josh are all graduates of Lake Elmo Elementary School.

“My favorite part of working in the industry is getting to know our clients and getting involved in the community,” said Rusty Zignego. “Being able to work in Lake Elmo, where I grew up, is an added benefit.”

Zignego Agency, Inc. has a full-time staff of eight, including Rusty’s sister, Kristy Kroening who fills the role of office manager. They are an independent agency representing several companies, which allows them to offer a wide variety of insurance products at competitive rates. They currently serve the East Metro and Western Wisconsin and service both personal and commercial accounts. For more information on how Zignego Agency can meet your insurance needs visit www.zignegoinsurance.com or contact Josh or John R. at 651-777-8788.

What’s Happening at the Library?

The Lake Elmo Public Library has been open for six months and is now a busy place. The many adults and children who have visited have browsed and checked out books and DVDs, enjoyed the complimentary coffee, tea and hot chocolate, sometimes while reading newspapers and magazines, or using the coffee room as a Wi-Fi hot spot. They learned about rain gardens from a landscape ecologist/author, gathered with other writers for support in the East Metro Writer’s Room, listened to children’s stories, used the four public computers, sang along and made music with local folk musicians, and hung out with the friendly volunteer staff and the books. The demand has been high enough that hours were extended to 34 hours per week to better serve families after school. New library hours are Monday through Saturday 10 am to 2 pm and Tuesday through Thursday 3 pm to 8 pm.

Book donations are still being accepted during open library hours; however the library is also purchasing new books. If the library does not have a book you wish to read, you may request it to be purchased and if pos-

sible they will do so and you will be the first to read it. All cataloged books can be seen at the website <http://lakeelmopubliclibrary.org>.

April Library Events

- Thursday, April 4, 6:30 pm: Family Means Financial Counselor Bernie Johnson-Clark on “Get the Most With Your Tax Refund”
- Thursday, April 11, 6:30 pm: Author William Souder presents “On a Farther Shore: the Life and Legacy of Rachel Carson”
- April 14 - April 20: National Library Week. Every patron to check out three books will receive a free library book bag in celebration of National Library Week. The event theme is “Communities Matter at Your Library”
- Thursday, April 18, 6:30 pm: Celebrate Minnesota Authors in our library collection with cake and coffee
- Thursday, April 25, 3 pm: National DEAR Day [Drop Everything And Read], stop by for relaxation and reading time



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Lake Elmo Will Partner with ISGMN on Park Survey

The City of Lake Elmo Park Commission has hired ISGMN, a Bloomington-based research firm, to conduct a survey of residents about their park use and needs. ISGMN has previously worked with the City of St. Paul, the Three Rivers Park District and the Metropolitan Council on resident opinion surveys.

In April, ISGMN will contact 500 Lake Elmo residents and get their thoughts on how they use the Lake Elmo park system and what they would like to see added to Lake Elmo parks in the future. The survey will be used to guide the Park Commission's decision on where to allocate over \$900,000 of parkland dedication funds collected over the last ten years of development.

"Lake Elmo is blessed with an abundance of parks and open space. If you couple the City's park system with the Lake Elmo Park Reserve and 3M's privately-owned Tartan Park over 1/3 of our land mass is green. We feel it is very important to understand how we can utilize this strength to the benefit of our taxpayers and this survey will provide some invaluable insight," said Mike Bouthilet, Direct of Public Works and Parks.

The survey, to be conducted by phone, will not only ask residents what they would like to see in the Lake Elmo



A park survey will be conducted to determine how to improve City parks. Pictured above is Carriage Station Park, one of Lake Elmo's 18 parks.

park system, but also will provide an opportunity for respondents to talk about making the community more walkable and why they may go to other communities to use their parks.

"We have a sense that our parks are under-utilized and we would like to know why, and more importantly, what we can do to provide a return on the tax dollar that is targeted for parks and recreation," said Mayor Mike Pearson.

Be a Part of Your Community Celebration



The 2013 Lake Elmo Days community celebration will be held September 6th & 7th

this year. The planning committee is accepting applications for parade participants/float competition and expo vendors. For more information and other opportunities to get involved contact Alyssa at 651-747-3900 or amacleod@lakeelmo.org.

THE SOURCE

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