City Update

Woodbury

City seeking state funds to help improve Central Park

The City of Woodbury – in partnership with Washington County – is exploring potential improvements to the community’s 20-year-old Central Park and Lookout Ridge indoor playground.

The multi-use indoor facility provides important gathering space by linking many different resources and people from all around the East Metro.

“Central Park is one of the most diverse gathering places in the region and hosts many meaningful multi-cultural and multi-generational educational and recreational program opportunities,” said Parks and Recreation Director Michelle Okada. “The indoor gathering space is so important for all seasons, but especially during Minnesota winter months.”

The recreational and educational programming offered at Central Park is made possible through successful partnerships among various public and private facility stakeholders, including the R.H. Stafford Library, the School District 833 Community Education program, Great Rivers Adult Education Consortium, the YMCA, Stonerest Senior Living and the City of Woodbury.

Woodbury’s population has grown from about 49,500 to approximately 77,000 since Central Park opened in 2002. The upgrades are needed to better serve the growing community and region and its changing demographics today and into the future.

Project goals:

- Enhance welcoming environment and increase general gathering opportunities for all users.
- Improve accessibility throughout the facility.
- Increase multi-purpose space capacity for increasing need to host larger events, meetings, and public programs especially for youth, teens and seniors.
- Update Lookout Ridge indoor playground to include programming for kids ages 0-3 years.
- More space for public/community art displays.
- Expand and enhance space for Great Rivers Adult Education Consortium-English language and life skills.
- Address deferred maintenance issues, reduce energy consumption and create a healthier indoor environment for all guests.
- Add single-use restrooms.
- Expand parking lot capacity.

Community input

The city is seeking $15 million in State of Minnesota bonding to cover a portion of the estimated cost of the improvements. The public will be invited to provide feedback on the potential improvements in the coming months. Details will be shared on woodburymn.gov, by email (woodburymn.gov/intouch), on the city’s social media accounts, and in a future edition of this newsletter.

Community Survey: check your mailbox!

In mid-January, more than 3,000 randomly selected residents will receive an important mailing from the city – the 2022 Community Survey. Some households will receive a paper copy of the survey to return, and others will receive a link to complete the survey online. Respondents will have until Thursday, Feb. 24, to complete this survey.

Residents who do not receive an invitation to complete the survey in the mail will still have an opportunity to make their voice heard via an open participation link, which will be available via the city’s digital communications channels in mid-February. By providing this quick and simple input process, the city hopes to hear from more people in the community and from people from varied backgrounds who have different experiences and interests.

If you receive a survey invitation in the mail, it is very important to complete it using your proprietary link or hard copy, rather than the open participation survey.

This year, the City of Woodbury has partnered with Polco to implement the survey. Polco will keep your individual responses anonymous to the city, while allowing city staff to see broad demographic and geographic breakdowns.

Planning and measuring performance

After receiving the results, the City Council will invest time in strategic planning to identify issues that deserve a more detailed approach than the city’s day-to-day business operations generally allow.

Resident input is critical to help the city understand how it is performing on delivering essential city services, and to hear opinions on critical quality of life factors like transportation, affordability, safety, and more. The survey includes questions to help gauge police service levels and community interactions with staff across the city. Residents also will be polled about environmental stewardship, water quality, housing, and other strategic issues facing Woodbury.

Getting input from a wide array of residents will help the city understand its strengths and areas for improvement, and ensure that it understands the values of the community.

The survey results also are a key component of the city’s performance measurement program.

A number of the performance measures are tied directly to data coming out of the community survey. For instance, the city tracks the percentage of residents who rate a service as excellent, good or fair. When the city prepares the city budget, the performance measures help the City Council evaluate what the city is getting for the money it spends and whether the city is providing residents with good value for the tax dollars they pay.

The City Council recognizes that participating in the survey requires a time commitment from citizens. The 2022 survey should take about 15 minutes. The city hopes that those receiving the survey in the mail this month will take the time and participate. Resident input is valued and it truly does impact the City Council’s decisions.
Last summer, Woodbury once again earned a spot on Money magazine’s “Best Places to Live” in the U.S. list – one of our many noteworthy achievements of the last year. After reflecting on this accolade, I thought it was appropriate to share more about our other key accomplishments of 2021.

State outlines plans for PFAS settlement funds

As I noted in my October 2021 newsletter column, the State of Minnesota released its long-term Water Supply Plan to address per-and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) contamination in East Metro drinking water. As we continue to digest the state’s findings and final determinations regarding distribution of the remaining $700 million of 2018 3M settlement proceeds, it is important to know that the water delivered to our customers today continues to meet state and federal standards and guidelines for PFAS. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) continues to monitor the city’s wells for PFAS, and PFAS levels in additional city wells may be trending toward receipt of health advisories from the MDH. If MDH does issue health advisories on these wells, we will immediately remove them from service until they can be treated at the temporary or long-term water treatment facility. As this newsletter went to print, the city is awaiting formal notification from MDH on the latest water quality results from the additional wells.

I am proud to report that we have already started implementing solutions. This work includes acquiring land for a long-term water treatment facility; implementing preliminary engineering and treatment technology pilot study for the long-term water treatment facility; exploring expansion of the temporary water treatment plant capacity for treating more existing wells (which will be needed until the long-term treatment facility is fully operational); and constructing an additional production well to make up for a well that we’ve had to permanently remove from service due to PFAS contamination.

Constructing a centralized long-term water treatment facility is much more substantial than building a temporary water treatment facility. Work is expected to take five or more years. The city will continue to advocate for residents and businesses as we work with state agencies to fully review and implement the Water Supply Plan, and we will continue to keep the public informed as we learn more. Details about the history of PFAS in Woodbury wells and testing results through 2021 are available on the city’s website at woodburymn.gov/PFAS. Additional resources are available at 3msettlement.state.mn.us.

Social workers partnering with Public Safety

In October 2021, we officially launched our Police-Mental Health Coordinated Response, collaborating with Washington County social workers to provide a co-response option for our residents. The intent is to connect people in crisis (and their families) to resources and professionals in mental health and substance use to help them cope for the long term.

Woodbury’s assigned social worker, Angie Shackleton, works full-time from the Woodbury Police Department. A second social worker, Brooke Hendrickson, is assigned to the Washington County Sheriff’s Office, where she co-responds with county deputies. Both Brooke and Angie are licensed independent clinical social workers, the highest licensure in Minnesota a social worker can obtain.

Angie and Brooke respond along with law enforcement and emergency medical services (EMS) when appropriate. Much of the work they do is follow-up with clients and client families, and on the reports that are noted by patrol officers as having a mental health or substance use component. They provide significant expertise in supporting our first responders as they continue to serve and protect our community with compassion and courage.

Klein named new EMS/fire chief

In August 2021, Chris Klein was named our new EMS/fire chief. He was promoted from his fire/EMS commander post, and is responsible for directing basic and advanced life support emergency medical services, fire response, prevention and inspection, emergency preparedness and safety services, along with associated staff and programs. He will also be overseeing an important service transition as we move to cross-train all of our paramedics into paramedic-firefighters.

This new staffing model is important for providing emergency response to an increasing number of medical calls today and into the future. In Woodbury, more than 70% of fire/emergency medical services calls are medical related. As the average age of our community members continues to rise, we expect our calls for medical service to continue to increase.

Woodbury provides its own advanced life support ambulance service and does not contract services out to a private ambulance service, which often respond to multiple communities across vast territories. This allows for faster paramedic level response times since Woodbury ambulances are responding from within the community.

Well-managed growth

We continued to see new residential construction across the city’s landscape in 2021. Growth is a fundamental part of the history and future of Woodbury. From our early days as a city, local officials anticipated growth and implemented long-term planning strategies that have allowed us to carefully manage growth. The residential growth we are seeing today – both single-family and multi-family homes – is consistent with our long-term planning goals and strategies.

Since the early 1980s, the city has had a comprehensive plan – our “blueprint” for future development. The plan, updated on a regular basis, provides the basic framework for development, including policies related to the extension of utilities, roads and other city infrastructure, and the facilities and services needed to accommodate development. When fully developed, we expect Woodbury’s population to be close to 90,000.

If you would like to learn more about residential and commercial development in Woodbury, check out our interactive development map at woodburymn.gov/DevelopmentMap.

Virtual public meetings

When the state instituted its COVID-19 pandemic stay-at-home orders in March 2020, we started holding our public meetings virtually through the Microsoft Teams application. While we are back to meeting in person for most meetings today, members of the public now have the option of participating in most public meetings virtually using a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device. If you are interested in participating in a city meeting virtually, you can refer to the Participating in a Virtual Meeting Guide on the city’s website for more information (woodburymn.gov/VirtualMeetings).

Looking forward, we pledge our best efforts as we tackle new challenges in the year ahead. With your support and participation, we will be celebrating many more accomplishments at the end of 2022!

Happy New Year!
Purchase a dog license by March 31 to avoid additional fees

According to 2021 licensing records, more than 2,550 dogs call Woodbury home. The most popular breeds in the city are Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, Huskies, German Shepherds and mixed-breed rescue dogs. Other popular breeds include Maltese, Pugs, Yorkshire Terriers and Shih Tzus.

**Licenses required**

No matter which breed has stolen your heart, now is the time to purchase your dog’s license for 2022-2023. Identification through licensing your dog is important. Sometimes dogs wander or become lost. The license tag helps animal control officers locate the owner of any pooch they may pick up. Licenses also are required to use Woodbury’s off-leash dog park, Andy’s Bark Park.

Licenses are required for all dogs six months and older, and should be purchased prior to March 31, 2022. The license period will start Jan. 1, 2022, and end Dec. 31, 2023. For Woodbury residents, the fee is $10 for each spayed or neutered dog, $18 for each non-altered dog. For non-residents, the fee is $15 for each spayed or neutered dog, $23 for each non-altered dog. After March 31, license fees increase. New residents of Woodbury must license their dog(s) within 60 days. In order to be processed, documentation from a veterinarian must be provided to verify rabies vaccination expiration date.

As in previous years, residents can use the attached application to purchase your license by mail or you may come in person. Licenses can be obtained at Woodbury City Hall, 8301 Valley Creek Road from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Please bring a printed copy of your dog’s most recent rabies vaccination certification. Credit cards (MasterCard, Visa and Discover) are accepted in person only; however, payment of cash or check will expedite service.

License applications also are available on the Woodbury website at woodburymn.gov/doglicense. If you mail in the application, you must include a copy of the rabies certificate and a check payable to the City of Woodbury. Mail to: City of Woodbury, Dog License, 8301 Valley Creek Road, Woodbury, MN 55125.

Questions can be directed to the Administration Department at 651-714-3500.

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<th>Dog’s Name</th>
<th>Exp. Date</th>
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**Council appoints 20 to advisory boards**

Twenty residents were appointed to Woodbury advisory commissions by the City Council in December. All serve on a volunteer basis, and their terms are for three years, unless noted otherwise.

Those appointed were selected from a pool of 41 residents who applied for the advisory board vacancies in October. Council members interviewed candidates in November.

Advisory groups and those appointed include:

- **Audit and Investment Commission:** Frank Gilbertson, Cody Groth, Alec Sonsteby and Annmarie Weiser.
- **Economic Development Commission:** Jenny DeMaría, Ruth Godfrey, Craig Johnson (reappointed), Pam Morke (reappointed to two-year term) and Bill Routt (reappointed).
- **Parks and Natural Resources Commission:** Timothy Brewington II (reappointed), Deborah Musser (reappointed) and Wallace Wadd. Student representatives (one-year terms): Brandon Mersch (Woodbury High School) and Emerson Siefken (St. Croix Preparatory Academy).
- **Planning Commission:** Sathymohan Gavvagi, Stephanie Haake and David Hoelzel. Student representatives (one-year term): Hunter Hakkila (Woodbury High School) and Sahithi Polavarapu (East Ridge High School).
- **South Washington Watershed:** Brian Johnson (reappointed).
- **Council appoints 20 to advisory boards**

The Council also selected chairpersons for the commissions. They are: Blake Darsow, Audit and Investment Commission; Craig Johnson, Economic Development Commission; Greta Bjerkness, Parks and Natural Resources Commission; and Shannon Olsen, Planning Commission.

As new appointees are named, the City Council wishes to acknowledge those who have completed their service on city boards and commissions.

They include: Heidi Conrad, Ross Dahlin and Richard Osborn, Audit and Investment Commission; David Hoelzel, Economic Development Commission (completed term and joining Planning Commission in 2022); Isaac Eikenberry (student representative), Karin Freymann and Benjamin Sayers (student representative), Parks and Natural Resources Commission; Francisco Andruet (student representative), Richard Johnson, Jefferson McCough (student representative) and Jennifer Nowacki, Planning Commission.

Residents interested in serving on any of the city’s advisory boards may apply for openings annually. Applications generally are accepted in October, with interviews in November. Commissioners’ terms begin in January.
City Council meeting start time moved to 7 p.m.

Beginning in 2022, City Council meetings – which generally take place on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month – will now start at 7 p.m. Previously, City Council meetings started at 7:30 p.m. The additional 30 minutes was approved at the Dec. 8, 2021, City Council meeting.

City Council workshops, which take place on the third Wednesday of each month, will continue to begin at 6:30 p.m.

Most Council meetings and workshops take place at Woodbury City Hall, 8301 Valley Creek Road. Agendas are available online at woodburymn.gov or by calling City Hall 651-714-3500. Sign up to receive email notifications when agendas are available on the website. Visit woodburymn.gov/InTouch to learn more.

City Update

Keep sidewalks clear of snow

City ordinance requires property owners with property adjacent to a public sidewalk to maintain the sidewalk by clearing snow and ice within 12 hours after it stops falling.

If you have a contractor clearing the snow and ice from your sidewalks and driveway, remind them to also include the sidewalk(s) adjacent to your property.

Sidewalks not cleared within 12 hours may be abated, meaning the city may hire a private contractor to clear the sidewalk at the cost of the adjacent property owner. Typically, the cost for abatement exceeds $200 and may include administrative fees.

If you have questions, contact Matt Novak, senior code enforcement officer, at 651-714-3553 or email matt.novak@woodburymn.gov.

Plowing crew’s goal is to clear city streets in 8 hours

In an average winter, Public Works crews plow city streets about 25 times, clearing the equivalent of 778 miles of one-lane roadway after each snow event.

Plowing activities begin whenever icy or slippery conditions make driving difficult. Roads adjacent to schools and primary streets, such as Tamarack Road, Woodlane Drive, Lake Road, Bielenberg Drive and Hudson Road, are given first priority for plowing. Residential streets and cul-de-sacs are cleared next.

“Our goal is to have the primary roads cleared before the morning and evening rush hour,” Public Works Director Mary Hurliman said. “Heavy accumulations or high winds sometimes make that impossible, though.”

How you can help

- Observe Woodbury’s winter parking regulations. Don’t park your car on the street between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m., or after a 2-inch snowfall.
- Don’t allow children to build snow forts and tunnels adjacent to the curb, or play in the snow banks adjacent to the curb or snow piles in cul-de-sacs.
- If trash/recycling pickup day coincides with plowing activities, make sure your trash can and recycling bin are well behind the curb or in the driveway so the plow will not hit them.
- Keep sleds and toys away from the street.
- Shovel snow from the bottom of the driveway to the right as you’re facing the street.
- Clear snow from the mailbox area after each plowing.
- “Adopt” a fire hydrant near your home and keep snow cleared away from it.
- Motorists should allow at least five car lengths between their vehicle and a plow.

For more information about plowing procedures, visit woodburymn.gov. Questions should be directed to the Public Works Department at publicworks@woodburymn.gov or call 651-714-3720.