



City of Oak Park Heights

Tree City USA

First Quarter 2009 Newsletter

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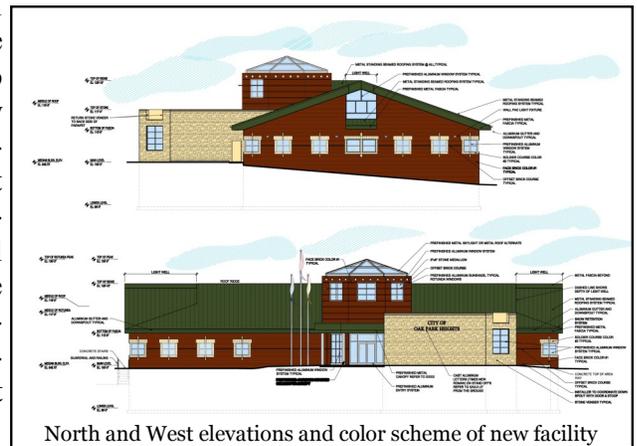
City Hall Facility Update

Geothermal

On January 13th, 2009 the City Council approved the incorporation of a GEOTHERMAL heating and cooling system for the new City Hall Facility. A GEOTHERMAL system utilizes the earth's stable underground temperature of approximately 55 degrees Fahrenheit via the installation of numerous underground "wells" whereby interconnected pipes are inserted and liquid is pumped through and the heat/coolness of the earth is exchanged through the pipe wall (heat sink). This water is then circulated into the building for heating and cooling purposes. There is no actual extraction of water from the ground, essentially, the system is a large sealed 'radiator' placed underground with numerous interconnected wells.

While this system will add approximately \$250,000 to the total cost of constructing the building, it is estimated that these costs will be recovered in approximately 15 years at current natural gas prices. Should natural gas prices rise; the cost recovery will likely be sooner. Thereafter, the City Hall Facility would operate its heating and cooling systems at little cost compared to a traditional system.

It is worth noting that the City has investigated the possibility of utilizing the current water mains adjacent to the City Hall as the 'heat-sink' which would have negated most of the required costs to install a GEOTHERMAL system by avoiding the cost of drilling numerous wells. Ultimately, the MN Dept of Health discouraged the City's proposal citing concerns about thermal fluctuations. The City will continue to explore this issue, but has affirmatively selected to proceed with a traditional GEOTHERMAL system at this time.



Other Green Initiatives

Beyond the direct financial cost and recovery issues with the decision to install a GEOTHERMAL system, the City is taking this positive step towards reducing its 'greenhouse emissions' by reducing its reliance on fossil fuels to operate. It is possible that in the future, cities and other entities would be mandated by the Federal Government and/or State of Minnesota to reduce its greenhouse emissions, with the City taking

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actions now, future investment into retrofitting the City Hall Facility will likely be reduced.

In addition to the installation of a GEOTHERMAL system, the City has explored the implementation of other 'green' elements including, the placement of a rain-garden to filter storm run-off from the parking lot and roof; installing low-flow fixtures; incorporating passive solar elements and roof overhangs; requiring that all building materials contain low to zero VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) and where possible have all materials be manufactured in the United States, preferably within 500 miles of Oak Park Heights.

The City explored the possibility of seeking official LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Certification for the building but such process would have required an additional investment of over \$35,000+/- simply for documentation purposes. While this standard is important, it is not required and the City instead is going ahead with apparent and practical 'green initiatives' as mentioned. The City is also exploring the possibility for certain LEED requirements on building materials.

Timeline

Also at the January 13 meeting, the City Council also finalized the project timeline. Specifically, the final plans are to be provided to the City Council on February 24 for final approval and would then be placed out for bids. The bidding advertisement and review of submitted bids process will take four to six weeks. Upon review of all received qualified bids, the City Council hopes to award a building contract in late March/early April with construction to begin in early May upon the removal of road weight limits. It is estimated that the construction time line would carry into 2010 for occupancy of the new building and demolition of the current facility thereafter.

Detailed building elevations, sample materials and color selections can be viewed at the Oak Park Heights City Hall – located at 14168 Oak Park Blvd. Call 439-4439 if you have any specific questions.

Use of Andersen Windows in City Hall Facility

Recently, there has been some local discussion of the City possibly selecting to exclude the use of Andersen Windows in the New City Hall Facility. In fact, the City Council has entertained no such discussion and has made no such determination. To date, the City has investigated the use of both typical aluminum commercial windows as well as comparable commercial products that may be available from Andersen Corporation or other window manufacturers.

Under Minnesota Law (MN Stat. 471.35 and its related case law) the City Council is generally precluded from specifying by exclusive name particular products in a public bidding process. Additionally, the City may not craft a bid specification that effectively disqualifies all other possible material suppliers as this is also considered violation of such statute. It is the general intention of this law that the taxpayer receives the best product at the best price. Violations of these laws may be punishable as 'gross misdemeanors' by the Washington County Attorney's Office under MN Stat. 471.37.

At this time it is anticipated that the bidding process will include the option to use both typical aluminum windows and/or 'wood framed' windows. Unfortunately, there is no guaranty that the City may provide during the bidding process that will ensure the use of a specific type of window manufacturer. Again, pursuant to Minnesota law, the City may not specify the use of Andersen Windows, meaning that other manufacturer's products may be 'called-out' by general contractors in their bid submissions. Once the bidding process is complete, additional options may be available to the City to address further concerns.

As this process progresses, the City Council will endeavor to make the best choices that first comply with Minnesota bidding law and what is both good for the City and the City Hall Facility Project. If you have any questions on this particular item please call Eric Johnson, City Administrator, at 439-4439.

Notes from Public Works

Have a backup plan in the event of a power outage

There are a growing number of people in our community who depend on home medical equipment such as oxygen, dialysis machines, nebulizers, IV and nutrition pumps, and CPAP breathing masks. In the event of a power outage, it is imperative to have a backup plan.

Have an outage kit that is kept in an accessible location. The kit should include the following items:

- * A phone that does not require electricity (note: cordless phones do require electricity)
- * Flashlights

- * Batteries
- * Battery-powered radio or television
- * Non-electric alarm clock
- * Bottled water and non-perishable food
- * Manual can opener
- * Extension cords (for partial outages)
- * First aid kit

You may wish to also have a stand-by generator.

To report a power outage, contact Xcel Energy's outage line at 1-800-895-1999.



This device is called a touchpad. The touchpad is used to conveniently obtain a reading of your water meter without having to enter your house. Be vigilant to reattach the touchpad after any home improvement construction projects, especially re-siding. Owner maintenance is not required; however to be helpful to the city's meter readers a small cleared path to the touchpad in the winter months would be appreciated.

Roadway and right-of-way trim and maintenance requirements

The City of Oak Park Heights, like most cities, has road right of way and pavement placed for neighborhood use, transportation and emergency access. The adjacent homeowner maintains this boulevard portion of the city property in exchange for the added yard and lawn use.

Homeowner Responsibility

Hedges and bushes should never be planted within 10 feet of the road. If older plantings have started to encroach in to this area they must be removed or pruned and maintained so that there is always a minimum of 6 feet of boulevard available on the side of the street and/or so that visibility is maintained.

The homeowner is responsible for mowing and controlling the grass in the boulevard area. Low level plantings may be placed and maintained in the boulevard, however, they must never interfere with visibility of signage or other traffic. The city has no liability if they are damaged. If these become a nuisance they will require removal. The city does some snow sod repairs each spring by adding black dirt and grass seed only. The homeowner must water the repairs as part of their maintenance requirements.

Utility and road work in the right of way requires contractor restoration of the grass. There is no claim available for other types of plantings. Irrigation lines in this area are strictly the homeowner's responsibility.

Do not fill or plant items in a drainage area. These are designed to move storm water off site at a controlled rate to purify the water, remove contaminants and avoid erosion or damage downstream. The city must calculate the total amount of water and speed at which that water will move during a rain event to protect the lakes and rivers around us. All storm water is discharged to the St. Croix River. Please respect it.

Please help your neighbors and yourselves by shoveling around fire hydrants. We hope they are not needed, but critical minutes can be saved if neighbors keep their hydrants accessible for emergency use.

Parks Commission Vacancies

The City is seeking applicants to fill two openings on the Parks Commission. The Parks Commission is comprised of five members, who are appointed by the City Council to serve on the Commission in an advisory capacity.

The objectives of the Parks Commission are to make recommendations to the City Council, which will guide the development of city parks and related services and facilities. Commission term commitments are three (3) years and run from January to December. The Commission typically meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. and periodically holds workshops or other special meetings.

If you are a resident of Oak Park Heights and are looking for an interesting and rewarding opportunity to participate in development and governance of Oak Park Heights, contact City Administrator Eric Johnson at 651-439-4439 or by email at eajohnson@cityofoakparkheights.com. Applications may also be printed from the City's website: www.cityofoakparkheights.com.

City Meetings (typical dates—subject to change)

City Council:
2nd and 4th Tuesdays at
7:00 p.m.

Planning Commission:
2nd Thursday at 7:00
p.m.

Parks Commission:
3rd Monday at 6:30 p.m.

City meetings are broadcast live on cable channel 16.

Agendas and Minutes are posted on the City's website: www.cityofoakparkheights.com

Winter Parking Restrictions

Winter parking restrictions are put in place in an effort to enable snow removal equipment the opportunity to do a top quality and efficient job in removing snow from city streets. Please be aware that these parking restrictions are in place AND ENFORCED regardless of whether or not there has been recent snowfall. Please help us by obeying the winter parking restrictions.

****No parking on city streets from November 1 through March 31 between 1:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.****

Street light out in your neighborhood? Contact City Hall

Your help in identifying street lights that are not working is very important, as we rely solely on your notification assistance. Once City staff is aware of a light out, we contact Xcel Energy immediately to help make sure the light is repaired in a reasonable amount of time. To report a City street light out, please contact City Hall at 439-4439.

If possible, have the following information available:

- > Property address and/or nearest cross street to where the light pole is located.
- > Whether the light is located: on a corner, midblock, or in a cul-de-sac.
- > The nature of the problem (i.e. light is out, light is blinking, light is broken).

Notice of Water Rate Increase

Effective January 1, 2009, the City of Oak Park Heights established a municipal water rate for all users as follows:

1. A quarterly minimum charge of \$26.24 for the first 15,000 gallons of water used per quarter (last year's rate was \$24.35).
2. A rate of \$1.78 per 1,000 gallons for water used above 15,000 gallons up to 50,000 gallons (last year's rate was \$1.62).
3. A rate of \$2.44 per 1,000 gallons for water used above 50,000 gallons up to 99,000 gallons (last year's rate was \$2.22).
4. A rate of \$2.94 per 1,000 gallons for water use above 99,000 gallons (last year's rate was \$2.67).

Sign up for auto pay

With auto pay, there is no need to waste time writing and mailing a check. Paying your utility bill electronically allows you to save time and money on stamps and late fees. The amount you owe on your utility bill is automatically withdrawn from the account you designate on the billing due date each month. You will continue to receive your bill so that you

know the date and amount to be withheld from your account.

If you are interested in participating, please call or stop by City Hall to obtain an enrollment form. The form is also available on the City's website, under Forms & Handouts. City Hall phone number is 439-4439.

Attention Pet Owners

Leash Law Reminder

The City of Oak Park Heights has a leash law in effect that prohibits pets from running at large. Any dog or cat that is off the premises of the owner and not under the physical control (by leash or by voice) of the owner or another designated person is in violation of this Ordinance.

When you are out walking your pet, please remember to bring a plastic bag. Pet owners are required by City Ordinance to clean up pet waste on public and private property. Removal and proper disposal of pet waste helps keep our City clean and healthy.

Pet Licenses

All dogs and cats in the City for more than 30 days are required to have a City Pet License. There is no charge for this service and it could save your pet from a trip to the animal shelter. Bring proof of your pet's rabies vaccination to City Hall to receive a pet license and tag.

What's included in trash pickup?

In addition to the typical garbage and recycling pickup, the City also covers the disposal of yard waste, large household items, and 'white-goods' such as televisions, refrigerators, couches, chairs, desks, water-heaters, stoves, dishwashers, dryers, etc. In order to have these items picked up in a timely fashion, please contact Judy Tetzlaff at City Hall, 651-439-4439, at least two days prior to collection day so that the special truck may be dispatched to your home.



Some items are not included in your monthly fee are extra bags of garbage not placed in your container. The City's waste hauler, Veolia, will bill you \$1.50 per bag. Some other items that are picked up for a fee are carpet, sinks, toilets and construction debris. You will be billed by Veolia at a regulated rate as monitored by the City.

In the event you receive any billing from Veolia, except for the Annual Washington County Environmental Charge, please contact the City Administrator at 651-439-4439 to ensure that the billing is correct.

REMINDER!!

Waste and Recyclable pick-up is every THURSDAY, unless the week contains one of the six holidays – New Years Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. During those weeks, collection will fall on FRIDAY.

Recycling incentive program

The City of Oak Park Heights has a recycling incentive program. The City awards a prize of \$25.00 or a fire extinguisher and/or smoke detector. Residents participating in curbside recycling are picked randomly twice a month.

Recycling benefits the environment in countless ways: it reduces the amount of natural resources used to make new products, it saves energy, it prevents water and air pollution including greenhouse gas emissions, and it reduces waste. This means that the simple act of recycling in your daily life provides significant protection for our environment and reduces global warming.

Need another recycling bin, contact City Hall at 439-4439.

How to sort your recycling

Materials collected by Veolia for recycling must be sorted into two categories to make sure they get recycled. Use paper bags and recycling bins to separate your materials. Do not use plastic bags. Place textiles in a separate paper bag from everything else.

Paper & Cardboard	Bottles & Cans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspapers • Magazines, Mail and Office Paper • Corrugated Cardboard • Boxboard/soda boxes • Phonebooks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steel and Aluminum Cans and Foil • Glass bottles and jars (any color) • Milk cartons and juice boxes • Plastic bottles (1 and 2)

Thank you for recycling!

Garlic Mustard

Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the woods after buckthorn was removed, there is another invasive plant to tackle which is also invading native woodlands. This is an herbaceous (non-woody) plant called Garlic Mustard. This plant was brought to North America from Europe over a hundred years ago to be used in cooking and medicines. Because it has no natural enemies here, the plant has spread. It is a biennial, needing two years to go from a seed to producing seed. The first year it grows as a rosette, close to the ground,

with 3-8 rounded, scalloped leaves, which resemble a large "creeping Charlie" plant. These leaves stay green all winter. It produces a flower stalk, 1-4 ft. tall the 2nd year of growth, in May and early June, with white flowers having 4 petals. The leaves and stems smell like garlic when crushed. Small black seeds, in 1-2 in. long, thin, pod-like capsules, are produced in the summer. Once ripe, the seeds scatter on the ground and can be carried by animals, and people who walk through the area. The seeds are also carried by running water. This

plant is often first seen along trails and streams and is more common in shady areas. Remove plants by hand-pulling just before flowering, or cut plants close to the ground as plant is flowering, but before seed develops. Do not leave pulled or cut plants on the ground, as seeds can still ripen. Do not compost plants, as most compost piles do not become hot enough to kill the seeds. Biological controls, primarily insects, are being researched, but are not available at this time.

Feeding birds in the winter

Birds have a tough time finding food in the winter, with snow, ice and cold, but few insects and growing plants. To provide food for birds during the cold months, add one or more seed feeders and a suet feeder to your yard. Birds especially love black oil sunflower seeds, but you can also offer other mixes with striped sunflower seed, safflower seed and peanuts. Thistle seed is particularly loved by finches and chickadees, but is best put in a feeder especially for thistle. Suet feeders attract many species, and woodpeckers, which don't often come to seed feeders, will readily feed on suet. Having native plants in your yard, which form and hold onto fruits and seeds, will also help provide winter food for wildlife. Especially prized are crab-apples with persistent fruit, highbush cranberry and other viburnums, dogwood shrubs, hazelnuts, sunflowers, black-eyed susans and purple conflowers, as well as evergreens with seed-bearing cones. Animals will also feed on seeds and fruits in the winter. To keep squirrels and chipmunks out of bird seed, use a squirrel-proof feeder.

Spring Seminar

The OPH Arborist, Dr. Kathy Widin, will present a seminar for residents on "Healthy Trees For Our Landscapes" on Thursday, April 16th, from 7-8 p.m. at the Family Means building at 1875 Northwestern Ave. in Stillwater (just north of Valley Ridge Mall). This seminar is free and open to the public. It is sponsored by

the St. Croix Oak Savanna Chapter of Wild Ones, a group interested in native plants and natural landscaping, the City of Oak Park Heights and the City of Stillwater. Refreshments and socializing at 6:30. Come and find out about the native trees suitable for our area, and how to care for them.

Tree Problems?

If you are an Oak Park Heights resident, and have a problem with a tree or shrub, such as an insect or a disease, have planting questions, or just want to have a plant identified, call Dr. Kathy Widin, the OPH Arborist, at 439-4439 Ext. 252. She can either answer your question over the phone or make an appointment for a site visit. This service is paid for by the City of Oak Park Heights.



Oak Park Heights Police Files

From the desk of Chief Brian DeRosier



I would like to take a few minutes of your time to talk about traffic rules and conduct. As we are all aware traffic is increasing steadily in the area. This creates many issues within communities ranging from nuisances to safety issues. So what can we do?

The first step is policing ourselves. We all need to respect our neighborhoods and others on the road be it a vehicle, bicycle, or pedestrian. If we do not police ourselves within the community we can't expect others to do any different.

As the traffic increases drivers tend to seek other routes to avoid areas which they feel are congested or will slow them down. When they try to avoid those areas they find alternate routes which often lead them into other residential neighborhoods. This in reality does little to solve their perceived problem; however it creates new problems for the residential streets that were never intended to be through streets, creating increased nuisance traffic and safety issues for those residents in the area being used as a perceived shortcut.

Blocking intersections while waiting for a traffic light or other reasons is illegal. I see this frequently at the frontage road intersections. If you cannot proceed completely through the intersection you need to stop. Stopping back from the intersection and leaving it open and visible allows the other traffic to flow and reduces the congestion.

Speed and aggressive driving accomplishes little for anyone. A speeding driver rarely gains any real time in comparison to following the speed limits. Aggressive driving such as quick acceleration, weaving back and forth between lanes, rolling stop signs or ignoring other traffic control devices also gain the driver little as compared to the increased safety issues they create. A vehicle traveling at 35mph will cause 33% more damage and injury to a person or vehicle struck than if the vehicle was traveling 5mph less at 30 mph.

As we all do our part to police ourselves and respect each other's neighborhoods we all gain a more livable community.

Tips to prevent theft from your vehicle:

By following these simple steps you can greatly reduce your chances of being a victim:

- Don't leave valuables in your car.
- This sounds like "common sense," but if you leave items of value in plain view your car is automatically a target.
- If you must leave valuable items in your car, place items out of sight before reaching your destination.
- Plan your shopping / errands so that you don't load your trunk until you are ready to drive to another destination; never open a trunk, fill it full of valuables, close it, and then just walk away. If your trunk can be opened from inside your car without a key, lock this feature when you are not in your car or have it disabled.
- Leave no sign that there might be valuables "out of sight" in your vehicle, such as docking stations or connector cables, very few auto break-ins are random. If you have an after-market stereo/CD-player with a removable faceplate, remove it.
- Try to park in well-traveled and well-lit areas:
- Large lots are the preferred target of thieves, so try to choose a well-light, visible, parking spot where there is lots of vehicular and pedestrian movement when possible.
- Lock ALL your vehicle's doors and set your alarm or anti-theft device even if you plan to be gone for only a brief time. Every year, the police take hundreds of theft reports from unlocked vehicles where the owner was only going to be gone "just for a second".
- Mark your valuables!
- As a last line of defense, mark your valuables. Recording serial numbers is a good idea, but many serial numbers are on removable "labels", rather than "engraved" into items. Don't use your social security number; use your driver's license number instead.

If you would like to mark your valuables and need an engraver, the Oak Park Heights Police Department can loan you an engraver. Please contact us at 651-439-4723 Monday through Friday, 8:00 – 4:00 PM, to arrange for you to pick one up.

Reserve a City Park Shelter

Are you thinking about having a get-together or a family reunion? The Brekke, Valley View, and Autumn Hills Park shelter buildings can be reserved free of charge for your event. The Autumn Hills Park Shelter does require a refundable \$100 deposit.

Brekke Park is located on Omar Avenue south of the former St. Croix Mall. The park has a covered shelter building with restrooms as well as a tot lot, baseball diamonds, playground equipment, and barbeque grills.

Valley View Park is located on Osgood Avenue at the edge of the city limits. This park has a covered shelter building, picnic areas, playgrounds and a beautiful passive park area with trails, a prairie restoration area and wetlands.

Autumn Hills Park is located at 5697 Norwich Parkway off of 58th Street adjacent to the Boutwells Landing campus. The park contains meandering trails, trail access parking, and playground equipment. It has a 2,000+ square foot shelter, which includes a covered gathering area with a small kitchen/serving area, men's and women's restrooms, and a water fountain.

You may use the City's online reservation form to reserve either the Brekke Park or Valley View Park shelters. You may obtain the Autumn Hills Park Shelter reservation documents and information online as well. Or, you may call or visit City Hall anytime to reserve any of the shelters for your next event!

City of Oak Park Heights

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PO Box 2007
Oak Park Heights, MN 55082
Phone: 651-439-4439
Fax: 651-439-0574

Police non-emergency: 651-439-4723
Police Emergency: 911

Office Hours:
Monday through Friday
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
excluding legal holidays

MAYOR
David Beaudet

COUNCILMEMBERS
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Mary McComber
Mike Runk
Mark Swenson

CITY ADMINISTRATOR
Eric Johnson

Visit our Website!
www.cityofoakparkheights.com

*The Oak Park Heights
newsletter
is published by the City
of Oak Park Heights.
Comments are welcome.
651-439-4439*

Recyclables going to Eureka Recycling

City Collected Recyclables now going to EUREKA Recycling

Commencing January 1, 2009 the City's recycling hauler VEOLIA will be taking all collected recyclables to Eureka Recycling. This shift will allow residents to now recycle additional items such as juice/milk cartons and boxes, soda/beer boxes as well as clothes and linens. By this shift, it is hoped that the City will increase its recycling tonnage by five percent with these additional materials now being eligible for recycling.

The City anticipates that there shall be no alteration in services provided by VEOLIA, collection shall remain on Thursdays and recyclable preparation shall remain the same. Again, in addition to what you currently recycle, you may now recycle the following items:

- juice/milk cartons and boxes
- soda/beer boxes
- clothes and linens

Besides being good for the environment, the City does receive fifty percent of the current commodity value of all collected recyclables which is then applied to off-set all waste collection services, which is otherwise funded by property taxes so,... more recycling reduces the burden on the general property tax. Pitch-in! It will save you \$\$\$!

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