



City of Oak Park Heights

Tree City USA

Fall 2016 Newsletter

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2017 Party in the Park—new date!

The year 2017 marks the 160th anniversary since the platting of Oak Park. The City of Oak Park Heights plans to combine an anniversary celebration with its annual Party in the Park. Party in the Park is usually held on National Night Out, but in 2017, the City will be having this event on a weeknight in early June and will be encouraging neighborhoods to organize their own National Night Out events on August 1st in order to get to know their neighbors and promote public safety. If you would like an Oak Park Heights Police Officer to stop by your neighborhood event, please contact the Police Department at 651-439-4723 to request that.

For the Party in the Park/160th Anniversary Celebration, we are requesting residents to gather pictures, memories, and stories which depict the history of the City. We hope to display those at the event for others to see. Pictured here is a photo of the old Oak Park



School. If you have any mementos or memories to share, please contact City Clerk Jennifer Pinski by phone at 651-439-4439 or by e-mail at jpinski@cityof oakparkheights.com.

The City held the 22nd Annual Party in the Park on August 2, 2016. The City served hot dogs, chips, mini donuts, and snow cones. There were activities and prizes for the children, live music, a jumpy room, a raffle with great prizes, Bayport Fire Department water spray, and promotional items from local businesses. We expect to have even more activities at the 2017 event.

City department spotlight—Finance Department

The Finance Department is responsible for the management of financial operations for the City of Oak Park Heights. That includes accounts payable, payroll, accounts receivable, investing, utility billing, financial reporting, and assessments. Other responsibilities include:

- Developing, maintaining, and advocating for fiscally responsible and sustainable budgets;
- Preparing financial statements for the City;
- Financial planning for future projects;
- Providing support and advice to other City departments, the City Administrator, and City Council in matters related to financial issues; and
- Overseeing annual financial audits.

The Department is currently preparing the 2017 budget for council considerations and computing the 2017 tax levy.

The goal of the Finance Department is to provide timely and accurate financial information using generally accepted accounting principles to our customers, while ensuring residents the department is operating in the most efficient manner and that the City is providing essential services as economically as possible. Please visit the City's website to view audit reports, financial statements, and budgets.



Pictured above: Accountant Judy Tetzlaff, Finance Director Betty Caruso and City Clerk/Utility Billing Clerk Jennifer Pinski

Low mow lawns

For people who enjoy reading, napping, biking, walking, camping, fishing, golf or any number of other activities more than pushing a lawn mower, the concept of a low-mow lawn may be of interest.

University of Minnesota researchers have found that fine fescues are a practical alternative to Kentucky Blue Grass for many lawns. Dubbed “low-mow” because they rarely grow taller than six inches, these fine fescue grasses are drought tolerant and require no fertilizers. Low-mow mixes grow best in full sunlight or very light shade and are not well suited for clay or poorly drained soils. Most people with low-mow lawns need only mow once a year, when seed heads develop in the spring. After that, one might mow once a month to keep the grass four inches tall, or simply leave it alone and let the grass rest at a natural height of six inches. Because they require neither watering nor fertilizing, fine fescues are a good choice for homeowners interested in saving money and protecting water resources.

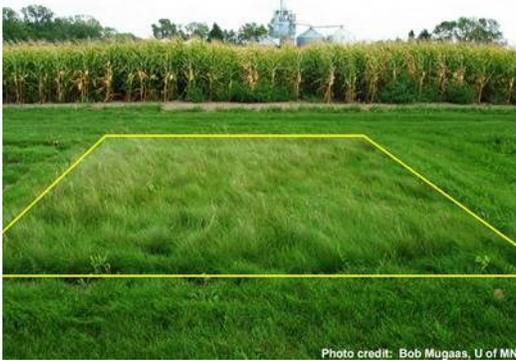


Photo credit: Bob Mugaas, U of MN

The best time of year to plant a fine fescue mix is between mid-August and mid-September, making now an ideal time to start planning. University Extension staff recommend that you use a weed-killer or sod cutter to remove all existing vegetation from the area you wish to seed, and then use one pound of 10-10-10 fertilizer per thousand square feet you will be seeding. The lawn will require daily watering for the first few weeks until the grass becomes established, but after that it is virtually maintenance free. Houle's in Stillwater and E J Houle in Forest Lake both sell low-mow fine fescue mixes. Another source for low-mow mixes is PrairieNursery.com.

Watering trees and shrubs

If the weather is drier, established shrubs, small trees, and evergreens will need water. Water plants well, once per week, at the ground line. If the property slopes at all where you are watering, use a root-feeder, which attaches to your garden hose, pushed into the ground about four inches. Water plants weekly until the ground freezes.

If you receive a new boulevard tree in the fall, please water those trees well once a week (at least 10 gallons of water per week) up until the ground freezes. Any week where we have a half inch of rainfall or more, you will not need to water. Leave mulch around new trees for at least several years to help retain soil moisture.

Tree problems?

If you have a problem with a tree or shrub, such as insects, diseases, site factors, or just want to have a plant identified, call Lisa Danielson, the City Arborist at 651-439-4439 or via e-mail at ldanielson@cityofoakparkheights.com. She can either answer your question over the phone or make an appointment for a site visit. This service is free for residents of Oak Park Heights.



Go GREEN: Pay & View Oak Park Heights Utility Bills Online



We accept...



Pay ONLINE

Go to www.CityOfOakParkHeights.com

1. Click "Pay Utility Bill"
2. You will go to our payment processor's website where you should register and make your payment

Or CALL

1-877-885-7968 (have your bill handy to provide your account number)

View Bills Online

Go to www.CityOfOakParkHeights.com

1. Click "View Utility Bill"
2. You will go to our payment processor's website to register
3. You will get an email each time your bill is ready

You don't have to pay online to view your bills online.

WHY?

Help save natural resources by viewing and paying online.

- Easy, fast and secure
- Pay immediately, schedule a payment or set up Auto-Pay
- Keep costs down; opt out of paper bills
- Print receipts, view payment history and more



City Meetings (subject to change)

City Council:

2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. (during summer months, the Council may only meet once per month)

Planning Commission:

Typically the 2nd Thursday at 7:00 p.m.

Parks Commission:

3rd Monday at 7:00 p.m.

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

Third quarter 2016 utility bills

There is an outdoor utility payment drop box located in the landscaped circle directly outside the City Hall entrance. This will allow for you to drive up to the box to drop off your payment rather than having to get out of your vehicle.

Utility bills for the third Quarter of 2016 (July 1 – September 30) will be mailed to residents in October and will be due November 9, 2016.

Auto pay is available. 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 City Information, Forms & Handouts. Call Jennifer Pinski at City Hall, 651-439-4439, if you have questions.

City sewer rates

Each year, the City of Oak Park Heights receives a sewer charge from the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) and such fee is for the treatment of sewerage and its discharge into the St. Croix River. MCES operates and maintains the wastewater treatment plant in Oak Park Heights. The City recently received the sewer charge for 2017, and that amount is \$498,929, an 8.85 percent increase over the 2016 charge.

Further, the amount charged by the MCES is the share of the sewer flow from within the City divided by the total sewer flow of the amount processed for the Twin Cities metro area. MCES increased their budget by 5.4 percent to a total of \$211,941,538 for 2017. According to MCES, the City’s percentage of the budget is 0.2354 percent, an increase from 0.22803 percent. This is not necessarily due to the City’s sewer flow increasing but also due to other metro cities flows decreasing. The total flow used for 2016 was 85,601.13 million gallons as compared to 85,298.36 million gallons used for the 2017 budget. Here is a yearly comparison for the sewer charges from the MCES:

MCES SEWER PROCESSING CHARGE						
Bill Year	City Vol (MG)	Regional Vol (MGD)	City Cost	% Inc Previous Cost	MCES Budget	% Increase
2017	200.80	85,298.36	\$ 498,929.46	8.81%		5.40%
2016	195.20	85,601.13	\$ 458,378.37	10.50%		5.40%
2015	199.01	91,494.90	\$ 414,812.16	1.59%		3.50%
2014	190.66	86,007.24	\$ 408,307.25	3.47%		3.00%

The total increase in charges to the City for the last four years is \$90,448; a 22.15 percent increase and \$83,943 increase in just the last two years. The total number of sewer customers in Oak Park Heights is 1,290. This will likely cause an increase to the sewer rates that the City charges its customers in 2017. In 2016, City residents incurred a rate increase of approximately six percent.

The Mayor and City Council have stated their concerns regarding the increases in the charges to the City and have requested a meeting with representatives from the MCES. This is scheduled to take place in the near future where it is hoped these increases can be reduced or perhaps reversed.

The MCES is a department of the Metropolitan Council which is the regional policy-making body, planning agency, and provider of essential services for the Twin Cities metropolitan region. It is not an elected council or board and is not accountable to any overseeing agency (see www.metrocouncil.org for more information).

Oak Park Heights local business & development news

Welcome New Businesses:

Simonet’s Furniture—13435 60th Street North

Coming Soon:

Pizza Ranch—5785 Minnesota Avenue North

Regions Hospital Car Seat Clinic

When: December 17, 2016
9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Where: Bayport Fire Department
1012 5th Ave N
Bayport, MN 55003

Call for Appointment: 651-357-2798

Or Email: carseatinfo@healthpartners.com

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St. Croix Crossing construction update

This summer has been a busy construction season for crews working on the St. Croix Crossing, and several milestones have been reached.

The final segments were cast at both the on-site casting yard, located near the Highway 36/Highway 95 intersection and the Grey Cloud casting yard, located in Cottage Grove.

Since Summer 2014, crews have produced nearly 330 pre-cast segments at the on-site casting yard. These segments are being used for the approach ramps and bridges on Minnesota land. Since Fall 2014, crews have produced nearly 650 pre-cast segments at the Grey Cloud casting yard. These segments are being used for the main river bridge.



Bridge deck construction and stay cable installation is complete at Piers 8 and 9. The segment lifters that were being used to place segments at Piers 8 and 9 moved to Piers 10 and 11 and one of the ringer cranes that was brought in to lift segments has been removed.

Crews continue to lift segments at Piers 10, 11 and 12, and stay cable installation is underway at all three river piers.

Construction of the Minnesota approach will continue through the fall. Crews began Phase II of the cast-in-place, or built on-site, portion of the new Highway 36 eastbound entrance ramp from Highway 95 this summer and they continue to hang segments at the new Highway 36 westbound exit ramp to Highway 95.

There are still tickets available for the remaining public boat tours of the bridge construction site via the St. Croix Boat & Packet paddle boats. Wednesday tours occur from 12:30 to 2 p.m. and again from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Saturday tours occur from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Remaining tours are scheduled for the following dates, rain or shine: Saturday, Sept. 10; Wednesday, Sept. 14; and Saturday, Oct. 8.

Go to www.stillwaterriverboats.com for reservation information and more details. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$6 for children ages 4 to 12.

Stay connected

- Visit the project website: www.mndot.gov/stcroixcrossing (Sign up for weekly email updates)
- Call the hotline at 1-855-GO-CROIX (462-7649)
- Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/saintcroixcrossingmndot
- Follow us on Twitter @stcroixcrossing
- Stop by the office at 1862 Greeley St. S., Stillwater

Sanitary sewer use

The City's Public Works Department provides for the collection, operation and maintenance of a wastewater system that ultimately leads to treatment and the return of water back to the ecological system at an environmentally safe level.

Oak Park Heights has approximately 28 miles of sanitary sewer mains, roughly 750 sanitary sewer manholes and four lift stations. Each year about 30,000 linear feet or roughly six miles of the City's sanitary sewer mains are cleaned and inspected. Mains that require a higher level of maintenance are cleaned more frequently. This routine maintenance helps to prevent blockages and sewer backups; however when unauthorized items are flushed into the sanitary sewer, the City's ability to prevent backups is no longer controllable.

As a resident, you play a key role in preventing sanitary sewer backups. To help prevent backups, please dispose of the following items properly by NOT dumping in a drain or flushing down the toilet:

- ◆ Diapers
- ◆ "Flushable" wipes (These do not dissolve, therefore they clog sanitary sewer lines and pumps)
- ◆ Cooking grease and oil
- ◆ Sanitary napkins
- ◆ Rags or shop towels
- ◆ Garage waste products such as oil, grease, gasoline, antifreeze
- ◆ Household waste such as ashes, corrosives, glass, metals, paint, poisons, or solvents
- ◆ Yard waste such as sand, soil, or mud.

Sanitary sewer problems should be reported to the City of Oak Park Heights Public Works Department during business hours by calling City Hall (651) 439-4439. The public works department also has a 24 hour emergency only hotline (651) 485-2304. OPH, as in many other Cities across Minnesota, the sewer main is owned by the City of OPH. City staff are responsible to maintain the City main lines. The sewer service or lateral from your home, business or other property to the City sewer main is the property owner's responsibility. That means the property owner is responsible for clearing any blockages in the service lateral between the home and the main.

Garbage and recycling

Garbage pickup in Oak Park Heights is every Thursday (on the weeks containing New Years Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, pickup will be on Friday). Please have your trash container curbside by 7:00 a.m. on pickup day. To facilitate better snow removal and mail delivery, bring containers from the street as quickly as possible after disposal.

Recycling pickup is every-other-Thursday (except those weeks with holidays noted above). The recycling calendar is available on the City's website, along with information on what can be recycled and where to bring hazardous waste and electronics for disposal.

*****Please use biodegradable paper bags for yard waste and /or please bundle brush in a manageable length so collection can be as smooth as possible.*****

Attention Pet Owners

Leash law reminder

The City of Oak Park Heights City Council updated its Leash Law Ordinance effective March 1, 2015. All dogs and cats that are off the premises of the owner must be on a leash at all times and under control of the owner or another designated person. If you do not have your dog or cat on a leash, you will be in violation of the new Ordinance.



Clean up after your pet

Also, 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. For more information, please call City Hall at 651-439-4439. City Ordinances can be viewed on the City's website: www.cityofoakparkheights.com.

Frozen pipes in the winter months

Your water lines may be at risk of freezing during prolonged periods of bitter cold. Water service lines that run from the main line to the home are private property as are the water shut-off boxes. The City does not have the capacity to thaw frozen private water lines.

Here's what you can do to prepare:

- Monitor the weather reports for extended periods of severe cold; then take action.
- Allow warm air to circulate in the area where the water comes in to the house.
- Leave utility room doors open and clear space around the waterline.
- Remove contents of vanity cupboards and leave the doors open.
- If possible/practical leave snow cover over the area where your lateral water line runs from the curb stop to the house.
- Run your cold water closest to the water line entry point for a couple minutes and then take the temperature of the water. Please first notify the City if you must leave your water running.
- If water from the tap is below 40 degrees Fahrenheit it is recommended that you let your cold water run from this faucet at a pencil thickness until a few days after frigid temperatures subside.
- You may want to run your faucet non-stop overnight when temperatures typically dip lower or no water is being used for a period of time. Monitor such flows and keep track of water use and proactively inform the City that you are running water to preclude a frozen water line. The City will make appropriate adjustments to water and sewer billings for homes that do run water to prevent freeze-up.

Be mindful with use of drones

What's that in the sky: a bird? a plane? a drone???

Drones (remote-controlled pilotless aircraft) have become increasingly more popular for recreational use. If you are operating a recreational drone in Oak Park Heights, please be mindful of your neighbors. Do not conduct surveillance or photograph people in areas where there is an expectation of privacy without the individual's permission, and do not fly the device over private property or groups of unsuspecting people.



Under Federal Aviation Administration rules, all drones weighing over 0.55 pounds and less than 55 pounds must be registered online at registermyuas.faa.gov. Drones weighing 55 pounds or more must be registered using FAA's paper-based process. Registration costs \$5.00 and is valid for three years.

Additional rules to follow include: fly no higher than 400 feet and remain below any surrounding obstacles when possible; keep the device within sight at all times; remain clear of other drones; do not intentionally fly over moving vehicles; do not fly in adverse weather conditions such as high winds; do not fly near or over power stations, the water treatment facility, the correctional facility, heavily travelled roads, and government facilities; never fly near emergency response efforts such as fires, and do not operate under the influence.

There are different rules for those using drones for business purposes, such as for contractor photography or delivery services. To view all rules, please visit www.faa.gov and knowbefore-youfly.org.

House Numbers Required by City Ordinance

Not only are house numbers required by the City's Zoning Ordinance, they are essential for people to find you and can be critical for emergency response groups, such as the police department, fire department and emergency medical responders to assist you as quickly as possible.

To make it easy to locate your home, your house numbers should be:

- ◆ A minimum of 3 inches in height
- ◆ Made of a durable, weather resistant material such as metal, glass, plastic, etc.
- ◆ A color that stands out with the house or background upon which they are placed such as dark numbers against a light background
- ◆ Easily and clearly seen from the street when approached from any direction. You may want to consider having the numbers coated with a reflective material for better visibility at dark or locating them beneath a light source
- ◆ Attached to your home or a sign post that faces the street

If your home does not have house numbers on it, make it a priority to put them on today.

Election workers needed for November General Election

The City of Oak Park Heights encourages all citizens to vote and to become involved in the election process. One of the most rewarding ways to become involved is to serve in your community as an election worker at the polls. Citizen involvement is essential in conducting open, accurate, and fair elections. Please consider participating in the election process by signing up to be an election worker. Election workers are paid \$10 per hour. No experience is necessary. Paid training is provided. All meals are provided for election workers on election day as well.

Who can be an election judge?

To serve as an election judge, an individual must meet the following qualifications: 18 years of age; Must be able to read, write, and speak English; Must not be the spouse, parent, child, or sibling of any other judge in the same precinct or to any candidate; and, Must not be a candidate for elective office in the same election. High school students who are 16 or 17 years of age may serve as trainee election judges. The student must be in good academic standing, be in or have completed a course in government, and have permission from their school and parents.

What are the duties of election judges?

To attend at least two hours of training (for which the election judges are paid) provided by the City Clerk (date to be determined); serve on Election Day - November 8, 2016; to open and close the polls; to be responsible for all election materials; to ensure that only qualified voters are permitted to vote only once; to distribute ballots; to ensure that all votes are cast in secret; to help voters requiring assistance; to maintain order in the voting place throughout the day; to obtain the results after the polls are closed.

How can you become an election judge?

An application can be found on the City's website, www.cityof oakparkheights.com or by contacting City Clerk Jennifer Pinski at jpinski@cityof oakparkheights.com or 651-439-4439.



Show your Pony Pride!

District alumni, residents, and all other Pony fans are invited to join the students and staff of Stillwater Area Public Schools for Homecoming 2016. This will be an exciting week of community building to celebrate our exceptional students – past and present.

Homecoming festivities run October 2-8, 2016 and will feature a variety of athletic competitions and other special events leading up to the homecoming football game at 7 p.m. on Friday, October 7. Watch for a full Homecoming 2016 schedule to be posted online at stillwaterschools.org in mid-September.

City of Oak Park Heights

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City of Oak Park Heights

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Oak Park Heights, MN 55082
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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

Mary McComber: 351-7879

COUNCILMEMBERS

Chuck Dougherty: 491-0419
Mike Liljegren: 351-2742
Mike Runk: 439-5458
Mark Swenson: 270-5385

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*

City of Oak Park Heights

Fall 2016 Newsletter

OAK PARK HEIGHTS FALL CLEAN-UP DAY

The City of Oak Park Heights will be hosting a Fall Clean-up on
Saturday, October 1, 2016 from 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The Clean-up will be in the southwest corner of the former St. Croix Mall (Andersen Corporation) parking lot in Oak Park Heights. Proof of residency such as a utility bill or driver's license will be required.

COMMON ITEMS DISPOSED OF:

- Appliances such as washers, dryers, ovens, and water heaters
- Brush and yard waste (please use compostable bags)
- Construction materials such as doors, windows, and lumber
- Furniture such as sofas, chairs, and tables
- scrap metal
- carpet
- Electronics such as televisions and computers
- Lawnmowers (please drain all gas and oil)

THE FOLLOWING WILL NOT ACCEPTED:

- Mattresses and box springs will not be accepted at this event, but can still be picked up curbside for no charge—please call City Hall to schedule)
- Hazardous waste (such as paints, stains, oil, gas, pesticides, or other chemicals from your home)
- Tires, stumps, and firewood

If you have any questions, please call City Hall at 651-439-4439.