

Woodbury City Update

January 2003 • Volume 4, No. 1

Council appoints 13 citizens to advisory boards

Thirteen residents were appointed to Woodbury advisory commissions and another seven were named to various subcommittees by the City Council at its Dec. 17 meeting. Those appointed serve on a volunteer basis for three years, unless noted otherwise.

Thirty citizens applied for the advisory board vacancies in November, and the Council interviewed candidates Dec. 5 and 7. According to Mayor Bill Hargis, the Council once again was impressed with the number of applicants and their qualifications.

"Woodbury has been very fortunate in attracting candidates who have professional or personal experience relevant to the various advisory boards," Hargis said. "We are grateful that these citizens are willing to take an active role in their city's government."

The advisory groups and those appointed include:

Economic Development Authority: Lyn Foley (reappointed). The EDA studies and analyzes economic development needs of the city and implements programs to attract business. The EDA also administers several financial incentive programs. EDA members serve six-year terms. The authority usually meets at 7:30 a.m. on the second Thursday of each month. Call 714-3533 to confirm dates.

Economic Development Commission: Roger Green and Kristin Lukes (both reappointments)

and David Bartlett (one-year term). The commission acts as a coordinating body and resource agency for economic development matters. Commission meetings are held quarterly; committee work is conducted between meetings. Call the Community Development Department, 714-3533, for meeting dates.

Environmental Education Commission: Lynne Markus (reappointed), Justin Merritt and Karen Sauro (one-year term). This commission advises the City Council on matters relevant to environmental education issues including solid waste, air, water, land, energy, and other natural resources. Meetings are held the fourth Monday of the month; meeting times vary. Call 714-3523 for more information.

Park and Recreation Commission: Lyn Robinson (reappointed), Angela Chen, Nancy Remakel, and Tim Swanson (one-year term). The commission works to protect natural resources, reviews recreation programs and studies park site planning. Meetings are scheduled on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m., and on the third Tuesday, if needed.

Planning Commission: Jim Erkel (reappointed) and Lori Marco. The Planning Commission is responsible for all questions relating to planning and zoning regulations. It reviews all applications for development and recommends approval or denial based on conformance with the com-

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Residential growth in 2002 slowest since 1980

You have to go back more than two decades to find a year when fewer new homes were started in Woodbury than in 2002. The city issued building permits for 200 new housing units last year. It's the lowest number since 1980, when 188 new residential units were built.

The decline in the number of permits for 2002 marks the third year in a row that residential growth has diminished. Woodbury issued building permits for 784 new housing units in 2000 and 469 in 2001. These compare to 1,636 in 1999.

"This decrease in the number of permits was expected," said City Administrator Barry Johnson. "Most of the building activity in the past two years involved projects already under way and the later phases of multi-phase projects. We did not see many new residential developments."

According to Johnson, the city's growth slowed down, as predicted, primarily because of the limited amount of developable land within the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA) where water and sewer utilities are available. That's about to change, however, as the MUSA boundary expanded in 2002 and new sewer was built.

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Council Perspective *by Mayor Bill Hargis*

Community survey influences Council's decisions

In mid- to late January, our 2003 community survey will get under way. Through the survey, conducted for the city by a Minneapolis polling firm, 400 randomly-selected residents will rate city services and the quality of life in Woodbury. They also will give their opinions about some specific issues and potential projects.

The telephone poll, consisting of more than 170 questions, will closely follow the format and content of surveys taken every two years since 1993. The survey provides valuable feedback to the City Council about ongoing services. We use the data collected to determine whether we're meeting citizens' expectations and where we need to make improvements.

Because we gain so much information from the survey, the Council decided a few years ago to set aside the funds to conduct community surveys on a biennial basis. This has allowed us to track our performance over time and make adjustments in some areas.

For example, about a fourth of the survey respondents in 1997 were critical of the city's snow plowing efforts, and 21 percent rated plowing of city trails as "only fair" or "poor." After reviewing the survey results, the City Council authorized the purchase of a tractor, snow blower and snow blade that are designed specifically for removing large accumulations of snow from trails.

In just a few months, the City Council will hold a strategic planning session to identify issues that deserve a more detailed approach than our day-to-day business operations generally allow. As part of identifying these issues the Council looks at how well the community is doing in a number of areas deemed important to the success of our city. Many of the measures used to track the city's performance are based on the citizen opinions expressed in the survey.

Performance measurement

The survey results also are important ingredients in our performance measurement program. Through this program, city

staff tracks 286 performance trends in city services. For example, we monitor the average amount of time it takes to completely plow streets after a snow storm. By monitoring the city's performance, the Council can determine if service is improving or declining, and whether we need to adjust resources in a particular area.

A number of the performance measures are tied directly to data coming out of the community survey. We track the percentage of residents who rate a service as good or excellent, for instance. When we prepare the city budget, the performance measures help the Council evaluate what we are getting for the money we spend, rather than simply how much we are spending. We use the measures to try to determine whether we are providing citizens with good value for the tax dollars they pay.

Specific issues and projects

While it's important to collect data about city services and the quality of life in Woodbury, it also is helpful to ask citizens about some specific issues and potential projects. The open space issue a few years ago is an example.

Through community surveys in 1995 and 1997, citizens indicated that conserving open space in Woodbury is a priority. Partly because public sentiment was so strong, the Council decided to go forward with the open space referendum in 1998. The tax impact of the \$5 million requested in the referendum was consistent with the amount citizens said they were willing to pay to acquire and conserve open space.

As Council members finalize the survey questions, we will consider whether we should ask about the possibility of another open space referendum in 2003 or about other possible major projects.

With more than 170 questions, the community survey requires some time on the part of those who are called. Nevertheless, I hope residents will be willing to participate if contacted. The input we receive is carefully reviewed and it does impact the City Council's decisions.

Advisory boards...from page 1

prehensive plan and zoning regulations. The commission meets on the first and third Monday of the month at 7 p.m.

In addition to the advisory boards, the Council made the following appointments: James Gaard, Ron Lattin, Aurita Holguin-Resch and Adam Stone, Business Development Subcommittee of the EDC; Ernest Lloyd, Infrastructure Subcommittee of EDC; Mark Paddleford and Tony Xiong, Housing Task Force.

As new appointees are named, the City Council wishes to acknowledge those who have completed their service on city boards and commissions. They include: Willie Davis, Economic Development Commission; Rich Brude and Brian Davis, Environmental Education Commission; Marilyn Doyle, Betty Marquardt and Peter McCarthy, Park and Recreation Commission; and Bruce Larson, Planning Commission.

Citizens interested in serving on any of the city's advisory boards may apply for openings annually. Applications generally are accepted in October or early November; commissioners' terms begin in January.

Growth...from page 1

"Major new developments have been approved by the City Council during 2002," Johnson noted. "In southwest Woodbury, Wyndham Ponds near the intersection of Woodlane Drive and Bailey Road has begun development. Dancing Waters and Stonemill Farms, on the north and south side of Valley Creek Road, respectively, have started construction. Other developments in the phase one growth area east of St. John's Drive and north of Bailey Road also will get under way."

Even when new areas open for development, however, Woodbury will not experience the high growth rates seen in the 1990s. That's because the city's Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2000, seeks to limit future growth in the areas added to the MUSA to 600 housing units per year, on average.

The City Council adopted a growth management policy in December 2001 to implement the 600-unit target rate. The policy applies only to the phase one expansion area, which consists of about 1,400 acres east of St. Johns Drive and north of Bailey Road.

It does not apply to property formerly within the MUSA, such as Wyndham Ponds. That property has already been assessed for public improvements and thus has the legal right to proceed with development.

New video system assists with firearms training

When is it necessary for police officers to use a firearm in apprehending a criminal? Firearms training conducted by the Woodbury Police Department helps officers learn to make the correct decisions in potentially life-threatening situations. Their training recently has been enhanced with the purchase of a firearms training simulator.

"Law enforcement officers often come under scrutiny when they are required to make decisions regarding the use of deadly force with firearms," said Public Safety Director Bill Hering. "The Laser Shot firearms video training system generates realistic video scenarios to test marksmanship, and 'shoot-don't shoot' judgment."

The system, which has the ability to repeat a scenario to emphasize a lesson, helps officers make proper decisions regarding the use of firearms and evaluates shooting accuracy against moving targets. Because lasers are used, there are no ongoing ammunition costs. The compact size of the simulator provides officers with the convenience of practicing inside the Public Safety Building and allows officers to work through a 15- to 20-minute session during their regular shift.

The firearms video training system has 72 different built-in scenarios ranging from 10 to 45 seconds in length. Officers can modify the scenarios – like darkening the lighting in an abandoned warehouse or rearranging the furniture in a living room – to create more life-like situations. In addition, officers can create their own scenarios using Woodbury squad cars and police officers in popular Woodbury places.

"It's about as real-life as you can get," Sgt. Cory Stilp, one of four firearms instructors with the Woodbury Police Department, explained. "It's the best way to measure how an officer will react in a real situation. You cannot simulate those effects on the shooting range."

The system's replay feature allows officers to see immediate results and get instant feedback from instructors. Each scenario also allows officers to work on their oral communication skills by talking through many of the situations as they would on the streets.

The system cost \$13,995, and includes a projection screen, projector, laptop computer and software. Funds for the training simulator were raised at the Second Annual Woodbury Public Safety benefit dinner in October. More than 350 people attended the dinner, which generated



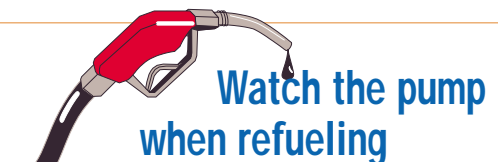
Sgt. Mike Pepin tests the new Laser Shot firearms video training system, purchased with funds raised at the Public Safety benefit dinner.

more than \$16,000 through a live auction, silent auction and raffle.

The Woodbury Public Safety Board is a non-profit organization formed to provide community education and raise funds for public safety needs in the City of Woodbury. The board has helped the Police Department acquire and train K-9s Andy and Shadow, and has also purchased thermal imaging equipment for the Fire Department.



RIGHT ON TARGET Riding in an ambulance can be a scary proposition for young children. That's why the local Target Store donated about 500 stuffed animals to the Woodbury Public Safety Board. "Bullseye," the company's mascot, will be given to kids by firefighters and paramedics to help ease their fears when they are being transported. Presenting the dogs were, from left, Todd Gulbranson, district assets protection manager for Target, and Todd Bruehl, store team leader. Gulbranson also is a part-time Woodbury firefighter. Accepting the donation were Greg Orth, representing the Public Safety Board, Public Safety Director Bill Hering, and Emergency Medical Services Coordinator J.B. Guiton.



The Woodbury Fire Department would like to remind motorists to remain outside their vehicles while refueling. Doing so can help prevent gas spills and fires.

Already this winter the department has cleaned up one gas spill at a local station, according to Fire Marshal Rob Miller. A motorist started the gas pump and returned to her vehicle to use her cell phone. The automatic shut-off on the pump did not activate, and about eight gallons of fuel spilled onto the ground before the motorist noticed.

Winter weather also brings dry conditions that create static electricity. The static may build up if a motorist re-enters the vehicle during fueling, Miller said. When the motorist returns to the vehicle's gas tank, the static may discharge at the fill point, potentially causing a flash fire or a small sustained fire with gasoline refueling vapors.

While it may be a temptation to get back in the car to avoid the cold, motorists can avoid static electricity problems and prevent spills by remaining outside the vehicle while refueling.



It's dog license time!

If your dog's name is "Max," don't beckon him too loudly. Thirty-four other "Maxes" might answer your call!

The most popular names among dogs licensed in Woodbury in 2002 were: Bailey, 39; Max, 35; Maggie and Sadie, 28; Buddy, 26; Abby, 20; Mollie, 17; and Lucky, 12. Among the unusual names were Bourbon, Bullwinkle, Hoover, and Humphrey Bogart.

Labrador Retrievers are still "top dog" in Woodbury. Though they come in an assortment of colors, 169 Labs were licensed in the city last year. Golden Retrievers were in second place with 104 residing in the city. Other popular

breeds included: Bichons Frises, Beagles, and German Shepherds. About 1,600 dogs were registered in 2002.

Now is the time to purchase your dog's license for 2003. 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 Abby, Bailey, Sadie, or other-named pooch they may pick up.

While the number of licensed dogs has increased over the years, the cost of licensing has remained the same since 1979. The fee is \$9 for male or female dogs, \$5 for spayed or neutered dogs. Licenses are required for all dogs six

months and older, and should be purchased prior to March 31 each year. As of April 1, license fees double in cost. New residents of Woodbury must license their dog within 60 days.

You can use the attached application to purchase your license by mail or in person at the Public Safety Building, 2100 Radio Drive. Proof of rabies vaccination must be provided. If you mail in the application, please include the rabies certificate. It will be returned with your license.

Local veterinary clinics also sell dog licenses. It may be more convenient for you to purchase a license when you take your pet in for shots or a check-up. Participating clinics include Banfield, Carver Lake Veterinary Center, Hudson Road Animal Hospital and Woodbury Animal Hospital. Some local clinics charge an additional fee for processing the license.

Questions can be directed to the Public Safety Department at (651) 714-3600. Business hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays.

2003 Dog License Application

Check One:

- \$9-male
- \$9-Female
- \$5-Neutered Male
- \$5-Spayed Female

Rabies Inoculation:

- Date _____
- Tag No. _____
- Vet Name _____
- Vet Phone _____

Dog's Name _____ Age _____

Breed _____ Color _____

Owner's Name _____

Address _____

Phone (home) _____ (work) _____

2002 Dog Tag No. _____

Sign up for Half Pint Safety Camp

Children in kindergarten through second grade can learn about fire prevention, home and personal safety at Half Pint Safety Camp, starting at 9 a.m. Monday, Feb. 17, at Bielenberg Sports Center. One of the highlights this year will be a visit from animals that will talk to the campers about animal safety. The camp ends with a graduation ceremony at 2 p.m.

The deadline for registering is Feb. 7. The cost is \$25 per child, which includes lunch and a shirt. For more information, contact the Parks and Recreation Department at (651) 714-3583.

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