



Sunfish Lake Quarterly

Winter 2024 Volume 24 Issue 1

Greetings Neighbors,

I hope all of you had a wonderful holiday season and are staying warm as winter settles in. A few transitions for our City team.... Shari Hansen, one of our City Council members, resigned effective 1/1/24. Shari has been a champion for environmental concerns and an optimistic, compassionate voice on the Council. Although we regret her departure, we are happy for her upcoming adventures sailing the world with her husband, Paul. We wish them bon voyage, and fun and safe travels. Ginny Beckett, a long serving member of the Planning Commission, will join the Council to serve out Shari's term. On behalf of SFL, I express a huge "thank you" to both Shari and Ginny for their dedication to public service and to our SFL community.

Another change in the new year is that Ann Lanoue, our City Treasurer for the past 10 years, has resigned to have more time to enjoy family and favorite endeavors. The Council expresses our gratitude to Ann for her contributions over the years and for supporting our recent and successful financial audit. Char Stark, the Finance Director for West St. Paul, will add the part-time duties of SFL City Treasurer to her current role. The Council is appreciative of this cooperative effort with West St. Paul, and we thank their Mayor and City Administrator for this support and collaboration. Char brings strong credentials to the Treasurer role and we are pleased to have her on board.

A few notes on City business.... Christy Wilcox, our City Clerk, has started the somewhat daunting task of digitizing all past SFL records. We were able to seize the opportunity to utilize ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds to defray some of the costs associated with this necessary project. We hope to have this effort completed by year-end. Work has also started on updating City Ordinances to streamline content and reduce inconsistencies. ARPA funds will also defray some costs for this project.

Like all metro communities, SFL experiences its share of air traffic noise given we have the benefit of a close-in airport serving the metropolitan area. The Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) Noise Oversight Committee (NOC) is an advisory board to the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) and is comprised of industry and community representatives with the express purpose of addressing air traffic noise issues. The NOC Committee has developed an excellent reputation throughout the U.S. for working closely with the FAA to abate noise whenever possible. I serve on this committee on behalf of SFL.

Recently, the FAA has installed RNAV (area navigation) systems in most U.S. airports. It is a more precise way of directing air traffic and it will be installed at MSP in 2025. Typically, the FAA establishes RNAV procedures with minimal input from affected residents. The NOC has negotiated with the FAA to allow affected resident input regarding flight distribution patterns. The recent "draft RNAV procedures" place an inequitable burden on Sunfish Lake and a few other metro communities. The SFL Council is working closely with the NOC to ensure the NOC's recommendation to the FAA will be to distribute flight paths more equitably among all affected Metropolitan communities. It will be important for SFL residents to appear at virtual and in-person meetings to express their concerns about the RNAV procedures. These upcoming meetings will be held in 2024 and notification will be posted well in advance on the City's website homepage under the category, "Latest on the Airport." Please support this effort by bringing your voice to the discussion as this is an important concern for all in our community.

As always, the Council welcomes input from residents so we hope to see you or hear from you as we all seek to maintain our great community environment.

Stay well and have a great winter season.

Dan O'Leary

A NOTE FROM SUNFISH LAKE’S NEW TREASURER

My name is Charlene Stark but I go by Char. I am your new treasurer. I have worked in the government sector for many years, all in the accounting field. I enjoy the field of accounting and have wanted to work in this area after taking a class in bookkeeping in the 9th grade. So, a love for numbers began.

My husband and I reside in Hastings. We raised our four children and were involved in many groups along the way. We both volunteered at our children’s Parochial school. My husband coached many levels of hockey both boys and girls as well as soccer, baseball and softball. I served on the Hockey boosters board for two terms as the treasurer.

I graduated from the University of Wisconsin River Falls, and I have an inactive CPA license. I have worked at the County level (Washington Co.), as well as at a bigger city (Bloomington), to midlevel cities (Hastings and West St. Paul). I am currently the Finance Director for the City of West St. Paul.

If you have any questions about the City’s budget, please email me at char.stark@comcast.net.

2024 ELECTION INFORMATION

Sunfish Lake elections are held in November of even-numbered years during the General Election.

- Presidential Nomination Primary - March 5, 2024
- Primary Election - August 13, 2024
- General Election - November 5, 2024

Not sure if you’re registered or want to pre-register? Check your voter registration status at mnvotes.org and learn what documents you will need to provide. Voters are strongly encouraged to pre-register to save themselves time on Election Day. If you have moved since the last election, have changed your name, or have not voted within the past four years, you will need to register. Only residential addresses are accepted. Pre-registration may be done online at mnvotes.org, OR at any of the three Dakota County offices, or drivers’ license centers. See the chart above for important pre-registration deadlines.

Please visit the City’s website at sunfishlake.org for other helpful links and information about the 2024 elections.

NO PARKING



In an effort to increase pedestrian and vehicle safety, no parking signs were installed along the north side of Salem Church Road. Recently, the City Council and staff received a request from residents to evaluate parking along Salem Church Road and its effects on safety as vehicles parked along the road were creating a potentially dangerous condition for both vehicles and pedestrians.

The City Engineer and the Chief of Police visited the site to collect information on roadway sightlines and measure lane widths. Based on the information collected and referencing guidelines published by the Minnesota Local Road Research Board and the Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, it was recommended to Council to post no parking on the north side of the Salem Church Road to improve sightlines and provide adequate traveling width.

<p>City Council Dan O’Leary, Mayor Mike Hovey Steven Bulach Shari Hansen Shannon Nelson</p>	<p>Planning Commission Tom Hendrickson, Chair Dominick Driano Ginny Beckett Jeannine Naves Kevin Wu</p>	<p>City Clerk/Administrator Christy Wilcox cwilcoxclerk@gmail.com Mailing Address: P.O. Box 18281 West St. Paul, MN 55118</p>	<p align="center">In this Issue Message from the Mayor A Note From the New Treasurer 2024 Election Information No Parking Forestry Update Organics Program Snowplowing in SFL Smart Salting</p>
<p>Upcoming Recycling Events:</p>	<p>Art & Craft Supply Swap Clark Memorial United Church South St. Paul February 27, 6-8 pm</p>	<p>Spring Paper Shred Event West St. Paul Sports Complex April 13, 9 am - noon</p>	

FORESTRY UPDATE

You may have noticed that portions of Salem Church Road and Angell Road seem a little wider. Following requests from residents, a street edge and buckthorn removal project was developed to prune back branches encroaching on street airspace and remove invasive buckthorn to about six feet from the road edge. The pruning should also make walking along these streets easier. The project has been completed by Fat Squirrel Forestry Technicians and similar road edge pruning projects will be conducted in the future.

Oak tree insect and disease issues in our city are a significant threat. Most people have heard of **oak wilt** and that is a killer of mature oak trees. The disease may be transmitted by insects or can also move through root grafts between trees of the same species. Red oaks and pin oaks are the most dramatically affected and if infected with oak wilt, both red and pin oak trees will likely die within a matter of weeks. White oak, swamp white oak and bur oak can be infected with oak wilt though these species may be successfully treated and recover. There is much more to be said about oak wilt so if you have more questions please contact your City Forester at 612-803-9033 or your Certified Arborist professional.

Two other deadly oak issues are prevalent here and those are **two-line chestnut borer (beetle)** and **armillaria root rot (fungus)**. Healthy oaks do not often have problems with either chestnut borer or armillaria as they are able to fend off attacks by these insects or disease. The key word here is healthy. Many trees in our common forest have been stressed significantly due to three consecutive summers of drought and are therefore more susceptible to either or both these organisms. When two-line chestnut borer attacks a mature oak tree it will usually start in one portion of the tree and causes a large branch or two to die back in the upper canopy. At this point chestnut borer is probably treatable with systemic insecticide plus supplemental watering if drought conditions continue. The two-line chestnut borer beetle leaves evidence in the form of a rather large oval shaped exit hole. Armillaria root rot is a more subtle pathogen that is normally found growing as a saprophyte in the soil of many forests. It does not always live as a pathogen. It usually will not attack mature trees unless they are significantly stressed by environment, damage, insects or other diseases. Oaks, ash, and other trees can be attacked by armillaria fungus and the defining sign of attack is the presence of black fungal strings under tree bark that is shed from the dying tree. There is no treatment for armillaria root rot and the best prevention is maintaining healthy growing conditions for your trees.

While we may not have had our usual white Christmas in 2023 our mild winter and significant soaking rain is good for our trees. May we all enjoy a more normal rainfall pattern for 2024.

Jim Naves
City Forester

JOIN YOUR NEIGHBORS TO KEEP FOOD SCRAPS OUT OF THE TRASH

The number one item in our trash is food. That's why more than 10,000 Dakota County households have registered to participate in the free organics drop-off program. There are 11 organics drop-off sites located throughout the county — in Apple Valley, Burnsville, Eagan, Farmington, Hastings, Inver Grove Heights, Lakeville, Mendota Heights, Rosemount (two) and West St. Paul.

Across the locations, more than 40,000 pounds of food scraps are collected each week. Collected material goes to an industrial compost facility and is turned into compost — a nutrient-rich soil additive — used in gardening and landscaping.

Bringing organics to a drop-off site is easy and can dramatically reduce waste. The typical household can divert up to one-third of trash by delivering items such as food scraps, spoiled produce, coffee grounds and bones.

To sign up, visit www.dakotacounty.us and search *organics*, email organics@co.dakota.mn.us or call 952-891-7557. All registered participants receive helpful tips and compostable bags to use at home.

Partially funded by Dakota County and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.



SNOWPLOWING IN SUNFISH LAKE

The City of Sunfish Lake does not have public works staff to perform maintenance and snow clearing of the city's streets. Instead, the city contracts those services out. The contractor is Executive Contractor's Inc., and the service is managed by City Engineer Justin Messner. An email address has been set up by the contractor for residents to use if they note areas within the city that they consider needing additional sand/ salt/ or clearing. The email address is sunfishlakesnow@gmail.com. Please copy Justin Messner at jmessner@wsbeng.com on all inquiries. The email goes straight to the contractor and will be followed up on by the city engineer as well. The contractor has proven to be very responsive to residents' concerns. The contractor also will apply a pretreatment to our road in advance of any snow event to help clear the roadways.

Please keep in mind that residents are responsible for snow removal at their own properties. Snow cannot be pushed into the street or the street Right-of-Way, and must be stored on your private property. It can make the city snow clearing effort much more difficult if snow is pushed in to the City street Right-of-Way, and often results in a bigger wake of snow around mailboxes. The US Postal Service requires that residents clear snow from below their mailboxes to allow access to mail carriers. The snow plow contractor can't properly clear the streets without plowing snow in the vicinity of mailboxes. Thus, it is the residents responsibility to clear the snow around your mailboxes. Your cooperation is very much appreciated!

You can find the snow plowing policy on the City's website at sunfishlake.org



SMART SALTING

With the snow accumulation of winter, comes the application of road salt, which prioritizes public safety in parking lots, roadways, and sidewalks. Chloride, a chemical compound in road salt, is a permanent pollutant that does not break down or degrade over time. Road salt is the #1 source of chloride to use in Minnesota with an estimated 403,600 tons of road salt used in Minnesota annually, according to the MPCA. Chloride is toxic to freshwater fish, amphibians, insects, and plants. Once it is used, chloride is transported into lakes, rivers, and groundwater with melting ice and snow. There are 67 impaired water bodies in Minnesota that exceed the chloride standard designed to protect fish and other aquatic life on the 2022 impaired waters list.

More than 48 billion pounds of salt is spread on icy roads in the United States each year. Still, even using small amounts of salt around your driveway or walkways can have lasting effects, as a single 50-pound bag of salt can contaminate over 10,000 gallons of water. Here are some tips for residential homeowners and property managers for salt application during the winter.

1. Check the temperature – is it too cold for salt? Most salts stop working around 15 degrees (F). When the temperatures drop, use sand for traction, but remember that sand doesn't melt ice.
2. Apply less than you think. Adding more salt does not equal more melting. Try to use less than four pounds of salt per 1,000 square feet. Keep in mind one pound of salt is about the same as one 12-ounce coffee mug. One coffee mug-full is enough for 10 sidewalk squares or a 20' driveway.
3. Clean-up any extra salt. If you can see sand or salt on dry pavement, it's means that it is no longer working and could be washed away. Try to reuse salt or sand somewhere else or sweep it up and throw it away.
4. How to effectively shovel – Shovel the snow early and often; if the temperature drops after a snowstorm, the snow can become less workable. If salt is needed, apply sparingly. As the sun comes out or the temperature rises, the deicer will make a slushy mixture of water and ice. Remove this before the temperature drops again and you should have an ice-free surface until the next storm.
5. Snow piles in parking lots should be placed at the lowest elevation, to prevent the melting piles from running across the lot and picking up potential pollutants.
6. Check out the MPCA's smart salting manual <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/p-tr1-10.pdf>
7. Check out the MPCA's page on winter maintenance [https://stormwater.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/Road salt, smart salting and winter maintenance](https://stormwater.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/Road_salt,_smart_salting_and_winter_maintenance)