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News & Views

May 18, 2021

The City of New Hope's Employee Newsletter

Time to S.O.A.R.

It is time to help New Hope SOAR! S.O.A.R. stands for **Share Observations, Achieve Results!**

As you travel through the city, take the time to take a look around and note anything you see that needs tending. **Share** your **Observations** with the appropriate department, to help **Achieve** the desired **Results**.

Some things to look for and the departments to report them to:

Potholes, weeds, long grass, street lights out—Public Works

Poorly maintained homes, graffiti, illegal signs, junk vehicles and other code enforcement issues—Community Development

All park issues, including graffiti in parks—Parks & Recreation

Thanks from **Kirk McDonald**, city manager, for helping the city S.O.A.R.!



City Council to Consider Phase 1 of Public Works Expansion



The contract for phase one of the public works expansion is set to be presented to the City Council at their May 24 meeting for consideration. The bids came in almost \$500k over projected cost so public works and finance staff are working together to propose alternative funding sources for Council to consider. If approved, improvements would include security additions and enhancements (new camera system, door contacts, upgraded fencing and gates that can be closed 24/7 except when entering and exiting), a separate soil storage building (allowing for additional

equipment to be stored inside), air conditioning for the mechanics bay, an expanded mechanics storage room (needed for storing components removed from patrol vehicles during retrofitting), and a relocated fitness room allowing it to be contained and air conditioned.

Food Truck Fridays

Thanks to the idea of and planning led by **Jessi Weber**, admin. specialist, community development will be hosting food trucks at city hall. The kick-off event will be May 28 and the events will occur weekly through Sept. 3, from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Participating vendors will vary each week. Come and get your grub on!



Mark Your Calendar:

May 26 – Wacky Wednesday

May 26 – Music in the Park: The Percolators

May 27 – Dorothy Mary Park Clean-up

May 31 – Memorial Day, City Offices Closed

June 2 – Aquatic Park Ribbon Cutting

June 5 – Aquatic Park Opens

June 9 – Music in the Park: The Castaways

June 17 – Movie in the Park: Big Hero 6

June 18-19 – City-Wide Garage Sale

June 19 – Weekly Farmers Market Starts

June 23 – Wacky Wednesday (including shorts)

July 5 – Independence Day, City Offices Closed

July 7 – Music in the Park: Brass Menagerie

New Employees

Tom Evans, General Inspector

Welcome to Tom who started on May 3. Tom comes to the city from the city of Coon Rapids where he was a housing inspector. But, he's excited to be in New Hope as he is originally from here and his parents still live here. Tom and wife, Jhoanna, met and dated while attending Cooper and now live in Brooklyn Park. Tom has five siblings, one is a twin of his and three others are triplets. His twin isn't identical though so if you see him out and about, say hi, it really is Tom!

Jhoanna was born in Mexico and is bilingual and an RSI first grade teacher. Tom's dad is a retired teacher/coach and his mom retired from work with the city of Minneapolis and transitioned to a shorter commute working for Park Nicollet.

Tom enjoys sports including watching the Vikings, Timberwolves and the Minnesota United Football League. He has also recently taken up golfing. He said that Jhoanna may come along and hit a few balls if they're putting but her interest so far in walking the course is low. He hasn't given up yet though. They both enjoy traveling and have started camping at Itasca State Park, currently in a tent but a camper is not yet out of the realm of possibility. Other trips have included Las Vegas and Disney World. They were scheduled for a trip to Disney Land when the pandemic shut things down.

For the quieter times, they enjoy watching TV and movies, recent views have been Godzilla vs Kong and Mortal Kombat. They also enjoy a range of games with friends from Jackbox, played in front of a screen with mobile phones as the controllers, to murder mystery events in costume dress. Tom has been on the lookout for a canine companion to join the family but Jhoanna has a slight allergy so s/he will need to be hypoallergenic.

We're glad you're here, Tom, and hope that you enjoy being back in your neighborhood!



Tom Lesnikowski, Police Officer

Welcome to Tom (not a typo) who started on May 10! Tom was most recently with Eden Prairie PD as a CSO. He and his girlfriend, Taylor, live in Eden Prairie. Taylor recently started a job with Scott County as a court clerk administrator. Tom's mom is a para for special education and his dad is a wholesaler for mutual funds, a career he found after service in the Army and as a police officer. I asked Tom how he didn't end up on the Army track. He said that he was considering both St. John's and St. Thomas but decided that law enforcement was his path for a career in giving back, so St. Thomas won out. And it was meant to be as he and Taylor met at St. Thomas in the criminal justice program that they were both enrolled in. He has one sister that lives in Apple Valley and will be marrying her fiancé next month. Not to be left out, they have two standard poodles, Humphrey and Stanley.

Tom enjoys playing and watching sports, especially football. He was born in New Jersey so I asked if there was a conflict between rooting for the Vikings or the New York Giants. He reassured me that despite the fact that his parents have failed to make the switch, he loves the Vikings. He also plans to make use of the fitness room as he enjoys working out and lifting weights.

Tom and Taylor enjoy being outside and being active. They made a trip last August to Duluth and spent a good deal of time outside hiking, including Gooseberry Falls. They also visit New Jersey periodically as other than his immediate family, all of his relatives still live there. They are also fans of sitcoms and enjoy some of the oldies such as Friends. Most recently though they've been making their way through all of the Star Wars movies.

Tom, we're glad you chose New Hope to start your career as an officer and hope you enjoy it as much as we do!



Staff Changes

Anthony Larson, Police Officer

Congratulations to Anthony Larson on his promotion to police officer effective May 10. Anthony has been with the city since March of 2020 as a community service officer and is excited to advance his career with the city. If you would like to brush up on more about Anthony, you can see his employee spotlight in the May 15, 2020 Issue of News & Views.

Dean Blom, Building Official, Retires

Dean Blom's last day was May 14. For more on Dean's tenure with the city, please see the article in the last issue of News & Views (April 9).



Employee Kudos



Brad Johnson, maintenance worker, for saving a life on April 9. That morning Brad was conducting routine maintenance on the south end of the city when he noticed smoke coming from behind the Midland Shopping Center. Brad drove to the side of the building and observed that a dumpster was the source of the smoke and called 911. Brad opened the gate where the dumpster was located and found an individual standing in the dumpster in distress. They said to Brad, "Get me out of here, I need help, there are chemicals in here."

Brad assisted the individual in exiting the dumpster. The individual was very thankful that Brad had showed up and recognized Brad as what he is, a hero. New Hope Police arrived and performed a health check. West Metro Fire-Rescue arrived and extinguished the fire. West Metro Fire-Rescue Chief Sarah Larson will be presenting Brad with an award at the May 24 council meeting. There are not words enough to express our gratitude, Brad, but thank you.

Matt Rowedder and public works staff: City Manager McDonald received the following correspondence from a resident recently: "We had been noticing some sporadic water pressure drops over the past bunch of weeks and when a few neighbors mentioned last night that they had noticed the same, I figured I'd call and see if there was anything that could be done. I left a voicemail message at shortly before 9:00 a.m. this morning, and just a couple of hours later Matt and his contemporary at the City of Golden Valley showed up at our home. (We live one block north of Golden Valley.) They had already tested several hydrants in the area to try to diagnose and remedy the problem. While it is likely due to road resurfacing and water main replacement in the north chunk of Golden Valley, Matt told me to call back if the problem persisted or got worse."



Here to help

I have always been extremely impressed by our Public Works department. This winter the streets were in pristine condition just hours after every snowfall while our neighbors to the south could not say the same, and every time in the last almost 27 years that I have had a question I have received an immediate response. They really do great work and I wanted to make sure you know it, though I suspect you hear it a lot. So thanks again to the City for always providing the very best service to its residents and visitors!"



May is Building Safety Month – On April 12, the City Council proclaimed May as Building Safety Month in the city of New Hope. A thank you and kudos to the building code and inspections staff as well as fire prevention officials for ensuring the safety and

desirability of New Hope properties through their work.

National Public Works Week – On April 12, the City Council proclaimed May 16-22 as Public Works Week in the city of New Hope. A thank you and kudos to public works staff for maintaining the city's infrastructure to provide a safe and healthy environment for the community.

May is Arbor Month – On April 12, the City Council proclaimed May as Arbor Month in the city of New Hope. A thank you and kudos to **Shawn Markham**, city forester, and public works staff for their work in maintaining New Hope as a designated Tree City USA for the last 23 years and for their diligence in combating the emerald ash borer.





City receives Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. In March, the city was notified by the Government Finance Officers Association that the city's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the fiscal year ending Dec. 31, 2019 qualified the city for the award. It is the highest form of recognition in government accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government entity and its management. Congratulations to the finance team and AEM for helping the city achieve this goal again this year.

Upcoming Events

Reminder of May 27 Dorothy Mary Park clean-up (can wear jeans that day)

All staff are invited to join in the park clean-up day for Dorothy Mary Park. City staff adopted Dorothy Mary Park many years ago and those participating are invited to wear jeans for the day. Staff will meet at the south entrance to the park located at 8030 61 ½ Ave. N.



New Hope Aquatic Park Ribbon Cutting

All staff are invited to the ribbon cutting event to be held on Wednesday, June 2 from 4:30 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. The ribbon cutting will be at 5:30 p.m., followed by refreshments. There will not be any swimming but attendees will be able to explore the facility in advance of the opening on Saturday, June 5. It will be exciting to finally see this beautiful facility up and ready to welcome guests!

Welcome Baby!

Congratulations to Justin Janson, police officer, and his wife, Ashley, on the arrival of son Jack, born on April 13. Jack was welcomed home by his brother, Cameron.



Wellness Program

Meal Planning – April 28

Dietician Ryan Weiler led 19 attendees through a virtual tour of Hy-Vee's departments sharing ideas for maintaining a balanced diet while using products that make for easy meal preparation.

Home Tips and Inspection Tricks – May 26

Learn the best of home maintenance tips from our very own housing inspector **Eric Piper**. After many years of inspecting homes, Eric has seen what can lead homeowners down an expensive path of considerable repairs. Eric will instruct us on tricks for learning more about your home, practices to avoid and ways to make the most of our resources as we seek to maintain and improve our living spaces. The information shared will apply to not just homeowners, but renters and squatters alike! Lunch will be from Crisp and Green. See all the details in the email sent to staff or on the flyers posted in city breakrooms.



Increasing your Mental Health Awareness – June 9

Many of us interact frequently with residents and those conducting business in the city. Britni Austin, New Hope Police Officer, will walk us through identifying when the individuals we are talking with may warrant a different approach and possible escalation to receiving assistance from police personnel. Details will be sent out soon.