



BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE NEWS



City of Birchwood Village, MN

Summer 2021

Welcome New Neighbors:

Loren Witcher, 360 Wildwood, **Joseph & Michelle Young**, 5 Hall Ct; Emily Kubic, 232 Wildwood

Our Condolences to:

Bridget Sperl on the passing of her husband John McCormick this spring.

Our thanks to:

- **John Lund and Jozsef Hegedus**, long-time planning commission members who both recently stepped down.
- **Tighe-Schmitz tree planters: Ryan, Jasper and Shari Hankins, Andy and Ginny Sorenson, Bob Carson, Mark Foster, John Fleck and Mary Wingfield**
- **Litter bug clean up: Mary Cahill and Mary Wingfield**
- Flower box tending: **Susie Mahoney:**

Be part of future volunteer opportunities, contact Mary Wingfield: Wingfield.mary@gmail.com

Residents who add a bright light to our town:

The caption of Grogg went missing in our last newsletter. That was **River Rasmussen** posing with his work of art.

Do you know of someone who has gone the extra mile to make our community bright? Let us know and we will post it here!

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT

Here is the link for our public water supply system. The analysis shows we are within the range of safety for all measured elements.

[https://www.cityofbirchwood.com/vertical/sites/%7BAA5D0154-C9CB-4BB6-8A70-7C86B8410F8A%7D/uploads/CCR_Report_PWS_1820003_2020.pdf]

UPCOMING EVENTS:

4th of JULY PARADE (YES!) - July 4th, 9:30 am at 5 Birchwood Avenue. FFI: Mary Wingfield. 651-653-1022, wingfield.mary@gmail.com

MUSIC IN THE PARK- Ten Sundays starting June 13 continuing through August 29 (but no concert July 4th). See city website FFI.

BIRCHWOOD CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION AND OPEN HOUSE/ICE CREAM SOCIAL: Hold the Date: Sept 10th (tentatively)

UPDATES BITS:

- **Used Tire Drop off:** Mosquito Control will pick up old tires (OFF RIMS) from our city garage at 207 Birchwood Av. Deadline for drop off is **June 15th**.
- **Roads:** Potholes have been fixed. The city council will be reviewing how long we can expect our pavement to last before we pursue another mill and overlay project. The last time the city did such as 20+ years ago, which has exceeded the typical 10-15 year life cycle.
- **Sewer lines:** The city lines were jetted (think pressure washed) last month. Aside from a couple cracked manhole lids, everything looks in good shape...kind of like of like going to the dentist and finding no cavities!
- **Water meters:** The city has contracted to replace all household water meters with new, electronic units. Meters will then be read remotely. The change is necessary because the current meters are no longer supported for reading or processing data.
Water meters will be installed in households between August and November. You will receive notification regarding install dates.
- **Utility bills:** The village utility commission will be making recommendations regarding recent rate increases by the Met Council (sewer) and White Bear Lake (water). The group will also evaluate and make recommendations for using Covid II funds the city was recently granted.
- **Lost Sign:** Has anyone seen our “White Pine Lane” street sign. It fell over in April and went missing one day later. Please drop off at the Village Hall...no questions asked.
- **City Council meetings:** going back live at city hall effective immediately.
- **Coming soon:** The city and planning commission are working on a pamphlet

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to help those who are interested in making property improvements. The guide will give you a checklist to follow to make sure your plan is complete and reviewed quickly and thoroughly. Look for it on the city's website.

- **Boat slips:** All city power boat slips are taken for 2021. If you would like to add your name to the wait list, please contact the Birchwood Dock Assn. [BirchwoodDocks@gmail.com](mailto: BirchwoodDocks@gmail.com)
- **Kayak/Canoe Rack spaces:** Please contact the city clerk/administrator to obtain a permit. Spots are available at most city beaches.
- It has come to our attention that a rumor has been circulating that the city council was considering closing the ice rinks. There is nothing further from the truth. If you ever have concerns about city business, please contact any of the council members listed on the last page of this newsletter. We want you to be well-informed

BIRCHWOOD "MINI-ROUND" GREENWAY

The city council has been working on a comprehensive capital improvement plan. This plan will help the city address and prioritize ideas for our parks and open spaces. And the process will help ensure dock fees are used wisely. (Look for draft plan on the city website.)

The CIP was drawn from a report the parks committee created a few years back. That parks committee conducted a community survey that revealed some of the most requested improvements are more pathways on public lands. This desire has been amplified with the Covid pandemic and people staying home and using local parks.

The council recently identified the Birchwood Avenue/White Pine Lane connection as a new pathway opportunity. The route goes from the eastern end of town through some open space in Mahtomedi before exiting back on to White Pine. Walkers can then walk through Polly's Park and on to Birchwood Avenue all the way to Ash Path. This loop within Birchwood, off main roads, is a take-off of the Grand Rounds of Minneapolis and St Paul that are very popular. And

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the new route will keep walkers away from busy traffic routes.

The city council is looking for a small group of people who can help facilitate this project. Please submit a letter of interest if you would like to help. The group would coordinate the plan with our engineer, the city of Mahtomedi, and neighbors to ensure a positive outcome for all.

WIN A FREE CENTENNIAL T-SHIRT!

Our Village needs a motto. Enter as often as you want. Send in your ideas to the city administrator by June 30th. The winner will be decided at the July 13th city council meeting.

POSITION OPEN:

White Bear Lake Conservation District Representative. Board members oversee the use and protection of the Lake. Meetings are monthly. Contact the District for more information. Send a letter of interest to the Birchwood City Administrator by June 30th.

ANOTHER OPEN POSITION:

Birchwood Planning Commission. Applicants interested in advising the council on plan review, variance requests and code modifications should send a letter of interest to the Birchwood City administrator by June 30th.

VILLAGE HALL RENOVATIONS: Our old Village Hall made the St Paul Pioneer press newspaper this past month! Front page, above the fold. What an honor. If you don't have a subscription, you can see the story on Twitter (although the pictures are different) <https://twitter.com/maryedivine/status/1391041971091693573?s=21>

Recently we found this picture of the hall with its original siding, circa 1961. <https://media.mnhs.org/things/cms/10415/164/10415164.640x640.jpg>

This latest find helps us connect the dots on an issue that was vexing us for some time--what were the pediments like that were over the windows? Why are the backer boards painted green and why are they faded? This 1961 picture helps solve the riddle. If you look closely at the 1961 picture, the vertical lines of

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the "logs" line up with vertical lines on the pediment. And now that the space above the windows has been revealed, the boards still line up. There are additional things of note:

- The edges of the white siding that are next to the pediment boards are painted
- The flashing for the pediment boards goes behind them rather than in front as it probably would have if these were just backer boards
- The boards are painted a finished color (forest green and the same color as the coal chute)
- There are no nail holes in the pediment space

This is an "ah ha" moment... what we had is what we still have. Now we just need to figure out the kerf marks next to the windows. We know there were shutters, but it is not exactly clear to what these cuts were for. Stay tuned.

This summer work will be done on the exterior to make the building weather tight and bring the R value of the roof up to code. (The building originally had 2" of insulation. It does not appear that was ever improved upon.) Windows, doors and siding will be restored and new paint will spritz up the old gal.

The Building Task Force continues to guide the rehabilitation process and bring the building up to ADA compliance. Interior work will begin in 2022.

COMMUNITY CLUB ANNUAL DUES

Please make sure to send your dues (\$4) in the enclosed envelope. Your support funds village events including the Fourth of July Parade and Christmas Party and covers the costs of some city enhancements, including our grand flags. Thank you to all for making Birchwood a great community.

CELEBRATE BIRCHWOOD-- T-SHIRTS!

- Iconic 4th of July Parade T-Shirt (White, all cotton, short sleeved, sizes 2T-Adult 3X). \$15
- Centennial T-Shirt (Black, Navy or Dark Gray, Poly/cotton blend, Adult XS-3X). \$20

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PROFITS BENEFIT BIRCHWOOD COMMUNITY CLUB.

Prepaid orders by July 29. Contact Cynthia Tomlinson ceeshtom1@comcast.net

THE MONARCHS ARE COMING—free classes

The monarch population has been dropping for several years but you can help reverse this decline. Milkweed plants have started to sprout and it won't be long before the first monarchs arrive here. Nino Nardecchia has raised and released hundreds of monarch butterflies. Join him for free, outdoor, hands-on learning sessions (approx. 1.5 hours) to:

- Learn about the monarch's lifecycle
- Learn how to grow milkweed
- Learn how to identify monarch eggs and how to find newly hatched monarch caterpillars
- Learn how to raise and release monarchs
- Learn how to tag butterflies to help researchers learn more about their migration.
- Based on availability, take home an egg or maturing monarch caterpillar to raise

Classes are for single family groups or groups of up to eight. Contact Nino (651/245-0461 or headdragonkeeper@yahoo.com) for further info.

HELP STOP LAKE POLLUTION

The City of Birchwood Village asks your help to stop the discharge of illicit liquids and materials from entering the City's storm sewer system. Illicit discharges are generally any discharge not composed entirely of storm water; such as oil, paint, fertilizer, pet waste, car wash chemicals, and grass clippings. Storm sewer systems are not designed to handle anything other than storm water; everything dumped down the storm sewer eventually drains into lakes and streams. Illicit liquids and materials can kill important plants and animals and negatively impact the water quality. Please take measures to keep the storm sewer system free from illicit discharge. If you see any unusual liquids or materials draining into a storm drain, ditch, stream, or lake, please call City Hall at [651-426-3403](tel:651-426-3403) or email info@cityofbirchwood.com. If it is after hours or on the weekend please call the Washington County Sheriff's department at 651-439-9381 or the 911 non-emergency hotline."

CHECK OUT THIS BIT OF NOSTALGIA

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We have free video cassettes of Birchwood History that is narrated by many of our prior residents. You might still hear those folks' names and wonder what their connection is to our community. Check out this video. It is a wonderful expression of what we are about. Please contact the city staff for your copy.

BELL TOWER RECOGNITION

The Centennial group is moving forward with commemorative signs for our various landmarks. This includes our Bell Tower. Folks who have donated to that project will be honored for their patronage. If you would like to be included, or increase your donor level, please send your donation to the city clerk before July 15, 2021 and your name will be included. Here is list of donors to date:

Gold donors (\$100+)

American Legion Post, Birchwood Community Club, John McCormick, John & Bridget Sperl, Charles & Suzanne Sandstrom, Mary Wingfield

Silver donors (\$50-99)

Ellen Maas, Dana & Dennis Murray, Urho & Pamela Rahkola, Peggy & James Stockwell, David & Wanda Wall

Bronze donors (\$25-49)

David & Rachael Drew, Stephen & Nancy Ferry, M. L. Husnik, William & Ramona Jwanouskos, Dana & Lori Klimp, John & Kellie Lund, Ellen Maas, Mark & Julie Simanski, Todd & Amanda Stanhope

MAXIMIZE YOUR RECYCLING

- If you find that you need more space for your recyclables, Tennis Sanitation will super-size your bin at no charge. Please contact our city administrator with your request, so he can coordinate delivery.
- Don't forget that all metals, including steel and aluminum are recyclable. They need not be free of corrosion, but they should be free of other materials such as plastic.

FREE CABLE TV!

If you are not currently subscribing to cable, but you would like to view:

- local community events;
- governmental meetings;
- school district information;

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• local and regional cable programming. Subscribe to Universal PEG Service. For more information call 651-747-3801

You will receive installation (basic, less than 200 feet) and these channels free of charge:

Ch. 16 - SCC Government

Ch. 18 - SCC Global

Ch. 19 - SCC Community

Ch. 20 - Educational Access

Also, there is no ongoing monthly fee. An A/B switch is also provided at no charge so you can switch to your TV's over-the-air broadcast channels.

MAYOR'S NOTES:

The city has been tackling a number of big issues this year. Some matters have been assigned to task forces; the council has been working on others--including issues surrounding the development of the Weber Property at 176 Cedar St.

At the last council meeting, the city decided it was not feasible or prudent to purchase the back lot of that parcel. The contractor had offered to sell the city the back half for \$500,000. The city obtained an appraisal that valued the land at \$180,000. The city offered the developer cash (city reserves and possible grant money) and tax benefits in the appraised amount, but that offer has been rejected. The council was also aware that the entire property was purchased last year for \$500,000.

In evaluating a potential purchase, the city council decided it was not fiscally responsible, and the parties were just too far apart to reach a mutual agreement. The council was mindful that the \$500,000 offer is equivalent to our annual levy. The council also considered the fact that the city is facing near-future expenditures for road mill and overlays city wide (\$1,000,000+), water meter upgrades and metering software (\$200,000), and the Wildwood Lift Station rebuild (\$500,000). In addition, the city will be incurring costs for the village hall renovation. These costs total over \$2 million and none of these expenses has been budgeted and our reserves are limited.

The council has notified the developer of the city's position. The city continues to ensure the subdivision code protects the city and our residents from ancillary costs of any development. The city council looks forward to additional properties adding to the tax base to share in our mutual costs. We hope you agree. m

PS. One other benefit of any subdivision is our code requires a 10% donation of land or 10% of the value of the land to the city before a permit is granted. So any development will benefit the city in a substantial manner without further expense to our residents. Stay tuned.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Mayor Mary Wingfield 651-653-1022 wingfield.mary@gmail.com

Council members:

Jon Fleck (Deputy Mayor) 651-270-9148 jon@makinbacon.com

Kevin Woolstencroft 651-426-3718 kevinshouse25@gmail.com

Mark Foster mark.foster.birchwood@gmail.com and 319-850-1684

Justin McCarthy 651-319-2247 McCarthy.CutyOfBirchwood@gmail.com

City staff: 651-426-3403 info@cityofBrchwood.com