



Stillwater Township News

February 2011

Residents to gather March 8 for annual meeting

Stillwater Township residents will have a chance to vote on the tax levy for the coming year during the convening of the annual meeting on March 8. The meeting will be held at the Town Hall at 7 p.m.

Annual township meetings are required by Minnesota law, and are structured to give residents the gavel. They are called to order by the clerk, who conducts an election among those present to find a moderator for the meeting.

During the meeting in March, residents will hear reports from various committees and the Township police chief. But the main order of business is voting upon the proposed tax levy for 2012.

The proposed levy, approved by the Town Board in early February, represents no increase over the previous levy.

Township supervisor Sheila-Marie Untiedt, said the board has tried to be prudent with tax dollars and has been fortunate

not to be subject to many inflationary pressures. For instance, insurance costs have not risen, and staff salaries have not been increased for two years.

The township also tries to keep a careful eye on road expenses by keeping to a set schedule of road maintenance. There can be unexpected expenses, and the biggest wild card can be snow removal. Township officials have been relieved that February has been a relatively light snowplowing month, which helps to average out the seasonal cost of snowplowing.

The township has also been trying to save money by coordinating services with the city of Stillwater whenever possible, Untiedt says. For instance, when the township needs to do sealcoating, it first contacts the city to see if it has any sealcoating needs. Offering a bigger contract to a vendor pleases the vendor and can provide a lower cost to both the city and township.

2012			
General fund	Road and bridge	Capital road and bridge	Proposed levy
\$345,000	\$218,650	\$185,000	\$748,650

2011			
General fund	Road and bridge	Capital road and bridge	Levy
\$345,000	\$218,650	\$185,000	\$748,650

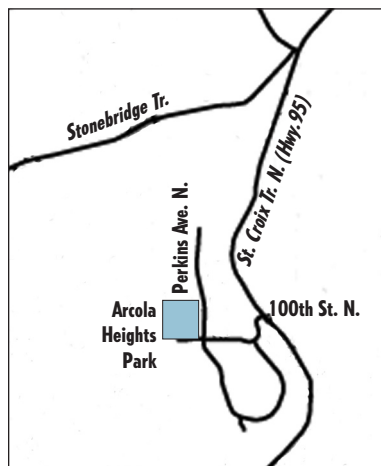
Township receives \$4,000 grant to establish disc golf course

Stillwater Township has received a \$4,000 grant to establish a disc golf course in one of its parks. The grant was funded by the Statewide Health Improvement Program and is distributed by the Minnesota Institute of Public Health.

Disc golf is sometimes called Frisbee golf, although the discs used are usually smaller and heavier than a typical Frisbee. A course is often made up of 9 targets or baskets laid out over grassy terrain. Players try to hit the target or throw the disc into the basket with the fewest number of throws.

The township's Parks Committee identified Arcola Heights Park, a five-acre park west of the intersection of 100th Street and Hwy. 95

as the best location for the disc course. Currently the park is undeveloped, consisting of open space with informal trails.



The Township has until June to establish the course and draw the funds from the grant. The Parks Committee plans to purchase the targets and other materials with the \$4,000 grant and to have a Stillwater Township Boy Scout lay out the course as his Eagle Scout project.

A public meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 24, at the Town Hall, to allow Parks Committee members to explain the project to township residents.

Workshops in the works for residents

Township officials are interested in offering workshops on various topics to residents, if there is interest. Some years ago, a workshop on identifying and eliminating buckthorn drew a large crowd, and officials are willing to reprise that topic and add new ones if residents would find them useful.



In the know

Among other suggested topics: green remodeling, simplified home gardening, reducing toxins in your home, combating invasive plants and promoting small agricultural farming.

To vote for your favorites, or to suggest other topics, go to the township website at www.stillwatertownship.com.

First-ever Easter Egg Hunt scheduled

The Parks Committee has received the go-ahead from the Town Board to put on the township's inaugural Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 23, at 11 a.m.

The committee received approval to spend \$500 on the event and is still firming up plans, but hopes to have a plentiful supply of candy-filled plastic eggs for young children to find. Organizers may cordon off specific areas for certain age groups and may even offer small toys as prizes.

Residents should plan to bring their own egg baskets or containers for their children.

Anyone interested in volunteering to help with the event should

contact Barb Riehle at Barbara.Riehle@Stillwatertownship.com or call (651) 275-9484.

Be careful where you put that snow

The large amount of snowfall this winter has created challenges for residents in figuring out where to put it all. However, please be aware that it is illegal to push snow across or into the roadway. There

are good reasons for this rule. The frozen ice and snow can cause problems for plows and other vehicles.

Sign up for emailed newsletters

The township newsletter, which is published three times a year, can now be delivered by email. This delivery method saves the township money and is ecologically preferable to printed newsletters.

Emailed newsletters also contain handy Internet links, and are sometimes distributed in color. Go to the township website to sign up.

Calling all vendors for Farmers' Market

Vendors are needed for the Wednesday evening Farmers' Market held during the summer in the parking lot at the Town Hall.

Local growers who are interested in participating should contact Rick Jacobson by email at jacobsonrl@msn.com.

Winter burning rules

Winter burning rules are now in effect. Burning can be done at any time as long as there is at least three inches of snow on the ground.

Burning permits are necessary, however. They allow residents to burn piles of brush, leaves, grass or untreated lumber, and can be obtained by calling (651) 439-0796. A 24-hour advance notice for the permit is requested, and the fee is \$15. Failure to get a permit will result in a fine. No fee is charged for burning piles of buckthorn.

Recreational fires do not require a permit and are allowed any time, except for rare occasions when the DNR imposes a total burning ban. Fires must be kept smaller than a 3-foot cube to be considered a recreational fire.

Please notify the township police chief Steve Nelson at (651) 439-0796 when you plan on having a recreational fire so you can be contacted in case of any DNR alerts, last minute burning bans or EPA air quality alerts.

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter

Yes, really. Keep up with the latest happenings in your neighborhood. Sign up on the township website.

Sign up now to rent Otto Berg Park

The main township park is a popular place in the summer for family reunions, neighborhood picnics and other gatherings. It's not too soon to reserve the pavilion for your family get-together.

Reservations can now be made online, by going to the website at www.stillwatertownship.com and clicking on the Parks and Recreation tab on the left side of the page.

Visit our website at www.stillwatertownship.com

up at 3 A.M., plowing township roads

By most accounts, this has been one walloping winter. Bitterly cold and snow—piles and piles of snow. Yet John Raleigh, whose job it is to cope with all those piles in Stillwater Township, is philosophical. “I’ve been doing it for 27 years,” he says. “Things always find a way to average out.”

Raleigh is co-owner with his brother Mike of MJ Raleigh Trucking Inc., a



Stillwater Township business that was started by their father, also named Mike, 40 years ago.

It’s Raleigh’s job to clear township roads of snowfall, and to do it as efficiently and as cost-effectively as possible.

The process starts with a weather forecast. Raleigh stays tuned to local forecasts, and even keeps a radar scanner at his office so he can watch the storms himself. It’s best to delay plowing until it’s done snowing, to avoid multiple passes on roads, but it’s crucial to get hills sanded and roads cleared for rush hour and school bus traffic.

To hear Raleigh describe it, it’s an art to decide when to plow and how aggressively to do it. Normally, it takes 10 to 12 hours to plow a normal snowfall, and up to four machines are used each time.

But the number of plows and the start time depend entirely on the timing and strength of the storm. “You don’t need to attack a 2-inch snowfall on a Sunday with four machines,” Raleigh says.

Get too aggressive with a minor storm and the plows might end up making multiple passes on the roads, clearing just a couple of inches at a time. That wastes time and money. On the flip side, a storm might be more powerful than expected. Then Raleigh runs the risk of failing to clear the roads properly before rush hour.

For a storm that begins at night, Raleigh says, they typically start plowing at 3

a.m. Often, at the beginning of a storm, just one truck will go out to plow and sand. If Raleigh is positive the storm will be strong, he’ll bring in all four drivers at once.

It has been a challenging winter for his crew. December, in particular, was brutal. “We had that 20-inch storm in December,” he says. “We had a few 16- and 18-hour days in a row.”

After the initial snow is cleared off, there’s the additional challenge of widening out the roads and dodging obstacles that remain. Luckily, the plows aren’t usually coping with cars on the roadways, but Raleigh and his crew dread the Monday garbage pickup days. And he wishes residents wouldn’t push driveway snow out into the street. “It’s nice and fluffy when they first do it. But then it becomes concrete, and it can break our equipment a couple of weeks later.”

Raleigh is paid by the Township only for the times he plows. He knows this winter is over budget compared to previous winters. “It’s going to be more than normal. But last winter was less,” he says. “And so far, February has been quiet.”

Do you recognize this place?

Enter our photo contest by visiting www.stillwatertownship.com and completing the Photo ID form online. A winner will be drawn at random from all the correct answers received by March 10.

The winner will receive a \$25 voucher to be redeemed with vendors at next summer’s Township Farmers’ Market. You may also mail your answer and contact information to Stillwater Township Photo ID Contest, 13636 90th Street N., Stillwater, MN, 55082.

The winner of the last mystery photo contest was Mark Doneux, who identified the picture as the water pump behind the Town Hall.





Stillwater Township
13636 90th St. N.
Stillwater, MN 55082
www.stillwatertownship.com

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Meetings

Township meetings are free and open to the public. Check the bulletin board at the town hall or the website for current agenda and meeting information.

Township Board of Supervisors

meets as necessary on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month at 7 p.m., except for November and December, when meetings are held on the second Thursday.

Planning Commission meets as necessary on the first Thursday of each month at 7 p.m.

Parks Committee meets as necessary on the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m.

If you need.....

Burning permits

Steve Nelson
(651) 439-0796

Building inspections

Jack Kramer
(651) 351-5051

Park reservations

Rick Jacobson
(651) 351-0299

Animal Control

Steve Nelson
(651) 439-0796

Contact us

Township Board of Supervisors

Linda Countryman (651) 351-0714
Matt Beane (612) 590-6949
Jim Hiniker (651) 351-1867
David Johnson (651) 439-5448
Sheila-Marie Untiedt (651) 439-6476

Township Clerk

Kathy Schmoeckel (651) 439-6451

Clerk for Parks and Planning Commission

Barbara Riehle (651) 275-9484

Township Treasurer

Marsha Olson (651) 275-9178

Police Chief

Steve Nelson (651) 439-0796

Website Publisher

Bob Ranalla (612) 819-8497

Newsletter Editor

Beverly Petrie (651) 430-9294

Find this information plus email addresses at www.stillwatertownship.com