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MEETINGS

CITY COUNCIL

1st & 3rd Tuesdays 6:30pm

PLANNING COMMISSION

3rd Tuesday 7:30pm

City Officials

Mayor Brad Spencer

City Council

Lynn Betts

Brad Fisher

Ray McCoy

Steve Grotting

Planning Commissioners

Robert Gardner, Chair

Anita Volkenant

Leith Dumas

Hal Tearse

Steve Thompson

Jon-Paul Story, Alternate

Timothy Usset, Alternate

MY FIRST 100 DAYS (NOT REALLY, MORE LIKE 12 DOZEN BY NOW)

2025 is off to a great start in Independence! It was nice to see all the folks who turned out for Marvin's retirement celebrations and Gary Kroells retirement party. Thanks everyone for taking the time to let these two know how much they mean to our City!

Plenty of new faces around City Hall:

Our new Director of Public Safety – **Chief Matt DuRose** formerly of Mankato PD,

Ben Lehman our new Public Works Director, formerly with Madelia, MN Public works,

Our newest **Councilmember Brad Fisher** has been appointed to fill my remaining term (Brad has served as an Independence City Councilmember for 3 previous terms), and

Katie Powell is our new full-time receptionist at City Hall, be sure to introduce yourself when you see her!

Thank you to all the volunteers, staff and citizens who contributed to our most successful City Cleanup Day that we can remember! Volunteers from Orono Rotary, First Presbyterian Church of Maple Plain, a few helpful residents, and City staff provided muscle (and the church even brought the best sandwiches and dessert!). Combined with the super organized services from Mike Barfknecht and Mikie's Landscaping who I think have figured out the most efficient setup I've ever seen to manage the dumpsters and disposal. Deb Fortner with Bikes4Kids picked the bicycles for recycling / rehoming and Second Chance recycling processed the mattresses. Although the \$25/mattress fee seemed high for some we would note the actual cost was discounted by Second chance and subsidized by the city of Independence. Republic and other waste haulers charge double or more per piece.



A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AT LEWIS CEMETERY

Thank you to Paul Stinson post 514, keynote Representative Kristin Robbins, Orono High school band, Julie Maas-Kusske and everyone who took the time on this beautiful Memorial Day to recognize and reflect on all of those who gave everything for all of us.



Mayor Brad Spencer



2025 GRAVEL ROAD PROJECT

UPCOMING ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS IN 2025

The City of Independence is dedicated to enhancing our community's infrastructure and ensuring safe and reliable roadways for all residents and visitors. In 2025, we are excited to commence a significant gravel roadway improvements project that will improve gravel roads throughout the city. A total of approximately 18 miles of gravel roadway will be upgraded as part of this Capital Improvement Plan project. Gravel roads that will be improved in 2025 are as follows:

2025 Roadway Segments for Improvement:

- Copeland Road
- Lake Haughey Road
- Burr Oak Lane
- Lake Sarah Road
- Fogelman Road
- Pete Road
- Hitsman Lane
- Nelson Road
- Pioneer Creek Road
- Turner Road
- South Kuntz Drive
- Game Farm Road North
- Ingerson Road

In addition to the 2025 project, the city has prepared a 5-year gravel road improvement plan. The city is dedicated to improving all gravel roads in the city by 2030. The plans provide for the following schedule for road improvements:

2026 Roadway Segments for Improvement:

- Island Drive
- Pagenkopf Road
- Old Post Road
- Dean Lane

2027 Roadway Segments for Improvement:

- Pete Drive
- Highsted Drive
- Kuntz Drive
- Valley Raod

2028 Roadway Segments for Improvement:

- Fogelman Road
- Copeland Road (South)
- Moline Road

2029 Roadway Segments for Improvement:

- Hitsman Lane
- Maria Road
- Quass Cutoff Road

Scope of Improvements:

The enhancements to the gravel roads will include the following:

- Gravel Recapping (adding new gravel on top of existing road)
- Drain Tile Improvements
- Spot Soil Stabilization Corrections
- Stormwater Management Spot Repairs
- Stormwater Culvert Replacements

Ditch Grading Improvements

It is anticipated that this project will begin in June and be substantially complete by the end of August. The city will send individual notices to residents that live on the impacted roads. The notices will provide additional information relating to timing and impacts. Please contact City Hall with any questions relating to the gravel road project.

County Road 92 Project

Hennepin County will be repaving County Road 92 this summer. The project consists of cold-in-place recycling between CSAH 6 (Watertown Rd) and 3000' S of TH 12 as well as stabilized full depth reclamation between 1300' N of TH 12 and CSAH 50 (Rebecca Park Trl). The County will also be replacing a handful of culverts with the project. Construction is slated to begin July 2025 and will be wrapped up in fall 2025. The County will work to maintain access to local residents, however there will be short periods of full closure at the culvert replacements while work is occurring. The County will not detour traffic onto city streets. Visit: hennepin.us/residents/transportation/county-road-92



CITY CLEAN-UP DAY SUCCESS!

This year the weather could not have been better to host our most successful clean up day to date! Thanks to all of our volunteers and staff, there was minimal wait time and the lines were ran must more smoothly. We want to thank Second Chance Recycling for taking all of the mattresses, Tom & Deb Forner with "Bikes 4 Kidz" took all the bikes to refurbish them for kids in need, the Orono Rotary Club offered their hands for unloading trucks and trailers, Maple Plain Presbyterian Church came prepared lunch for all of the workers, Planning Commissioner Alternate JonPaul Story offered a hand, our committed resident, Don Johnson offered his time and hands as well and last but not least, Mikie's Landscaping for his yearly assistance in providing dumpsters, equipment and staff to help make this run so smooth! We could not have made this as successful as it was without the help of each of these people!



READY FOR SUMMER!

Independence is ready for Summer! A couple kiddos on Fogelman Road set up a lemonade stand for the community. We love to see the kids outside and embracing the these moments! If you see a stand, be sure to stop by for a refreshment!

OPEN HOUSE FOR FARMERS

On April 11th, Hennepin County hosted an open house for farmers about cover crops at Independence City Hall. About 20 farmers attended along with county and Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff. Keith Olander the executive director of Ag Centric and Central Lakes College Ag and Energy Center, presented the economic data his organization has collected on farm profitability. The study "Farm Business Management (FBM) data." summarizes data collected from 2,317 farmers across the state. Farmers that enrolled in the program underwent review of all farm costs – seed, fertilizer, fuel, insurance, labor, etc. and analyzed their results and profitability.

In a similar but smaller-scale study with 129 farms, FBM data compared financials from farms that grew cover crops versus farms that did not grow cover crops. Data is divided into southern and northern MN regions. The return on investment for cover crops varied depending on what cash crop was grown and generally revealed that cover crops result in slight to moderate decreases in profitability due to the need

for up-front management changes (e.g., equipment, fertilizer, labor). View the study at: agcentric.org/farm-business-management/annual-fbm-reports and search for the 2023 cover crop data.

It should be noted that soil takes a long time to build and the data only shows the short term impacts of adopting cover crops as a soil health practice. In short, adding cover crops is a highly personal choice for farmers and there are many economic considerations to take into account. However, Hennepin County has a cost share program available for farmers that are new to trying out cover crops to help offset some of the costs to start up.

- Single species, one year contract: \$35 per acre
- Multiple species, one year contract: \$50 per acre
- Single species, three year contract: \$45 per acre
- Multiple species, three year contract: \$60 per acre

If you would like to learn more about the soil health cost share available from Hennepin County, please reach out to Roz Davis, Conservation Specialist, at 952-262-0397 or rozalyn.davis@hennepin.us.



STAY ALERT. DRIVE RESPONSIBLY.

One of West Hennepin Public Safety's top priorities is the safety of everyone who lives, works, and travels in our communities. While we often think of crime prevention and emergency response when it comes to public safety, traffic safety is just as vital—and often overlooked.

Every year, lives are lost or permanently altered due to preventable traffic collisions. Speeding, distracted driving, driving under the influence, and not wearing seat belts remain some of the most common causes of injury and damage in collisions. These aren't just statistics—they're tragedies that impact families, friends, and communities.

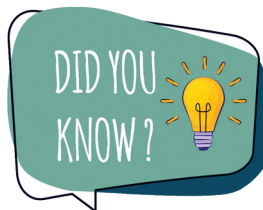
I want to take this opportunity to remind everyone of a few key practices that can save lives:

- **Slow Down:** Speed limits are set for a reason. Driving even a few miles per hour over the limit reduces your reaction time and increases the severity of crashes. You won't get to your destination faster if you end up crashing or getting pulled over.
- **Stay Focused:** Texting while driving is not only illegal - it's dangerous. Keep your eyes on the road, hands on the wheel, and mind on driving. Utilize hands free capabilities or keep your phone out of your hands until you reach your destination.
- **Drive Sober:** If you've been drinking or using substances that impair your abilities, don't get behind the wheel. Use a designated driver, rideshare, or other transportation service.
- **Wear your seatbelt:** Wearing your seatbelt, and requiring everyone in your car to wear one, significantly reduces the risk of injury and death in a collision.

In the coming months, our department will continue targeted enforcement in high-risk areas to monitor for these driving behaviors. But enforcement is only one part of the equation. Real change happens when each of us takes personal responsibility for our behavior behind the wheel.

Let's commit to making our streets safer for our children, neighbors, and fellow drivers. One moment of carelessness can cause a lifetime of pain—but one good decision can prevent it.

Thank you for doing your part to keep our community safe.



Starting on July 1, 2025 a new law will require some adults and youth who operate motorboats — including personal watercraft — to have a valid watercraft operator's permit.

ONLINE COURSES

WATERCRAFT OPERATOR'S PERMIT

Complete the online boating safety course to receive a youth Minnesota water operator's permit (12 to 17 years old). In addition, this course may be required for youth and adults who plan on boating in Canada.

Adults taking the course and maybe eligible for a discount on boat insurance —check with your insurance agent.

FREE PADDLE SPORTS SAFETY COURSE

The free online Paddle Sports Safety course offers a useful introduction to paddling safety. This course is a supplemental course and does not meet youth operator's permit requirements.

The Paddle Sports Safety course covers rules of the water, what to do in an emergency, and other tips to enhance paddlers' knowledge base and operating skills.

dnr.state.mn.us/safety/boatwater/education.html





SHADY BEACH BELL – STILL MISSING 9 YEARS LATER - \$2,000 REWARD

A reward for information leading to the recovery of the bell is offered by the Spencer family. Please contact West Hennepin Public Safety at 763-479-0500 if you know of the whereabouts of this important piece of local history.

In late February 2016, a century+ old Blymyer Norton cast steel school bell weighing nearly 200 lbs. was stolen from its home on the shore of Lake Sarah, taken by thieves over the ice.

Carl Scott Zimmerman, Campanologist, identifies the foundry as the Blymyer Norton & Company, Cincinnati, Ohio (which later became the Cincinnati Bell Foundry Co.). A detailed history of this company is not yet known except that it was organized under the corporate name of Blymyer, Norton and Co. in 1866. Due to successive name changes our best guess is this bell which is clearly marked B.N. & Co, CIN O on the yoke was founded in the period 1866-1890 making it well over 125 years old. The bell is in excellent condition, measuring 26" across the mouth and is cast of steel. This bell was probably originally purchased for a local schoolhouse, one possibility is the Wagner School which maps show was originally located just north of county road 11 and subsequently moved to the southwest

corner of county road 11 and Independence Rd. Earl Taylor, curator of the Independence History Museum, says the Wagner School was in existence between 1880-1921 and was closed largely due to the opening of the catholic school in Loretto in 1920. The catholic school today still has its bell, a Blymyer 24" with a rope wheel. Evergreen Grove and Lyndale School, which were in existence at that time were eliminated as they still had their bells many years later. The Wagner School appears to be the only local school which fits our timeline, but hard evidence linking the bell to that origin has yet to be discovered.

Florence Jacobs (Snodgrass) recalled in an interview, the bell being used to call hotel guests to dinner while she and her sisters worked for Mrs. Anderson at the Anderson's Inn before the Depression in the 1920's. Richard Klaers also remembered the bell being used to call people off the lake in the event of oncoming bad weather. Following the sale of the Anderson's Inn (by now named Shady Beach Inn) to the LaMotte's in the 1930's, the bell was primarily rung by Mrs. LaMotte to call her husband up from

the resort buildings below or to announce that dinner was ready. At the Shady Beach Inn during that period, as recalled by Eileen Klaers (Grotz), the bell was mounted atop a wooden tower roughly 8' tall that was located 25' or so from the lake facing side of the Inn near the top of the hill and was rung by means of a rope/strap tied to the clapper. Later, photos show the bell mounted to a tree stump in the 1950's. On one occasion, as Susan LaMotte was ringing the bell, it fell from the tower and reportedly broke her foot. The bell was never to hang from the tower again. The LaMotte's sold the resort in the 1950's to Milton (Mac) Makousky. Mac sold the bell to Marvin Johnston in about 1956. Marvin owned it until his passing in June of 1992. Marvin's son Dennis then inherited the bell. Denny and his wife Jackie displayed it in their beautiful front garden for many years until they put their home up for sale in 2006. It was sold to the Spencer family. The Spencer's wished to retain this unique piece of local history in the Shady Beach area and had since repaired the support, cleaned and repainted the bell and installed it in their hillside overlooking the lake.

Planning an event on your property?

If your event includes 50 or more people, it would require a non-city assembly permit from the city. Our goal, along with WHPS, is to make sure everyone in our city is safe. Please reach out to the city to see what is required based on your event details. We would be happy to help.



Burn restrictions have been lifted for the City of Independence. For information on burn permits please visit westhennepin.com/burn-permit-application



NIGHT to UNITE!

Annual neighborhood parties will be held on
Tuesday, August 5 from 6pm-9pm.

Night to Unite is sponsored by the Minnesota Crime Prevention Association and local law enforcement communities. This program is designed to provide an opportunity to meet your neighbors and to work together to build strong, safe, and united neighborhoods that are proactive in crime prevention.

If you would like to set up a party in your neighborhood, please register with the West Hennepin Public Safety Department by clicking on this link westhennepin.com/night-to-unite. Register by Tuesday, July 29.

For registered parties – West Hennepin Police and your local Fire Department will make a visit to your event. Contact Officer Raskin or call our office with questions, (763) 479-0500. We look forward to uniting once again!

Have Your Next Event at the Community Center

The City of Independence is proud to offer community room rentals for Independence residents ONLY. We see this as a great option for our residents to host their own events in our facility and enjoy the beautiful space. We currently have tables and chairs to seat up to 100 people, although we do allow for rental companies to bring in additional items as you may need for your guests. We have hosted an array of events from holiday parties, bridal showers, baby showers, weddings and organizational groups. If you are interested in booking our facilities for your next event, we would be happy to help!

**IGNORE
THE HYPE
DON'T
FLUSH A
WIPE!**



**If you must use wipes -
put them in the trash!**

SEPTIC SAFE

It might not seem newsworthy, but with new residents moving to a more rural area, some need to be educated that putting diapers, "flushable" wipes, socks, toys and even undies down the drain creates clogs that are not disintegrating and break the City's lift stations causing residents extra costs in repairs. Those residents could be assessed accordingly.

The Myth of Flushable Wipes

How long does it take for wipes to break down and not damage the sewer system and lift stations? 182 minutes? 192 hours? 8 days? The answer is NEVER!

Flushing even flushable wipes is like flushing a handkerchief or another cloth item. Flushed wipes cause expensive problems for Public Works staff, who have to clean clogs out of screens and pumps. They can also get caught in your pipes, which is expensive for you to fix.

Please do your part and discuss with your neighbors who are also on City Sewer.

Recycling in Minnesota



What to Recycle



Plastic Bottles & Jugs

Water, soda and juice bottles, dish soap bottles, shampoo bottles, soap and lotion bottles, and detergent jugs (empty and clean/rinsed, and dry; caps on)



Plastic Cups & Containers

Yogurt cups, pudding and fruit cups, clear disposable cups (no straws), margarine/whipped cream tubs, cottage cheese and similar containers, clear produce, deli and take-out containers (empty and rinsed; lids on)



Boxes (flattened)

Cardboard, cereal, cracker, pasta and tissue boxes, shoe, gift and electronics boxes, toothpaste and other toiletry boxes



Cartons

Milk cartons, juice cartons, juice boxes and soup and broth cartons (empty and clean/rinsed, and dry; caps on)



Paper

Mail, office and school papers, magazines and catalogs, newspapers and inserts, phone books (clean; staples OK)



Metal

Food and beverage cans (empty and rinsed; labels OK)



Glass

Brown, green and clear bottles, jars (empty and rinsed; no lids)

Not recycling costs money. In 2021, a million tons of recyclable material was thrown away, but could have been recycled for an additional estimated value of \$142.1 million. Instead, it cost Minnesotans millions of dollars to put it in landfills. Recycling saves energy. It takes 90% less energy to make a can from recycled aluminum compared to virgin material. Recycled glass? About 50% less energy. Recycled paper? About 75% less energy, plus 74% less air pollution and 35% less water pollution. Lower energy use means reduced air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

What You Can Do to Optimize Sorting at Our Facility

Do not bag: For the safety of our employees and for the efficiency of our system, Republic Services asks that you place recyclables in the bin loose and individually. We can't be sure what is in the bags that we receive. For example, it could contain a sharp object and harm our employees. Plastic bags can also get caught in the recycling machinery, which can cause delays and significant damage. Therefore, bagged plastics are removed from the line and are processed as residual trash.

Empty, rinse and leave lids on: If items in your recycling cart aren't clean and empty, they are likely to be considered contaminated and will not be recycled. This is because food residue and liquids can damage the recycling process and

contaminate other recyclable materials in the cart, making them unsuitable for reuse.

If you leave a dollop of mayo in the jar or a big swig of soda at the bottom of a bottle, it might not make a huge difference. But imagine if everyone did the same thing? The cumulative effect can ruin otherwise perfect recyclable items. Instead of being recycled, contaminated items will likely end up in a landfill and all the efforts truly, went to waste.

Flatten boxes: It makes them easier to process and saves space in your recycling cart. Flattening boxes also prevents clogs. Other recyclables can get stuck in your bin if a box is lodged.

Leave caps on your plastic bottles: It helps with the sorting process at recycling facilities, ensuring the cap stays attached to the bottle and is recycled together, rather than potentially falling through the sorting machinery.

Batteries: Never recycle or throw away batteries at home. Putting them in your recycling or trash harms the environment and can be dangerous. Instead, dispose of them at a designated recycling site. This prevents fires, protects the environment, and keeps our community safe.

The recycling calendar is available on your city's website. A larger 95-gallon recycling cart can be requested. Extra recycling carts are available, if needed.

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Sustainability in Action



A Republic Services Company



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asimon@ci.independence.mn.us

City Staff

Administrator, City Planner	Mark Kaltsas
Admin. Services Dir.	Amber Simon
Public Works Supervisor	Ben Lehman
Building Official	Bruce Satek
Permit and Utility Analyst	Carrie Solien
Receptionist	Katie Powell

BATTLE OF THE BADGES



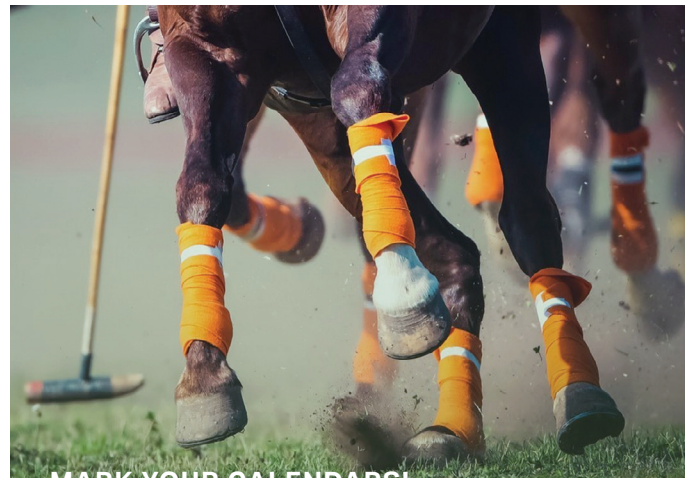
AUGUST 18

6:30 pm

Veterans Memorial Park

Maple Plain Fire Department
mapleplain.com

West Hennepin Public Safety
ci.independence.mn.us



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

36th Annual Polo Classic
August 3rd, 2025!

6755 Turner Road

Gates open at 11:00am! You can view the schedule [here: thepoloclassic.com/schedule](http://thepoloclassic.com/schedule). This is the preeminent polo event in the Twin Cities with a rich history of exciting competition and unique events. The Polo Classic is an initiative of This Old Horse, Inc., with the mission of providing support through this annual event for retired and rescued racehorses. Join us to watch exciting polo matches while enjoying a day of picnicking, tailgating, champagne sipping, divot stomping, and more!