

# NEWSLETTER

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## MAYOR JOHNSON'S LETTER

As I prepare to write this newsletter article, I looked at what I wrote in previous newsletters. There is always a familiar theme, but the circumstances seem to vary considerably.

For instance, last fall instead of snow, we had one rain after another and the ground was saturated. Several corn and soybean fields had areas where the grain was left standing all winter for fear of getting the combines stuck. We ended up with 30 degrees below zero a couple weeks before Christmas, and then Christmas Day we had heavy rains. A record year for moisture!

This should be a good year for our maple syrup collectors. With the sap season beginning in late February we could wind up having a long season. We need above freezing temperatures during the day and freezing temperatures at night. Once we have several warm days above freezing, trees



**Mayor**  
**Marvin Johnson**

## MEETINGS

### City Council

2nd & 4th Tuesdays at 7:30 pm

### Planning Commission

3rd Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.

Workshops are posted

as scheduled

[independence.govoffice.com](http://independence.govoffice.com)



## The City of Independence welcomes Leith Dumas as Planning Commissioner!

Dumas was appointed as the newest Planning Commissioner on February 21, 2017. He has over 30 years of experience with the Opus Group, a commercial real estate developer, working on a broad range of projects including Industrial, Office, Retail and Multifamily Residential developments, and has worked with planning commissions in Minneapolis and surrounding suburbs. Dumas has lived in Independence since 1996 and has three children who attended Orono schools. He is looking forward to his role in planning for the City. Planning meetings are the 3rd Tuesday every month/6:30pm.

By now, all property owners should have received their new property valuation statements. Look at them carefully and compare them with your previous year valuations. Values on homes across the City saw a small percentage increase. If you have questions, call the Hennepin County Assessor and find out what changed if there was a significant increase. If you still disagree on the value after speaking with the assessor, you have the opportunity to come before City Council at our April 11th Board of Review meeting.

The 2017 tax statements will arrive shortly. For those in the Orono school district, please remember your tax statement may be quite different than your proposed statement last December. At the November election, voters approved a bond for an activity center addition to the high school, and an increase in student operating levy. Those increases will be reflected on this year's tax statement.

Recently the Council needed to appoint a new Planning Commission Member. We want to thank Craig Olson for serving in that capacity for a number of years, but he chose not to be reappointed. We were fortunate to have four very highly qualified residents apply for the position. Leith Dumas was appointed to the position, but we have asked all of the applicants (to which they agreed) to serve on a Task Force with the Planning Commission to work on our Comprehensive Land Use Plan. By law every ten years each local unit of government is required to review and rewrite its 'twenty year plan'. It must be completed and approved by the Metropolitan Council and neighboring cities by the end of 2018.

I've just learned that the County will be resurfacing County Road 90 from County Road 6 north to U.S. Highway 12 this summer, as well as County Road 110 south from County Road 6 to Sunnybrook Circle in Minnetrista. County Road 11 will have crack seal repair from Loretto west to County Line Road.

With a new President, both Congress and the Minnesota Legislature in session, I have no idea what kind of changes we will be experiencing in the months ahead. The Minnesota Legislature will adjourn about the 20<sup>th</sup> of May, so that brings us to spring with all the graduations and summer activities becoming a priority. We are hoping that the State Legislature will have approved some additional funds for our Highway 12 and 55 corridor improvements.

In the meantime, I will be traveling to Washington D.C. for the National League of Cities Congressional Cities Conference and National Association for Community Action Agencies Legislative Conference. (I'm a public sector appointee for the Hennepin County Commissioners on the Community Action Partnership Hennepin County Agency). I'll hear a lot of Congress persons, Senators and Cabinet Heads (maybe even the President) speak. I'm hoping they will speak positively and constructively rather than throwing mud pies at each other.

While in Washington, I know I will get to meet with our two Minnesota Senators and a few of our Minnesota Congressional Members. I will also be meeting with the Small Cities Council and the Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Steering Committee as we develop policy for Cities for the National League of Cities. It is a very busy schedule! I feel things are running well in the City. If you think otherwise, I would appreciate hearing your concerns. Enjoy Spring!

**Your Mayor, Marvin D. Johnson**

## Severe Weather Awareness Week



West Hennepin Public Safety Department and our local fire departments want to help you be prepared for severe weather. Are you ready? Each year, the National Weather Service and 16 State and local agencies and organizations sponsor Severe Weather Awareness Week in Minnesota. The week is designed to refresh, remind and educate everyone about the seasonal threats from severe weather and how to avoid them. It's also a great time to make and practice your emergency plan and build or refresh your emergency preparedness kit.

**State wide tornado drills :Thursday, April 20, 2017 at 1:45 pm & 6:45 pm.**

This annual public education event is designed to remind individuals, families, businesses, schools, and institutions that it's essential to plan ahead for Minnesota's severe spring and summer weather.



**Get it now...**

Join now to receive proper notification in the event of an emergency in Maple Plain or Independence? Help your West Hennepin PSD, Maple Plain Fire, and City of Maple Plain and the City of Independence notify you in an emergency. Sign up through the City website or WHPS website!

Individuals are targeting the elderly by calling and claiming their grandson or granddaughter is in custody and they need bail money. The individuals request bail money either by wire transfer or in the form of gift cards. The individuals usually call from "ghost numbers" or from a foreign country making investigating difficult. **What can you do to protect yourself?** Do not provide any personal or financial information to unverified businesses or persons over the phone. Report any suspicious phone calls to your law enforcement agency or file a complaint with the FTC (Federal Trade Commission) by going to [FTC.gov](http://FTC.gov)



**Please discuss these tips with other family members – especially elderly members that might be more susceptible to getting caught up by these scammers. The simplest thing you can do is to hang up on these callers.**

**If you ever have questions or concerns about suspicious phone calls or solicitors at your home, call 911 and speak with an officer.**

## McCoy elected Fire Chief for Maple Plain Fire Department

McCoy said "It is with great honor, I have been given the opportunity to lead the Maple Plain Fire Department and continue the rich tradition of serving the citizens of Independence, Maple Plain and Medina as your Fire Department.

The Firefighters that make up Maple Plain Fire Department are committed community members that are willing to help and assist you whenever help is needed. They are committed to continuing education and training and take an active part in prevention education whenever necessary. The men and women that make up our fire department are top notch and very professional individuals.

As a second generation Fire Chief, I am proud to represent such an outstanding organization. As Maple Plain Fire enters our next chapter we will continue to find ways to be more efficient and flexible as we adapt and change our service to meet the needs of the communities we serve.

If Maple Plain Fire can ever be of assistance to you, your family or your business, please feel free to contact me at [justinmccoy@mapleplain.com](mailto:justinmccoy@mapleplain.com). Thanks for the opportunity to serve you and please remember to be safe! "



**Justin McCoy**

**Fire Chief**



**Sunday, May 21, 2016**

**1:00-3:30 p.m.**

**Orono Discovery Center Room 102**

**5050 Independence Street**

**Maple Plain, MN 55359**

Orono Rotary is sponsoring a sew-a-thon to make and assemble feminine hygiene kits for the non-profit organization **Days for Girls International**. The purpose of these kits is to provide protection to girls so they can attend school and have a more dignified life. These kits can last 3 years with proper cleaning. To give a girl 3 more years of schooling will help break the poverty cycle and is instrumental for positive social change in families and in the world.

You don't need sewing experience! Tasks include sewing flannel liners, waterproof shields and bags, turning fabric and ironing, tracing patterns on fabric, cutting fabric, stringing bags, and putting snaps on the shields. Food and drink provided! Stay as long as you like. More info at: [www.daysforgirls.org](http://www.daysforgirls.org)

**Orono  
Rotary**





**Please note this sewer tips!**

**DO NOT** put products such as paper towels, wipes, condoms, sanitary napkins, feminine products, moist wipes in the toilet. **The only thing that should be flushed is toilet paper.**



**Garbage disposals** are not meant to handle solids such as fruit and vegetable rinds and peels, corn kernels, eggshells and bones. These items cause blockage in the sewer lines. Also, do not dump cooking grease and oils down the drain. Flushing the grease with hot water does not work either, it actually causes stoppage further down the drain. To dispose of cooking grease, pour it into a heat-resistant container, and allow it to cool and set. That container may then be disposed of in the regular garbage.

**State Law** limits city responsibility for sewer back-ups because the city does not have exclusive control of the city's sanitary sewer system. Damage can occur to homes and property for which the city will not be legally liable. As a result, a prudent homeowner may wish to discuss purchasing additional coverage with their homeowner's insurance carrier/ agent.

**Green thinkers, unite! Check out the new Choose to Reuse website**

**[www.hennepin.us/choosetoreuse](http://www.hennepin.us/choosetoreuse)**

Keep usable stuff out of the trash and obtain quality items without buying new with the Hennepin County Choose to Reuse website, [www.hennepin.us/choosetoreuse](http://www.hennepin.us/choosetoreuse). The website is a gathering space for Twin Cities green thinkers that will help you make sustainable choices for everyday living.

Features of the Choose to Reuse website include:

A listing of more than 600 local places to sell, donate, buy, repair, rent, and share items.

A Google Maps function to locate reuse resources near your zip code.

“Spotlight on Reuse” articles that take a deep dive into reuse topics, such as cloth diapering and the negatives of fast fashion.

Local event highlights to keep you in the loop on area Fix-It Clinics, neighborhood garage sales, classes and more.

Choosing to reuse helps us live sustainably by reducing waste, protecting natural resources, conserving energy, preventing pollution, and saving money. With a click on a computer or smart phone, you can learn more at the Choose to Reuse website [www.hennepin.us/choosetoreuse](http://www.hennepin.us/choosetoreuse).





### **Kindergarten Registration & Kindergarten Connection Classes!**

Will your child be 5 years old by September 1, 2017? It's time to get registered for Kindergarten! Forms are due as soon as possible so schools can be ready for the "Class of 2030!" If your family has not been contacted by your school district, please call the District Office. The Orono District Office phone number is 952-449-8300. Register for free Kindergarten Connection classes where you and your child will get a sample of Kindergarten. Registration for the April 4 & 11 classes or the April 17 & 24 classes is available online at [www.oronocommunityed.com](http://www.oronocommunityed.com) or call 763-479-1530 Option 3. Child care is available for siblings for \$10 per child.

### **Annual Online Auction**

Mark your calendars! The annual Orono Early Learning Silent Auction opens April 10 and runs until April 17. You'll find wonderful items to bid on, for all ages, ranging from domestic good, local services and restaurants, sporting event tickets, relaxing getaways and more! Visit [oronokids.com](http://oronokids.com) starting April 10.

### **2017-18 Preschool & Practice Preschool Registration**

Now is the time to get registered for Preschool and Practice Preschool! The Orono Schools Early Learning program has a 4-Star Parent Aware Rating and NAEYC Accreditation – the highest possible rating. Visit [www.oronoeearlylearning.com](http://www.oronoeearlylearning.com) for more information or call 763-479-1530 Option 3 to schedule a tour. Register online at [www.oronocommunityed.com](http://www.oronocommunityed.com).

### **"Mindfulness – The Path to Peace" presented by Kathy Matthews, licensed parent educator, MBA, M.Ed., certified coach**

Join us on **Wednesday, April 26** from 6:30-8:30 pm for an Early Learning speaker night. Kathy Matthews will lead a workshop on creating a positive and calm climate at home and in the classroom. Peace Factors developed a program that teaches the essential life skills of compassion and positive decision-making. Adults and children learn how to manage thoughts so that the words said and the actions chosen build healthy relationships. Techniques and strategies can be used immediately for personal and professional growth. \$10 per person at the door. CEUs and child care available - \$5 per child.

### **Mondays "Pop In & Play Gym Times"**

Do you have young children? Orono Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program at the Discovery Center invites you to get those wiggles out and meet some new friends on Monday mornings, 10-11 am in the East Gym through Monday, April 24. It's free – we just need parents to stay with their children and supervise. Please bring your ID and check in at the front desk. (No Pop In & Play March 27).

### **Early Learning Summer Programs**

The Orono Discovery Center will host several Early Learning camps and classes for kids through Orono Community Education this summer. Summer registration opened March 11. Register online at [www.oronocommunityed.com](http://www.oronocommunityed.com) or call 952-449-8350. Register early - classes fill quickly!

**For more information – Call 763-479-1530 Option 3, or email: [earlylearning@orono.k12.mn.us](mailto:earlylearning@orono.k12.mn.us)**

**Orono Community Education Summer Brochure**

The 2017 Summer brochure is available now! Call 952-449-8350 if you would like a brochure mailed to you.



# **Independence and Maple Plain Spring Clean Up Day is May 6, 2017!**

**9:00 a.m.– 12:00 p.m. (Noon)**

**\*\* Free Bee Bombs from Plantables to the first  
100 participants\*\***



**\* Proof of residency for Independence and Maple Plain required.**

**Please no bills larger than \$20 and checks should be made out to the City of Independence.\***

## **ACCEPTED MATERIALS:**

**Air Conditioners: \$25** No gas air conditioners or refrigerators unless you pay \$200.

**Appliances: \$20** Includes dehumidifiers, heat pumps, water heaters, microwaves, washers, dryers, refrigerators, etc.

**Carpet: Small roll \$15. Large roll (greater than 5' x 8') \$25.**

**Construction Material/ Debris/ Junk: \$20/cubic yard.** Includes concrete, doors, lumber, fences, tile, sheetrock.

**Mattresses, Box Springs, Upholstered Furniture: \$25.**

**Scrap Iron/ Metal: No Charge.** All plastic to be removed. Tanks/ Barrels must be cut in half.

**Tires: \$5/ car, \$10/ semi, \$20/tractor.** With or without rims.

## **LIMITED HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION**

**Auto, Vehicle, and Household Batteries– FREE**

**Electronics- \$5 to \$45 (depending on item and size).**

**Fluorescent Tubes/ Bulbs: DO NOT tape together. Must be in original packaging or surrounded by cardboard. Must be taken apart and ballasts disconnected from housing unit. Bulbs 4' and under .50, over 4'- \$1, ballasts- \$2 and light fixtures- \$10.**

**Propane tanks– under 3'-\$5, over 3'- \$10.**

**\*No Curbside Recyclables or Yard Waste!\***

**CITY OF  
INDEPENDENCE**

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**City Officials**

**Mayor**

Marvin Johnson

**City Council**

Brad Spencer

Lynn Betts

Ray McCoy

Steve Grotting

**City Officials**

**Planning Commission Chair**

Carl Phillips

**Planning Commissioners**

Robert Gardner

Leith Dumas

Tom Palmquist

Steve Thompson

**City Staff**

**Administrator/City Planner**

Mark Kaltsas

**Public Works Director**

Larry Ende

**Building Inspector**

Bruce Satek

**Administrative Asst.**

Beth Horner

**Administrative Asst.**

Trish Bemmels



**2017 Comprehensive Plan**

**Help develop future plans for**

**The City of Independence!**

In 2017 the City of Independence will begin the process of updating the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Use Plan. The Land Use Planning Act requires cities to update their comprehensive plans every 10 years.

The comprehensive plan is used by the City to plan for and ensure the sustainable development of the City. Key elements addressed by the plan include; land use, transportation, utilities, economic development, trails and parks and open space. For more information and a timeline of the plan process check out the link on the city web-site: [independence.govoffice.com](http://independence.govoffice.com).

**\* Look for a community survey that will be in your mailbox soon\***



One of the best kept secrets in Minnesota! If you are enrolled in Medicare or will be soon keep reading! Senior Partners Care is not insurance. It is a community based program that enables Minnesota Medicare recipients to access the medical care they need. For more information on how the program can help you bridge the gap between medical bills and your Medicare coverage contact Senior Community Services at:

(952) 767-0665

[www.seniorcommunity.org/programs](http://www.seniorcommunity.org/programs)