

NEWSLETTER

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MAYOR JOHNSON'S LETTER

Usually I really look forward to fall. This year I'm not exactly sure we had one. With all the cool rainy fall days we had, it felt like winter arrived in October. I decided I needed to cut hay regardless of the weather because the calendar told me there would be very few, if any, drying days to come and the daylight hours were getting shorter too. It took weeks to finish the job because of rain, snow and cloudy weather.

This has also been a very stressful year for the farmers who raised corn and soybeans too. There was much difficulty in getting the seed in the ground because of the late wet spring with the same conditions persisting this fall.

These same conditions have made maintenance on our gravel roads very hard for our Public Works Employees.

I understand we did have the rainiest year in recorded history. That record was broken with the wet snowfall just before Thanksgiving.



Marvin D. Johnson
Mayor
City of Independence

MEETING INFO

City Council

1st & 3rd Tuesdays at 6:30 pm

Planning Commission

3rd Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

Workshops are posted

as scheduled

www.ci.independence.mn.us

By the time you get this newsletter, our City Council will have affirmed our tax levy for 2020. Your 2020 taxes will remain pretty close to the estimate you received this fall. The only increase would be for the home owners who live in the Westonka School District. (continued p. 2)....



Utility Customers

Never write another check?

You don't have to when you pay online at Ci.independence.mn.us or

Download "PSN Payments" from the App Store or Google Play. Building permits may be paid online as well.



A levy increase was approved in that District in the November election. Everyone else's would remain the same or be lower.

For the first time in years, I will not have attended the County Truth in Taxation hearing because we have a Council meeting at the same time.

Thank you for those who voted on election day and the support you gave to me and Council members, McCoy and Grotting. We don't always agree, but we can work well together with our excellent staff.

A year ago when I wrote my article I thought we were close to having our 2040 Comprehensive Land Use Plan approved by the Metropolitan Council. We are still "processing" and I hope we can soon put that Plan behind us. Once we get the OK from Metropolitan Council the City Council has to make the final vote of approval.

Our top concern for the Council at the present time is the final layout for the County Roads 92 and U.S. Highway 12 design. We need to have City approval. Our frustration is what we feel was by far the most workable long-term approach that was presented at the public hearing we are now told we are short on money by about \$3 million. Hennepin County is putting no money into the project, but using only the money that was designated from the State by our Legislators. We have met with our Legislators and Congressional members several times. We have a meeting scheduled again with Transportation Commissioner Margaret Anderson Kelliher hoping to get some additional funding. The projects need to be approved very soon because of the timeline on spending the money which includes the County Road 90 Roundabout.

As we come to the end of 2019 I hope it was a good year full of pleasant experiences and memories. If not, I hope the Christmas season with all its' festivities can be a joyful experience. May 2020 be a good year for us all.

Marvin D. Johnson, Your Mayor

2020 Elections

New Presidential Nomination Primary– March 3rd

On Tuesday, March 3rd, registered voters will be able to cast their ballots in the presidential nomination primary election. The political party precinct caucuses will still be happening on February 25th to discuss party issues, offer resolutions, and elect delegates, but the actual presidential nomination will happen during an official government run election on March 3rd. The presidential nomination primary will allow registered voters to vote on election day at their regular polling place or cast an absentee ballot starting on January 17, 2020. Registered voters will be required to choose a party and can only vote for a presidential candidate on the party ballot of their choice. A voter's choice of party ballot will be recorded and is private data; however, a list of who voted in a presidential nomination primary and the political party each voter selected will be provided to the chair of each major political party. How a voter voted on the ballot will be secret.

The City will also be running elections for the 2020 State Primary on Tuesday, August 11th and the General Election on Tuesday, November 3rd. Watch for more information on these two elections in upcoming newsletters or on the City's website at:

ci.independence.mn.us



Announcing the 2020 Citizens Police Academy February 13th– April 2nd



2019 Citizens Academy Graduates

Front Row: Emma Melton, Katharina Thompson, Betty Chandler, Jane Stein, Tammy Melton, Margaret Genereux. (Not pictured is Frank Beck.)

Back Row: Sgt. Rick Denneson, Arnold Simpson, Mike Melton, Tonia Klinkner, Michael Francis, Brian Glover, Tanner Kroells, Chief Gary Kroells, Of-

The academy runs for eight weeks, one day a week, Thursday nights, from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

WHAT IS IT?

The Citizens Academy is a **FREE** 24-hour block of instruction, sponsored by the Crime Fund, designed to give citizens knowledge about how your public safety department operates, our policies, procedures, programs and challenges. In addition, you will be introduced to government officials and staff and learn about the responsibilities of their respective offices. Participants in each session will commit to meeting 3 hours, one night a week for 8 weeks.

The Citizens Police Academy was designed to create a better understanding of law enforcement through education. The Citizens Police Academy participants are presented with realistic hands on information, which will help each

participant better understand the police department functions. The classroom and hands on information covers: **DWI and Traffic Enforcement, home security, personal security, use of force, including deadly force which includes a demonstration of the Taser Gun and FATS training (firearms simulation), Hennepin County Dispatch Center, Court procedures including testifying before a Judge** and many other areas related to law enforcement. An informational video can be found on our website at <http://www.westhennepin.com/citizens-police-academy.html>

WHY SHOULD I ATTEND?

We believe an informed citizenry will enhance public safety, make better decisions about how to protect themselves and their business, understand law enforcement strategies to problem-solving and provide leadership to other areas of government. The West Hennepin Public Safety Department is currently establishing a list of participants who would be interested in the next class. The recommended attendee age is 18 years and older.

Please contact the West Hennepin Public Safety Department at (763) 479-0500 between the hours
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., if you are interested in attending the Citizens Police Academy.

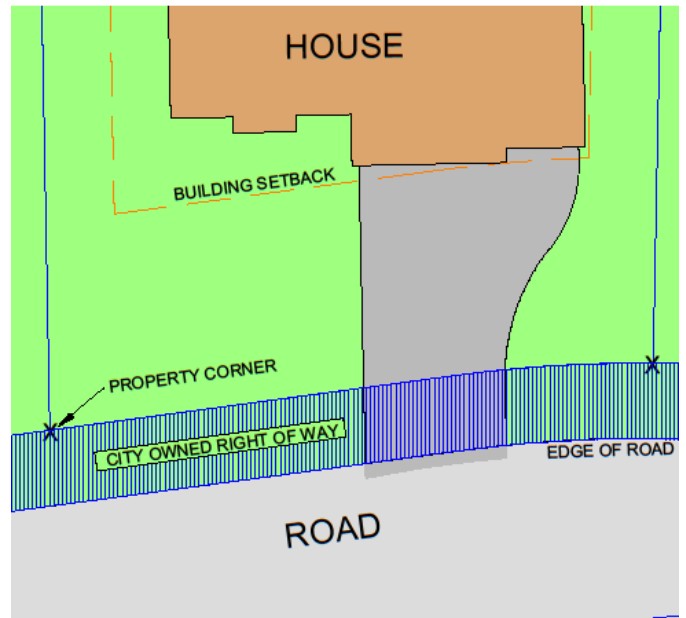


Understanding the City’s Right-of-Way as it pertains to your property.

The City of Independence is asking residents to understand the importance of the right of way and how it is used by the City. Right-of-way or “ROW” is a strip of land owned by the City usually for a public street, storm water conveyance, or other public use.

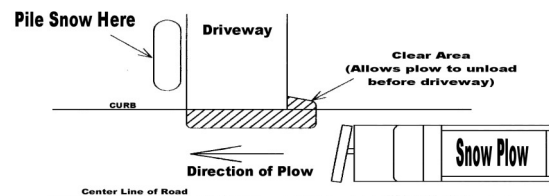
How wide or big is the typical right-of-way?

Typically a right-of-way is 66 feet wide. This will include the paved portion of the road, normally 33 feet wide, and about 16.5 feet on either side of the paved street. The space along the road side is reserved for ditches, culverts, utilities, storm sewers, road signs, and other public uses. For your property specific ROW location and information contact the City.



RIGHT OF WAY DEPICTION

Driveway Plowing Policies



Please note that the City does not allow obstructions to be located within the City’s right-of-way, including but not limited to boulders, rocks, and other materials/ structures that may impede safety or drainage. Invisible dog fences and irrigation heads or lines are also not allowed in the right-of-way. The City is not responsible for these items if they are damaged during routine maintenance and repair operations such as snow plowing and road and ditch repairs. The City may have to remove obstructions located within the right-of-way.

Please note it is unlawful to dump, plow or push snow from private driveways onto highway or city streets whether you are plowing your driveway or have hired someone to remove snow. Snow dumped on highways or street right-of-way can create a hazard not only for motorists, but also for snowplows. Even heavy snowplows have been ditched and damaged when hitting compacted and frozen snow. The person responsible for depositing snow on roadways may be liable in a civil lawsuit if damages or injuries occur as a result of this action. Under MN Statutes, Chapter 160.2715, RIGHT-OF-WAY USE, violation of the above statute is a misdemeanor, **City Ordinance 2018-04** states from November 1 through April 15 of each year and between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m., it shall be unlawful to park or permit to be parked, or continue to park or permit to stand, any vehicle upon any city street. Also, following a snow fall of 3 inches or more in depth, it shall be unlawful to park or permit to be parked, or to continue to park or permit to stand, any vehicle upon any street until the snow has been plowed from the street or the same has been otherwise disposed of.



Delano Senior Center

234 2nd Street North
 Delano, MN 55328



The Delano Senior Center will be starting a new lunch program on January 2nd! We will be partnering with local restaurants to provide lunch for seniors weekdays at Noon. The Senior Center also offers lunchtime transportation for seniors in Maple Plain, Independence and Loretto. For a suggested contribution of \$2.00, seniors can ride the bus to and from the Senior Center for lunch. The bus picks up seniors from their homes. January dates include:

Jan. 3rd, Jan. 10th, Jan. 14th, Jan. 17th,
 Jan. 21st, Jan. 24th, Jan. 27th and Jan. 30th.
 Maple Plain: 11 a.m.
 Loretto: 11:20 a.m.

Call 763-972-0574 to sign up!

AARP Tax Aide

This service is available to all age group persons that have low to middle income, with special attention given to those ages 60 or older. You do not have to be a member of AARP to take advantage of this tax assistance program. Tax Aide counseling will be offered at the Delano Senior Center on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. starting February 5. **Appointments for tax counseling are required! We will begin scheduling appointments Tuesday, January 21.** Interested persons can make an appointment by calling 763-972-0574 weekdays.

AARP Tax Aide is a free service that prepares tax returns and answers questions about taxes. The scope of our training sometimes makes it necessary to refer more complicated tax returns to paid preparers. You will be advised at your appointment if you should seek paid tax preparer services.

Kindergarten Parent Meeting & Kindergarten Connection Classes!

Will your child be 5 years old by September 1, 2020? It's time for the class of "2033" to get ready for Kindergarten! Attend the parent-only Incoming Kindergarten Parent Meeting on February 20. You can also register for free Kindergarten Connection classes where you and your child will get a sample of Kindergarten. Registration for the April 7 & 14 classes or the April 20 & 27 classes is available online at www.oronocommunityed.com or call **952-746-5895.**

2020-21 Preschool & Practice Preschool

Registration. Registration for 2020-21 Preschool and Practice Preschool opens January 13th! There are part-day or full-day options 2, 3, or 4 days per week to fit your schedule and needs. Register online at www.oronocommunityed.com.

Discovery Center Book Fair

Mark your calendars for the Scholastic "Jungle" Book Fair. **Monday - Friday, February 10– 14.**



Orono Community Education Winter Spring Brochure is here!

The 2020 Winter Spring brochure is full of classes and programs for all ages, birth to senior citizens, taking place January - May! Register early as classes are filling quickly. If you did not receive a copy, you can pick one up at the Maple Plain City office, the Orono Discovery Center or the Orono Community Education office. Register online at www.oronocommunityed.com or call: **952-449-8350.**

Randy's 2020 Recycle Calendar



7 Common Mistakes People Make when Recycling! Page 7

Believe it or not, here are a few items that end up in residential recycling containers...

Car Parts

Brake rotors, wheels & tires, batteries, and other metal car parts aren't recyclable in curbside recycle carts. The only metal materials that can be recycled are generally food packaging, such as aluminum beverage cans and metal food cans. Heavy metal parts should be taken to a scrap metal dealer, and a person could fetch a pretty penny.

1 lb. Propane Tanks

Any kind of compressed gas tank in your recycle cart is UNSAFE. This includes the likes of refillable propane tanks used for camp stoves, disposable propane canisters, butane canisters, helium balloon tanks, and oxygen tanks. These pose massive health and safety risks. Compressed gas cylinders could rupture and catch fire, so it's vital that they're disposed of properly at a safe drop-off location!

Plastic Gas Cans

Similar to propane tanks, plastic gas cans pose a large risk of explosion and fire!

Plastic Landscape edging

This type of plastic is rarely labeled with a Resin Identification Code (recycle number) which is needed to identify the type of plastic for proper recycling. In addition, this material is usually quite dirty and the processing lines can't handle all the shapes and sizes!

Plastic toys

These are another item that can't be recycled because one toy will often contain a variety of different plastic types. In order for a plastic item to be recycled, it must first contain only 1 type plastic, making plastic toys nearly impossible to recycle in a residential curbside recycle program.

Lithium Batteries

No batteries are allowed in your curbside recycle cart, and Lithium Batteries are perhaps the most dangerous. For starters, they're often filled with acid and some types can start fires when they get smashed with other recyclables. Lithium-ion batteries usually contain a metal coil and a flammable lithium-ion fluid. Tiny metal fragments float in the liquid. The contents of the battery are under pressure, so if a metal fragment punctures a partition that keeps the components separate or the battery is punctured in our truck or recycling facility, the lithium reacts with water in the air vigorously, generating high heat and often a fire! Many hardware stores accept batteries for recycling. Take car batteries to an auto-repair shop.

Plastic Bags

This one might surprise people – it's a commonly made mistake when recycling. No plastic bags are able to be recycled at standard recycling facilities. Not only are they not recyclable at single sort recycle facilities, but when people put them in the cart loose, they cause havoc on the equipment and cause down time to untangle locked gears. Curbside recycling is collected and processed at Material Recovery Facilities (MRF's). One of the common items that we find in the recycling stream are consumer plastic bags. i.e. Target bags, Wal-Mart bags, etc. Please, do not place loose bags in your recycle cart. Plastic bags and wrap can be brought to retailers that offer plastic bag recycling, such as grocery and department stores.

You may feel you are being tidy by bagging your recyclables before you put them in the cart. But all your hard work can actually be working against you because trash bags filled with recyclables end up in the landfill. Bags containing recyclable items would have to be opened so the individual recyclable item could be sorted. This simply does not happen. Instead of bagging recyclables, please get a reusable recycling container for inside your home and then dump loose materials into the curbside bin. We all have to pay extra attention to what is put in the recycle carts. Call Randy's for more information **(763) 972-3335**.

**CITY OF
INDEPENDENCE**

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City Officials

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Marvin Johnson

City Council

Brad Spencer
Lynn Betts
Ray McCoy
Steve Grotting

City Officials

Planning Commission Chair

Robert Gardner

Planning Commissioners

Anita Volkenant
Leith Dumas
Tom Palmquist
Steve Thompson

City Staff

Administrator/City Planner

Mark Kaltsas

Public Works Supervisor

Shawn Bode

Building Inspector

Bruce Satek

Asst. City Admin.

Beth Horner

Administrative Asst.

Trish Gronstal



Hennepin County Discontinues

Battery Collection Program

As of November 1, the county is no longer collecting batteries at various locations including Independence City Hall. This is due to a potential fire hazard. The combination of vape pens/e-cig devices that heat up and rechargeable batteries that are flammable is dangerous. The county will still accept batteries at its drop-off facilities in Bloomington and Brooklyn Park. If you do drop them at the drop-off facilities, they have the following requirements:

- Place batteries in a clear plastic bag or place clear tape on both the positive (+) and negative (-) terminals of batteries to prevent fires.
- Bulging or damaged lithium ion batteries should be brought to a drop-off facility as soon as possible. This should not be placed in any recycling or trash container.