
Our Mission: Providing quality services through responsible leadership, innovation and the cooperation of dedicated people

Date: May 17, 2016
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the May 17, 2016, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

Haider to serve on Valley Branch Watershed District board

Anthony Haider, Lake Elmo, was appointed to the Valley Branch Watershed District board by the Washington County Board of Commissioners May 17.

Haider will serve a term expiring Nov. 15, 2018.

Watershed district governance, required by state statute, helps to control or alleviate damage by flood waters; improves stream channels for drainage or navigation; reclaims or fills wet or overflow lands; oversees water supply for irrigation; regulates the flow of streams; diverts or changes water courses; provides and conserves water supply; and provides for the protection of groundwater and regulation of groundwater use.

Contact: Yvonne Klinnert, Public Information Manager, 651-430-6026

County Board approves application for gambling permit for Families SCNZA Foundation

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved an application for an exempt permit for Minnesota Lawful Gambling May 17 for the Families SCNZA Foundation to conduct a raffle at the Washington County Fairgrounds.

The organization will have a fundraiser at the fairgrounds June 25.

Contact: Steve Gransee, Taxpayer Services Elections Division Manager, 651-430-8272

A great place to live, work and play...today and tomorrow

County Board approves contract for traffic signal on CSAH 14 in Oakdale, Lake Elmo

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a contract with Taylor Electric, Inc., May 17 for construction of traffic signal improvements on County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 14 (34th Street North) in Oakdale and Lake Elmo.

This \$191,500 contract is for a portion of a project in the Highway 5 Turnback Budget allocations, approved by the County Board last July. This is Phase 1 of the project. Phase 2 for traffic signals north of Highway 36 in Stillwater planned for later this summer.

The project will improve four county-owned traffic signals on CSAH 14 (34th Street North / Old Highway 5) in Oakdale at its intersections with Grenada Avenue, Hadley Avenue, Market/Imation, and Ideal Avenue (CSAH 13). The Ideal Avenue intersection is on the boundary of Oakdale and Lake Elmo.

The project will upgrade all traffic signals to light-emitting diode (LED) technology, add Flashing Yellow Arrow capability to all approaches at all four intersections, add additional traffic signal lights for better visibility where needed, add overhead street name signs to the traffic signal mast arms, and add pedestrian "countdown" timer indications to existing pedestrian crossings.

The project will be funded with money from the state that the county received in 2015 when the state transferred Old Highway 5 to the county.

Contact: Joe Gustafson, Traffic Engineer, 651-430-4351

County will purchase land to include into Big Marine Park Reserve

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the purchase of 15770 May Ave. N. to add it to Big Marine Park Reserve.

The 14.4-acre purchase is consistent with the Big Marine Park Reserve Master Plan. The acquisition of the property was initiated by the property owners who told the county of their interest in selling the property. An offer was made to the landowners based on an appraisal, and the county and landowners negotiated a purchase agreement.

The purchase price is \$290,000 and will be funded by the voter-approved Land and Water Legacy Program (LWLP). The county will request that the Metropolitan Council reimburse the LWLP fund for 75 percent of the acquisition cost.

Contact: John Elholm, Parks Director, 651-430-4303

2 parcels will be cleared in redevelopment work around Red Rock Transit Station

The Washington County Board of Commissioners agreed to designate two structures around the Red Rock Transit Station in Newport as structurally substandard May 17, allowing for their demolition. The Washington County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) has acquired two parcels in the Red Rock Crossing redevelopment area. The former Red Rock Plumbing and Heating commercial property at 2120 Second Ave. was purchased in 2013 and a single-family home at 2189 Second Ave. was purchased in 2016. Both properties are slated for demolition in 2016.

Once a developer and project has been identified, it is the intent of the Washington County HRA to create a redevelopment tax increment financing (TIF) district, which would include other contiguous parcels that, when combined, would form a developable parcel.

The future tax increment, which is the increase in the property taxes due to higher property value, will be “captured” to assist with overall redevelopment costs incurred by the HRA. For the parcels to be eligible for inclusion in a future redevelopment TIF district, the parcels must be determined to be structurally substandard and comply with standards set by state law. The standards note that:

- 15 percent of the site contains buildings, streets, utilities, or parking lots; and
- more than 50 percent of the buildings are structurally substandard, requiring substantial renovation or clearance, and more than 15 percent of the replacement value would be required to bring the building up to code.

The HRA engaged LHB, Inc., to complete separate studies of the two properties, and workers concluded that the parcels meet the state definition of a structurally-substandard building.

Contact: Melissa Taphorn, Washington County Housing and Redevelopment Authority Deputy Director, 651-202-2821

May recognized as Mental Health Month in Washington County

The Washington County Board of Commissioners recognized May as Mental Health Month May 17. Mental health is a priority for Washington County government, its departments, and the communities the county serves.

The board's resolution noted that mental wellbeing is important for people of all ages, races, social classes, and walks of life; and mental health routinely emerges as a high priority in the seven-county metropolitan area's community health needs assessments. It also noted that Washington County Community Services and the Department of Public Health and Environment have both identified mental health as a priority concern for the community. The Department of Public Health and Environment is a member of the Center for Community Health, a public/private health improvement initiative involving members from public health agencies, health plans, hospitals, and health systems across the seven-county metropolitan area.

The Center for Community Health has identified mental health as a focus of its health improvement activities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, and the center has challenged communities in the region to take the "Make It OK" pledge to end the stigma around mental health disorders and support training to promote mental health.

The County Board joined other Center for Community Health organizations to encourage residents and public officials to learn more about Mental Health First Aid and Psychological First Aid and to take the Make It OK pledge during "Mental Health Awareness Month."

The county's Community Services Department provides ongoing support and attention for its Mental Health Services Advisory Committee. Also, in 2014, the Department of Public Health and Environment completed a Community Health Assessment and a Community Health Improvement Plan, both of which indicate mental health is a priority for the community.

Contact: Lowell Johnson, Public Health and Environment Director, 651-430-6725

County Board approves agreement with City of Afton for downtown improvements

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a cooperative cost share agreement with the City of Afton May 17 for the design and construction of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 21, CSAH 18, sanitary sewer, the river levee, and local streets.

The City of Afton has signed the cooperative agreement.

Under the agreement, the City of Afton will design and construct the project. The estimated cost to the county is \$4.75 million, including construction, aesthetic amenities, right-of-way and easements, and contract administration. The county will use bond proceeds to fund its share of the project.

The project involves the reconstruction of CSAH 21 and CSAH 18 in downtown Afton, to accommodate the needs of both the community and the county highway system. The total project cost is roughly \$12 million.

The pavement is in poor condition, and the lack of a regional drainage plan results in localized, small-scale flooding and standing water. As the downtown area continues to redevelop and attract more visitors and residents, parking and pedestrian activities have become more difficult.

Benefits of the project include improved pavement condition and increased pavement life, improved roadway and intersection safety, improved drainage and stormwater management, and improved pedestrian safety.

Contact: Cory Slagle, Deputy County Engineer, 651-430-4337

County vacates right-of-way not needed for CSAH 26 in Oak Park Heights

The Washington County Board of Commissioners vacated excess right-of-way on a portion of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 26 May 17 in light of the planned reconstruction of the south frontage road on Highway 36 in Oak Park Heights.

The county's Capital Improvement Plan includes the realignment of CSAH 26, or the Highway 36 south frontage road, at the intersection of CSAH 24 (Osgood Avenue) in Oak Park Heights.

The project establishes the intersection for CSAH 26 and CSAH 24 approximately 400 feet south of its current location and will tie into the existing 59th Street, which provides for increased separation between CSAH 26 and Highway 36.

With the new alignment, existing portions of CSAH 26 right-of-way are no longer needed by Washington County, and the county will vacate its interest in the portion no longer needed.

Contact: Wayne Sandberg, County Engineer and Deputy Public Works Director, 651-430-4339