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

Date: Sept. 25, 2018
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Sept. 25, 2018, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County Board approves comments on draft comprehensive plans for City of Woodbury

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved comments Sept. 25 prepared following review of the draft comprehensive plan for the City Woodbury.

All local governments within the seven-county metropolitan region must prepare a comprehensive plan and update that plan every 10 years. The Metropolitan Council is charged with reviewing local comprehensive plans.

Before formally submitting local comprehensive plan updates to the Met Council, local governments must provide adjacent and affected jurisdictions the opportunity to review and comment on the draft plan during a mandatory six-month review period. Comprehensive plans must be submitted to the Met Council by Dec. 31.

The county's comments stated its support for the effort to develop a variety of housing types and affordability levels to accommodate people at different life stages and income levels. The county stated its appreciation for reference to and inclusion of implementation of the Washington County Groundwater Plan in the Natural Resources chapter, and looks forward to additional opportunities to partner on water quality and quantity projects in the future. The county also stated encouragement to see resilience as a guiding principle within the city's Natural Resources chapter and throughout the comprehensive plan. The county also commends the City of Woodbury for completing an Existing

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Energy Conditions report to better understand energy consumption in the city. The county stated that it is exciting to see the city support the implementation of renewable energy wherever possible, as shown by the use of solar panels and geothermal systems. Further, the county commends the city for its section on waste and recycling with the goal to reduce waste while increasing recycling and organics recovery.

Contact: Colin Kelly, Senior Planner, 651-430-6011

County Board names Eckles to Brown's Creek Watershed District board

The Washington County Board of Commissioners appointed Klayton Eckles, Stillwater, to the Brown's Creek Watershed District Board of Managers Sept. 25.

Eckles will serve a partial term expiring Oct. 21, 2020.

Watershed district governance, required by state law, 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 will receive grant to support Citizens Review Panel activities

Washington County will receive a \$5,000 grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services to support the expenses associated with the county's Citizen Review Panel, after the County Board accepted the grant Sept. 25.

The Child Protection Citizen Review Panel provides opportunities for members of the community to have an integral role in ensuring that Child Protection Service Systems are protecting children from abuse and neglect and are meeting the permanency needs of children.

The funds can be used to reimburse expenditures incurred from July 1 through June 30, 2019. Grant funds must be used for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for volunteer Citizen Review Panel members and for reimbursement of administrative costs associated with panel activities.

Contact: Sarah Amundson, Community Services Division Manager, 651-430-6597

County will use portion of proceeds from tax-forfeited land sales for parks

Washington County will use 20 percent of the net proceeds from tax-forfeited land sales for the acquisition and maintenance of parks and recreational areas, after the County Board approved the measure Sept. 25.

The action is allowed by state law, and the County Board must approve the set aside of the funds each year. The ownership of property that forfeits because of the non-payment of property taxes rests with the state, and counties are tasked with the management and disposition of the property. When a tax-forfeited property is sold to a governmental agency or the public, the proceeds are deposited into the county's tax-forfeited sale fund. Prior to any distribution of funds from this account, the department recovers the costs for management of the tax-forfeited land in the county.

From the net proceeds remaining, the distribution is:

- 20 percent to the county for acquisition and maintenance of county parks and recreational areas in counties that have passed the appropriate resolution annually;
- of the remaining funds, 40 percent is distributed to the county general fund, 40 percent to the school district, and 20 percent to the city or township.

The financial implications for the county vary by year depending on the amount of sale proceeds from tax-forfeited land and maintenance costs.

Contact: Jennifer Wagenius, Property Records and Taxpayer Services Director, 651-430-6182

County Board approves performance report for housing projects

The Washington Board of Commissioners approved the 2017 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report for submission to the U.S. Department of Urban Development Sept. 25.

The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) details Washington County's progress toward meeting the goals outlined in Washington County's 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan and projects undertaken with the 2017 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) program funds. The CAPER is a means to communicate to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and policymakers how funds are spent and the

impact the programs make in the community. The full report can be viewed on the Washington County Community Development Agency's website at www.washingtoncountycda.org.

The CAPER details accomplishments including 1) funds invested in projects and activities; 2) households and persons assisted; 3) actions taken to affirmatively further fair housing; and 4) grant-funded projects that meet housing and community development needs in Washington County.

Washington County's Program Year 2017 accomplishments included six home improvement loans, street improvements in Landfall, construction of nine single-family homes, rehabilitation of two rental units, creation of five overnight emergency beds, and acquisition of two vacant lots in St. Paul Park and Cottage Grove.

Funds also were used to prevent homelessness by providing public services to 1,036 households with housing emergencies.

The CDBG and HOME funds leveraged \$1.6 million of additional funding.

Washington County, as member of the Fair Housing Implementation Council, provided funding to Equity in Place to conduct region-wide community outreach and tenants' rights trainings.

The draft CAPER was released and published for public comment Aug. 31. The public comment period ended with a public hearing conducted by the Community Development Agency Sept. 18. A public hearing was also conducted Sept. 18 by the Dakota County HOME Consortium. No comments were received.

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

County Board honors Property Records and Taxpayer Services staff by declaring Oct. 1-5 as Customer Service Week in Washington County

The Washington County Board of Commissioners honored the staff in the county's Department of Property Records and Taxpayer Services Sept. 25 by declaring Oct. 1-5 as Customer Service week in the county.

In 1992, the first full week in October was proclaimed National Customer Service week by the U.S. Congress to recognize the work of customer service professionals throughout the year and the importance of that work in a wide range of businesses, including government.

The employees in Property Records and Taxpayer Services serve county residents daily face-to-face at a number of locations throughout the county and their high-quality service is recognized and appreciated by the board.

The board's resolution noted that the purpose of the work of Washington County employees is to serve the 250,000 residents of the county, and the county's mission is to provide quality services through responsible leadership, innovation, and the cooperation of dedicated people. It also noted that the people who make up the staff of the county's Property Records and Taxpayer Services Department have extensive technical knowledge and serve county residents in a prompt, accurate, and friendly manner.

With that in mind, the County Board extended its appreciation for providing that service, and thanked the Property Records and Taxpayer Services staff for its customer service.

Contact: Jennifer Wagenius, Property Records and Taxpayer Services Director, 651-430-6182

County Board recognizes work in county to prevent suicide

The Washington County Board of Commissioners recognized work being done in the county to counteract a growing risk of suicide Sept. 25.

Sheriff Dan Starry noted the Sheriff's Office work of raising awareness about suicide, and the office's addition of informational decals to a county squad car to bring awareness to the issue of suicide. The office worked with the National Alliance on Mental Illness to develop the informational vehicle. The office has also collaborated on a lip-sync video to raise awareness about suicide, and has participated on forums in the community to bring awareness about suicide.

The county's Department of Public Health and Environment highlighted QPR Training, available to county residents. Residents may learn how to recognize the warning signs of suicide, how to offer hope, and how to get help by completing QPR Gatekeeper Training. QPR stands for Question, Persuade, and Refer — the three simple steps anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide. The online QPR Gatekeeping course is free to residents of Washington County and can be completed in as little as one hour. Information is on the county website at www.co.washington.mn.us under Public Health and Environment under Training Opportunities.