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Date: Oct. 9, 2018
Contact: Yvonne Klinnert, Public Information Manager
Phone: 651-430-6026, after hours 952-807-3723
E-mail: yvonne.klinnert@co.washington.mn.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Oct. 9, 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 Cottage Grove

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved comments Oct. 9 prepared by county staff following review of the draft comprehensive plan for the City of Cottage Grove.

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 city's effort to develop housing that serves and accommodates all income levels and life stages, and the inclusion of high-density workforce housing to support nearby employment areas. The county also stated its appreciation of the city's desire to partner with the Washington County Community Development Agency rehabilitation programs to improve existing housing units. Further, the county is encouraged by the city's focus on water conservation, emergency preparedness measures that have been taken with respect to water supply, and overall water sustainability. The county is also encouraged to see the city's commitment to resiliency and support of solar energy throughout the community and enforcement of existing solar

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access regulations in new subdivisions, as well as identifying areas for solar development. In addition, the county commends the city for achieving and maintaining its status as a Green Step City, and commends the city for including healthy community priorities, such as access to healthy foods and physical activity through a robust parks and trail system that include pedestrian and bicycle connections to transit-focused and mixed-use districts.

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

County Board approves assessing unpaid County Environmental Charges

The Washington County Board of Commissioners Oct. 9 certified unpaid County Environmental Charges (CEC) on property owners in Oak Park Heights who have failed to pay 2017 fees, and authorized the county auditor to put the fees, with interest, on the tax rolls of the county

The CEC is a 35 percent charge on garbage service; it does not apply to the collection of recyclable materials. The fee has been collected since the mid-1980s, and revenue from the CEC is used for solid and hazardous waste services, such as the county's Environmental Center and household hazardous waste collections, recycling grants to cities and townships, environmental education programs, and operation of the Recycling and Energy Center in Newport. Oak Park Heights residents are invoiced quarterly for the CEC by Tennis Sanitation, the city's contracted waste hauler. Tennis Sanitation provided a list of 137 unpaid CEC charges from residents of Oak Park Heights for 2017.

Contact: Nicole Stewart, Senior Environmental Resource Manager, 651-430-6713

County updates records retention, disposition policy

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved an update to the county's Records Retention and Disposition policy Oct. 9, and the creation of policies on Electronic Communications. The policies address the responsibilities for management of records and information collected by the county. The Records Retention and Disposition policy was first adopted in 1986. It established guidelines for the retention and destruction of records. The revisions include updates to definitions, references county custom retention schedules that have been created and approved by the state, and procedures.

The electronic communications policy focuses on the electronic devices used to capture county data and information and the management of that information. It defines official records, references state laws and county policies, identifies the responsibilities of county staff, and establishes guidelines for record deletion and retention.

A substantive change directs staff to delete emails and other electronic communications as soon as they are no longer needed if they are not official records, to store official records in the official system of record, and to automatically delete emails after three years from receipt if they are not required by law to be kept longer.

Contact: Valerie Raiche, Records Manager, 651-430-6028