



Mayor's Column

By Dan Denno

Spring!

I usually enjoy writing an article about spring in our great city. However, as I write this we are in the middle of the National and Minnesota State of Emergency from the Coronavirus. The governor has issued a statewide “shelter in place” order. We also declared a city state of emergency. We were concerned that programs may be developed for residents or local businesses that would require a local state of emergency to be declared by Oak Grove in order for residents to be eligible. Some of you are going crazy trying to work from home while the kids are home from school with you. Unfortunately, I know there are some of you that are at home because you don't have work to go to. The people of Oak Grove are very independent and capable of taking of themselves without government hand-holding, but if you find yourself in a position where you absolutely need help to get through this and are trying to figure out what sort of help might be available, please call Anoka County or call City Hall. Someone will be able to tell you what might be available. I know there will also be help available from some of the local churches and the Salvation Army. We are very fortunate to have the Salvation Army available to us in times of an emergency. There are other very worthwhile organizations willing to help, but those are the ones that immediately come to mind. We can also plan on helping neighbors and family, especially with **toilet paper**. We pray that all of our residents get through this with little or no long-term health issues, hoping the few that get it have a swift and easy recovery.

On March 18 we decided to close City Hall to personal interaction with the public. We decided to do this following the same decision by Anoka County and some of the other cities in Anoka County. At this time all the staff have continued to work in the office to be available for any phone calls, emails, or any other business they can do without having public contact. The Planning and Zoning Commission was still held, and the City Council meeting on March 30 was held. A release was sent out via our city emergency notification system. If you haven't already signed up for it, that would be a great idea. You can get either a text, an email, or both letting you know of any emergencies or citywide notifications. Carrying this

a step further, on March 30 we began the work at home system for the office staff at City Hall, complying with the governor's shelter in place directive.

The people that can't stay home and can't refrain from contact with the public are our first responders. They again deserve our sincerest thanks for putting their own health at risk in order to protect us. We as citizens need to make sure that we don't abuse their willingness to help. The sheriff's deputies are working in split shifts trying to mitigate any possibility of spreading the virus among themselves. Our public works and our fire department are also working on developing a system that would protect members from infecting each other.

This is a very trying time. Everyone needs to do their best to help our communities get over this terrible disease. At the same time we need to make sure that we don't become emotionally distraught. We need to keep a positive attitude, and, as I mentioned earlier, help each other.

So, that being said, let's look forward a little to a more pleasant subject, **spring**. So far this spring we have been saved from large snow storms. In the past it seems we have a blizzard at basketball tournament time. It appears that the weather knew the tournament was cancelled, so it skipped us this year. Hope I didn't jinx us by writing this. I am really looking forward to getting outside and working in my yard. Losing some of that winter weight, and getting back in a healthy state. I don't do much for outdoor activities in the winter. After the big rush on the grocery stores in March, I am planning on doing more vegetable gardening than before. Being a little more self-sufficient is always a good endeavor. I wonder if I could peel a birch tree and make my own toilet paper.

We are going to be having a discussion with Anoka County concerning the intersection at Lake George Boulevard and 221st Avenue NW. We are all curious to hear what they have to say. A proposed round-a-bout is our best guess. At the same time, we will be reviewing with them potential projects for both Lake George Boulevard and Rum River Boulevard south of Viking Boulevard.

The city council is continuing to work on the city's long-term budget, better known as the Capital Improvement Plan. This is where we budget for large items, such as public works equipment, fire department equipment, roads, any large building expenses. We will be having work sessions to discuss these items once the virus is conquered. If you have an interest in getting involved in these discussions, please check the city's website or call City Hall to find out when these work sessions will take place.

Mayor's Column

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City Administrator's Updates

Loren Wickham
CITY ADMINISTRATOR

COVID-19 Response

The City has taken several actions in response to the declared National, State and Local emergencies to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- City Hall was initially closed until March 31 to all public facing services, now that closure is extended through April 10. City Staff remains available to help the public via email and phone during normal business hours. See page 3 for more information.
- The City Council declared a local emergency. This may help make the city eligible for future FEMA funds toward costs we incur due to the pandemic.
- Mayor Denno issued a Statement and Determination Permitting City meetings to be held by telephone or other electronic means. This allows staff to hold meetings by telephone or video conference if needed. At the time of print all public meetings are still scheduled and open to the public at City Hall. Staff is working on options for phone and video conferencing so the public can still participate if a meeting is held this way. Please visit the City website for updates on meetings.
- All playground equipment in City parks has been posted as closed until further notice to comply with the Governor's Stay at Home order.
- The City is considering staggered or alternating shifts for our essential fire fighters and public works employees to limit exposure.
- The City has postponed the upcoming Spring Recycling Day and Pet Clinic. We will try to reschedule these events for later in the year if possible.
- Important updates will continue to be communicated on the City website and we will utilize the Public-Alert system to notify residents directly as needed.

Watch City Meetings Online

The City livestreams all City Council and Planning Commission meetings on the City website at www.ci.oak-grove.mn.us. Click on the City Meetings tab on the City website to watch a meeting live or to view an archived meeting at your convenience.

2020 Official Newspaper – *Star Tribune*

The City's official newspaper for publishing legal notices is the *Star Tribune*. Legal notices are available at www.startribune.com. All legal notices are also posted on the City website, at City Hall and at the Recycling Drop-Off Center at 19045 Main Street NW.

2020 Construction Projects

The City recently received bids on 2020 Road Improvement Projects. The City Council will consider awarding the bids to the lowest responsible bidder at an upcoming meeting. The tentative improvement list includes overlay projects for neighborhoods in East Swan Lake Estates, Swanson Brook View 1st through 4th Additions and a portion of Seelye Brook Estates. The City Council will also consider bids for two assessment projects in the area of South Lake George Drive NW and Cedar Creek Drive NW. In addition to the annual overlay project and assessment projects the city will be reconditioning 221st Avenue NW between Nightingale Street NW and Cedar Drive (CSAH 13). The City's Public Works crew will be actively involved in all the projects. Anoka County has no overlays/rehabilitation projects on county roads planned in Oak Grove this year. To learn more about all projects being considered and to see additional maps, visit the 2020 Road Improvement Projects section of the City's website www.ci.oak-grove.mn.us.

Building Inspection Services

Andy Schreder
RUM RIVER CONSTRUCTION CONSULTANTS

During these challenging times, it is important to protect ourselves, our families as well as our neighbors; while still trying to maintain some semblance of normalcy and moving forward where possible.

Building projects and inspections are continuing, where we are able, as we strive to serve the residents and contractors of Oak Grove.

At this time, we have decided to suspend inspections of the interior of occupied buildings; with certain exceptions. If an emergency situation arises, or if a homeowner is comfortable having us in their home, we are conducting inspections as requested. If either the

homeowner or inspector is not feeling well, or not comfortable with the situation, inspections are being deferred until at least the first part of April.

Our company has been in contact with the Minnesota State Department of Labor and Industry and received confirmation that we have a safe and acceptable approach to permitting and site inspections.

Any questions or concerns about this process and situation can be referred directly to the City Building Official, Andy Schreder at 763-291-3704.



Election Notice

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, to the residents of the City of Oak Grove, that a General Election will be held in the City of Oak Grove, in the County of Anoka, State of Minnesota, on Tuesday, the 3rd day of November, 2020, for the purpose of electing candidates for the offices listed below. The filing period for these offices begins on Tuesday, July 28, 2020 at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 11, 2020. Candidates for the offices listed below need to file with the City Clerk at Oak Grove City Hall, 19900 Nightingale Street NW, Oak Grove, Minnesota. Office hours at City Hall are 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. However, office hours will be extended until 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 11, 2020, to accept filings. A fee of \$2 must be paid before an Affidavit of Candidacy will be accepted.

Offices for 2020 General Election

Two (2) Council Members
each for four-year terms

Jessica Rieland
INTERIM CITY CLERK

In-Person Absentee Voting

Eligible voters may cast an absentee ballot in-person starting 46 days prior to each election.

August 11 – State Primary Election
June 26 - August 10, 2020

November 3 – General Election
September 18, 2020 - November 2, 2020

Times

8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday unless otherwise noted

10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. on the Saturday before Election Day (August 8 and October 31)

8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. on the Monday before Election Day (August 10 and November 2)

Locations

In-person absentee voting for ALL Anoka County voters is available at the Anoka County Government Center, 2100 3rd Avenue NW, Anoka, MN 55303

In-person absentee voting at all City Hall locations is ONLY for residents of that city.

City operations during COVID-19 restrictions

Effective March 18, 2020, The City of Oak Grove is **closing** all its public-facing services at City Hall until April 10, 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the declared National and State Emergencies. City Hall will be closed for day to day business but will be open for all scheduled public meetings. Even though City Hall is closed City staff is available to help you during normal business hours 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. by phone or email. Please call 763-404-7000 or visit the City's website for a staff directory.

Please check for updates on the city website www.ci.oak-grove.mn.us

- **Public Meetings:** As of now, City Hall will be open for regularly scheduled public meetings including the City Council and Planning Commission. Please check the city website or contact City staff for updates.
- **Building Permits and Inspections:** Contact Rum River Construction Consultants at permits@rumrivercc.com or for more information visit www.ci.oak-grove.mn.us/building. If you pay by check, please include permit number and address on the check.
- **Burning Permits:** As of April 1 the City is under Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) burning restrictions. Permits will not be available until the restrictions have been lifted. Three foot by three foot recreational fires are still okay. Check the City website for updates. The DNR map is updated daily.
- **Utility Billing:** Please drop your payment in the Utility Drop Box in the parking lot or pay online. For more info: www.ci.oak-grove.mn.us/utilities
- **Applications:** If you need to leave applications or other documents for city staff, please email them or put them in the Utility Drop Box in the parking lot. Staff will regularly check the drop box.

Oak Grove Parks and Trails News

City parks and trails are open, but all **playground equipment is closed** until further notice

Enjoy your time outdoors but please stay off the playground equipment and maintain social distance of at least six feet.

The playground equipment is closed pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order dated March 25, 2020.

Thank you for understanding.

For more information visit www.ci.oak-grove.mn.us.



Sign up today for Oak Grove's new public alert system. Alerts can be received as an automated SMS text message, email, or phone call. You don't have to have a mobile phone to utilize this service. This service can be used to notify residents of important information include: Planned detours/road maintenance, burning restrictions, road closures, hydrant flushing, imminent threats to the public, wildland fires and community events like Recycling Day. We won't immediately use it for weather-related events such as tornadoes, but we may in the future.

To sign up look for the Public Alert logo on the front page of the City's website.

Scams: What will they think of next?

Sheriff James Stuart

ANOKA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

It is a constant battle to keep up with new scams and updated versions of old scams. Last year across the United States, 1.4 million fraud reports were filed; of those 25 percent involved a financial loss for the victim. In 2018, people reported losing over \$1.48 billion to fraud which was a 38 percent increase over 2017.

A newer trend that we are seeing is that younger people are losing money to scams more often than older people. Forty-three percent of people ages 20 to 29 reported being scammed, compared to 15 percent of people 70 or older. These numbers may be subjective, and perhaps under reported by our senior population, but the fact remains younger people are being increasingly targeted.

The most current and unique scam that has become popular in the last month is the "U.S. Border" scam. It occurs when someone calls you and identifies themselves as being from a federal agency, typically the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The "agent" will claim that they have located a vehicle along the U.S. border with a large amount of money or drugs in the vehicle, along with your identification. Either they claim the vehicle was registered in your name or they found your identification, so now you are their "prime suspect."

The scammer starts by asking you to verify your full name, date of birth, address and even your social security number. They claim that they need this information to ensure they will not issue a warrant for your arrest. In a report last month, an agent told the victim that they were seizing all his financial accounts and advised him to get withdraw \$3,000 and send them the cash to stop the seizure process.

In addition to the border scam, we have taken multiple reports on the "Xcel Energy" scam and the "Social Security" scam. The Xcel scam occurs when someone calls and says your bill is overdue, and they will be cutting off your power immediately unless you pay over the phone. The Social Security scam occurs when someone calls and says your number has been compromised and a warrant was issued for your arrest. Again, they need money (sometimes in the form of gift cards) to clear up the warrant. While this can sound ridiculous, people can be more easily tricked by these con artists when they are panicked. For a typical law-abiding citizen this can be scary, and they may just want to get it taken care of.

Many people can be critical of those who fall for scams and they think that it could never happen to them. Our experience is that nobody is immune to fraud and sometimes people simply fall for scams due to the psychological techniques employed by these fraudsters. Remember to **never** give out personal information or payment, to a stranger that has called you.

Every Friday, our Crime Prevention Unit sends out an email with a list of crimes and arrests that occur in Oak Grove. Included in that report is information about current scams that we are seeing. If you would like to receive our Friday Update please add your name to our list by emailing crime.prevention@co.anoka.mn.us.

We appreciate your partnership as we continue to serve Oak Grove and combat the evil that would seek to victimize our families.

Statistic Source: Federal Trade Commission: Consumer Information

Spring Events Postponed

The Spring Pet Clinic and Recycling event have been postponed until further notice.

Please visit the City's website, www.ci.oak-grove.mn.us, when COVID-19 restrictions have relaxed for more information



The City of Oak Grove values its local businesses. To support and promote the success of commercial, industrial, and



home-based businesses in our community, the City has launched a "local business directory" page on its website. To see a list of Oak Grove business, or if you would like to have your home-based business listed on the City's Local Business Directory page, please visit the city's website at www.ci.oak-grove.mn.us/business

If you have a local business in Oak Grove and would like to be featured in an upcoming newsletter or interested in advertising, please contact City Administrator Loren Wickham at admin@ci.oak-grove.mn.us or 763-404-7075.

Business Resources for COVID-19

Anoka County has consolidated resources to help ready and recover your business and workforce from the impacts of COVID-19. Please visit www.anokacountysuccess.org/covid-19-anoka-county-business-resources often as new resources and programs will be added as they become available.

This link has a comprehensive list of federal, state and local resources available to businesses.

National Weather Service to begin flood forecasting for Rum River

Jamie Schurbon
ANOKA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

In response to a request from eight local government units, the National Weather Service (NWS) will begin flood forecasting for the Rum River. Forecasting will begin in February 2020 whenever the river is approaching critical elevations. The forecasts will provide a graph of past, current and forecasted future water levels relative to critical elevations for homes and infrastructure.

“Getting flood forecasting was important to many communities throughout the watershed,” recalls Jamie Schurbon, Watershed Projects Coordinator at the Anoka Conservation District. The request was supported by emergency managers in Anoka, Isanti, and Mille Lacs counties, soil and water conservation districts those counties, and cities.

The forecasting is valid for the Anoka County portions of the Rum River. Forecasts are based on data from a river monitoring station at the Viking Boulevard bridge, which has 86 years of river level and volume records. It is further informed by three river level monitoring stations within Isanti and Mille Lacs Counties.

While the forecast does not extend to Isanti and Mille Lacs Counties, water level data for three river monitoring stations those counties is presented as graphs on the NWS website. Graphs include past and current river levels, but not a forecast of future levels.

Large scale flooding has not been a regular problem along the Rum River, however there are areas of concern. “There are homes or roads that can be flooded in extreme events,” stated Schurbon.

Flood forecasting will give local governments and homeowners better information and potentially valuable time to prepare when waters are approaching critical elevations. Local governments are providing the NWS with data to inform critical flood elevations, such as the “action” level. These data include elevations of roads and homes that might flood.

Water level graphs for the Rum River, and many of others across the country, are available on the National Weather Service website at <https://water.weather.gov/ahps>. The Rum River flood forecasts will be available on this same website starting in February 2020. Forecasts are only done when water is anticipated to approach critical levels.

The costs of flood forecasting are paid by the National Weather Service.

Wellhead and Surface Water Protection

Help Protect our Water

All water quality protection comes down to the actions of the individual in his or her daily life. Simple decisions about how much you recycle, which products you buy and their packaging and reusability, how much water you use, how you maintain your septic system, how you dispose of household hazardous wastes, where and how you use lawn and garden chemicals, and many others have an impact on the quality of drinking and surface waters. Our first responsibility for protecting water lies with these types of everyday decisions.

Burning Restriction Reminders

Rob Engler
INTERIM OAK GROVE FIRE CHIEF

Burning restrictions are currently being enforced.

- Burning of brush piles larger than 3 x 3 feet requires a burning permit. Although recreational fires 3 x 3 feet are still okay.
- Burning Permits (during non-restriction periods) are available online at www.ci.oak-grove.mn.us on the upper right menu on the main page or by calling 763-404-7000 during normal business hours.
- Standard permits are set for 6:00 p.m. start and out by 8:00 a.m.

REMINDER: If you have a question as to whether or not permits are allowed, please check the city website or the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources website map as it is updated daily. www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/fire/questions.html.

Mayor's Column

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In the offices at City Hall our City Clerk Kathy Nielsen has resigned and is being temporarily replaced by interim City Clerk Jessica Rieland. Jessica has been working with us as a part time office staff person for almost a year now. She has been involved in other government organizations, and is familiar with the work that the City Clerk needs to do. It was fortuitous that she was available to step in to this position for us at such short notice. She will be in this position until the city makes a decision on a permanent City Clerk. Interim Fire Chief Rob Engler is becoming acclimated to his new temporary position. As our fire chief, he is the lead person in our emergency response team. He is our main resource in our fight against the virus. We will be looking for a temporary part time staff person to fill the role that Jessica had been serving us in. If you know of anyone that might be a good fit, please let us know.

If everything goes well, if the hydroxychloroquine works, if the beer virus is defeated by April 25, we will be having our Spring Recycle Day. I enjoy working at the recycle day so that I can be available to speak to everyone as they come through the line. So if I don't see you before, hopefully I will see you then. Happy Easter and Happy May Day. Here is your happy thought for the day. By the time I do my next newsletter, you will be getting bitten by the Minnesota state bird.

Enjoy Spring.



19900 Nightingale Street NW
 Oak Grove, MN 55011
www.ci.oak-grove.mn.us

PRESORTED
 STANDARD
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 TWIN CITIES, MN
 PERMIT 30308

Website
www.ci.oak-grove.mn.us

City Hall
General Information
 19900 Nightingale Street NW
 Oak Grove, MN 55011
 Phone: 763-404-7000
 Fax: 763-404-7001

Monday-Friday except holidays
8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Anoka County
Sheriff's Office
 (Police non-emergency)
 763-427-1212

Fire & Police Emergency
 911

City Council

Mayor	Dan Denno.....	763-443-4729
Council Member	Scott Lawrence.....	763-228-0222
Council Member	Paul Tradewell.....	612-910-7577
Council Member	John West.....	763-250-1740
Council Member	Weston Rolf.....	612-385-4036

City Staff Directory

City Administrator	Loren Wickham.....	763-404-7075
Interim City Clerk	Jessica Rieland.....	763-404-7007
Building Official	Andy Schreder/Rum River Const. ..	763-291-3704
Account Specialist	Lisa Hart.....	763-404-7022
Public Works Director	Tim Smith.....	763-434-1441
Interim Fire Chief	Rob Engler.....	763-404-7000

Monthly Meeting Schedule

City Council	Second and last Mondays.....	7:00 p.m.
Planning Commission	Third Thursday.....	7:00 p.m.
Parks Commission	Third Wednesday.....	6:30 p.m.

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