

PUBLIC WORKS

Pipeline

Park Maintenance Joins Public Works Department

By Katie Lofrano

The City of Edina's park maintenance operations are now part of the Public Works Department.

During a recent reorganization, City Manager Scott Neal moved Park Maintenance under Public Works in order to use personnel and equipment to their fullest potential and possibly save money while delivering quality public service.

"Consolidating our public infrastructure and property maintenance functions under one department, Public Works, is a good idea because it allows management a better vantage point to coordinate work and manage resources, while also creating a more streamlined budget, equipment and communications system for our maintenance employees," said Neal. "We're still working out the bugs, but I think it's going to be better for all of us as time goes on."

Public Works Director Brian Olson echoed those comments. "The same people who maintained the parks in the past are the same people who are maintaining the parks into the future," said Olson, whose past experience leading a park maintenance team was a factor in Neal's decision.

"After all is said and done, our parks' trails, parking lots and buildings are built of concrete, asphalt and metal. The Parks & Recreation Department will still guide the development and use of the parks; we simply maintain them."

Park Maintenance Supervisor Bob Prestrud has been in Park Maintenance for 36 years. He said he has seen many changes throughout his career. With this latest change, he thinks that the City is headed in the right direction. Prestrud believes this change will improve communication between the two departments, enabling them to better work together.

The park maintenance staff is comprised of 17 full-time workers and 33 seasonal workers. They manage more than 40 parks and open areas and oversee park-related projects and improvements.

For more information, contact the Public Works Department, 952-826-0376 or www.EdinaMN.gov/PublicWorks.

– Michael McGivern contributed to this story.

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The Upkeep Of Public Trees Depends On You

“Natural beauty” is one of the reasons people enjoy living in Edina, according to the most recent Quality of Life survey.

In the immediate vicinity of streets, the community claims approximately 30,000 trees, adding to the natural beauty residents appreciate.

A City Forester and two Forestry Technicians work year-round to monitor and maintain the beauty of Edina’s trees on public property. Property owners play a vital role in maintaining the health of trees on private property by ensuring that overhanging branches and other overgrowth do not present any transit or safety concerns.

“Homeowners are responsible for maintaining all vegetation bordering their properties – trees, shrubs and other plants – to comply with City ordinances,” said City Forester Tom Horwath.

Growth into boulevards – the portion of the City’s right-of-way bordering the street itself where sidewalks, street signage and fire hydrants may be placed – can cause a number of obstructions.

By law, all streets must be clear of vegetation to a height of 16 feet above the curb or street edge, and sidewalks to a height of 8 feet, regardless of whether the plot is private or public. In addition, overhanging deadwood and rotting branches present a safety hazard and must be removed.

Edina residents have access to a number of valuable local resources. Horwath is available for on-site consultations “to determine what needs to be done – or even to offer any advice on how to maintain these boulevard areas ... for aesthetic purposes.”

If you do not want or are unable to trim the growth yourself, you can contact him for a referral to a trusted tree removal company that has successfully completed projects for the City in the past.

When the City discovers overgrowth in residential areas, the property owner is given three weeks’ notice to trim the trees back to an acceptable length. If after that period the trees have not been taken care of, the City will arrange for the work to be done at the expense of the property owner.

If, however, in the judgment of any City official, “an immediate public safety hazardous condition exists which must be corrected immediately, the City will do the removal at no expense to the property owner,” Horwath said. In these cases, all debris will be left on site and removal will be the responsibility of the property owner.

For more information, contact Horwath at 952-826-0308. His hours are 6 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

– Compiled by Katie Lofrano

Water Treatment Plant Gets National Recognition

By Frank Petrovic

Congratulations to “Treatment Plant 6.”

Granted, the water treatment facility located in the lower level of the municipal parking ramp adjacent to Jerry’s Foods in the Grandview District doesn’t have the greatest moniker ever. However, the facility itself is pretty great and has garnered national accolades.

Constructed in 2011 and 2012, the space had been previously used for storage by the Public Works and Police departments.

The site was chosen because there was no additional cost to procure property, and for its central location to northern water wells. The City of Edina operates four water treatment plants that filter a total of 10,400 gallons of water per minute. Treatment Plant 6 filters about 4,400 gallons per minute, and has pressure filters filled with sand, gravel and anthracite to remove iron and manganese. The plant also has air strippers that filter out volatile organic compounds (VOCs). The cost of the new water treatment plant was \$5.9 million.

“This project was very challenging,” said Dave Goergen, Public Works Coordinator. “Designing and constructing a building inside a building is a huge undertaking. It’s definitely an atypical project and the recognition for everyone’s time, expertise and effort is appreciated.”

Enclosed inside another structure, Treatment Plant 6 presented plenty of construction challenges. Massive pieces of equipment were brought into the building

without using cranes. This equipment, along with plenty of pipes, electronics and concrete had to be incorporated into the existing structure using extreme attention to detail with a very small margin for error. These issues, along with Plant 6’s VOC filtering capabilities, make it unique.

The treatment facility’s architect, AECOM, won the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) of Minnesota’s Grand Award in January for outstanding engineering projects. The facility was one of five projects from Minnesota entered for ACEC’s National Engineering Excellence award. While it didn’t win the top prize, the project received Honorable Recognition from ACEC at its awards ceremony on April 23 in Washington D.C.

AECOM and the City presented the project at an American Water Works Association conference this summer. The contractor of the facility, Municipal Builders, Inc. (MBI), was given an Excellence in Construction award in January from Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. (ABC) Minnesota/North Dakota Chapter. The project also received a national ABC Eagle Award for construction.

Gary Wells, Public Works Utility Supervisor, agrees that Treatment Plant 6’s accolades are well-deserved.

“What they did with the new equipment really was an engineering feat.”

Water Treatment Plant 6 is located at 5120 Brookside Ave. Edina operates three other plants at 5849 Ruth Drive, 4500 W. 76th St. and 6721 2nd St.

Minnesota Wastewater Operators Association Names Behlen ‘Operator of the Year’



Photo by Michael Braun

Award winner Nate Behlen is all smiles at work during a beautiful day in Edina.

By Frank Petrovic

Nate Behlen, a Public Service Worker for the City of Edina’s Utilities Division of Public Works for the past two years, was recently awarded “Operator of the Year” by the Minnesota Wastewater Operators Association (MWOA).

The MWOA recognized Behlen at its annual meeting in Grand Rapids. He is the 2013 Collection System Operator of the Year for Class SB, which is comprised of cities with a population of 15,000 to 50,000.

Dave Goergen, Edina’s Public Works Coordinator, said the award is an honor, explaining, “There are over 50 municipalities and agencies that fall into the Class SB, and thousands of operators, so to be singled out by his peers

is a great honor. We are very proud of Nate’s efforts and he is clearly deserving of this award.”

Behlen is the first Edina employee to win this award.

Behlen excels in his job duties, which include preventive maintenance tasks and troubleshooting and repairing water, sewer and storm water systems. However, it takes much more to win MWOA’s Operator of the Year. Winners meet criteria of excellence in job performance; accomplishments, awards, education and training undertaken to further their performance; professional, community and civic activities; and involvement in the advancement of the MWOA.

“Not only has Nate delivered excellent performance on his work assignments, but he has also shown that same dedication to high quality in his continuing education and professional licensure pursuits,” said Goergen.

Behlen was nominated for this award by co-worker Travis Iverson. He feels honored to have received this award but insists, “Everyone in our department is equally deserving of this award. I was fortunate to be nominated and feel lucky that I was chosen.”

For more information about the Public Works Department, visit www.EdinaMN.gov/PublicWorks or call 952-826-0376. For more information about MWOA, visit www.mwoa.net.

Clear Sidewalks Of All Snow And Ice



For Minnesotans, “being neighborly” goes well beyond the occasional block party and a willingness to lend a cup of sugar. In the wake of blizzards and other severe weather, Edina residents have important responsibilities to one another. In addition to clearing their own driveways and walkways, property owners must remove snow from the public sidewalks on their plots.

According to Edina City Code, “All snow and ice shall be removed from a sidewalk by the owner of the property adjoining the sidewalk within 48 hours of the cessation of the precipitation.” Clearing sidewalks of all accumulation within two days is imperative because not doing so can cause many safety hazards.

There are only a few commercial and heavily trafficked stretches of sidewalk where the City will remove snow. These include those along France and York avenues, Gleason Road and 70th Street.

The City will issue a written notice to property owners with sidewalks that are not shoveled. If snow and ice are not removed within seven days after a warning is issued, residents may be charged for the cost of removal by the City, which could exceed \$300.

You can clear the accumulation however you would like, but you must obey several rules when moving snow.

Snow may never be pushed out onto or across City streets, and should never be piled onto adjoining properties. Note how tall your snow piles are becoming during this process. If it looks like they might present a sight obstruction to passing vehicles, redistribute some of the bulk.

In addition, residents should clear snow from around fire hydrants located on private property. Fire hydrants must be visible and accessible to emergency workers at all times.

Maintaining sidewalks is not only a winter responsibility, though. After the ground thaws in the spring, some sidewalk panels may move or shift. Uneven pavement is a trip hazard that should be reported to the Public Works Department.

Residents can report trip hazards and other problems using the online service request form at www.EdinaMN.gov/PublicWorks.

– Compiled by Katie Lofrano



Fire Hydrants Need To Be Seen

Fire hydrants are sprinkled throughout the community, but are often overlooked. In the event of a fire, though, they are the center of attention.

Locating the nearest fire hydrant is one of the firefighters' first priorities.

The ability to tap into the municipal water supply via a hydrant can mean the difference between life and death for those trapped inside a burning building. Fire hydrants need to be visible at all times.

"They are not meant to be hidden. That's why they're painted red," said former Fire Chief Marty Scheerer.

According to Minnesota State Fire Code, there must be a three-foot cleared radius around all fire hydrants. This clear zone includes flower beds and other landscaping improvements.

When you add bushes or plant trees in your yard, make sure the plants are away from any fire hydrants, and account for future growth.

Fire hydrants are even easier to overlook during the winter months. Clear all snow away from the hydrant and be sure when moving it not to obstruct the view of the unit from the street. If you see that a neighbor is out of town, clear snow away from the hydrant on that property.

The City appreciates your helping hand. Approximately 2,000 fire hydrants are in Edina, and the City does not have the personnel to look after each one.

For more information regarding fire hydrants, contact the Edina Fire Department at 952-826-0330.

– Compiled by Katie Lofrano

Motorists Must Follow Winter Parking Rules

Avoid parking tickets and having to recover a towed vehicle by familiarizing yourself with the City of Edina's winter parking restrictions.

According to City regulations, no vehicle may be parked on a street, highway or alley under these conditions:

- From 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. Nov. 1 through March 31, regardless of wintery conditions.
- When 1.5 inches or more of snow has fallen. Once streets and roadways have been plowed to the curb line, residents can then park vehicles on designated roadways.
- For six hours after a snowfall has ended, unless City traffic signs specifically allow vehicles to park on roadways.

In order to clear Edina's streets, snowplows must have easy access. Cars parked in the street prevent them from doing a thorough job. These rules are strictly enforced.

The Edina Police Department records and tracks those vehicles that are not in compliance with parking regulations. When a vehicle is in violation, an officer will issue a warning by means of an explanation card to the owner of the vehicle. If the Police Department encounters the vehicle violating regulations a second time, the owner will be issued a citation.

During significant weather events, if a vehicle is obstructing the path of a plow, the Police Department will attempt to locate the owner. If an owner cannot be found, the City will have Kustom Karriers tow the vehicle to its Minnetonka location.

For more information, contact the EPD at 952-826-1610.

– Compiled by Katie Lofrano



City Will Reimburse Residents For Plow Damage To Lawns

A snow-covered Edina is a beautiful thing, but for snowplow drivers, it can be challenging to know exactly where streets end and lawns begin. Their second-to-second judgment calls become even more challenging during heavy snowfalls and winter storms.

While snowplow drivers do a commendable job on the whole, it is inevitable that there will be places each year where the plows do slight damage to the grass at the edge of plots. If this happens to your lawn, the City of Edina will cover the cost of new sod or grass seed and send out a Public Works crew to repair the turf the following spring.

After installation, it is the property owner's responsibility to tend to the new grass.

Streets Supervisor John Scheerer cautions that boulevards – the length of lawn immediately abutting the street pavement – are intended for utility uses and for snow deposits, not for gardening or other landscaping improvements. As a result, the City is not accountable for plow damage done to vegetation other than grass or to personal items other than mailboxes.

If a boulevard on your property is damaged by a snowplow, contact Public Works through the "Report a Problem" form at www.EdinaMN.gov/PublicWorks.

– Compiled by Frank Petrovic



Barnes Begins Work As Facility Manager

Tim Barnes, Facility Manager for Public Works, enjoys solving problems and supporting City operations each and every day.

Barnes is responsible for planning, organizing and managing the operations and staff of the Public Works Department's City Facilities Division, which includes three other employees. His team works closely with the Public Works Department's other divisions to coordinate projects at all City facilities and plan for future needs.

"The Facility Manager position was created because residents of the community have made a massive investment in the community – exceeding over \$150 million," said Edina City Manager Scott Neal. "Yet, we had no essential management of this function. I have experience with facilities management ... and [Tim] brings a drive for a better stewardship to give our residents better management."

Public Works Director Brian Olson agrees that Barnes was the best fit for the newly created position.

"Tim's background and experience in the facilities management field will be instrumental in providing positive leadership and direction for Edina's buildings. He will be proactive rather than reactive in his methodology as we move forward," he said.

Barnes has 20 years of experience in facility maintenance. He received his training through Lee University and the

By Katie Lofrano

Solving problems and supporting all types of City operations is what new Facility Manager Tim Barnes enjoys most in his job.

As Facility Manager,

University of Florida. He has been a State Certified Trade School Instructor for several years in various building-related trades. Managing facilities has been in the Barnes family for three generations, so Barnes says it's "in his genes."

Barnes relocated from New York five years ago after he fell in love with the Midwest. When he heard about the Facility Manager position with the City of Edina, he "knew this was a place that shared the same values and guiding principles as I did," said Barnes.

The City operates more than 88 buildings with a value of roughly \$151 million. Barnes appreciates that each City building is unique. Employees work at some, but not all, buildings. Some are climate controlled, others are open seasonally.

To keep things running smoothly, City Hall and other buildings need to be strategically managed and comprehensively monitored and looked after, said Barnes, explaining his position.

Systems Barnes oversees are HVAC, electrical, plumbing, building infrastructure, roofing and custodial work.

With a full workload and a lot of buildings, Barnes enjoys coming to work every day because he gets the chance to help people and solve problems. He said he likes all of the diversity that presents itself in Edina.

For more information, contact the Public Works Department, 952-826-0376 or www.EdinaMN.gov/PublicWorks.

– Michael McGivern contributed to this story.

Connect To Public Works



By Katie Lofrano

The Edina Public Works Department offers a number of ways for residents to stay connected and informed of its projects and activities.

Residents can request service through the City of Edina's website, find behind-the-scenes information about Public Works on its blog, keep up with updates via social media, receive notifications through City Extra and offer ideas for improvements on the "Speak Up, Edina!" website.

Report a Problem: The City of Edina's website includes an interactive form for residents to request a service or report a problem. This form makes it very easy for residents to tell the City about something that needs to be fixed, such as a pot hole or malfunctioning street light. Fill out the form at www.EdinaMN.gov/publicworks_reportproblem.

Public Works Blog: Public Works employees write a blog. Public Works Coordinator Dave Goergen is the primary blogger. Residents can follow the blog to get a glimpse of the behind-the-scenes operations of Public Works and comment on them. Visit the blog at www.EdinaMN.gov/wordpress/category/public-works/.

Social Media: Information regarding Public Works is included on the City of Edina's main Facebook page, as well as on the City of Edina's Twitter account. On the Facebook and Twitter pages, Public Works notices such as road closures are posted. Become a fan of the City at www.facebook.com/EdinaMN. Follow the City on Twitter at www.twitter.com/EdinaMN.

City Extra: City Extra is a free email subscription service. People can sign up for any of several dozen lists, including those for street closures and emergency water shut-offs and street reconstruction projects by neighborhood. Sign up for City Extra at www.EdinaMN.gov/CityExtra.

Speak Up, Edina!: "Speak Up, Edina!" is an engagement website where people can share their own ideas for improvements and where the City facilitates discussions. Speak Up, Edina! is the newest tool the City of Edina has to connect with its residents. It was launched in June 2012. Visit Speak Up, Edina! at www.speakupedina.org.

"Individuals have their own preferences for staying informed and connecting with the City. Most people choose to connect in a way that is the most convenient," said Communications & Technology Services Director Jennifer Bennerotte. "We want to give residents a lot of different options and opportunities for staying informed. There isn't one way that is better than another – they are all equally important."

Goergen said the website and blogs have traditionally been the most utilized electronic means of gathering information about Public Works.

"I personally like the blog, and am working on improving how often posts go up for people to see," he said.

Goergen thinks social media is a great and easy way for Public Works to get vital information out to the public, especially when the information is time sensitive.

Winter Teamwork Keeps Edina's Streets Clear And Safe

Clearing Edina's streets of snow during the winter months can be difficult.

Fortunately, the Public Works Department has developed detailed guidelines to handle snow and ice with an emphasis on public safety and minimal inconvenience to drivers.

For severe weather purposes, the City classifies each street based on primary function, traffic volume and community welfare concerns. High-volume routes that act as access roads for emergency vehicles are labeled "Red Routes." These receive first priority for both plowing and salting. Routes providing access to schools and commercial areas are second priority.

Only when these street tiers are clean will plows turn to low-volume residential roadways, alleys and City-owned parking lots. Except in select cases, the clearing of sidewalks is the responsibility of property owners.

Ordinarily, the plows clear the center of each roadway first so as to accommodate through-traffic while the rest of the buildup is cleared. When appropriate, Public Works will also deploy trucks to spread sand, salt and other chemicals to remove ice from the streets.

As a general rule, snowplows will not be dispatched for a snowfall of less than 1.5 inches. Streets Supervisor Shawn Anderson monitors snow accumulation,

snowdrift and ice conditions, and it falls on him to determine when plowing is necessary.

"Each storm is different," Anderson said. "Sometimes we have to wait it out and sometimes we have to fight it during the storm."

Be advised that severe cold, significant wind and limited visibility may inhibit City plows from reaching your street in a timely manner. In the event of extremely poor weather conditions, snowplows are put on temporary hiatus at the discretion of the Streets Division.

How To Help Plow Drivers Help You

Even when wind and dangerous temperatures are not a factor, plow drivers have a tough job dealing with winter storms. Public Works Director Brian Olson notes that there are several simple things you can do to minimize obstacles.

"Don't pass snowplows when they're plowing, and wait until after the plow goes by to park your vehicle in the street," he said. In addition, Olson strongly advises residents to keep sleds and toys away from the street when they are not being used, and not to shovel near the end of their driveways as the plow comes through.



Respecting snowplows is not merely a matter of courtesy, but also a safety concern, Olson noted, saying, “Frequent backing is necessary during plowing, and visibility to the rear is very limited.”

One particularly troubling practice is the building of snow forts and snow bank tunnels on or near street curbs.

“Snow forts can easily conceal children and are very difficult to see when driving large snowplows,” Olson said. Moreover, “Forts are usually only built when the snow is heavy and wet – not when it is light and fluffy – and the most dangerous in terms of a collapse.”

– *Compiled by Frank Petrovic*

Be Sure To Inform Your Snow-Clearing Contractors Of Edina’s Regulations

Many Edina residents hire private contractors to handle their snow removal needs. While it’s nice to have someone else take care of this for you, please remember that it is still your responsibility to make sure the people you hire follow Edina’s regulations.

Private plows must not deposit snow onto or across a roadway. Any snow that is removed from a sidewalk or driveway must remain on that property or be hauled away at the property owner’s expense.

The City of Edina’s Public Works Department will monitor private snow plowing contractors on a regular basis, though the property owner is ultimately responsible.

Property owners will receive a warning letter for violations on the first offense. If a second offense is reported, the City may issue the property owner a fine of up to \$700.

– *Compiled by Frank Petrovic*

Snow Forts Can Be Dangerous!

Snowmen, snowballs, snow angels – a simple snowfall can provide kids with hours of fun. Snow forts and tunnels are also popular with children come wintertime. Unfortunately, children can easily become trapped and severely injured in these structures.

It is important that children remain safe and do not make snow forts or tunnels or play on snow piles near roadways. Plow drivers cannot tell where tunnels or forts may be or if children are in them.

“Snowplow drivers are watching the road,” said John Scheerer, City of Edina Streets Supervisor. “Drivers can’t always see if kids are in forts.”

In addition, plowed snow can be very heavy. It can weigh enough to collapse a tunnel or fort and injure children inside them. Hidden forts are even more dangerous when plow drivers go “winging,” pushing the snow further off the street to make room for more plowed snow.

If children want to build a fort, Scheerer recommends they build it near the house – never near a roadway or driveway. Also, forts should be built without tops that could collapse. Supervision and common sense is key.

Forts and tunnels should be reported to City of Edina Public Works using the “Report a Problem” form at www.EdinaMN.gov/PublicWorks, or by calling 952-826-0376. Public Works personnel will work with the property owner to remove the fort or tunnel.

– *Compiled by Frank Petrovic*

