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Date: Feb. 4, 2020
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The following actions were taken at the Feb. 4, 2020, Washington County Board of Commissioners meeting at the Government Center in Stillwater, Minnesota

County Board approves liquor license applications for rest camp

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved an application for the renewal of liquor licenses for an on-sale license, a Sunday liquor license, and a consumption and display permit for the Disabled Veteran's Rest Camp Association in May Township Feb. 4.

Washington County processes all liquor licenses for townships within the county. The county reviews the necessary information for the licenses, and the Sheriff's Office, Attorney's Office, and the Department of Public Health and Environment complete compliance/verification checks.

All requirements for the application have been completed, and the appropriate fees were paid by the applicant. The license fee pays for the cost of the county for administration, compliance, and verification checks.

Contact: Steve Gransee, Taxpayer Services & Election Divisions Manager, 651-430-8272

County Board approves county facilities plan, workplace guidelines

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved a strategic facility plan and county workplace guidelines Feb. 4

The plan is written with the county's values and mission in mind, and considers the way in which Washington County facilities impact employees, visitors, constituents, and the way services are delivered currently, and in the future.

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The planning process is a significant undertaking that requires thoughtful evaluation of how services are delivered today and from what facilities, and how service delivery may change in the future. The plan provides the county with the opportunity to evaluate its facilities and to think about how it will provide services over the next decade.

The primary objective of the Strategic Facility Plan is to provide recommendations to ensure that the right facilities are in the right location to serve the county's residents.

Recommendations that would be most apparent to residents is to vacate the existing Woodbury Service Center on Radio Drive, and build a new west-central service center, build a new South Shop, which provides Public Works services to the southern part of the county, and plan for growth in both the Forest Lake and Cottage Grove service centers.

Key findings show that population and household growth is spread across the county, there are underserved communities in the county, and that there are constraints on buildings that the county already uses.

Contact: Greg Wood, Building Services Director, 651-430-6225

County Board names 2 members to canvassing board for primary election

Commissioner Stan Karwoski, District 2, and Commissioner Gary Kriesel, District 3, will serve on the canvassing board for the presidential primary election that will occur March 3.

The two commissioners were appointed by the County Board Feb. 4.

The membership of the county canvass board is established by state statute to consist of the county auditor, the court administrator of the district court, the mayor or chair of the town board of the county's most populous municipality, and two members of the county board selected by the board from its members who are not candidates at the election. Any member of the canvassing board may appoint a designee to appear at the meeting of the board, except that no designee may be a candidate for public office. Three members constitute a quorum.

The canvass board meeting will be at 12 noon Friday, March 6, in conference room LL12 of the Washington County Government Center, 14949 N. 62nd St. in Stillwater.

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

County Board agrees to allow Pollinator Friendly Alliance to work in county parks

Pollinator Friendly Alliance will work in Washington County parks to improve habitat for pollinators, after the County Board approved an agreement with the organization Feb. 4.

Pollinator Friendly Alliance is a volunteer organization based in Washington County whose mission is "to protect and restore pollinators to improve the environment and sustain our food supply."

Since 2016, the county has had a goal of planting 150 acres of diverse prairie and oak savanna by 2020, apply for grants to improve pollinator habitat in parks, and evaluate and implement pollinator-friendly best management practices on county-owned property.

As part of this work, the county established a Pollinator Consortium and began working collaboratively with the Pollinator Friendly Alliance. Efforts with the organization to date have included establishing a 13-acre protected butterfly prairie at Pine Point Regional Park, conducting a three-year citizen science monitoring project, serving on the Pine Point Park Master Plan Community Advisory Committee, and conducting a citizen science project at St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park for beneficial insect and native bee research with the University of Minnesota.

In addition, the alliance has applied for grants to improve pollinator habitat with funding provided by local and national philanthropic companies that support conservation and community improvements. The alliance purchases the native seed and flowers and implements the projects within the park. Washington County also received an award from the organization in 2016 for the resolution in support of pollinators, and has featured Washington County's efforts at the Pollinators Best Practices Summit annually for the past three years.

Future work from the organization will include continuing citizen science monitoring, and enhancing prairie and oak savanna in Lake Elmo Park Reserve for the Rusty Patched Bumblebee and establishing *Liatris nectary* sites for the at-risk Monarch butterfly within the park.

The agreement provides a nonexclusive license to the Pollinator Friendly Alliance to provide land stewardship activities in Pine Point Regional Park, Lake Elmo Park Reserve, St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park, Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park, Big Marine Park Reserve, and Square Lake Park. The agreement runs through Jan. 31, 2025.

Contact: Dan MacSwain, Natural Resources Coordinator, 651-430-4323

County Board expresses appreciation for Dacy's work

The Washington County Board of Commissioners expressed its appreciation Feb. 4 for Barbara Dacy, the executive director of the Washington County Community Development Agency (CDA).

Dacy will be leaving the CDA Feb. 10. She has lead the agency for 19 years, and has had a positive impact on the agency and the county.

In its resolution of appreciation, the board noted the agency's role in ensuring that the people of Washington County have a good, safe, and decent place to call home, and that the CDA provides assistance to cities and townships through its community development and economic development programs. It noted that Dacy has developed strong working relationships with the local communities within Washington County, and has overseen a tremendous improvement in the agency's financial position. During Dacy's tenure, the agency lead the redevelopment of Red Oak Preserve and investment in the community of Landfall, and the creation of public housing at TrailSide, Picadilly Square, and the Glen at Valley Creek.

Under Dacy's leadership, the agency responded to the foreclosure crisis by creating counseling and education programs, establishing the GROW Fund, and worked with Habitat for Humanity and Two Rivers Land Trust on collaborative housing projects. Also, the County Board and the CDA under Dacy worked with the agency to establish an economic development program that is assisting local cities and townships grow jobs and businesses within the county.

The County Board wished Dacy the best of luck in her new position.

Contact: Kevin Corbid, Administrator, 651-430-6002



Washington County commissioners honored Barbara Dacy, Community Development Agency executive director, Feb. 4 for her 19 years of service to the agency as she prepares for her next position. Commissioner Lisa Weik, District 5, Commissioner Fran Miron, District 1, are with Dacy, with Commissioner Gary Kriesel, District 3, and Commissioner Stan Karwoski, District 2.

County Board declares Feb. 4 as Joel Loer Day in Washington County

The Washington County Board of Commissioners declared Feb. 4 to be Joel Loer Day in Washington County.

The day recognizes the 30 years that Loer has worked in Washington County, providing support work in the Community Services Department. He is an employee of Rise, and works five days a week at the county Government Center, where he has developed strong work relationships with county employees in a number of county departments.

The County Board approved a proclamation that noted Loer's sense of humor, his positive attitude, productivity, and focus; and stated that he continues to provide exceptional service and contributes to the efficient and effective delivery of many essential safety net services provided by the county. With the proclamation, the board recognized and commended Loer for his 30 years of dedicated service.

Contact: Kevin Corbid, Administrator, 651-430-6002

County Board will conduct public hearings Feb. 11, March 17 to consider increase in transportation sales tax

The Washington County Board of Commissioners will conduct a public hearing Feb. 11 to consider an update to the county's current transportation sales, use, and excise tax to fund the development and construction of county road and bridge projects, and increase the sales and use tax to 0.5%.

A second public hearing will be conducted March 17. The first public hearing will be during the board's regular meeting at 9 a.m. in the Board Room of the county Government Center in Stillwater, 14949 62nd St. N. The second public hearing will be after 6 p.m. March 17 in the same location.

Generally referred to as the Local Option Sales Tax, state law allows counties to impose a sales and use tax up to 0.5% and a vehicle excise tax up to \$20 per vehicle. Starting or increasing the tax requires a public hearing, and the County Board must enact a county board resolution. Of Minnesota's 87 counties, 49 have implemented the tax. Currently, Washington County imposes the tax at a rate of 0.25% for the sales and use tax and a \$20 vehicle excise tax.

The county is restricted in its use of the revenue from the tax. Proceeds must be used for specific projects or improvements, which must be spelled out during a public hearing and the county board's resolution. The tax may be used for:

- payment of the capital cost of a specific transportation project or improvement;
- payment of the costs, which may include both capital and operating costs, of a specific transit project or improvement;
- payment of the capital costs of a safe routes to school program; and
- payment of transit operating costs.

Washington County has had the 0.25% sales and use tax and the \$20 per vehicle excise tax since 2008, when it collected the tax under the auspices of the County Transit Improvement Board. Later, when that organization was disbanded in 2017, the county continued to collect the taxes on its own. Since then, it applied the proceeds to the development of the Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit project and operating costs for Forest Lake and Newport transit stations.

The hearings will include a list of projects for which the increased revenue would be used.

The additional tax revenue would be used for transportation projects in the county, and would reduce the reliance on county general property taxes to pay for the principal and interest costs on debt that otherwise would be necessary to fund certain projects.

If the County Board agrees to adopt the additional tax following the public hearing, it would be implemented July 1. The Minnesota Department of Revenue will collect the revenue and remit it to the county quarterly.

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