Stillwater Township News

March 2010

Township annual meeting scheduled for March 9

Once a year, Stillwater Township's supervisors step aside and let the citizens run the show. It's the annual town meeting, at which residents will have the chance to discuss the level of taxation the board has set for the coming year and raise any issues that are important to them.

The annual meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 9, in the town hall.

According to protocol for township meetings, elected township officials do not conduct them. At the beginning of the meeting, the township clerk welcomes the residents and instructs them to choose a person from the crowd to moderate the meeting. During the evening, residents will hear reports from the police chief and various township committees. Residents will have a chance to raise new issues that may be referred to the town board for action.

This year, residents will be welcomed by new clerk, Kathy Schmoeckel, who was appointed to serve out the remaining term of longtime clerk Pat Bantli, who recently retired (story, page 3).

One of the main duties of residents who attend the meeting is to vote on a proposed tax levy for 2011. As shown in the chart below, the proposed levy of $748,650 is down 2.6 percent from the previous year's levy of $769,000.

The reduction was achieved by cost-cutting and prepaying some road maintenance to take advantage of economies of scale.

2011

General fund	Road and bridge	Capital road and bridge	Proposed levy
$345,000	$218,650	$185,000	$748,650

2010

General fund	Road and bridge	Capital road and bridge	Levy
$366,000	$223,000	$180,000	$769,000

Do you recognize this place?

Enter our photo contest by visiting ***www.stillwatertownship.com*** and completing the Photo ID form online. A winner will be drawn at random from all the correct answers received by March 7.

The lucky winner will receive a $25 voucher to be redeemed with vendors at this summer's township Farmers' Market. You may also mail your answer and contact information to Stillwater Township Photo ID Contest, 13636 90th Street N., Stillwater, MN, 55082.

The winner of the last mystery photo contest was Lori Swanson, who identified the picture in the last newsletter as the Rutherford Cemetery on Manning Avenue.

Beverly Petrie

In the know

Township has new clerk, treasurer

With the recent resignations of the township's clerk and treasurer, the town board has appointed new people to the positions.

Kathy Schmoeckel will serve out the remainder of the clerk position recently vacated by Pat Bantli. Schmoeckel was most recently the clerk for the planning commission, the parks committee and the communications committee. She has served as the planning commission clerk since 1989, when township clerk Pat Bantli recruited her while the two were serving as election judges.

Schmoeckel has been a resident of the township since 1977. She and her husband, Jon, have two grown children.

The clerk position is an elected position. Schmoeckel will serve until the next election for clerk, in November.

Marsha Olson is the township's new treasurer, replacing Carol Collins, who recently resigned.

Olson is a Stillwater resident who studied accounting in college and worked in accounting for two firms before suspending her career to stay home with her three children.

The treasurer's position is appointed.

Cougar sighted in township

On Jan. 10, a resident on Minar Avenue North reported seeing cougar tracks in the backyard and under the deck of the house. An officer from the DNR checked the tracks and determined that the animal likely was a cougar.

The DNR has received reports of cougars from across Minnesota. But only a few reports have proven to be true. Cougars can live wherever their main prey, deer, are present. The cougar is a protected species in Minnesota, meaning that it cannot be hunted or trapped.

The cougar is extremely rare and secretive, and few Minnesotans have ever seen one. There are no reports of cougars attacking humans in Minnesota. Biologists believe that the cougars in Minnesota are wandering through from the mountainous western states.

Residents should be aware of their surroundings while outside and report any sighting to Police Chief Steve Nelson at (651) 439-0796.

Driveway shoveling causes problems

Police Chief Steve Nelson is asking residents not to shovel snow from their driveways into the roads.

It is illegal to do this because of the danger of the packed snow causing problems with passing vehicles and snow plow trucks. Residents should also make sure their mailboxes are shoveled out so when the plows go by they are not as likely to be damaged by the moving snow.

Any interest in a community garage sale?

Some township residents are trying to gauge interest in a community garage sale.

There are many ways to organize one, including having "booths" in the parking lot at the town hall or printing maps for a specific weekend of individual sales throughout the township.

If you are interested, go to the township website to express your interest or call Kathy Schmoeckel at (651) 439-6451.

Dog licenses must be renewed this year

The current period for dog licensing will end on June 30. All dogs that will be in the township for more than 30 days a year need to be licensed.

Residents who have current licenses will get renewal forms in the mail in May. Licenses are free for dogs that are neutered and have an implanted ID chip. Licenses for neutered dogs cost $10. The fee for dogs that are not neutered is $26.

Township seeking vendors for Farmers' Market

In just a few months, the township's Farmers' Market will resume, and the hunt is on for vendors.

Organizer Rick Jacobson has heard from some of last year's vendors who would like to return, but he still needs a few more local growers. The weekly Farmers' Market will be held on Wednesdays from 4 p.m. to sunset, from spring until fall.

Local growers who are interested in participating should contact Rick Jacobson by email at jacobsonrl@msn.com.

Planning commission clerk needed

The township is looking for a deputy clerk for the planning commission, park and communications committees. The primary duties would be to prepare agendas for the three committees, attend the meetings and take minutes. If interested, contact Kathy Schmoeckel at (651) 439-6451.

Township clerk Pat Bantli retires after 37 years of service

In 1974, Richard Nixon resigned the presidency, Patty Hearst was kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army, the movie *Chinatown* was released, and *People* magazine debuted. In Stillwater Township a young woman named Pat Bantli, who had just moved to the township the previous year and taken on the job of clerk for the planning commission, agreed to become town clerk to fill the remainder of the term of the resigning clerk.

There was no way to know that it would begin the term of one of the longest-serving and most dedicated public servants in township history. And the story comes full circle with Pat's recent resignation to be able to do more traveling with her husband, Heinrich. Fittingly, planning commission clerk Kathy Schmoeckel has been appointed to serve out the remainder of Pat's term.

Pat's 36 years as clerk have provided her with a close-up view to the growth and changes within the township. In 1973, when she arrived, "it was all just country," she says. Norell Avenue was a dirt road, curvy and picturesque, and the homes were fewer and more modest in size.

Beverly Petrie

Heinrich and Pat Bantli

At the time, she and Heinrich intended to stay no more than six years, time for him to do a research project at the University of Minnesota. But then he accepted a job at 3M, and Pat had already settled into her job as clerk. An elementary school teacher in the past, "in a really rough area of Berkeley," she says her new tasks required her to keep the township organized, run elections and be the primary contact for residents needing information or help from township government.

David Johnson, a township supervisor for 23 years, says, "I affectionately refer to her as the mayor. With the way we operate, the clerk's role is really the city manager. The board meets one or two times a month, but in between, she's the one who is the glue to the whole operation. And she did an outstanding job, because that's where her heart was. The town is her family." Johnson also admires her diligence during all those years." She was not afraid to take anything on. It wasn't like she got into the job and got comfortable. She had a willingness to have her sleeves rolled up all the time."

Now, however, Pat is looking forward to more travel with her retired husband, along with tending the three housecats, two aging horses in the barn and some 40 wild turkeys that cluster in her back yard. "Yes, I feed them," she admits. "I really like to see them out there."

And in the few weeks since her retirement, she has put together a three-ring binder of articles and documents she has collected in her years as clerk. It serves as a loose-leaf history of the years she helped guide the township.

It contains a section on the decision 10 years ago to renovate and expand the town hall, rather than replace it with a new building. Orginally, the board had decided to build new, thinking it would be more cost-effective than trying to renovate the old, decaying building. But then a group of residents, including Pat, began to advocate for the Town Hall, as an important symbol of the township's history and heritage. Today, it is a emblem of grassroots democracy, and Pat is proud that its photo appears frequently in newspapers across the country on election day.

There will be a reception at the Town Hall to thank Pat and celebrate her years of service to the township on Feb. 28 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Join us to honor Pat Bantli on her retirement

Sunday, Feb. 28, 2 to 4 p.m., at the Town Hall

Short program at 3 p.m.

Cake and coffee will be served

Stillwater Township
13636 90th St. N.
Stillwater, MN 55082
www.stillwatertownship.com

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Meetings

Township meetings are free and open to the public. Check the bulletin board at the town hall or the website for current agenda and meeting information**.**

Township Board of Supervisors meets on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month at 7 p.m., except for November and December, when meetings are held on the second Thursday.

Planning Commission meets as necessary on the first Thursday of each month at 7 p.m.

Parks Committee meets as necessary on the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m.

If you need.....

Burning permits
Steve Nelson
(651) 439-0796

Building inspections
Jack Kramer
(651) 351-5051

Park reservations
Rick Jacobson
(651) 351-0299

Animal Control
Steve Nelson
(651) 439-0796

Contact us

Township Board of Supervisors
Linda Countryman (651) 351-0714
Matt Beane (612) 590-6949
Jim Hiniker (651) 351-1867
David Johnson (651) 439-5448
Sheila-Marie Untiedt (651) 439-6476

Township Clerk
Kathy Schmoeckel (651) 439-6451

Clerk for Parks and Planning Commmission
Kathy Schmoeckel (651) 439-6451

Township Treasurer
Marsha Olson (651) 275-9178

Police Chief
Steve Nelson (651) 439-0796

Website Publisher
Bob Ranalla (612) 819-8497

Newsletter Editor
Beverly Petrie (651) 430-9294

Find this information plus email addresses at www.stillwatertownship.com