Stillwater Township News

May 2008

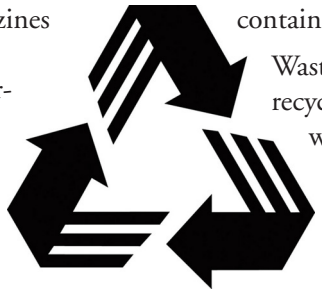
Rethinking Recycling

Just a decade ago, recycling was still a bit of a novelty. It wasn't always easy to find places that would take recyclables, and the hassle of sorting them into four or five containers discouraged some people from doing it at all.

Today, recycling is on the rise, and it has gotten simpler and easier to do. In the Twin Cities, about 1.2 million tons of waste are recycled each year, about 38 percent of total garbage. Mike Maroney, head of Stillwater-based Maroney's Sanitation Inc., says he has noticed a significant rise in the number of township residents who recycle. He says most residents use the program at least once a month, although the participation rate on any given week might be only 50 or 60 percent.

Residents are undoubtedly reacting to ongoing campaigns such as "Rethink Recycling" that make the point that recycling reduces energy use and is good for the environment and the economy.

Even so, there's room for improvement. Recycling experts say that about one-third of the trash we throw out could be recycled. Part of the reason could be that residents aren't keeping up with the growing number of items that can be recycled. For instance, magazines and catalogs can be recycled, along with stapled and paper-clipped papers, envelopes with plastic windows and even boxes that hold toothpaste, medicine or other personal care items.



For more information on the expanded list of items that can be recycled, visit the "Rethink Recycling" website at http://www.greenguardian.com/residents/rethink-recycling.

Township residents can choose between Maroney's and Waste Management in designating a company to haul away their garbage and recyclables. Maroney's takes its recyclables to Eureka Recycling in St. Paul, which requires residents to sort their recyclables into two containers: paper products in one and everything else in another. Maroney says this system produces a very high recovery rate, since the paper is not contaminated by liquid materials contained in cans or jars.

Waste Management accepts its recyclables in a "single stream," which means that residents may toss all recyclables together. Mike Lunow, plant manager at Waste Management's Twin Cities Material Recovery Facility, says the plant uses a combination of human sorters and sophisticated machinery to separate the materials. He says the recovery rate at the plant, which opened in 2002, is about 95 percent. The plant recycles about 200,000 tons of recyclables a year.

To learn more about recycling, visit the website www.recyclemoreminnesota.org.

Heavy Metal Day

Otto Berg Park
next to the Town Hall

Saturday, June 7

8 a.m. to Noon
rain or shine

Maroney's Sanitation Inc. will collect discarded refrigerators and other large items in a special collection for Stillwater Township residents. Electronic items, such as computers and printers, will be collected also, for a fee. But Washington County now collects electronic items for free. Visit its website at www.co.washington.mn.us for more information. For questions, or to get prices for items not on this list, call Maroney's at 439-7279.

Household appliances

$40 - refrigerators, air conditioners, dehumidifiers, freezers.

$35 - stoves, dishwashers, washing machines, dryers, water heaters

Other metals

Priced by volume, with $5 minimum - bicycles, car parts, swing sets, lawn mowers, etc.

(All nonmetal parts and fluids must be removed prior to recycling. Bicycles must have seats and tires removed.)

Tires

$8 - auto and truck tires, with rim

$5 - auto and truck tires, without rim

$25 - tractor tires

In the know

Come to the township picnic

Everyone is invited to an All-Township picnic to be held on Aug. 24 from noon to 4 p.m. at Otto Berg Park. Free food and fun activities will be provided. Mark your calendar, and look for more details on the township website.

Dog licenses are due; some are free

Dog license information sheets will be mailed out soon to township residents. Licensing starts on July 1,and is good through June 30, 2010. All dogs residing in the township for more than 30 days each year need to be licensed. Contact Kathy Nelson at 439-0796 for more information.

Dog licenses are free for any township dog that is neutered or spayed and has an implanted identification chip.

Comprehensive plan almost ready for public hearing

The township has finished revising the Comprehensive Plan, a blueprint to guide growth and development in the township for the next decade.

Planner Sherri Buss says the plan has been given to neighboring governments for comment, and a public hearing will be scheduled for late summer or fall. Information about the meeting will be on the township website (www.stillwatertownship.com). A copy of the proposed plan will be on the website by mid-June.

Buss says the new plan does not propose many changes to land use. But it does require developors to come with a plan for managing surface runoff water in new developments. There is also a long-range plan for park facilities and natural resource protection. And the plan encourages local and sustainable agriculture.

Once the plan has gone through the public comment stage, it will be submitted to the Metropolitan Council for review. The process will be completed by Dec. 31.

Parks Committee members needed

The Parks Committee needs two new members. The seven-member board meets once a month on the second Monday, as needed, and develops recommendations for the township board on issues related to parks and trails.

If you are interested in being on the committee, contact Kathy Schmoeckel at 439-6451.

Summer burning permits

Summer regulations governing the burning of brush piles will go into effect as soon as the DNR lifts its spring "green-up" ban. Once fires are allowed, probably in late May, the hours for burning will be 6 p.m. to 8 a.m.

Contact Steve Nelson at 439-0796 to get a burning permit. There is a fee of $15 for the permit, and a 24-hour advance notice is requested. No fee is charged for burning piles of buckthorn.

Finally, recreation fires don't need a permit and are allowed anytime. Recreational fires must be kept smaller than a 3-foot cube. Please notify the township Police Department at 439-0796 if you plan on having a recreation fire.

Restrictions on four-wheelers

Four-wheelers, dirt bikes, and other off-road vehicles are not allowed on township, county and state road right-of-ways between April 1and August 1 of each year. They are never allowed on roads or the shoulder of roads. The only exception is a vehicle that is being used for a farming operation.

These vehicles can only be operated on properties of at least five acres in size. Township officials ask that you be respectful of your neighbors and limit the times that you ride.

Watch for wild animals

Township Police Chief Steve Nelson is cautioning residents to be particularly watchful this spring because he has noticed an increase in the number of sightings of bears. The animals have also been more bold than usual.

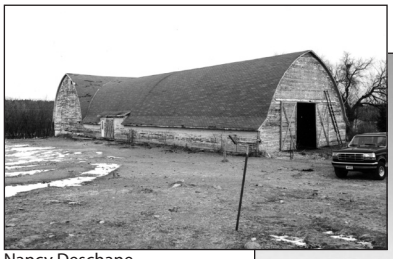
One township resident had placed a birdfeeder in an enclosed porch, and a bear tore a door off to get to it. Other residents have had beehives and birdfeeders in their yards knocked over, Nelson said.

Bears commonly awake very hungry from hibernation in the spring. Consequently, it's a good idea not to leave food in an area where a determined bear can get to it. In particular, keep food out of screened porches and patios. Use caution and keep an eye on children and pets.

Barn, Refreshed

If you have ever driven on Stonebridge Trail between County Road 11 and Highway 95, you have noticed it. It's the beautiful barrel-roofed white barn with brick-red trim that hugs a slope just off the road. And it probably gives you a lift, because if you've lived in the township for any length of time, you know it didn't always look like that.

When Nancy Deschane and her husband, Dean Sather, bought the property in 2003, the barn was run down and the adjacent house was too small and dilapidated for their needs. They tore down the house, built a new one at the crest of the hill and turned their attention to the barn.



Nancy Deschane

They had been attracted to the property largely because of the lure of the barn. "This was the only treasured structure on the property," Deschane says. Built probably around the turn of the century, the original structure had a lower level that likely housed livestock and kept the animals cool because it was bermed into the hill. On the main floor above was a hay mow.

In the 1980s, a previous owner added on a 5,000-square-foot horse barn, with room for 16 stalls, and a three-bedroom bunkhouse. When Deschane and Sather began the work of restoration, the first thing they did was replace the barn roof and shore up the foundation in certain spots.

Rather than replace all the siding boards, they chose to replace only those that were rotted, a delicate operation taken on by Sather's carpenter father. Within a year, the project was completed. And although some of the boards still look a little weathered, "the barn is water-tight," Deschane says. "The fact that it's not perfect close up is part of its charm."

Now the self-described "city girl" tends three horses in the barn and is renovating the interior of the bunkhouse.

Although they did not apply for outside funds to accomplish their project, there may be an opportunity for other barn owners to secure funds for barn restorations. Friends of Minnesota Barns advocates for barn restoration, offers educational workshops and helps barn owners find resources for barn preservation projects. Contact the organization by calling (612) 338-2276 or visit the website at www.friendsofminnesotabarns.org. Another resource is Barn Again!, an organization that also provides guidance to barn owners doing renovation projects. Call (303) 623-1504.

Beverly Petrie

Dick Thompson retires as planner, is succeeded by Sherri Buss

Dick Thompson, the township's planner for the past five years, is retiring and will be replaced by a colleague at the planning firm TKDA, Sherri Buss.

Thompson has been a planner for his entire working career, going into the field because he thought it would allow him to "change the world." Now, he says, "I realize you can make a difference, but you can't always accomplish what you think you're going to accomplish in your 20s."

Before joining TKDA about six years ago, Thompson spent about 12 years working for the Metropolitan Council.

His experiences with townships have left him with a few keen impressions. For one thing, he is impressed with the high sensitivity that townships have toward protecting the community's character. "They want to protect the rural character, the open space and the things that people enjoy about living in a rural area."

He is also impressed by how accessible township government is, and how sophisticated its government can be.

Thompson will be succeeded by Buss, who joined TKDA recently after being with the Metropolitan Council for about 10 years. Before that, she served as a planner for a watershed district. Buss, who has about 25 years of planning experience, also is a planner for Scandia and the city of Grant.

Stillwater Township
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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 it meets only 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
(612) 351-0299

Animal Control
Steve Nelson
(651) 439-0796

Contact us

Township Board of Supervisors
Linda Countryman (651) 351-0714
Jim Doriott (651) 439-8499
Jim Hiniker (651) 351-1867
David Johnson (651) 439-5448
Sheila-Marie Untiedt (651) 439-6476

Township Clerk
Pat Bantli (651) 439-9051

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

Township Treasurer
Carol Collins (651) 340-7600

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