

The Arlington Report

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Jim Kreft -- Mayor
 John Griep -- Council Member
 Jim Pederson -- Council Member
 Bob Pichelmann -- Council Member
 Curt Reetz -- Council Member
 Mike Vrklan -- Council Member

APPOINTED OFFICIALS

Matt Jaunich -- City Administrator
 Dennis Schultz -- EDA Director
 Lisa Tesch -- Deputy Clerk
 Vicki Pomplun -- Admin. Ass't
 Lana Woehler -- Community Center Coordinator
 Dan Thomes -- Streets/Parks Supt.
 Jeff Paine -- Maintenance Worker
 Bruce Rovinsky -- Chief of Police
 Scott Bennett -- Police Officer

CONTRACTED SERVICES

Ross Arneson -- City Attorney
 Cynthia Smith-Strack -- Planning & Zoning Consultant
 Darin Haslip -- Building Inspector
 People Service -- Water/Wastewater
 Joel Hawbaker (Bolton & Menk) -- City Engineer

PHONE NUMBERS

City Hall: 964-2378
 Fax Line: 964-5973
 After-Hours On-Call:
 507-327-6601
 Fire Garage: 964-2279
 Police Dept: 964-5200
 Library: 964-2490
 Hospital: 964-2271
 S.E. School: 964-2292
 Post Office: 964-5503

OTHER SERVICES

Water/Sewer/Electric Services
 City of Arlington (964-2378)
Gas Service
 CenterPoint Energy (800-245-2377)
Cable Service
 Mediacom (800-332-0245)
Internet/Phone Service
 Frontier (800-435-1504)
Garbage Services
 Waste Management (800-422-5785)
 Tidy Disposal (952-873-2636)
 Evergreen Sanitation (877-601-4467)

ARLINGTON NAMED "TREE CITY USA"

The City recently received notice that it had been named a Tree City USA community by the Arbor Day Foundation to honor its commitment to community forestry. This is the first year that Arlington has received this national recognition. The Tree City USA program is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters and the USDA Forest Service. Arlington has met the four standards to become a Tree City USA community: having a tree board or department, a tree care ordinance, a comprehensive community forestry program, and an Arbor Day observance and proclamation. Communities that receive a Tree City USA recognition not only have taken the time to meet these four standards, they recognize that: 1) Trees promote healthier communities. Leaves filter the air we breathe by removing dust and other particles. 2) Trees moderate climate, conserve water and provide habitat for wildlife. 3) Trees in urban areas reduce the "heat island effect" caused by pavement and buildings. 4) Properly placed trees can increase property values, and buildings in wooded areas rent more quickly and tenants stay longer. More information about Tree City USA can be found at www.arborday.org/TreeCityUSA.

TOWN HALL MEETING

State Senator Kevin Dahle will be hosing a Town Hall Meeting on Saturday, May 2, 2009 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers of the Arlington Community Center (204 Shamrock Drive). Anyone interested in sharing his or her opinion about state government, discussing the 2009 budget deficit or learning more about the legislative process is invited to attend this community discussion. For more information on this meeting, please contact Senator Dahle's office at 651-296-1279.

REMINDER WHEN MOWING GRASS

Residents should remember that the discharging of lawn clippings/debris onto city streets is not allowed. Clippings/debris that are discharged onto city streets eventually wash into the storm sewers and cause them to clog. Along with being an inconvenience to residents, clogged sewers are costly and time consuming for the City to clean and unclog. The City is asking all residents to take their grass clippings/debris to the compost site. The compost site is open 7 days a week during daylight hours to better accommodate Arlington residents.

REMINDER ON RECREATIONAL FIRES

City residents should remember that recreational (outdoor) fires are permitted within city limits as long as they are contained in an outdoor fireplace, barbecue equipment, or a concrete-lined fire pit, sufficient to provide physical limitation to the spread of the fire. *Recreational purposes* shall include only the cooking of food or the providing of heat and light for outdoor social gatherings. Only propane, charcoal bricks or wood products may be used to fuel outdoor fires (absolutely no garbage!). Outdoor fires must be supervised at all times by at least one adult person or extinguished if unsupervised. Outdoor fires shall be created or maintained at a distance of at least 15 feet from all structures and property lines.

REMINDER ON SUMMER WATER USE

With the summer months upon us and potential dryer weather, watering of lawns and gardens become more of a priority for residents. Residents should remember that your sewer charge is based on your water usage. To avoid having to pay high sewer costs for summer water usage, residents should inquire with City Staff on purchasing a lawn meter. Residents save money with a lawn meter, because water that runs through the lawn meter is not charged with the sewer costs.

CEMETERY NOTICE

The City of Arlington would like to remind everyone that decorations in the Public Cemetery must be affixed to the headstone or part of the wash area so as not to interfere with the path of the mowers. Special decorations are allowed one week prior to Memorial Day, but must be removed from the grass area within two weeks following the holiday. Please be aware that non-conforming decorations will be removed by City Staff.

CITY PUTTING IN NEW STREET LIGHTS

In an effort to reduce overall energy costs, the City recently began the process of replacing all of its street lights. The existing orange High Pressure Sodium lights are being replaced with white Induction Lighting. The light fixtures are being replaced one for one. The energy savings from this change out will be roughly 50% and the lighting should last three times as long in overall life. The result of the project will be a new kind of street lighting which delivers a whiter, brighter light in which colors and people will seem more natural and save the city 50% in energy costs. Since Induction Lighting offers an incredible 100,000 hours of life, street light maintenance costs for the City are expected to decrease by 65%.

City Offices will be closed on Monday, May 25th for the Memorial Day Holiday.

City of Arlington, Sibley County

Contact us at:
204 Shamrock Drive
Arlington, MN 55307

Phone: 507-964-2378
Fax: 507-964-5973
E-mail: cityhall@arlingtonmn.com



A Beautiful City Growing in Unity



THE MAYOR'S CORNER

Just over two years ago, while our Planning and Zoning Commission was evaluating a preliminary plat for a potential residential development in the southwest corner of Arlington, we were made aware that we did not have a precise location of our southern city limits in that area. When the southern boundary was originally surveyed prior to 1948, it was set according to the location of High Island Creek, which, as easily imagined, is not in the same location today. Incredibly, the border could vary by as much as 60 feet!

During 2008, the Sibley County Assessor made us aware that there were a number of discrepancies and questions with property taxing authority along our southern border. If the boundary between the city and township is unknown and indeterminable, the city/township proportion of taxing authority cannot be calculated. The Assessor rightly further encouraged us to determine our city limits, and thus taxing authority.

Late last year the City Council assigned city staff, including our Administrator, Planning and Zoning consultant, City Attorney, and City Engineer, to research and propose optional solutions, including, but not limited to requesting some property owners to petition for annexation to create a new southern boundary.

Early this year, it was determined that there was one viable option: to work within the parameters of our Orderly Annexation Agreement (OAA) to incorporate into city limits the parcels south of the area of question, thus creating a new, well-defined southern border. Our OAA, signed by city and township officials in 1998, outlines means by which a parcel can be incorporated into the City of Arlington. If a property owner wishes a parcel to be included in city limits, a petition can be filed with the City Council. If criteria listed in the OAA are met, the City Council, by resolution, can annex the property, and by its own discretion, annex another, non-petitioning property.

For the case of trying to clean up our southern border, there are two potential petitioners for annexation: High Island Creek Developers and the Arlington EDA. These two properties lie on the western end of the boundary in question. Looking east, property owned by Jeff Hennen, a local developer, and property owned by Seneca Foods also lie along the uncertain boundary. Neither of these property owners has petitioned, and both have made it clear that they wish not to be part of the City of Arlington.

Our city has a history of restraint when annexation has been available—never making “land grabs” for the sole purpose of increasing influence and tax base. Our current council has taken the philosophy of annexing, when available, only when the City of Arlington has some immediate amenities to offer to property owner to improve their properties.

I strongly believe that the City has services to offer to both properties likely to be included as non-petitioners. The Jeff Hennen property, ironically the same property that kick started our search for our southern boundary, can exclusively be developed in the City of Arlington. Without annexation the property would remain farm field and be useless to a developer.

The local vegetable canning plant has been part of our community for over 100 years, and the city and the plant have evolved together symbiotically. Seneca has been a good corporate partner and are one of the biggest employers in Arlington. The plant is part of the fabric of our community, and a reminder of our ties to our agricultural surroundings. Looking back in time, the plant has had wonderful, local leadership. Bruce Pinske, the current Arlington plant manager, has retained Wayne Feil's and Dick Cox's optimism and vision, while continuing to be a vocal proponent of the local plant and our community.

However, Seneca Foods and the City of Arlington have recently reached an understanding that we are going to disagree as to how much of Seneca's outlying property should be annexed. Seneca developed a proposal, under which the property north of the service road would be in city limits, while the other acreage would remain in the township. Although Seneca officials did thorough research and were able to narrow the possible southern boundary to within a few feet, it did not, in the end, meet the approval of our City Council.

Again, before deciding to include all of Seneca's property in the southwest annexation, the City considered what we can offer Seneca. The portion of their property currently outside city limits is used as part of their vegetable processing, and their entire facility is serviced by city water, sewer, and electricity; it was found logical by the city to include all of their operation under one governmental authority. Upon annexation, we will be working closely with Seneca's local and corporate officials to update language in our zoning ordinance and, potentially, create a conditional use permit that will further bind the City of Arlington and Seneca Foods as allies, and enhance our symbiotic relationship. Full incorporation into Arlington will allow complete availability of tax incentives for any possible future expansion of their operations, and our EDA has recently approved an enthusiastic letter of support to Seneca Foods, offering such incentives if at any time we can support Seneca's expansion in Arlington.

Through this two-plus year course, we have learned that we are not the only city struggling to identify its corporate limits, but I am pleased to report that we are close to consummating a final decision on delineating ours.

Mayor,
Jim Kreft
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