

CITY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2023



Find more updates inside about Citizen and Business of the Year programs, No Mow May, Sister Cities, use-of-force statistics, the spring tree sale, energy savings, street sweeping, and more!

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COLUMBIA HEIGHTS
REDISCOVER THE HEIGHTS

SEE FLIP SIDE FOR RECREATION PROGRAMS

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TWIN CITIES, MN

City of Columbia Heights
590 40th Ave., N.E.
Columbia Heights, MN 55421
763-706-3600



Previous winners, left to right: Tanya Moore, Veronica Johnson, Linda Fowler, Patricia Sowada, Drake Pham, and Catherine Miske

Submit Nominations for 2023 Outstanding Citizen by April 24

Do you know of someone making a positive impact in our community? Someone who's gone unrecognized for the great things they've done to make the City a better place? Every year, Columbia Heights seeks nominations for an Outstanding Citizen. If you have someone in mind, please visit www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/outstanding to print out a nomination form, or stop by City Hall to pick one up. Completed nomination forms can be dropped off at City

Hall, mailed back to Ben Sandell at 590 40th Ave NE, or emailed to bsandell@columbiaheightsmn.gov.

Nominations for 2023 are being accepted until April 24. Please call 763-706-3615 if you have specific questions.

Last year's winner of the award was Veronica Johnson. For a full list of winners dating back to 1976, visit www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/outstanding.

2022 Employee of the Year Award Goes to Jeff Hanson

The 2022 Employee of the Year, the 43rd employee to win the honor, is Information Technologies System Administrator Jeff Hanson.

Co-workers described Jeff as having top-notch customer service skills—always polite, helpful, and good-humored anytime he interacts with a colleague, council member, vendor or resident.

Jeff keeps a positive attitude even in the most stressful situations when the problems never seem to stop piling up.

IT staff assist every employee and department in the City. Through this work, Jeff has gained the trust and respect of his co-workers and demonstrates true expertise in his job, no easy task considering the range of complex problems he's expected to solve daily in a field that's ever-evolving.

During his 15 years with Columbia Heights, Jeff has worked many early mornings, late nights, and weekends to perform necessary tasks to prevent or resolve major disruptions to the City in a cost-conscious manner.

He plays a key role in the installation and upgrade of network equipment and cabling for City buildings during construction and remodeling. He was crucial during the installation and upgrade of the Top Valu point-of-sale terminals, the March Networks video monitoring system, and the phone and voicemail systems for 270 phones and nearly 600 phone numbers.

Whether it's creating training videos for co-workers, edu-

cating staff on cyber security, tackling time-sensitive IT emergencies, or answering daily help tickets from 200 computer users across nine locations, Jeff has been vital to the core functioning of the City of Columbia Heights.

Congratulations, Jeff!

More About the Employee of the Year Award

The Employee of the Year nomination review committee is composed of former Employee of the Year recipients who are still employed by the City. This year, the selection committee reviewed nine nominations.

When a person is selected as Employee of the Year, their name and year of award is engraved on a large plaque displayed in the Council Chambers. They receive a congratulatory letter, a day off of their choosing (with pay), an article and picture in the City Newsletter, a month-long announcement on the electronic bulletin board outside City Hall, and a featured role in the annual Jambo-ree parade. On rare occasions, more than one employee is selected in a given year.



Jeff Hanson, right, receives the 2022 Employee of the Year plaque from Mayor Amada Márquez Simula.

Sign Up for the City's Monthly E-Newsletter!

The print newsletter is mailed four times per year, but for residents who want updates more frequently, Columbia Heights launched an e-newsletter to keep subscribers informed monthly of upcoming events, deadlines, construction projects, and other timely items. At the start of each month, the e-newsletter is emailed to anyone who subscribes to it. You may unsubscribe anytime.



Register Your Email Address Today!

Visit www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/enews or email wrottler@columbiaheightsmn.gov to subscribe.

NEW TO COLUMBIA HEIGHTS? GET YOUR ...

WELCOME PACKET

- Welcome packets include lots of information to help new residents get acquainted with the City and learn about City services, events, departments, billing, park amenities, trash services, government operations, volunteering opportunities, rental laws, and more! The packet also includes City and Council contact info.
- Welcome packets can be picked up at City Hall, 590 40th Ave NE, or the Columbia Heights Library at 3939 Central Ave NE. They can also be downloaded online at www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/welcome. Or you may request to have the packet mailed to you. Email wrottler@columbiaheightsmn.gov to order a mailed packet.

Nominations for 2023 Business of the Year Award Due by March 27

The City's new Business of the Year nomination program works similarly to the City's annual Outstanding Citizen of the Year Award (see page 2). Anyone not on the Economic Development Authority Commission may nominate a business of their choice. The EDA will review all nominations and make the final selection in April. The winning business will be highlighted in the City newsletter, receive a plaque at a City Council meeting, and

take part in the annual Jamboree Parade. Selections will be based on multiple criteria such as community involvement, major accomplishments, and history with the City. Nomination forms may be found at www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/business. Completed nominations may be emailed to mforney@columbiaheightsmn.gov or brought to the City Hall Community Development Department at 590 40th Ave. NE. The nomination deadline is March 27.

Event Sponsorship Opportunities for Businesses and Organizations

To increase its outreach to community members, improve local business visibility, and provide the best-quality community events possible, the City of Columbia Heights has launched a sponsorship program for businesses and organizations. There are many City events that can be supported through this program (upcoming June events are listed on page 12). For more details, visit www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/business, or email wrottler@columbiaheightsmn.gov.

Arbor Day Tree Sale: Pre-Order This Spring to Claim a Tree

In celebration of Arbor Day in April, the City will again be selling trees at a discounted rate for its residents. Columbia Heights residents will be limited to two trees per household.

Orders must be pre-paid. Supplies are limited and are on a first-come, first-served basis. Checks are the preferred form of payment. In the memo,

please write "Arbor Day Tree Sale." Checks can be mailed to: City of Columbia Heights, 590 40th Ave, Columbia Heights, MN 55421. Credit card payments are also accepted.

Place an order by the end of April. For the full list of trees for sale, visit columbiaheightsmn.gov/trees. Free delivery included.



Conversation Circle Gives English Language Learners a Practice Space

The Columbia Heights Library offers free weekly Conversation Circle meetings for adult English language learners. The Conversation Circle is a casual gathering of residents who meet at the library to practice their English-



speaking skills with help from an English-speaking library volunteer. The relaxed group setting allows people to practice their English in a safe, low-stress environment.

Currently, Conversation Circles are hosted by two dedicated library volunteers, Paul Cram and Pat Tollfeson. **The program takes place on Mondays from 5:30-6:30 pm, and Thursdays from 2-3 pm.**

"I am a big fan of getting to know people a little bit but also letting the conversation go where it will," said Cram (pictured third from left). "It's fun to talk about current events or whatever is on people's mind."

There is no need to register. Learners can drop in to any session. For more info, call the library at 763-706-3690 or visit www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/library.

Stories from the Road: Historian Returns With Tales of MN Travels

Historian Doug Ohman concludes his Minnesota From the Road series this spring at the Library. Doug has published 14 books all about Minnesota. He travels around the state sharing his interactive, historic presentations. Registration encouraged. Call 763-706-3690.

March 4, 11 am: Urban Gems: Minneapolis Tour

April 1, 11 am: Urban Gems: St. Paul Tour

May 6, 11 am: Name That Town!

Brought to you by the Library Foundation.

Update on Columbia Heights/Lomianki Sister Cities, Year in Review

In 2022, Mayor Simula and her husband took a trip to Lomianki, Poland. Councilmember Jacobs also visited the country on a separate trip in 2022. They were able to report back all that they learned. Sister Cities continued to participate in the Jamboree parade, sponsored a movie in the park night at Huset Park, and donated money to SACA.

Members have shown their support of the Ukrainian people in many different ways. The group is now planning a tour of Poland in September. All are welcome to join the group. Call 651-633-0506 or email gbergs1325@hotmail.com if you are interested. Find out more about the Sister Cities at www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/sistercities.

No Mow May Helps Hibernating Pollinators

Keeping lawns undisturbed until June helps ensure vital pollinators have time to thaw out and reemerge for summer after the first bloom.

In the spring of 2022, the City Council voted to pass a resolution allowing residents to keep from mowing their lawns until June. The resolution applies to all years moving forward. The No Mow May initiative is part of an ongoing international effort to preserve pollinator habitats. Maintenance Code regulates the length of grass in yards but inspectors will not enforce the rules until June. The City will have yard signs for sale for \$15 at City Hall for those who participate (image on right), but the sign is not necessary. To order a sign or get more info, visit www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/pollinators.



City Renews Mayors' Monarch Pledge in 2023, Volunteers Needed

Mayors and other heads of local and tribal government take action annually to help save the monarch butterfly, whose population is nearly wiped out. The National Wildlife Federation's Mayors' Monarch Pledge encourages communities to create habitat for the monarch butterfly and pollinators and educate residents about how they can make a difference. Columbia Heights committed to the pledge for the third time in 2023. Volunteers are wanted. Email monarch@columbiaheightsmn.gov.

Get daily updates on Columbia Heights happenings by following us on Facebook @columbiaheightsmn, Instagram @columbiaheightsmn or Twitter @heightsmn

Find our daily newsfeed at columbiaheightsmn.gov
For questions about this newsletter, call Communications Coordinator Ben Sandell at 763-706-3615

Library Program & Activity Highlights

Below is a sampling of upcoming activities at the library. For a full list or more details, visit <https://bit.ly/3kyG6vJ> or call 763-706-3690. Programs that require registration are indicated by *. Register online or by calling 763-706-3690. For at-home service, call 763-706-3681. Visit columbiaheightsmn.gov/library for additional info.

Adult Programs

Library Book Club

10 am: March 15, April 19, May 17

Fiction Writing Workshop*

Mon, March 20, 5:30 pm

Resident and published author J.P. Johnson will lead this workshop.

Consult a Law Librarian

5-7 pm: March 23, April 20, May 25

The Anoka County Law Library Director will be on hand to answer legal reference questions and provide referrals.

Write Your Life* **

Fri, March 24, 2 pm

Loft Literary Center writing workshop.

Puzzle Contest*

Sat, March 25, 10 am-noon

Register in teams of two to four to complete a 300-piece puzzle in the allotted time for a chance to win prizes.

Birdscaping Basics*

Mon, April 3, 5:30 pm

Learn how to build bird habitats through landscaping.

Let's Clay! Gnomes* **

Mon, April 17, 5:30 pm

Learn sculpting skills to make yard ornaments with polymer clay.

Bike Fix-It Clinic

Sat, May 13, 10 am-noon

Drop in between 10 and noon for help with tune-ups, tire repair, changing tires, adjusting brakes and derailleurs, and any bike-related questions you might have. The fix-it station is near the library's parking lot entrance.

Creating a Vigil Plan

Wed, May 17, 5:30 pm

An end-of-life planning workshop led by Death Doula Brianna Kocka.

Conversation Circle

Mondays, 5:30-6:30 pm

Thursdays, 2-3 pm

This is a casual gathering of English-language adult learners who meet at the library to practice their speaking skills with help from an English volunteer.

Kids and Teen Programs

Family Storytime

10:30 am: Mondays, March 6-April 24

Share books, songs, and rhymes with your children at this storytime designed to promote school readiness in 2-to-5 year olds. Siblings are also welcome!

Tinker Time***

Slime

Tue, March 7, 4:30-5:30 pm

Let's Clay Tasty Treats*

Tue, March 21, 4:30-6 pm

Batteries, Bulbs, & Wires

Tue, April 4, 4:30-5:30 pm

Fairy Doors

Tue, April 18, 4:30-5:30 pm

Legos

Tues, May 2 and 16, 4:30-5:30 pm

Family Discovery

DIY Birdfeeders* ***

Sat, March 25, 1-2 pm

Family Birding* ***

Sat, April 29, 2-3 pm

Storytime With the Mayor

Mon, April 3, 10:30-11 am

English & Spanish storytime.

Clay Bird & Nest* ***

Thu, April 6, 2-3:30 pm

Sculpt and paint clay. Ages 7-12.



Self-Publish Your Zine!* ***

5:30-7 pm: March 1 and 8

Learn how to design a zine with local artist Natasha Pestich. Ages 12-18.

ENCORE: Brain Buster Days* ***

11:30 am-1:30 pm: March 20, April 10

Free food and activities. Ages 12-18.

Job Fair for Teens

May 9, 3-6 pm

The Anoka County Job Training Center, part of Career Force in Blaine, will host this youth job fair at the Library. Employers will have applications and information related to summer jobs or internships and answer questions.

Summer Volunteering

Learn more about the library, help your community, meet new people and earn community service hours for school. For teens ages 13 and older who are self-motivated, reliable, and want to have fun. Applications at the library.

* Registration required.

** This program is funded by the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

*** This program is partially funded with a grant from the Minnesota Department of Education using federal funding, CFDA 84.287, Every Student Succeeds Act, Title IV B-21 Century Community Learning Centers. The content of this program does not necessarily represent the policy of the federal Department of Education or the Minnesota Department of Education.

Library Hours

Mon-Thu, 10 am to 7 pm

Fri, 10 am to 4 pm

Sat, 10 am to 3 pm

Sun, closed

Library Closures

April 7 • May 18 • May 27-29

3939 Central Ave NE • (763) 706-3690

At-home Service • (763) 706-3681

www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/library

www.anokacountymn.gov/4180/Libraries

Facebook: @chplibrary



CITY REDEVELOPMENT UPDATES

4300 Central Ave Site Redevelopment Plans Moving Forward

In the summer of 2021, Alatus LLC purchased the mostly vacant strip mall located at 4300 Central Ave. Dollar Tree is the last tenant remaining on the location at this time. They are expected to vacate the space at the end of June. Once that happens, Alatus plans to immediately demolish the existing building in preparation for redevelopment.

The preliminary plans for the site include a mix of high-density residential housing, medium density residential housing,

commercial/retail space, and public open space.

The final site plans have not been approved by the City. The City and Alatus plan to introduce more detailed plans in the spring of 2023 and seek feedback from residents.

Alatus and the City would like to have the land-use approval process completed by the end of 2023, with the intent of breaking ground on phase one of the redevelopment project in the spring of 2024.



City Hall, Apartment Complex Mixed-Use Development Updates



Alatus LLC has completed the market-rate apartment project located at the corner of Central and 40th Avenue. Residents began moving into Ratio apartments in October of 2022. The overall development project includes 266 apartments, a 3,500 square foot café space, and new City Hall. The build-out of the new City Hall condo unit started in October of 2022. It's expected to open

in June of 2023. Alatus has not secured a tenant for the café space at this time. The City Hall space will be owned by the City, like a condo, and will take up nearly the entire first floor of the building. The City will likely sell the property where the existing City Hall stands. It's too early to know what might replace the existing City Hall building. For more details, visit www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/newcityhall.

Housing Redevelopment Project Behind the Public Safety Building to be Completed This Summer

Reuter Walton development has hired Frana Construction to complete the 62-unit affordable housing development project located behind the City's Public Safety campus. The apartment project broke ground in the summer of 2022, and is expected to open in July of 2023.

The original site plan for the property included a separate development parcel that was intended to be sold to Southern

Anoka Community Assistance (SACA) for the relocation of their operations into a new building. Since the original project approvals, SACA has decided not to relocate to the site and have shifted their focus to the acquisition of an existing industrial property located within the City. Currently, there are no backup plans for the development of the site that was expected to sell to SACA.



HOME ENERGY SQUAD

Want to Save Money on Your Heating Bill? Call the Home Energy Squad

Make sure your home is as energy efficient as possible with a Home Energy Squad (HES) visit. An Energy Auditor will inspect your house and create a customized report with recommendations. They will also provide instant energy savings by installing free materials like LED lights, weather stripping, and high efficiency water fixtures. Plus, Columbia Heights residents get a discounted rate for HES visits. Visit www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/homeenergy for more info. Call 651-328-6220 to book a visit.



Take a Seat

Citizen commissions contribute to the quality of life in the community by assisting the City Council in an advisory capacity regarding a wide range of activities. Residents who serve their community in this way gain valuable insight relative to City operations. Commissioners have the capacity to help shape the community through decisions and input. Members volunteer their time to attend meetings throughout the year to address pertinent matters.

Multiple Seats Open on Four Boards and Commissions: Apply by Feb 28

- Number of open seats: 1 Planning Commission, 1 Library Board, 2 Park and Recreation Commission, 1 Charter Commission
- Descriptions of board and commission duties at columbiaheightsmn.gov/boardsandcommissions
- Find an application online at columbiaheightsmn.gov/boardsandcommissions, or pick one up at City Hall or at the Columbia Heights Public Library
- Application deadline of Feb 28: bring to City Hall, mail, or email sion@columbiaheightsmn.gov
- Interviews in mid-March
- All positions require an interview except those only applying for Charter Commission (appointed by Chief Judge of the 10th Judicial District)
- Appointments made March 31 for those appointed by Council. Terms for those appointed start April 1
- For more info, contact the City Clerk at 763-706-3611, or email sion@columbiaheightsmn.gov

Another Way to Get Involved: Volunteer Opportunities

Our City has numerous service and civic organizations that provide opportunities for community involvement and volunteering. Find a list of those organizations and their contact info at www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/volunteer to help get you started. If you have an organization that you want to be listed on our site, or if you identify information in need of updating, please contact Ben Sandell at bsandell@columbiaheightsmn.gov or call 763-706-3615.

IMPORTANT CITY CONTACTS

CITY OFFICES.....(763) 706-3600
Administration.....(763) 706-3610

Public Works.....(763) 706-3700
Garbage/Refuse Pick-up/
Recycling.....(763) 780-8464
Refuse Support.....(763) 706-3727

Utility Billing.....(763) 706-3640

Fire Dept. Admin & Info.....(763) 706-8150
Fire Chief.....(763) 706-8152

Police.....(763) 706-8100

Library.....(763) 706-3690

Community
Development.....(763) 706-3670
Bldg. Permits/
Licenses.....(763) 706-3678

24-Hour Info. Line-Murzyn Hall info., Weather
Cancellations, Directions.....(763) 706-3737
Murzyn Hall Rental.....(763) 706-3734

Mayor Márquez Simula.....(763) 706-3607
Councilmember Buesgens.....(763) 788-5072
Councilmember Jacobs.....(612) 810-0512
Councilmember James.....(763) 706-3618
Councilmember Spriggs.....(763) 706-3617

City Newsletter editor.....(763) 706-3615

Emergency.....911

MORE INFO AT:
www.columbiaheightsmn.gov

CHPD SOCIAL WORKER PROGRAM COMPLETES FIRST YEAR

The Columbia Heights Police Department completed its first full year of its embedded co-responder social worker program, in partnership with Canvas Health.

Eileen Crosby started with the department in December of 2021 and Erin Buller joined the team in the summer of 2022. Both are licensed independent clinical social workers. Between the two of them, they are available to answer calls 10 am to 11 pm Monday through Friday. The program has delivered impressive results already. The social workers served 457 clients in their first year (312 of those were engaged during a co-response with police) for a total of 1,954 client interactions. A major goal of the co-responder program was to reduce the need for police use of force. Out of the 312 co-responder calls, 303 were resolved without the need for use of force, 307 did not lead to the individual going to jail, and 275 did

not require the client to be hospitalized. Instead, 36 clients were referred to medical treatment, 145 individuals were provided with new resources, and 126 were re-engaged with established services.

Over the past year, the number of calls from Columbia Heights to Anoka County Mobile Crisis has increased by 177%. This means more residents know about the crisis line and are using it compared to 2021. An internal survey showed 73% of CHPD officers believed that the embedded social workers have reduced the number of times force would have been needed on calls. The program is funded through the first quarter of 2024, though the City will explore options for extension.



Canvas Health team members Eileen Crosby, Jessica Torrey, and Erin Buller accept the CHPD's 2023 T. Nightingale Community Outreach Award.

Anoka County residents can call Canvas Health's Anoka County Mobile Response Team at (763) 755-3801.

Columbia Heights Police Department Podcast Online and On Spotify

Roll Call, the CHPD's bi-monthly podcast, features discussions with officers and special guests about law enforcement and public safety topics relevant to the community. Each podcast features a different topic and special guest. The City

won first place in Community Engagement for this podcast from the Minnesota Association of Government Communicators in 2022. To listen, visit www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/podcast or search Columbia Heights Podcast on Spotify.

CHPD Use-of-Force Statistics for 2022

- The CHPD responded to 24,909 calls for service in 2022
- A minimal amount of force was used in 0.34% of these calls, with a total of 85 incidents for the year.
- Open hand techniques were the most common type of force used.
- No injury was reported in 93% of cases where force was used. Of those who reported injuries, minor pain or abrasions were the most common.

The application of deadly force is a measure to be employed in the most extreme circumstances. The CHPD goes beyond the state and federal reporting requirements to monitor use-of-force incidents and ensure compliance with the law and department policy. Full report at chpolice.com.

Curfew Reminder

Columbia Heights City Ordinance sets curfew limits for youth 17 and younger. Curfew for children 15 and under is 10 pm on weekdays and 11 pm Friday and Saturday. Curfew for 16- and 17-year-olds is 11 pm on weekdays and midnight Friday and Saturday. All curfews are enforced through 5 am.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Columbia Heights Police Department office is open Mon-Fri, 8 am to 4:30 pm. The telephone number is (763) 706-8100. Call 911 in an emergency. The office is located in the Public Safety building, 825 41st Avenue NE. The police department offices are closed on weekends and holidays.

A telephone is located inside the entry doors that can be used after hours to request assistance.

For general info, ordinances, and services, visit www.chpolice.com, find us on [Facebook.com/chpolice](https://www.facebook.com/chpolice), and follow us at twitter.com/colhgtspolice.





WE NEED FIREFIGHTERS

RECRUITMENT OPEN HOUSE IS APRIL 26

The Columbia Heights Fire Department needs more on-call firefighters to join the team. On April 26, 6 pm, the department will hold a recruitment open house for those who wish to learn more about the job responsibilities, check out the equipment, meet firefighters, and ask questions. The Open House will be at the Fire Station, 825 41st Ave NE, Columbia Heights, 6-8 pm. Registration for the event is not required, but it is appreciated. To RSVP, email your contact info to fire@columbiaheightsmn.gov with subject "Open House RSVP," or call 763-706-8150.

How Much Training Is Required?

On-call firefighters receive hourly pay for training and learn valuable skills they can use in other areas of their lives. Recruit firefighters complete 125 hours of EMT training, 98 hours of Firefighter level 1 training, 50 hours for Firefighter level 2 training, and 48 hours of hazmat training. All training takes about 18 months.

Who's Eligible to Apply?

If you're 18 or older, live within 10 minutes from the fire station, and have a valid driver's license, you're eligible to apply. It's as simple as that.

What Are the Time Requirements?

On-call firefighters are not expected to answer every call. To ensure flexibility, the department requires on-call firefighters to answer roughly 30% of calls.

What Will I Get Out of It?

You get to be there to help someone when they're having the worst day of their life, and will walk away feeling like you've made a difference, all while being a part of a team and gaining valuable, real-world experience. On-call firefighters also get paid. They receive pension benefits if they commit for five years.

How Do I Apply?

Applications can be submitted online by visiting www.heightsfire.com and clicking the Firefighter Employment Opportunities link in the navigation menu. Call 763-706-8150 for more information. Want to learn more before applying? The Recruitment Open House is April 26, 6-8 pm, at the Public Safety Building. **The department is eager to recruit new firefighters, so please spread the word if you know of anyone who might be interested.**

FIRE DEPARTMENT

825 41st Ave NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421
fire@columbiaheightsmn.gov

Be up to date on activities and regular safety reminders of the Columbia Heights Fire Department by following us on Facebook [@columbiaheightsfire](https://www.facebook.com/columbiaheightsfire).



Non-Emergency: (763) 706-8150
Emergency: Call 9-1-1
Housing Maintenance Inspections: (763) 706-8156
fireinspections@columbiaheightsmn.gov

Adopt-a-Drain Challenge Returns

The Anoka County Community Adopt-a-Drain Challenge returns in 2023. Claim storm drains and report drain cleanings through www.Adopt-a-Drain.org from March to October. The City has won this challenge two years in a row, and its winning title is on the line! Columbia Heights will compete against Blaine, Andover, and Fridley to see who has the most storm drain adoptions and reported cleanings. Each month one city/watershed will feature an adopter and share their story. Join the challenge now by adopting and naming your drain through www.Adopt-a-Drain.org. After snow melt, clean your drain and report what you've cleaned. Send any fun cleaning photos to lletsche@columbiaheightsmn.gov. For more info, contact Abby Shea at ashea@cooncreekwd.org or 763-258-7305.



What You Put On Your Lawn and Driveway Washes Into Waterways

Water runoff from your driveway and lawn washes directly into the storm water drainage system. Storm drains are generally located along street curbs and siphon above ground water runoff. So **anything you put on your lawn, sidewalk, driveway or parking lot, or any waste you don't pick up, will drain into ponds, lakes, streams, and rivers.** These pollutants harm wildlife and recreation areas.

Special concerns include phosphorus fertilizers, petroleum products, salt, other chemicals, garbage, and sediments from erosion. Federal and State environmental laws have resulted in more stringent regulations concerning pollution from storm water systems. Local governments may incur large fines if they do not have an active program to reduce storm water pollution.

Storm Water Pollution Prevention Public Information Session Is June 14

The Public Works Department conducts a required public informational session on our SWPPP (Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program) annually. This year it will be held June 14 during the Art and Info Fair in Huset Park, 4-7 pm. The City of Columbia Heights has developed a SWPPP

plan in response to Federal and State regulations concerning the quality of water entering streams, rivers, and lakes from storm water drainage systems. At this event, the public will have the opportunity to ask questions and give input and comments on the SWPPP.

PUBLIC WORKS SPRING REMINDERS

Fire Hydrant Flushing April & May

Fire hydrant flushing takes place in April and early May. Hydrants will be flushed from 7 am to 3 pm. It's necessary to flush all City hydrants to ensure they're in good working condition and to clear sediment. As a result of the flushing you may notice some temporary discoloration of the water. Flush your residential system by running cold water for 10 to 20 minutes. Avoid washing clothes while hydrants are being flushed in your area, as discolored water may stain. Some localized flushing may be necessary throughout the year.

Spring Street Sweeping Begins Soon

The street department will begin street sweeping as soon as weather permits, usually in early April. Areas around lakes and ponds will be swept first to minimize the amount of sediment entering these bodies of water. Sweeping operations will continue until all streets have been swept twice.

Prevent Sewer Backups

Over time, homeowners may experience problems such as collapsed pipes or tree roots growing into service lines that can cause stoppages with their sewer service lines. If your sewer backs up, it may be time to clean or repair the line. Before hiring a contractor, call Public Works at 763-706-3700. They will check the City's mainline condition in the street for a possible blockage. **This service is free.**

Water Service Leak? Sewer Clog?

Call Public Works before calling a contractor:

- Weekdays: 7 am-3:30 pm (763) 706-3700
- After-hours: (763) 427-1212 or 911

Property owners are responsible for the water service and sewer service from the house or structure to the main in the street, including the connection to the City main.

Street Parking Restrictions In Effect Until March 31, 2–6 am daily



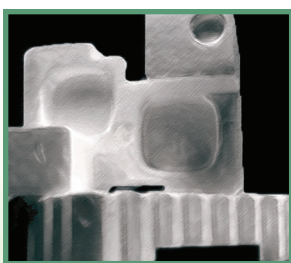
MAKE SURE TO SEPARATE OUT FILM PLASTIC AND STYROFOAM

Please do not dispose of your recyclables in a plastic bag. Plastic bags and other film plastics clog the recycling system and break the machines, requiring time-consuming de-clogs and repairs. Plastic bags and film plastic can be recycled, but they must be brought into the Recycling Center separate from all other recycling. The same applies for Styrofoam. *Film plastic and Styrofoam should never go into your recycling cart.* These products must be brought to the Recycling Center separate from other single-sort recycling. Find more information in the tips below. Thank you for the help!

Tips for Recycling Items Not Picked Up With Curbside Recycling

Plastic Bags and Styrofoam Blocks

The Recycling Center accepts clean plastic bags, plastic films, and white Styrofoam (rigid block type only), clean and free of tape. These items must be brought directly to the Recycling Center at 3801 Madison St NE, Saturdays, 9 am to 1 pm.



Compostable Products

Delivery style pizza boxes, paper egg cartons, paper towels and any other wet or food-soiled paper, organic food products (not including grease, oil, or gum), BPI certified compostable utensils, house plants and flowers, tea bags (remove staple), and non-treated wood items such as chopsticks, popsicle sticks, and tooth picks, can be composted. Order a compost cart at www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/refusesupport

Donating Items

There are a number of outlets for donating used items. For a full list, and addresses, visit columbiaheightsmn.gov/reuse. Also consider hosting a garage sale to sell old items. The citywide garage sales event is June 9-11. Find more about that on page 12.

Yard Waste Collection

Yard Waste collection begins in April after the snow cover melts. Woody tree waste can be brought to the Anoka County site for a fee. Use paper bags. Personal containers will not be emptied by the hauler. Be sure to bundle the brush, or order a City compost cart. Find more about yard waste service at www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/yardwaste.

Compost Carts can be ordered using the refuse support form at www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/refusesupport

Refuse Holiday Schedule

- Good Friday, April 7, no delay
- Memorial Day, May 29, service delayed one day all week

Arm Truck Collection Information

Haulers use trucks with mechanical arms to collect trash and recycling. Place your cart out where the arm can reach it (though not in the street). Allow space between carts. Refuse pads are a convenient way to accomplish this. Contact publicworks@columbiaheightsmn.gov for specs and pricing on pad installations.

Walter's Recycling & Refuse/Haulstar Sanitation

Trash and Recycling Service: 1-763-780-8464; Email service@waltersrecycling.com

City Refuse/Recycling Info

Visit www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/refuseandrecycling or call 763-706-3727
Online request form: www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/refusesupport
Refuse service levels and rates at www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/refuserates

Anoka County Recycling & Resource Solutions

Call (763) 324-3400 or visit www.anokacountymn.gov/recycle

Columbia Heights Recycling Center

3801 Madison Street NE, Columbia Heights
Open Saturdays, 9 am to 1 pm. Closed some holidays
www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/recyclingcenter



THIS JUNE, SAVE THE DATES

Community Art & Info Fair, Pets in the Park, Citywide Garage Sales

ART AND INFO FAIR will be held at Huset Park West on Wed, June 14, from 4 to 7 pm. The info fair will be along the walking path in between the Huset Park Splash Pad and Zurek Pond. Community organizations looking to have an informational booth can register by contacting Will Rottler at 763-706-3614 or wrottlr@columbiaheightsmn.gov.

The deadline to register for an info booth is June 7. Art and Craft vendors can register for a booth by contacting Deanna Saefke at 763-706-3730 or email dsaefke@columbiaheightsmn.gov. Art and craft vendors pay a \$15 fee for table space.

PETS IN THE PARK will take place June 3. Join the City of Columbia Heights for this inaugural event from 11 am to 2 pm in Keyes Park. And bring your furry friends. Pet organizations and vendors wishing to participate can apply by emailing wrottlr@columbiaheightsmn.gov. Vendors must apply by May 26.

CITYWIDE GARAGE SALES will take place June 9-11. Anyone can participate. If you would like your garage sale included on the City's citywide garage sale locator map, please register your address by May 31 by visiting www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/garagesale. The registration window opens May 1.

Emerald Ash Borer Alert! Take Action ASAP

The City Forester would like the public to know that the emerald ash borer problem in Columbia Heights is now critical and not going away. Ash trees are dying in all areas of the City and management decisions need to be made ASAP.

Property owners are responsible for the management of trees on their property and should be aware that all untreated ash trees will die, if they haven't already, and need to be removed. But a bulk discount on EAB treatment for residents is still available through Rainbow Treecare (call 952-922-3810 or visit www.rainbowtreecare.com). Treatment is highly effective

and less expensive than removal, but it must begin before too much damage occurs in order to be effective. This is no longer an option for most ash trees.



For tree removal, the City recommends seeking multiple bids from at least three licensed professionals. Find a list of local licensed contractors at www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/trees. No City funding is available for removals. As the situation worsens, the City may order removal of dead or diseased trees on private property in the interest of public safety.

The City Forester is available for free to help with ID, inspections, and management consultations. Call 763-706-3722 to request assistance.

Bark blonding is common with EAB infestations.

Ash trees on your property? For more information, visit www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/EAB. For specific questions or for free consultation, call the City Forester at 763-706-3722 or email genter@columbiaheightsmn.gov