2/9/2022

**MAKES ME WONDER (by CITY ADMINISTRATOR TODD PRAFKE)** — The following is a reprint of a 2019 column.

Haven’t you been wondering? One of the guys I see at the gym asked why I hadn’t been wondering for the last 18 months or so. That is about how long it’s been since I last wrote a “Makes Me Wonder”.

Well it’s not that I have not been wondering, it’s just that I haven’t been writing it down. I am going to try to spend more time on writing it down and see how it goes.

Sometimes I am not sure that the ways we try to communicate with you work at all. Frankly, we spend a pretty good amount of time and your money on finding ways to help all of you know more about what your City is doing. Even with those efforts, sometimes it’s hard to make you know stuff.

I had someone ask me the other day, “Where is that Community Spirit Park?” I gave them the answer, but I am not sure how they missed news of the park as it has been a part of the Council’s discussion for over three years.

It just goes to show me that even though we may talk about it a lot, most folks are busy with life, getting the kids to school, paying their mortgage, getting to work, worrying about their parents, and deciding whether they should get a dog or a cat among a whole host of other things to think about what is going on at the City.

Life is busy and there is so much information out there that it is sometimes very hard to know or even want to know some of the things we talk about. I get it. That’s why we try so hard to help.

Lots of opportunities are available for you to learn more about what your City is up to including the Hot Sheet (which you can read online or through a direct email subscription); the City’s website at [www.saintpetermn.gov](http://www.saintpetermn.gov); our Facebook page at [https://www.facebook.com/CityofSaintPeter](https://www.facebook.com/CityofSaintPeter); our Twitter account @CityofStPeter; Public Access Channel 8; our YouTube channel [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWK7-GhXImDfaSTNs7yvwq](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWK7-GhXImDfaSTNs7yvwq); or through the flyers in your utility bill.

Which one works best for you? Please let us know so we can use it even more. Will you let us know what works for you? It makes me wonder……

Just to update this, the City’s reach out to residents is still evolving and since this column first appeared, Facebook pages specifically for the Police Department, the Library and the Recreation and Leisure Services Departments have been created and the Recreation Department has begun to use an email service called “Constant Contact” to provide news about upcoming events and programs.

**N95 MASKS** — A limited number of the federally provided N95 masks are now available at the Saint Peter Community Center and Library. Supplies are limited, but the masks are free to the public (three masks per person please).

Masks can be picked up at the Recreation and Leisure Services Office in the Community Center Monday-Friday between the hours of 8am-5pm or at the Library during the following hours:

- Monday-Thursday 10am-8pm
- Fridays 10am-5pm
- Saturdays 9am-1pm.

For more information on proper use of N95 masks, please visit the Centers for Disease Control website or the Minnesota Department of Health website.
CAT LICENSES DUE - The City’s two-year pet licenses are due on rotating years. Annie’s teddy doesn’t have to be licensed this year, but cat licenses will be due by no later than April 30th.

But you don’t have to wait if your cat’s rabies certificate is up to date. Licenses are already available for purchase at the Community Development Department at City Hall (227 South Front Street).

Why does the City require pet licensing? There are a couple of reasons. When pets wander from home and are picked up by the Police Department, having a license tag on their collar helps us get the pet back home to the owner before impound fees start to accumulate. The second reason is the more important one though. When you license a pet with the City, we require proof of rabies vaccination. In the event your pet bites someone, that proof, which is not always immediately available from the vet’s office, helps the victim avoid painful and expensive rabies vaccinations.

Proof of rabies certificate signed by a licensed veterinarian is required before a license can be issued. Cost for the two-year license is $5 for cats that are spayed or neutered or $25 for pets that are unaltered.

Can’t make it to City Hall? Don’t worry, we can help you by mail also. Just send a check for the cost, along with the signed rabies certificate to the address above, or drop these materials (put them in an envelope please) in the utility drop box located by the City Hall flag pole.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS – Are you looking for some interesting and educational events? The Recreation Department has several interesting events to consider. Here’s the list...

- Arn Kind - Vietnam: The American Dilemma - America’s most controversial war It lasted 10,000 days, cost the nation 56,000 lives, 300,000 wounded, 1,200 missing in action and $141 billion. It sparked riots and protests at home and ended without a victory. It left Americans divided in their feelings about the United States' role in Southeast Asia and the world. Tuesday, March 15th, 6 p.m. Room 219 of the Saint Peter Community Center (SPCC)
- Teddy Roosevelt - Teddy Roosevelt is arguably one of our most colorful Presidents. There are not many who can put on their resume: Author, Cowboy, Naturalist, Statesman, Soldier, Governor, Vice-President, Policeman, Nobel Peace Prize Winner, President, Father and Bull Moose! A fun and engaging talk about the exciting life of Teddy Roosevelt – from an asthmatic childhood, to the loss of his wife and mother on the same day, to his ascension to the Presidency. Adam Lindquist, Historical Presenter. Wednesday, March 23rd, 2 p.m. SPCC Room 219. This is a free program.
- Beginning computer/technology basics for Seniors/Adults - Geared towards beginning computer users looking to learn more about the basics of computers, online searching, buying a computer and more. Classes will be tailored to fit the needs of the participants. Select mornings in March, exact times TBD. Open to adults and seniors. Call the library for more information 507-934-7420. Classes will take place in the library.
- Welsh in Blue Earth County - The second-largest settlement of Welsh in Minnesota happens to be in Blue Earth County. Learn about the Welsh who settled in Blue Earth County. Learn about the Jones, Roberts, Evans, and other families that settled along the Minnesota River Valley. Blue Earth County Historical Society. Tuesday, March 15th, 11 a.m., SPCC Rm. 219. This is a free program.
- Religion and American Freedom: Two Part Series - This class will explore how religious Americans have thought about freedom. From debates about predestination and free will to current controversies over mask and vaccine mandates, religious Americans have celebrated, argued over, and demanded "freedom." We will consider the many—and possibly contradictory ways—people have used the term and what that might mean for many of our current divides and debates. Sarah Ruble, Professor of Religion, Gustavus Adolphus College Part 1: Friday, March 4th, 11 a.m., SPCC Rm. 219. - Part 2: Friday, March 18th, 11 a.m., SPCC Rm. 219. Both parts are free.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SUMMER - It’s not too early to plan for your spring or summer family reunion/event, company picnic, graduation party, wedding or groom’s dinner at one of our local park shelters. Shelters are available Gorman Park, Gault Park, Minnesota Square Park and Riverside Park (Mill Pond). If you are interested in reserving a shelter, please visit the City website at https://www.saintpetermn.gov/266/Facility-Park-
Shelter-Availability. Follow the instructions to find out when the park shelter is available. (Note that if the month you are checking doesn’t show up on the page that means no reservations have been made.) Once you select a date and time, please contact the Recreation and Leisure Services Department (507)934-0667 or email the office at jenh@saintpetermn.gov to finalize your reservation of the facility.

ICE DAMS – It’s never easy being a home owner. Mowing, painting, fixing, decorating…it’s all hard work and can be very expensive.

Those who live in the colder states have an additional challenge – ice dams. These seasonal phenomena are often caused by leakage of warm air from the home into the attic. Homes with several gables or dormers are also vulnerable to development of dams, especially after a very heavy snow fall which leads to ice build-up.

It’s a problem that needs to be addressed before the ice dam begins to leak and cause water damage or structural damage in your home, but as tempting as it may be, do not remove the ice by chopping. Doing so could cause serious roof damage. If the dam is severe, consider calling a professional roofer who can use steam to remove the ice dam. If the dam is just getting started, a few applications of sidewalk snow melt product might do the trick.

Removing the dam is one thing, but the best bet is to prevent ice dams from occurring in the first place and that means stopping leakage of warm air from the home into the attic. The following steps may help:

- Seal around light fixture and attic access in the ceiling.
- Adding insulation to the attic will help, but once you reach an R-44 level there may be little value in adding more. Pay close attention to the small space where the roof trusses meet the wall plats.
- If you are thinking of re-roofing your house at some time in the future, adding an ice and water membrane along the roof eaves and valleys will help.

For more information on preventing/dealing with ice dams, the Minnesota Department of Commerce has an informative article at https://mn.gov/commerce/media/news/?id=17-373292 you might want to check out or contact the City’s Building Department at 507-934-0662.

PRESIDENT’S DAY CLOSURES – All non-emergency City offices, including the Library, will be closed on Monday, February 21st in recognition of the President’s Day legal holiday. While the City’s Recreation and Leisure Services Department will be closed, the Community Center will be open for normal activities.

Minnesota River Valley Transit services will not be affected by the legal holiday.

SPACE HEATERS – Did you know that space heaters can dramatically increase your electric bill? If you are using or considering using a space heater in your home, here’s a formula that customers can use to determine the monthly cost of operating a space heater:

\[
\text{1,500 watt space heater (wattage divided by 1,000)} \times \text{hours used} \times \text{cost per kWh} = \text{cost per day.}
\]

Used 24 hours per day at the current cost per kWh of $0.1167 = $4.20 per day or $126.00 per month

Not only are space heaters expensive to use, but many home fires are caused by space heaters. If you must use one, here are some safety tips to follow:

- Plug you space heater directly into the wall outlet. Don’t use power strips or outlets with multiple appliances plugged in.
- Buy space heaters with automatic shutoffs in case the unit tips over or you forget to shut it off.
- Keep your space heater in low-moisture rooms. Using one in a bathroom where steam from your shower creates excess moisture, could damage the unit and cause it to overheat.
- Keep your space heater at a safe distance (at least 3 feet) from
kids, pets and flammable items like curtains, clothing and bedding.

- Always follow the directions and take a broken space heater to a qualified appliance service center or dispose of it. Don’t try and repair it yourself.
- Don’t leave your space heater unattended. Always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed.
- Don’t use an extension cord to plug in your space heater. It can cause the heater to overheat and can cause a tripping hazard.
- Don’t place your space heater near curtains, clothing, furniture or bedding.

Be warm, but above all, be safe!

**HELP WANTED** - The City of Saint Peter is currently accepting applications for the following positions:

**INFRASTRUCTURE TECHNICIAN** - in the Stormwater Utility of the Department of Public Works. Candidates for this position will spend the majority of their time working outdoors. Major duties include locating water, sewer, and stormwater lines, cleaning stormwater collection systems, checking and repairing stormwater sump basins and downstream defenders, raising manholes and recording information on the City’s geographic information system (GIS). This position works closely with contractors and property owners in observing construction practices and work performed in the right-of-way and on private property.

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:** high school diploma or equivalent; Possession of a valid State of Minnesota Class A driver’s license with Air Brake Endorsement and Tanker Endorsement, or to obtain within six months of employment with the City; Possession of the Erosion/Sediment Control Inspector/Installer Certificate or the ability to obtain within six months of the date of employment with the City; Possession of the Erosion/Sediment Control Site Management Certificate or the ability to obtain within six months of the date of employment with the City; Knowledge of “as-built” records, ability to read blueprints, maps, specifications used by contractors in the field of construction; and Possession of an American Heart Association Certification as a Basic Rescuer for cardiopulmonary resuscitation and emergency cardiac care or obtain within six months of the date of employment with the City. NOTICE: The successful candidate must complete and pass a pre-employment physical and drug test and is subject to post-accident, random, reasonable suspicion, return to duty, and follow-up drug and alcohol testing required by federal regulations. $22.90 to $35.36 per hour. Applicants are required to complete a City of Saint Peter application form available in the City Administrator’s Office (507) 934-0663 or www.saintpetermn.gov/356/Employment. Completed applications must be received by the City Administrator’s Office no later than 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 16, 2022. Faxed or late applications will not be accepted. Interviews will be conducted on February 23, 2022. AA/EOE

**FORESTER** - The City of Saint Peter is accepting applications for the position of Forester in the Department of Public Works. Minimum qualifications include: High school diploma or equivalent; One or more years of experience in a forestry or landscape related position; Possession of a valid State of Minnesota Class A Driver’s License with Air Brake Endorsement and Tanker Endorsement or to obtain within six months of employment with the City; Possession of a Minnesota Department of Agriculture noncommercial pesticide applicators license with endorsements in Categories A - Core, E – Turf and Ornamentals, F – Aquatic, J - Forestry, Rights-of-Way, and Natural Areas, L - Mosquito, Black Fly, Tick Pest Control within six months of the date of employment with the City; Possession of or ability to obtain valid State of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) tree inspector's license within six months of the date of employment; Possession of or ability to obtain an American Heart Association Certification as a Basic Rescuer for cardiopulmonary resuscitation and emergency cardiac care within six months of the date of employment with the City. Desired qualifications include: Demonstrated knowledge of approved methods, materials, and equipment used in the care, maintenance, removal, and planting of trees; demonstrated knowledge of tree physiology, structure, and growth;
demonstrated ability to classify trees according to species; Demonstrated knowledge of the operating characteristics and servicing of equipment; Demonstrated ability to operate light and heavy equipment and trucks including but not limited to wheel loader, bucket truck, dump truck, wood chipper, snow plow truck, and chain saws; Demonstrated ability to read and interpret landscaping plans and specifications; AAS, BS or BA degree in arboriculture, forestry, landscaping or a related field from an accredited college or university; One or more years of supervisory experience of two or more employees; Demonstrated knowledge of OSHA regulations and safety precautions of the trade; Demonstrated knowledge of Urban Forestry principles and practices; Possession of an Arborist Certification from the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA); Demonstrated ability to speak conversational Spanish and Somali. NOTICE: The successful candidate must complete and pass a pre-employment physical and drug test and is subject to post-accident, random, reasonable suspicion, return to duty, and follow-up drug and alcohol testing required by federal regulations. Wage is $26.52 – $27.63 per hour. Applicants are required to complete a City of Saint Peter application form available in the City Administrator’s Office, 227 South Front Street, Saint Peter, Minnesota 56082-2538, by calling (507) 934-0663; or online at www.saintpetermn.gov/365/Employment. First review of applications will begin February 9, 2022 and the position will remain open until filled. Interviews will be conducted beginning on February 14, 2022. AA/EOE

- BUILDING OFFICIAL - MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: High school GED or equivalent; Possession of a State of Minnesota Class II Building Official Certification; Two (2) years’ experience in any of the skilled construction trades; Ability to perform plan review for residential, commercial, and industrial building construction and alterations; Possession of a valid State of Minnesota Class C Drivers’ License; Two (2) years’ experience as a Building Inspector; Demonstrated knowledge of building codes inspection and enforcement principles; plumbing/mechanical inspection and enforcement principles; knowledge of principles and procedures of rental code enforcement; Demonstrated knowledge of OSHA regulations. DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS: Associate’s Degree in construction trades from an accredited post-secondary educational institution; Bachelor’s Degree from an accredited college or university in Construction Management or a related field; more than two (2) years’ experience as a Building Inspector; More than two years’ experience in performing plan review for commercial and industrial building construction and alterations; Currently possess State of Minnesota Full Delegation Agreement approval; Demonstrated knowledge of Minnesota State Building Code, current International Building Code, current Minnesota Plumbing Code, current Uniform Housing Code, and the Minnesota Uniform Fire Code, and other laws regulating building construction; Demonstrated knowledge of building construction methods and materials; Demonstrated knowledge of the principles and practices of plumbing and heating code enforcement; knowledge of the principles and procedures of rental code enforcement. Salary range $78,500 to $83,500 per year DOQ. Applicants are required to complete a City application form available online at https://www.saintpetermn.gov/365/Employment or from the City Administrator’s office at 227 South Front Street or by calling (507)934-0663. Completed applications must be received by the City Administrator’s office by 5:00 p.m. February 16, 2022. Faxed and/or late applications will not be accepted. AA/EEO

- APPRENTICE LINEMAN - in the Department of Public Works. Minimum qualifications include a high school diploma and satisfactory completion of a technical school program for Lineman Electricians or 2 years of experience in the line work trade; possession of a valid driver’s license; Possession of a valid State of Minnesota Class A Drivers’ License with Air Brake Endorsement within six months of the date of employment with the City; possession of an American Heart Association Certification as a Basic Rescuer for cardiopulmonary resuscitation and emergency cardiac care or obtain within six months of the date of employment with the City. Desirable qualifications include demonstrated knowledge of principles of electrical theory applicable to electrical circuits and wiring systems; demonstrated knowledge of OSHA regulations and safety precautions of the trade; demonstrated ability to operate bucket trucks, line trucks, trencher, backhoe, and locating equipment; demonstrated knowledge of materials and tools used in construction, operation, and maintenance of electrical
distribution systems; demonstrated knowledge of work hazards involved in operation of an electrical system; demonstrated knowledge of computer. NOTICE: The successful candidate must complete and pass a pre-employment physical and drug test and is subject to post-accident, random, reasonable suspicion, return to duty, and follow-up drug and alcohol testing required by federal regulations. Starting pay $29.65 per hour. Applicants are required to complete a City of Saint Peter application form available in the City Administrator’s Office, 227 South Front Street, Saint Peter, Minnesota 56082-2538, by calling (507) 934-0663, or online at www.saintpetermn.gov.356/Employment. Completed applications must be received by the City Administrator’s Office no later than 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 16, 2022. Faxed and/or late applications will not be accepted. Interviews will be Thursday, March 10, 2022. AA/EEO

• FACILITIES MAINTENANCE LEAD - in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Services. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS include: High school diploma or equivalent; Two years of responsible construction and/or maintenance experience in carpentry and masonry; Possession of a valid Driver’s License; Two years demonstrated working knowledge of methods and practices of mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and HVAC systems including maintenance and repair; Demonstrated knowledge of cleaning, use of chemicals and custodial equipment; Possession of or ability to obtain an American Heart Association Certification as a Basic Rescuer for cardiopulmonary resuscitation and emergency cardiac care within six months of the date of employment with the City. DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS include: Possession of a valid State of Minnesota Class B Drivers’ License with Air Brake Endorsement; Demonstrated: knowledge of the practices, methods, tools, and equipment used in the construction trades; skill in the use of construction tools and equipment; ability to read and interpret blue prints, diagrams, and engineering sketches; ability to make moderately complex mathematical calculations; knowledge of state and local building codes; Demonstrated knowledge of bidding and quote process and ability to work with vendors; Demonstrated knowledge of OSHA regulations, safety precautions of the trade and equipment operation; Two or more years of supervisory experience; Previous experiencing performing job duties related to building maintenance and repair in a facility larger than 40,000 square feet; Demonstrated ability to speak conversational Spanish or Somali. $25.78-$28.05 per hour. Applicants are required to complete a City of Saint Peter application form available in the City Administrator’s Office, 227 South Front Street, Saint Peter, Minnesota 56082-2538, by calling (507) 934-0663; or online at www.saintpetermn.gov/365/employment. Applications must be received by the City Administrator’s Office by 5:00 p.m. on February 24, 2022. AA/EEO

CITY MEETING CALENDAR –***PLEASE NOTE…Meeting dates and times may change due to unforeseen circumstances. For up to date information on meetings please visit the City’s website at www.saintpetermn.gov or call the City at 507-934-0663.

Monday February 14 3:30 p.m. Housing and Redevelopment Authority
Monday February 14 7:00 p.m. City Council Meeting (and Valentine’s Day!)
Monday February 21  Presidents' Day PRESIDENT’S DAY LEGAL HOLIDAY City Offices Closed
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<td>February 22</td>
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<td>Hospital Commission</td>
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<td>Economic Development Authority</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>February 25</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Tourism and Visitors Bureau</td>
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<td>Monday</td>
<td>February 28</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>City Council Meeting</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
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<td>Monday</td>
<td>March 7</td>
<td>3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>City Council Goal Session</td>
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<td>March 8</td>
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<td>Library Board</td>
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