

# MINNETONKA MEMO

A publication from the City of Minnetonka



## Just Deeds helps families remove racially restrictive covenants

### Redressing historic racism is a step toward becoming more inclusive

In 2021, Ivan and Diane Arenson learned about the city's involvement with Just Deeds, a program that helps homeowners remove racially restrictive covenants from their property deed. They were surprised to discover their home had such a covenant.

Racial covenants are agreements written into property deeds preventing the sale or residency to people of color.

Removing the racial covenant was an easy decision for the Arenson family. "This [was] one little way we can make the world better," said Diane Arenson.



The process was quick and easy. City staff helped the Arensons get in touch with a lawyer who made changes to the deed, all free of charge. Then, Ivan and Diane simply brought the paperwork to City Hall. "It really couldn't have been easier," said Ivan Arenson. "I think in total, it may have taken 30-45 minutes of our time."

Although racially restricted covenants are not enforceable by law, removing these restrictions can still have a positive effect in Minnetonka. "One of the things that we've learned is that laws and rules can change," Ivan said. "Now we've removed a potential barrier to someone living their life in a just manner forever. It's not only a small action today, but it may be an important barrier to prevent injustice in the future."

To fill out an application for the Just Deeds project, visit [minnetonkamn.gov/justdeeds](http://minnetonkamn.gov/justdeeds).

## Strategic profile tracks financial management

Minnetonka's city council and staff have begun work on the 2023 budget. It is a process that will continue throughout the rest of this year. The city was recently recognized for the 38<sup>th</sup> consecutive year for excellence in financial reporting. An impartial panel judges whether cities show a spirit of full disclosure and clearly communicate their financial story.

### Financial Strength and Operational Excellence

is one of six key strategies outlined in Minnetonka's Strategic Profile. City staff regularly updates a community dashboard as they work to complete key strategies. One includes maintaining the city's AAA bond rating. You can read more about the city's Strategic Profile, view the community dashboard and learn more about financial reporting at [MinnetonkaMatters.com](http://MinnetonkaMatters.com).



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# Come one, come all to the Farmers Market

The Minnetonka Farmers Market is for everyone! We have several food access programs available.

## SNAP & Market Bucks

Market Bucks match SNAP-EBT spending dollar-for-dollar (up to \$10). There are four easy steps to use SNAP-EBT at the farmers market:

1. Go to the Farmers Market Info Booth
2. Swipe your EBT card for the amount you want to spend. We'll match your purchase dollar-for-dollar, up to \$10.
3. Get \$10 in Market Bucks and \$10 in Produce Market Bucks each visit. You do not have to spend the full \$10 each time.
4. Shop for up to \$30 of SNAP-eligible food and produce at the farmers market.



## "POP" (Power of Produce) Club for kids

The POP Club is a free program for kids, ages 4-17, sponsored by South Lake Pediatrics.

- Sign up with a parent or guardian at the Farmers Market Info Booth.
- Receive a reusable produce shopping bag and flower seeds when you sign up.
- Check in each week to receive a \$2 voucher to spend on produce - a fruit, vegetable or herb of your choice. Vouchers can be saved or used each day.



## WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program

The Minnetonka Farmers Market is a participating market in the state's WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

- WIC participants receive \$30 in checks to use on produce at the farmers market.
- Participating produce vendors accept the checks at our market.



## July in Minnesota: What's in season?

Seasonal food guide, search by month at [seasonalfoodguide.org/state/minnesota](http://seasonalfoodguide.org/state/minnesota).

# Music in the Park 6:30-8 P.M.

Offering a wide variety of music for the whole family every Tuesday evening at the outdoor amphitheater on the civic center campus, 14600 Minnetonka Blvd. Bring your blanket or lawn chair.



July 5

Sawyer's Dream

July 12

Westwind Big Band

sponsored by



July 19

Jeff Dayton

sponsored by



July 26

City of Lakes Band

sponsored by



See the full schedule at [minnetonkamn.gov/entertainment](http://minnetonkamn.gov/entertainment).

# Meet Community Engagement Officer Bauer

Minnetonka Police Officer Peter Bauer is all about connecting with the community. He recently accepted the role as Minnetonka's community engagement officer - a position created five years ago to better engage residents and build relationships within the Minnetonka community.



"There's so much to community policing," Bauer said. "My role is about being able to build that trust and communication, create comfortability with the Minnetonka PD and the community."



Bauer joined the Minnetonka Police Department in 2014 and has served as a patrol officer, field training officer and mental health evaluation team member. His most recent assignment was

two years on the department's traffic unit.

With the ongoing pandemic, outreach has been challenging for the police department.

But as events return, Bauer is looking for ways to reintroduce the department, get involved and better reach pockets of the community that may not have regular positive interactions with police.

He also plans to build on the relationships developed within Minnetonka's faith community and continue tutoring elementary students twice a week - a program he started while on the traffic unit.

"It's rewarding to go into elementary schools in uniform and build that familiarity with our younger kids," he said.

Would you like an opportunity to connect with Minnetonka police officers? Share your community engagement idea or event with Officer Bauer at 952-939-7603 or email [engageMPD@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:engageMPD@minnetonkamn.gov).



## Absentee voting open for August primary

The 2022 primary election is Tuesday, Aug. 9. Here's how you can vote in the August primary:

- Absentee in-person at Minnetonka City Hall  
June 24-Aug. 8  
(Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.)
  - Direct balloting Aug. 2-8
- Absentee by mail - learn how at [minnetonkamn.gov/election](https://minnetonkamn.gov/election)
- In-person on Election Day (Aug. 9) at your polling location
  - Some polling locations have changed. Watch your mailbox for updated information from Hennepin County or visit [pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us](https://pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us).



More info: [minnetonkamn.gov/election](https://minnetonkamn.gov/election) or 952-939-8200

# Congratulations to Minnetonka's firefighter and police officer of the year

Firefighter Rich Alme is Minnetonka's 2022 Firefighter of the Year. Alme received the Chief Ken Johnson Award, named for the department's founding chief, at the department's annual banquet.

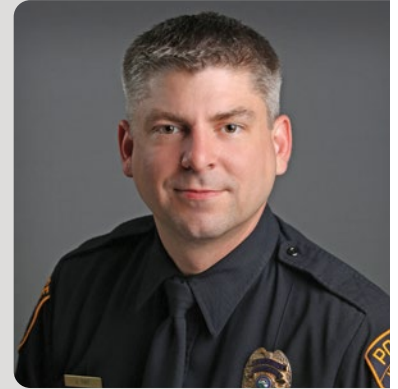


"He improves service quality by seldom missing a training night, or by signing up for additional trainings when they are available," said Chief John Vance, shown next to Alme in the photo.

Read more about him at [minnetonkamn.gov/firedepartment](https://minnetonkamn.gov/firedepartment)



Sgt. Jason Tait is the 2022 Glen Lake Optimist Officer of the Year. Tait, who currently serves as sergeant of investigations, was recognized for his leadership, initiative and efforts to improve the efficiency of the police department.



Tait became the first person in the department to receive an emergency management certificate.

Read more about his contributions at [minnetonkamn.gov/pdnotebook](https://minnetonkamn.gov/pdnotebook).



## Register your Night to Unite block party

Celebrate community at the annual Minnetonka Night to Unite celebration Tuesday, Aug. 2 from 6–9 p.m. Parties must register to receive visits from Minnetonka Police and Fire, Public Works and other city officials. *Please note: Visits are not guaranteed.*

This year, the police department will host a block party theme contest and the annual Night to Unite photo content with special categories for officer interaction, pets and more. We will also be collecting items for ICA Food Shelf.



Register your party by July 15 and find party planning tools: [minnetonkamn.gov/night-to-unite](https://minnetonkamn.gov/night-to-unite)

# Sustainable Minnetonka hosts solar and electric events

July includes two great opportunities to learn more about sustainability. The city will host a free solar energy workshop with the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA). The presentation will include benefits of solar energy ownership, including how solar works, available incentives, installation and how to schedule a free, no obligation, site assessment. MREA is also coordinating a solar group buy in the Twin Cities and will share how to participate in that program.

## Solar Energy Presentation

**Thursday, July 14**  
**6:30 p.m.**

**Minnetonka Community Center**  
**14600 Minnetonka Blvd.**

If you've ever considered buying an electric vehicle or outdoor equipment, then **Everything Electric** is the perfect place for you. This event will include an electric vehicle presentation plus a variety of other electric bikes and equipment. While you're there, you can enjoy something to eat from food trucks.



## Everything Electric

**Sunday, July 24**  
**2-5 p.m.**

**Minnetonka Community Center**  
**14600 Minnetonka Blvd.**

Visit **Sustainable Minnesota** at [minnetonkamn.gov](http://minnetonkamn.gov) to learn more about our programs or contact City of Minnetonka Sustainability Coordinator Drew Ingvalson at [dingvalson@minnetonkamn.com](mailto:dingvalson@minnetonkamn.com) or 952-939-8293 with questions.

## Clearing the air on recreational fires

Every summer brings with it evenings spent around a campfire and an increase in complaints about smoke from those fires. Minnetonka requires permits for all wood-burning recreational fires. Permits are available at [minnetonkamn.gov/fire](http://minnetonkamn.gov/fire) and should be renewed each year.

When preparing a recreational fire, please be considerate of neighbors who may suffer from respiratory illnesses. Also keep in mind that recently downed branches and limbs - known as green wood - do not burn well and can be particularly smoky. Please deliver storm debris to the city's brush disposal site.



Recreational fire recommendations:

- Wind speeds should be at or below 10 miles per hour
- The air quality index should be at or below 100 according
- The DNR fire danger rating should be low or moderate

# City gardens are in full bloom

Each summer, the Minnetonka Civic Center campus is in full bloom with pretty petunias, colorful coleus and flamboyant cannas.

The magnificent flower beds are the work of the Public Works Department's Eileen Connors and her green thumb.



"I love flowers. I love the colors after the gray of winter," she said. "I just like watching something become beautiful."

Connors is the flower guru at the city, responsible for the landscaping and flowers beds at Glen Lake Station, Minnetonka Mills Park, Burwell House and the civic center

campus. Her plant knowledge and ability to grow vibrant greenery keep Minnetonka's public spaces in full bloom.

Each January, Connors thoughtfully selects the next season's plants by comparing the list of available plants from her vendors with notes from past years. She takes photos throughout the season to track the plantings' progress and tries to do something new each year.

"Different plants shine at different times of the year," Connors said. "There are a lot of variables that go into selecting our plants."

## Volunteer Spotlight: Richard Koenig

Come summer, you're sure to find Minnetonka resident Richard Koenig with a hose in hand watering the flower beds at the Mills Gazebo and The Landing Shop.

Koenig spends three hours, two to three times a week, manually watering the large plots. Each spring, he also helps plant the beautiful flower beds throughout the city.

"He's my partner with the planting," said Public Works' Eileen Connors.

"He shows up at seven in the morning and stays through the whole day. He's the Energizer Bunny."

A founding member and ongoing volunteer with the Senior Garden Club, Koenig isn't one for accolades. "I would rather just help out when there is something that will make our community be a better place to live."



The plants – thousands of annuals and perennials – arrive the third week of May and there's a short window to get them in the ground.



Connors, two seasonal employees, volunteer Richard Koenig and the Senior Garden Club spend more than a week planting beds and 60 planters for display by Memorial Day weekend.

Connors' team waters, fertilizes, weeds, pinches and checks the annual plants' health until the first frost of the season. Institution Community Work Crews (ICWC) maintain the city's perennial beds on the civic center campus and parks.

It's hard work, but the reward comes in the multitude of compliments and positive feedback the city receives each year. "Minnetonka doesn't have the main street with hanging baskets that many communities have. So this," she said, gesturing to the flowers outside city hall, "is our city square."



Minnetonka Senior Services Garden Club members recently helped plant more than 60 large planters to be displayed at city parks and public spaces. The seniors volunteer each year to assist with the annual planting.

The garden club was founded in 2007. If you're interested in joining the garden club, contact the Community Center at 952-939-8369.

# Minnetonka protects pollinators

Most flowering plants on Earth need the help of animal pollinators to reproduce. Unfortunately, pollinator species – from wild bees, butterflies and moths to wasps, flies, beetles and hummingbirds – are declining globally due to pressure from habitat loss, chemical overuse and climate change. They need our help.



In 2017, the City of Minnetonka answered the call by signing the Mayors' Monarch Pledge, a National Wildlife Federation program that provides a framework to guide cities in pollinator protection efforts. Every year, the city re-commits to this program at the highest level, with:

- Extensive public outreach and engagement
- Collaboration between city departments and with external partners
- Ongoing habitat restoration on city properties
- Education and technical assistance to help residents add resilient habitat where they live and work
- An updated ordinance to increase and preserve habitat on private property.

## It's Monarch and Pollinator Awareness Month!

July 2022 marks Minnetonka's sixth annual Monarch and Pollinator Awareness Month. Watch the city's social media and [minnetonkamatters.com](https://www.minnetonkamatters.com) for weekly updates on how you can celebrate and pollinators, learn about their importance and take action to help them thrive.



## Plant for pollinators!

Diverse native plants can support many different pollinators, which in turn feed birds and other wildlife. Visit [bit.ly/3Mcctwz](https://bit.ly/3Mcctwz) to participate in this year's online native plant sale.



## Reduce chemical use!

Pesticides are intended to control pests and weeds, but they can harm pollinators and other beneficial creatures. Check out [minnetonkamn.gov/NRyou](https://www.minnetonkamn.gov/NRyou) to learn more.

## Appreciate pollinators and the plants they support!

There are hundreds of pollinator species in Minnesota, and each is a valuable part of our natural environment. Some even pollinate our food!



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## City of Minnetonka Calendar

- 4** Fourth of July observed, city offices closed
- 7** Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
- 12** Senior Advisory Board, 10 a.m.
- 14** Economic Development Advisory Commission, 6 p.m.
- 18** City Council & Economic Development Authority, 6:30 p.m.
- 19** Sustainability Commission, 6:30 p.m.
- 21** Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.

City meetings are held in person. Visit [minnetonkamn.gov/participate](http://minnetonkamn.gov/participate) to learn how to participate remotely. Watch meetings live and on-demand at [minnetonkamn.gov/tv](http://minnetonkamn.gov/tv).

For up-to-date information, visit [minnetonkamn.gov/calendar](http://minnetonkamn.gov/calendar) or call 952-939-8200.



CITY OF  
**MINNETONKA**

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**ECRWSS  
POSTAL PATRON**

## Let's play Pickleball!

It's widely considered the fastest growing sport in the country. This summer you can learn how to play or improve your game in the popular sport of pickleball.

The city is now offering private pickleball lessons with staff pros – Mary Harper, Kathleen O'Connell, and Terri Osland – at Lone Lake Park.

Please contact Boris Gonikman [bgonikman@minnetonkamn.gov](mailto:bgonikman@minnetonkamn.gov) to schedule a lesson.



## Register for Youth Soccer League by July 10

The Hopkins-Minnetonka Fall Youth Soccer League is a great opportunity for kids entering grades K-8 to learn the sport, make friends and have fun!

All teams play games on Saturdays, and grades 3-8 play an additional game each Tuesday or Thursday. Practices begin the week of Aug. 22, and the season will conclude by Oct. 15.

Visit [minnetonkamn.gov/register](http://minnetonkamn.gov/register) or call 952-939-8203 to register by July 10.



## Volunteer coaches needed

If you have soccer experience and enjoy working with children, call 952-939-8203 for more information.