

NEWSBRIEF



Date: November 22, 2013

To: Council & Senior Staff

Turn the page for a list of what's included in this packet.

(Items are alphabetized)

1. Centerpoint Energy Rate Increase
2. Crystal Planning Commission Agenda Summary
3. NWSCCC – City Granicus Webstreaming and NWSCCC.org Statistics
4. NWSCCC Meeting Minutes of September 19, 2013
5. NWCTV Meeting Minutes of September 19, 2013
6. Robbinsdale Area Schools *Discover* dated November 19, 2013
7. Senator Ann H. Rest 2013 Capitol Update – November 2013
8. SunPost article dated 11/21/13:
 - *Runnako retires from West Metro Fire-Rescue*



800 LaSalle Avenue
PO Box 59038
Minneapolis, MN 55459-0038

November 18, 2013

Ms. Anne Norris
Crystal - City Manager
4141 Douglas Dr N
Crystal, MN 55422

Dear Ms. Norris:

On August 2, 2013, CenterPoint Energy filed a request with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) to increase its natural gas rates by \$44.3 million annually, or 5.0 percent. The MPUC accepted the filing and approved an overall interim (temporary) rate increase of \$42.9 million, or 4.88 percent for all CenterPoint Energy customers. The interim rate, which is subject to refund with interest, took effect October 1, 2013, and continues until the MPUC issues a final order and the company implements new rates.

The process for changing our rates will take about one year, and we expect final rates to be implemented in mid 2014. A rate filing is the regulatory process that public utilities must follow to formally change rates and services for their customers. This filing will affect the rates paid by all of CenterPoint Energy's customers.

For your information, I have enclosed our public hearing notice with hearing dates, times and locations. This information was sent to all customers and will be advertised in each county seat in our service area, as well as in the communities where hearings will be held.

Please contact us at 1-612-372-4727 or 1-800-245-2377, or visit the company's Web site at www.CenterPointEnergy.com/ratecase if you would like additional information about the filing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Vortherms".

Joe Vortherms
Division Vice President
CenterPoint Energy
Regional Gas Operations

Enclosure: Public Hearing Notice

FOR MORE INFORMATION

You may visit CenterPoint Energy's offices during normal business hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday) to examine the proposed rate schedule and a comparison of present and proposed rates at:

800 LaSalle Avenue, 14th floor
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Phone: 612-372-4727

Web: CenterPointEnergy.com/RateCase

Or you may contact the Department of Commerce at:

85 Seventh Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101

Phone: 651-539-1534

Persons with hearing loss or speech disabilities may call through their preferred Telecommunications Relay Service.

Web: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/Efiling/search.jsp>
(Select 13 in the year field, enter 316 in the number field, select search, and the list of documents will appear on the next page), to examine the filing.

ACCOMMODATIONS

If any reasonable accommodation is needed to enable you to fully participate in these public hearings (for example, sign language or foreign language interpreter, wheelchair accessibility, or large print materials), please contact the MPUC at 651-296-0406 or 800-657-3782 one week in advance of the hearing.



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RATE INCREASE NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR CENTERPOINT ENERGY MINNESOTA CUSTOMERS

On August 2, 2013, CenterPoint Energy filed a request with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) to change its rates for utility distribution service. If approved by the MPUC, the proposed new rates will result in an overall increase in revenue of \$44.3 million, or about 5 percent annually. The requested increase would add about \$4.00 to a typical residential customer's monthly bill.

We expect the MPUC's final decision on this request in June 2014. If final rates are less than interim rates, customers will be refunded the difference with interest. If final rates are higher, customers will not be charged the difference.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Any CenterPoint Energy customer or other person may attend or provide comments at the hearings. You are invited to comment on the adequacy and quality of CenterPoint Energy's service, the level of rates or other related matters. You do not need to be represented by an attorney.

Administrative Law Judge, LauraSue Schlatter will conduct five public hearings. You may participate at any of the following dates, times and locations:

Date	Time	Locations
Monday Dec. 2	7:00 p.m.	Central Lakes Community College 501 W. College Dr., Room E203, Brainerd
Tuesday Dec. 3	7:00 p.m.	Normandale Community College, Classroom P0808 9700 France Ave. S., Bloomington
Wednesday Dec. 4	7:00 p.m.	Mankato Place Mall, Mankato Room 12 Civic Center Plaza, Mankato
Monday Dec. 9	1:00 p.m.	CEAP – Community Room 7051 Brooklyn Blvd., Brooklyn Center
Tuesday Dec. 10	7:00 p.m.	Sabathani Community Center, Auditorium 310 E. 38th St., Minneapolis

WRITTEN COMMENTS

Written comments may be sent to:

Administrative Law Judge, LauraSue Schlatter

Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH)

P.O. Box 64620

St. Paul, MN 55164-0620

ratecomments.oah@state.mn.us

Customers may also send comments to the Minnesota Public

Utilities Commission:

121 Seventh Place East, Suite 350

St. Paul, MN 55101-2147

Email: PublicComments.puc@state.mn.us

Telephone: 651-296-0406 or 800-657-3782 or your preferred

Telecommunications Relay Service

Written comments are most effective when the following three items are included:

1. The issues in CenterPoint Energy's proposal you are addressing
2. Your specific recommendations
3. The reason for your recommendations.

Please include OAH docket number 80-2500-30979 and MPUC docket number G-008/GR-13-316 in all communications. The deadline for written comments is **December 31, 2013**.

Important: Comments will be made available to the public on the MPUC's website, except in limited circumstances consistent with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. The MPUC does not edit or delete personal identifying information from submissions.

EVIDENTIARY HEARINGS

Formal evidentiary hearings on CenterPoint Energy's proposal are scheduled to start on January 14, 2014, in the MPUC's large hearing room, 3rd floor, 121 Seventh Place East, St. Paul. The purpose of the evidentiary hearings is to allow CenterPoint Energy, the Minnesota Department of Commerce – Division of Energy Resources, the Minnesota Office of Attorney General – Antitrust and Utilities Division and others to present testimony and to cross-examine each other's witnesses on the proposed rate increase.

Anyone who wishes to formally intervene in this case should contact the Administrative Law Judge, LauraSue Schlatter, at the above address.

CenterPoint Energy requested the rate changes described in this notice. The MPUC may either grant or deny the requested changes, in whole or in part, and may grant a lesser or greater increase than that requested for any class or classes of service.

The chart below shows the effect of both the interim and proposed rate changes on monthly bills for residential, commercial and industrial customers with average natural gas use:

Customer type (usage in therms)	Avg monthly usage in therms	Avg monthly bill: current rates	Avg monthly bill: interim rates	Avg monthly bill: rates proposed
Residential	73	\$57.50	\$60.25	\$61.50
Commercial/Industrial - Up to 1,500/year	60	\$51.50	\$54.00	\$55.00
Commercial/Industrial - 1,500 to 5,000/year	226	\$166.50	\$174.75	\$167.25
Commercial/Industrial - 5,000 or more/year	1,136	\$774.25	\$812.00	\$788.50
Small Volume Dual Fuel Sales Service - Up to 120,000/year	3,799	\$2,114	\$2,217	\$2,161
Small Volume Dual Fuel Sales Service - 120,000 or more/year	13,743	\$7,449	\$7,813	\$7,617
Large Volume Dual Fuel Sales Service	125,750	\$59,200	\$62,089	\$60,736

* Figures above are rounded (residential and commercial/industrial customers are rounded to the nearest \$0.25 and dual fuel customers are rounded to the nearest whole number).

CRYSTAL PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA SUMMARY

Monday, December 9, 2013

7:00 p.m.

Crystal City Hall – Council Chambers

4141 Douglas Dr N

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **November 12, 2013 regular meeting ***

C. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 1. Consider Application 2013-15 for a Conditional Use Permit and setback variance for an outdoor play area along Sherburne Avenue (Christina's Child Care Center, 5510 West Broadway) ***
- 2. Consider Application 2013-16 for setback variances to allow expansion of an existing house and detached garage at 4952 Quail Avenue North ***

D. GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1. Letter sent to Metropolitan Council regarding the 2040 forecast ***
- 2. City Council action on previous Planning Commission items:**
 - **Adopted an ordinance rezoning Crystal Gallery Mall to C-2 Planned Development for a new building, de-malling and parking lot improvements**
 - **Approved a CUP for an 8' tall fence at 7200 56th Avenue North**
 - **Approved first reading of an ordinance allowing multicolor electronic signs**
- 3. Staff preview of likely agenda items for Monday, January 13 meeting**

F. OPEN FORUM

G. ADJOURNMENT

** Items for which supporting materials will be included in the meeting packet*

CITY OF CRYSTAL

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

**LAND USE APPLICATION 2013-15
5510 WEST BROADWAY (CHRISTINA'S CHILD CARE CENTER)
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT AND SETBACK VARIANCE
FOR AN OUTDOOR PLAY AREA ALONG SHERBURNE AVENUE**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Planning Commission of the City of Crystal will meet on **Monday, December 9, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.** or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, at **Crystal City Hall, 4141 Douglas Drive North**, in said City, to consider the following land use application:

LAND USE APPLICATION 2013-15:

- Applicant: Steven & Ophelia Zeogar d/b/a Christina's Child Care Center
- Property Owner: Crystal Gallery Developers
- Property Address: Tenant space addressed as 5510 West Broadway within the Crystal Gallery Mall located at 5502 West Broadway (P.I.D 05-118-21-44-0046)
- Description: Conditional use permit and setback variance for a fenced outdoor play area located on the east side of the Crystal Gallery Mall adjacent to Sherburne Avenue. The conditional use permit is required for the outdoor use in the C-2 zoning district. The variance is required because the play area would be set back 7 feet from the lot line along Sherburne instead of the standard minimum of 30 feet.

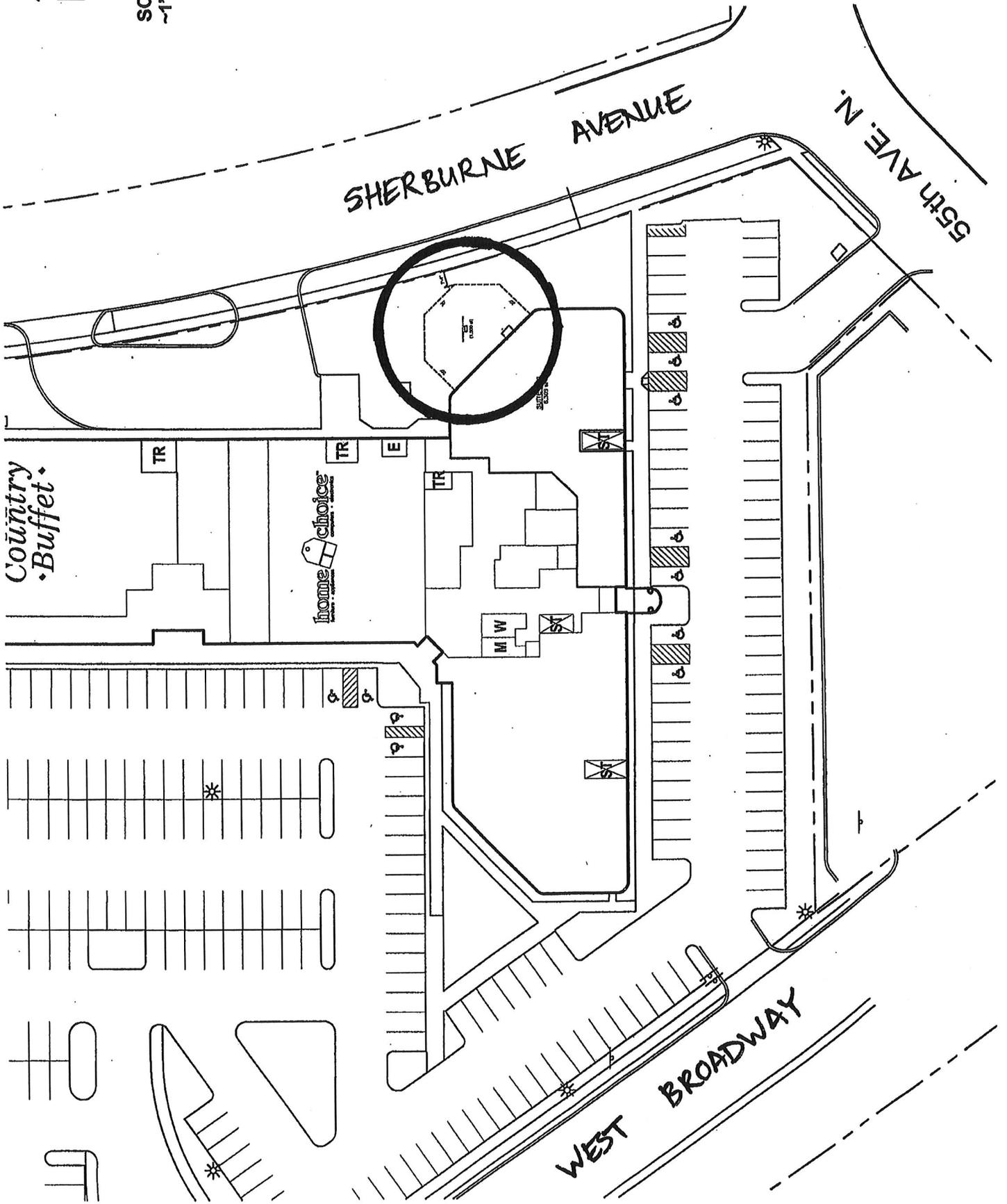
On or about November 26, 2013 a copy of this application will be available for review on the Planning & Zoning page of the city website, www.crystalmn.gov, and also at Crystal City Hall during normal business hours. The city staff report will be similarly available on or about December 4, 2013. If you have questions please contact City Planner John Sutter at john.sutter@crystalmn.gov or 763.531.1142.

Persons desiring to be heard on this matter are invited and encouraged to attend the public hearing. Persons unable to attend may submit written comments prior to the date of the hearing to: Community Development Department, City of Crystal, 4141 Douglas Dr N, Crystal MN 55422. Auxiliary aids are available for public meetings upon request at least 96 hours in advance. Please call the City Clerk at 763-531-1145 to make arrangements. Deaf and hard of hearing callers should contact the MN Relay Service at 711 or 1.800.627.3529 V/TTY.

TIM BUCK, SECRETARY, PLANNING COMMISSION



SCALE
~1" : 60'



CITY OF CRYSTAL

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

**LAND USE APPLICATION 2013-16
4952 QUAIL AVENUE NORTH
SETBACK VARIANCES TO ALLOW EXPANSION
OF AN EXISTING HOUSE AND DETACHED GARAGE**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Planning Commission of the City of Crystal will meet on **Monday, December 9, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.** or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, at **Crystal City Hall, 4141 Douglas Drive North**, in said City, to consider the following land use application:

LAND USE APPLICATION 2013-16:

- Applicant and property owner: Pamela and Michael Brady
- Property Address: 4952 Quail Avenue North (P.I.D. 09-118-21-14-0031)
- Description: This application seeks two variances:
 - The existing house is set back 3.5 feet from the north side lot line. The minimum setback is 5 feet (measured to the building wall). The house is lawfully non-conforming and cannot be expanded. The owner wishes to construct an addition on the east side of the house, but to do so, a variance is required to reduce the north side setback requirement to 3.5 feet so the house may be expanded.
 - The existing detached garage is set back less than 1 foot from the west and north lot lines. The minimum setback is 3 feet (measured to any part of the building). The garage is lawfully non-conforming and cannot be expanded. The owner wishes to add on to the garage at some point in the future, but to do so, a variance is required to eliminate the setback requirements so the garage may be expanded.

On or about November 26, 2013 a copy of this application will be available for review on the Planning & Zoning page of the city website, www.crystalmn.gov, and also at Crystal City Hall during normal business hours. The city staff report will be similarly available on or about December 4, 2013. If you have questions please contact City Planner John Sutter at john.sutter@crystalmn.gov or 763.531.1142.

Persons desiring to be heard on this matter are invited and encouraged to attend the public hearing. Persons unable to attend may submit written comments prior to the date of the hearing to: Community Développement Department, City of Crystal, 4141 Douglas Dr N, Crystal MN 55422. Auxiliary aids are available for public meetings upon request at least 96 hours in advance. Please call the City Clerk at 763-531-1145 to make arrangements. Deaf and hard of hearing callers should contact the MN Relay Service at 711 or 1.800.627.3529 V/TTY.

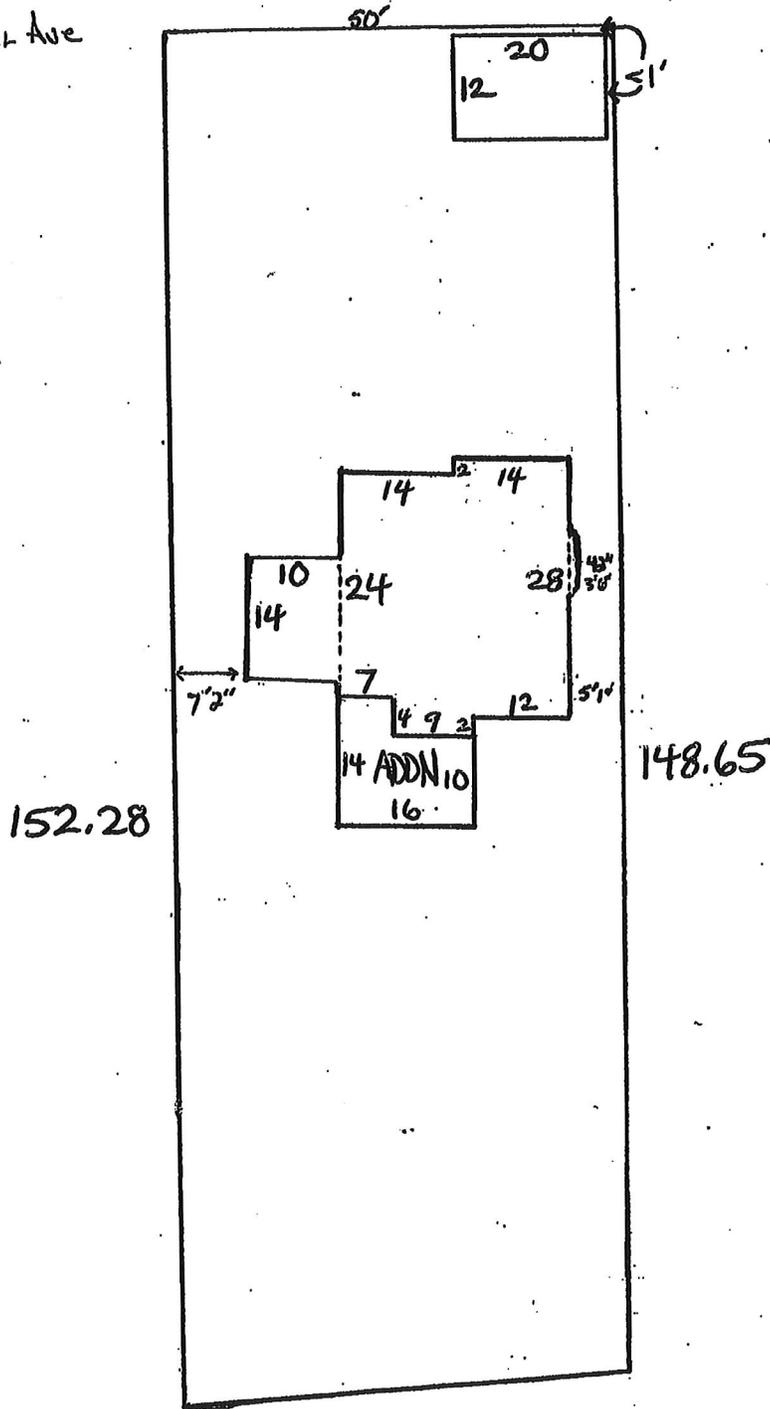
TIM BUCK, SECRETARY, PLANNING COMMISSION

QUAIL AVE

4952 Quail Ave

N ►

SCALE
~1" : 20'



TWIN LAKE BLVD

Approved 11-4-13

Meeting Minutes of The Northwest Suburbs Cable Communications Commission September 19, 2013

Meeting was called to order at 8:07A.M.

I. Roll Call

Present: Newman(Brooklyn Center); Jackson, Verbrugge (Brooklyn Park); Norris, Deshler (Crystal); Russell, Clausen (Golden Valley); Madsen, Leith (Maple Grove); McDonald (New Hope); Reeder, Schulz (Osseo); LaFave , Willis (Plymouth); Blonigan, Selman (Robbinsdale).

Absent: Willson (Brooklyn Center); Hoffe (New Hope)

Others present: Adrian Herbst (The Baller Herbst Law Group, P.C.)
Randy Stengel (Osseo School District)
Dave Carlson (Wayzata School District)
Paul Hennen (Financial Consulting Services)
Steve McDonald (Abdo, Eick and Meyer)
Joy Wanjiku (Media Development in Africa – Kenya)
Henry Gichaba (Media Development in Africa – Minnesota)

Staff present: Anderson, Brierley, Christie, Gaffron, Johnson – Ex. Dir., Kiser, Nolan Clark,

Consent Items

Agenda Item II.1 - Approval of the Consent Agenda from the May 16, 2013 meeting.

Commissioner Willis moved to approve the minutes from the May 16, 2013 meeting, seconded by Commissioner LaFave.

MOTION CARRIED

Agenda Item II.2 - Approval of Treasurer's Report.

Commissioner Willis moved to approve the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Commissioner LaFave.

MOTION CARRIED

Action Item III.3 Presentation of 2012 NWSCCC's and NWCT's Audit Report.

Steve McDonald of Abdo, Eick and Meyers presented the 2012 combined audit report for NWSCCC and NWCT. He discussed the Management Letter and the Opinion on the Financial reports, stating that there were no findings.

Commissioner Willis moved to accept the Audit Report, seconded by Commissioner LaFave.

MOTION CARRIED

Action Item III.4

Presentation of 2013 Investment Report.

Paul Hennen discussed FINRA and the Commissions Portfolio.

Commissioner Willis moved to accept the 2013 Investment Report, seconded by Commissioner Blonigan.

MOTION CARRIED

Action Item III.5

Presentation of Proposed NWSCCC's and NWCT's Budgets and referral to the NWSCCC's Executive Committee and NWCT's Budget Committee.

Mike Johnson – Ex. Dir. presented the NWSCCC 2014 Proposed Budget. He discussed briefly a few of the changes. Commissioner Willis moved to refer the budget to the NWCT's Budget Committee and the Executive Committee, seconded by Commissioner Blonigan.

MOTION CARRIED

Action Item III.6

Appointments of Open At Large Northwest Community Television Board of Directors Positions.

Mike Johnson – Ex. Dir. discussed that after reading the Articles of Incorporation, he found there should be 15 seats. He went on to further state that the At Large positions in the past had been filled by members of the Commission. It was suggested that a process be created to fill the At Large positions from the community if there is not enough interest from the Commission.

Commissioner Willis moved to have a process created and presented at the next Commission meeting, seconded by Commissioner LaFave.

Action Item III.7

Franchise Renewal Update.

Adrian Herbst of The Baller Herbst Law Group, discussed the renewal and referred to his memo for a recap of the last meeting with Comcast.

Action Item III.8

Telecommunications Update

Adrian Herbst of The Baller Herbst Law Group, very briefly discussed his memos on various updates in telecommunications.

With no further items, Commissioner Madsen moved to adjourn at 9:08A.M., seconded by Commissioner Blonigan.

MOTION CARRIED

Meeting ended at 9:08 A.M.

Approved 11-21-13

***Meeting Minutes of
The Northwest Community Television
Board of Directors
September 19, 2013***

Meeting was called to order at 7:32 A.M.

ROLL CALL

Present: Burt, Glick, LaFave Madsen, McDonald, Newman, Orn, Norris, Reeder,
Russell, Stinksi, Verbrugge

Absent: Goebel

Others Present: Adrian Herbst (The Baller Herbst Law Group, P.C.)
Randy Stengel (Osseo School District)
Dave Carlson (Wayzata School District)
Paul Hennen (Financial Consulting Services)
Steve McDonald (Abdo, Eick and Meyer)
Joy Wanjiku (Media Development in Africa – Kenya)
Henry Gichaba (Media Development in Africa – Minnesota)

Staff: Anderson, Brierley, Christie, Gaffron, Johnson(Ex Dir), Kiser, Nolan Clark

Prior to the start of the meeting, Mike, Johnson (Ex. Dir.) introduced new NWSCCC
Commissioner James Jackson, Henry Gichaba and Joy Wanjiku.

CONSENT ITEMS

Director Verbrugge moved to approve the minutes from the May 16, 2013 meeting and
the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Director Russell.

MOTION CARRIED

ACTION ITEMS

1. *Presentation of Proposed 2014 NWCT Budget and referral to NWSCCC's
Executive Committee and NWCT's Budget Committee. Please refer to NWSCCC's
Attachment number NWSCCC-5.*

Mike Johnson- Ex. Dir. discussed the NWCT Budget and the line item changes. He also
discussed the revenue projections and how subscriber counts influence our bottom line.
Director LaFave moved to refer the budget to the NWCT Budget Committee and
Executive Committee, seconded by Director Norris.

MOTION CARRIED

Staff Reports

Video presentation during staff reports.

Mike Johnson- Ex, Dir. discussed Tim Gaffron's and his tour of the 9 city council chambers, Media Development in Africa and their Brochures, and the new brochures for cities to promote their council meetings on the internet. Director Verbrugge commented on the hard work by Tim Gaffron to get all the bugs worked out. Mike also commented on the nomination for an Emmy by the sports department.

Barb Nolan Clark introduced a video that allowed her staff to report on the events happening in Public Access, the increase in programs compared to last year at this time, the upcoming Board of Directors election in November, the new cameras and the new look for Channel 18.

Dave Kiser reported on the new cameras for Public Access, the new switcher for the Events Department, Sports Jam Hall of Fame, the conversion to 16:9, graphics package for events, Community Corner, News and the new slogan for Channel 12 – "Your Local Source".

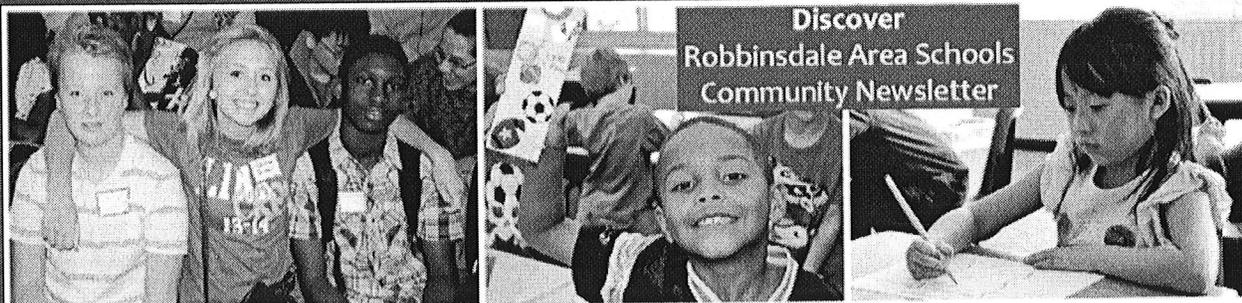
Mike Johnson – Ex. Dir. thanked Dave Kiser, James Anderson and Shawn Christie for all their hard work. In addition, Mike, thanked Wendy Brierley for all of her work with the 2014 budgets.

With no further business Director Madsen moved to adjourn, seconded by Director Norris.
MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07A.M.

Anne Norris

From: Robbinsdale Area Schools [robbinsdaleareaschools@rdale.org]
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2013 4:32 PM
To: Anne Norris
Subject: Discover - Nov. 19



Tuesday, Nov. 19

District News

Vote for Education Assistant of the Year

Robbinsdale Area Schools is now accepting nominations for the 2013-2014 district Education Assistant of the Year through Dec. 9. Anyone can nominate an EA - students, parents, administrators, colleagues, and community members. Self-nominations are also accepted. The nomination form can be found online at www.rftonline.org. [Click here](#) for more information.

School News

Turkey Pardoned by Governor Dayton Visits SEA

Did you know the President of the United States has pardoned a turkey at Thanksgiving since 1947? Students at the School of Engineering and Arts learned this and many other fun facts about turkeys on Monday when [Minnesota Turkey](#) came to visit kindergarten and first grade students. This year, a Minnesota turkey will get the official pardon from the president and his brother came to visit students at SEA. [Click here](#) to learn more about the road to becoming a presidential turkey. More photos are available on [our Facebook](#)

News Clips

Channel 12
Standout Student: Ricki Williams

WCCO-TV
[Special Turkey Stops at the School of Engineering and Arts](#)

Star Tribune
[Robins rally for sixth adapted soccer title in a row](#)

Check out our "[Media Room](#)" page on the website!

Upcoming Events

Robbinsdale Transition Center Holiday Craft Sale
Students from the Robbinsdale Transition Center are hosting a holiday craft fair through their student-run business Sugar Rush, a gift and goodies bag company. Come to the main lobby of Sandburg Learning Center on Thursday, Nov. 21 from 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. to purchase soaps, mittens, jewelry, art and



page.

Cooper's Performing Arts Boosters Fundraising for Equipment

Cooper's Performing Arts Boosters are fundraising for musical theater equipment this month. Purchase pre-paid and gift cards by Nov. 26 for an early December delivery. Click [here](#) for participating vendors or [here](#) for an order form.



Armstrong Girls Swimming Finishes Third at Sections

Congratulations to Robbinsdale Armstrong High School's section team on their 3rd place finish at the section meet! The team will send several individuals to the state meet on Nov. 19 and 20. Special congratulations to Courtney Evensen who broke the pool and meet record in the 200 free and 500 free, along with breaking her team record in the 500 free with a time of 4:56.05.



Courtney was also honored with being voted Section Swimmer of the Meet. The whole team received an honor of Section 5AA Academic Champs! Congratulations again!

Community Ed News

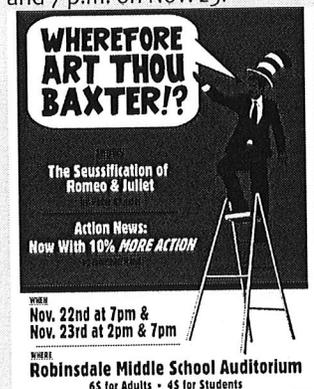
other fun items for holiday gift giving. This is a free event.

Meadow Lake Book Walk & Swap

Come to Meadow Lake on Thursday, Nov. 21 from 5:30-7 p.m. for the first annual Book Walk and Swap!

RMS Theatre Presents Wherefore Art Thou Baxter!?

Come see "The Seussification of Romeo and Juliet" and "Action News: Now With 10% MORE ACTION" presented by the Robbinsdale Middle School Theater department! Shows are at 7 p.m. on Nov. 22 and 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Nov. 23.



Cooper Theatre Presents Jump, Jive & G.I.'s

You're invited to attend Cooper Theatre's production of Jump, Jive & G.I.'s this weekend! Click [here](#) to view the flyer.



School Board News

Family Literacy Turkey

This month the Family Literacy Program at Sandburg Learning Center is celebrating being thankful, and by hanging a large turkey in the hallway. The children, their parents and anyone else within our building who wants to participate fills out a feather with what they are thankful for and hangs it up on the turkey. Please head over to Sandburg before Thanksgiving and fill out a feather of your own!



Robbinsdale Area School Board Meetings

The School Board met last night for listening time and a regular meeting. Follow us on Twitter and Facebook to get important votes and other news live during the regular and business meetings. For more School Board news, click on Minutes, Podcast and Webcast below.

School Board Resources:

- [Agenda](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [Minutes, Podcast and Webcast](#)

Stay Connected



To find more social media links for our schools, activities and community education programs, click [here](#).

[Robbinsdale Area Schools website](#)

[Forward this email](#)



This email was sent to anne.norris@ci.crystal.mn.us by robbinsdaleareaschools@rdale.org | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).
Robbinsdale Area Schools | 4148 Winnetka Ave N | New Hope | MN | 55427



Senator Ann H. Rest

2013 Capitol Update

2013 Interim Capitol Update

November 2013

PROPERTY TAX NOTICES FOR 2014

On Nov. 12, the Department of Revenue released preliminary maximum 2014 statewide property tax levies that have been reported by local governments and passed by local school referenda. These preliminary figures show property tax levies increasing \$152.7 million statewide for 2014, or a 1.5 percent increase over 2013 levies. These numbers represent the *maximum* property tax levies that taxing jurisdictions may approve for 2014. If the numbers change at all in February, they will be reduced. While next year's predicted 1.5 percent increase is disappointing, it also is a historically low increase compared with previous years and represents the downward property tax trend the legislature has been seeking. Increases for certain jurisdictions incorporate successful referendum votes, including the Hopkins School District and Osseo Area Schools.

Cities, counties and other jurisdictions must set final 2014 levies by Dec. 27, 2013. Local governments are required to hold Truth in Taxation hearings prior to this deadline in December to gather input from local residents. If you disagree with how your community is using new revenue or assessing property tax payers, you should attend these meetings to

voice your opinion. These preliminary levy figures also do not include the impact of direct property tax relief approved by the legislature in 2013, such as increased relief payments and expanded eligibility for the Renter's Credit and Homeowner Property Tax Refund. The maximum proposed levy increases for local governments in Senate District 45 can be found in this table.

Proposed Maximum Levy Changes for Local Government Units in Senate District 45	
Local Government Jurisdiction	Max. Levy Increase for 2014 (%)
Hennepin County	1.0%
City of Crystal	1.0%
City of Golden Valley	2.9%
City of New Hope	1.5%
City of Plymouth	2.5%
City of Robbinsdale	1.3%
Hopkins School District	11.4%
Osseo Area Schools	10.9%
Robbinsdale Area Schools	3.6%

MNSURE LAUNCHED OCTOBER 1

The MNsure website is now operational, and open enrollment on the exchange runs through March 31, 2014. Individuals, families and small businesses can shop for and compare health insurance plans on the new exchange. Those who wish their coverage to begin on January 1, 2014 must enroll in a plan and pay the first premium by December 15. Low-income Minnesotans may automatically qualify for Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare. Middle-income individuals and families may also be eligible to receive tax credits when purchasing coverage through the exchange. Governor Dayton, at the urging of Minnesota insurers, will not follow the new federal rule that will allow individuals to keep individual plans through 2014 regardless of whether those plans meet the standards set by the ACA, e.g. coverage of pre-existing conditions. For those who need help purchasing a plan, there are a number of navigators and brokers who can assist you. A full directory of these individuals can be found here: <http://www.mnsure.org/images/AssisterDirectory.pdf>. Additionally, MNsure has a toll-free hotline that you can call Monday through Saturday at 1-855-366-7873 (1-855-3MNSURE).

SOUTHWEST LRT

Met Council has delayed a final vote on construction of the Southwest Light Rail corridor. Two studies have been authorized that will investigate concerns raised by local governments about freight trains routes and light rail track in the Kenilworth Corridor of Minneapolis. The first study will determine which alternative routes are best for handling the diverted freight traffic. The second study will research whether a shallow tunnel under the current freight lines for the LRT line could be built without creating adverse environmental effects. This research will be conducted in December and the reports must be provided to the Met Council before they vote. All cities in the corridor (Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka, Eden Prairie) will also have a chance to review and approve the project before it can move forward.

MNDOT NEW ROAD PROJECTS

During the 2013 session, the Minnesota Legislature passed a law creating the Corridors of Commerce program. The new program authorizes \$300 million in trunk highway fund bonds for work on the state's trunk highways. The program was part of the Transportation and Public Safety Committee's Omnibus Finance Bill, HF 1444. Corridors of Commerce has two main goals: increase capacity where there are bottlenecks, and decrease barriers for commerce while improving the movement of freight. The grants will be administered by the Commissioner of Transportation. Among the inaugural grant recipients is the I-610 corridor. This highway will be extended by 2.5 miles so that it runs all the way from Brooklyn Park to Maple Grove, connecting Highway 169 to I-94. Upon completion, the new highway is expected to accommodate up to 50,000 vehicles a day.

Construction is also scheduled to begin on I-494 next summer. As part of a 2-year pavement rehabilitation project, a "dynamic lane" will be created for both directions of traffic between the Fish Lake interchange and Highway 55. The shoulders on both sides of the highway will be widened and will serve as additional traffic lanes during peak traffic hours. Unlike similar lanes on I-35W, drivers will not have to pay to use these lanes, but for now they will only be open as necessitated by traffic or crashes. Plymouth city officials were disappointed the solution was not a permanent one.



A NOTE FROM ANN

I had intended only to address in this note my thoughts about the legislation to raise the minimum wage, and I will do that but briefly. Many of you have written me about increasing it. I voted in the 2013 session along with other Democrats but no Republicans to increase it. A conference committee of Senate and House members did not reach agreement between the rate passed by the Senate (\$7.75) and the House (\$9.50). I am confident that a resolution will be reached early in the 2014 session and that we will send the governor a bill that he can sign.

I want to talk with you about two anniversaries this week: the 50th anniversary of the assassination of President Kennedy and the 150th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address delivered by President Lincoln at the dedication of a memorial to those who died at the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863. Many of us remember where we were when we learned that President Kennedy had been slain. I was a student at Northwestern University on my way home for the weekend. I stood at the corner of State and Randolph in Chicago and read the white moving sign high on the corner building dedicated to breaking news. I was stunned and then chilled—I was currently reading *Irrational Man* by philosopher William Barrett. In the chapter I was reading he asserted that America was a "nation of assassins." Don't remember much else about the book. The *Star Tribune* reprinted the Gettysburg address this morning. I sat over my morning coffee, read it aloud and reflected on the common fate of these two iconic presidents. I am so grateful to be a citizen of our great country but am moved to tears about certain moments in our history.

That gratitude for our country extends to gratitude for all the bounty we receive and are called upon to share and remember on Thanksgiving. Pray for all who risk their lives to protect our lives and our freedom. Celebrate with joy with your family and friends this most special day.

In your service,

Ann



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Marge Runnako shows the commemorative plate she received after her many years of service to the West Metro Fire-Rescue District. (Sun Post staff Photo by Joe Bowen)

Runnako retires from West Metro Fire-Rescue

A special reception was held for former Executive Assistant Marge Runnako at the West Metro Fire-Rescue District's board meeting Nov. 13. Runnako is retiring after 25 years with the department in its various forms after her position was eliminated during the district's recent reorganization.

"I hope you enjoy your life away from West Metro," said Board President Gary Laurant.

"I want to thank everybody. The firefighters all know I love them dearly and I'll miss them. I don't know what to say - for the first time, I'm speechless!" Runnako said with a laugh.

"The things that (at the department) I did have been boring, but it's never been boring," she added, before exiting the room to a standing ovation.

Cake and refreshments were served, and Runnako was presented with a commemorative plate for her service. Her first year of employment with the district was 1987.