

NEWSBRIEF



Date: December 26, 2014

To: Council & Senior Staff

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4. Thank you from Habitat for Humanity to EDA for NSP funded lots



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MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 19, 2014

TO: Planning Commission and other interested parties

FROM: John Sutter, City Planner/Assistant Community Development Director

SUBJECT: January 12, 2015 Planning Commission meeting cancelled

Due to there being no items requiring a public hearing or other action at the regularly scheduled January 12, 2015 Planning Commission meeting, said meeting has been cancelled.

The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, February 9, 2015.

If you have any questions in the meantime, feel free to contact me at 763.531.1142 or john.sutter@crystalmn.gov.

Recreation Department Update

December 24, 2014

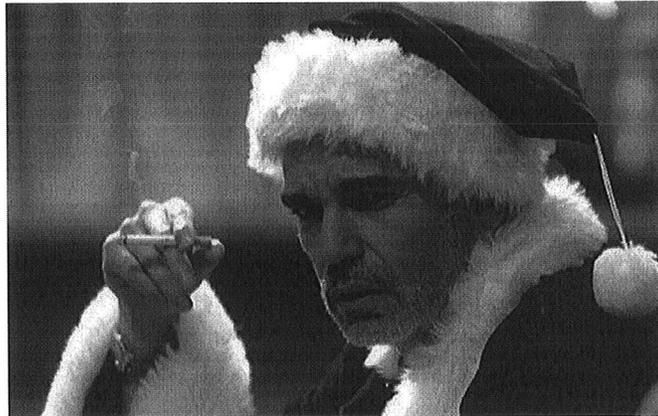
Pickleball Holiday Luncheon

The Pickleball Club held its annual Holiday Luncheon on December 17. Many of the players participated and a variety of items were served for lunch.

WinterFest

Winterfest was another big success this year, drawing around 1000 parents, grandparents and children. Festivities included: musical entertainment by Kidsdance, horse drawn hayrides, crafts for kids to make and take, Santa and Mrs. Claus arriving by fire truck, an ice sculpture carving created from a 300lb. block of ice, a visit by "Peter" the Penguin and a candy cane walk for the whole family to enjoy.

Sounds of laughter and excitement filled the air. The Park and Recreation Advisory Commission, along with Team McDaniel helped run the event.



'Adopt-A-Hydrant' with West Metro Fire-Rescue

By Joe Bowen

December 20, 2014 at 12:46 pm

Keeping fire hydrants clear of snow plays an important role in keeping your neighborhood safe during the winter months and helps firefighters at the same time. Residents of New Hope and Crystal can claim responsibility for shoveling out the fire hydrant in your neighborhood by signing up for West Metro Fire-Rescue District's new Adopt-A-Hydrant program.

The program is has two steps. First, a resident adopts a fire hydrant near their home. Then, every time it snows, they are asked to shovel at least a three-foot radius around the hydrant. This will allow firefighters immediate access to water through the hydrant in the event of a fire.

After each significant snowfall this winter West Metro personnel will check on the fire hydrants that have been adopted throughout New Hope. The names of each of the Adopt-a-Hydrant participant who have done a good job maintaining their hydrant will be entered into a drawing for gift certificate from a local business.

Those businesses include Target, Jet's Pizza, Marco's Pizza, and Cub Foods. Each gift certificate is worth roughly \$20.

Organizer and Deputy Fire Marshal Shelby Wolf said she plans to add more businesses as the program grows.

Wolf added that she got the idea from a similar program used by the Plymouth Fire Department.

The program begins Jan. 1. Wolf estimated that 30-40 hydrants had already been adopted among the hundreds in the department's coverage area, which encompasses New Hope and Crystal.

Notices about the program have been sent in both city newsletters and residents' utility bills, Wolf said. A short report was also broadcast on Channel 12.

Info or to adopt a hydrant: 763-230-7006, wmfrd.org or swolf@westmetrofire.org.

Compiled by Community Editor Joe Bowen

Crystal approves borrowing for public works building

By Joe Bowen

December 21, 2014 at 8:07 am

City council votes 5-2 to issue preliminary approval for \$4M in bonds

As construction continues through the winter, the Crystal City Council drew closer to deciding on a plan to pay for its new public works building.

By a 5-2 vote, the city council voted Dec. 16 to preliminarily approve up to \$4 million in bonds for the project.

Voting in favor of the measure, which required a supermajority due to state law, were Councilmembers Mark Hoffmann, Casey Peak, Julie Deshler, Joe Selton, and Mayor Jim Adams. Voting against were Councilmembers Laura Libby and John Budziszewski.

The presumptive plan to pay for the building, then, would use up to \$4 million in bonds, although the city doesn't have to come up with an official financing plan for several more months and could still elect to pay strictly with cash on hand.

The bonding measure adds to the list of options available to finance the \$13 million building, which is currently under construction at 5001 W. Broadway.

Foremost amongst those options is Crystal's Major Building Replacement fund, which has slightly more than \$10 million set aside specifically for projects like the public works building.

Other talked-about sources include \$1 million in a utility fund and \$650,000 in the city's Economic Development Authority fund. If all of those secondary funds were used along with bond money, it would leave approximately \$2 million in the replacement fund, according to Finance Director Charles Hansen, although he cautioned that vagaries in construction costs make that number a rough guess.

Several councilmembers were wary of draining the entirety of the replacement fund or dipping into other parts of the city coffers and therefore voted for the bonds.

"My fear, if we paid entirely in cash, is we would be dipping into the EDA fund, into the street maintenance fund, into the water utility fund, and I didn't want to risk bleeding those funds too thin," said Deshler. "I have no desire to dip into any other funds to pay for the new building."

Other bonding advocates cited future major building expenses, like a renovation or replacement of the city's police department building or its Becker Park pavilion. Those expenses could be difficult to cover if the replacement fund was spent all the way down, since there is no direct process by which it is replenished.

The city will also need to help determine how best to repair or replace an ailing Joint Water Commission pipeline, an expense that could end up in the millions.



An artist's rendering of the new public works facility in Crystal.
(Submitted photo)

“(The bonding decision) leaves a small reserve which could be used for the sewer problems and whatever else,” said Hoffmann. “By paying cash on the whole thing we were stripping down to almost nothing.”

Libby and Budziszewski both voted against the measure because they preferred to bond for the project in its entirety, they said.

“I have stipulated all along that we should bond for the full amount of the project and keep the cash, keep the liquidity, for any issues,” said Budziszewski, adding that bond interest rates were “historically low” and that the city could pay off large chunks, if not all, of the bonds at certain dates after issuing them, which would limit total interest paid.

Adams and Peak were both vocal proponents of an all-cash option who ultimately voted for the bonding measure.

Both said they voted in favor of bonding because they felt the majority of the council – who were adamant about bonding for some of the project’s cost – would elect to bond for the entirety of the project if the \$4 million measure failed.

“The votes weren’t there for cash, and I had to figure out what was best for citizens and what was best for my point of view,” Adams said.

“If we tanked the four million (option) it was pretty clear that the all-bonding would go through,” said Peak.

Both mentioned that a reverse referendum was possible, wherein a popular vote could be held to stop the bonding measure if initiated within 30 days of the measure’s enactment.

The city has already spent about \$3 million on the project: acquiring the land, paying an architect, and other expenses. That money has come out of the replacement fund and has been calculated into the project’s rough totals above.

The completed building will be more than 60,000 square-feet and will feature a mezzanine level, geothermal heating, and amenities such as offices, locker rooms, storm water treatment ponds and tanks, a “brine room” to mix salt with water for salting roads, a utility shop, mechanics’ bays and a fueling station.

Contact Joe Bowen at joe.bowen@ecm-inc.com

Free residential fire safety surveys

By Joe Bowen

December 19, 2014 at 3:53 pm

The West Metro Fire-Rescue District provides home safety surveys for residential homeowners free of charge.

Upon request, a small team of fire department members will conduct a survey of a resident's home and provide them with needed life safety equipment.

The survey program was developed to educate residents in the fire district about potential hazards in their home and to teach them how to fix those hazards and prevent fires.

Surveyors will check all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and examine a home for kitchen and cooking safety, fireplace safety, escape plans, and more.

"It usually takes about 1 hour to do a walk through a home," said Deputy Fire Marshall Shelby Wolf, who oversees the survey program. "If there are hazards, we will give them recommendations on how to fix the hazard."

At the end of the inspection, Wolf said, homeowners receive a fire extinguisher, carbon monoxide detector, battery operated candle, timer, an emergency flashlight, jar opener, and fire safety book.

Currently, 1-2 home surveys are scheduled, Wolf added, and the department has conducted about 24 inspections so far this year.

The program began in 2012, and its goal is to encourage life safety, prevent fires and injuries, and improve homeowner awareness.

"It is slow to get going, but everyone that has done this program seems to like it a lot," Wolf said.

Info and survey requests: 763-230-7006.

Compiled by Community Editor Joe Bowen.

Last meetings

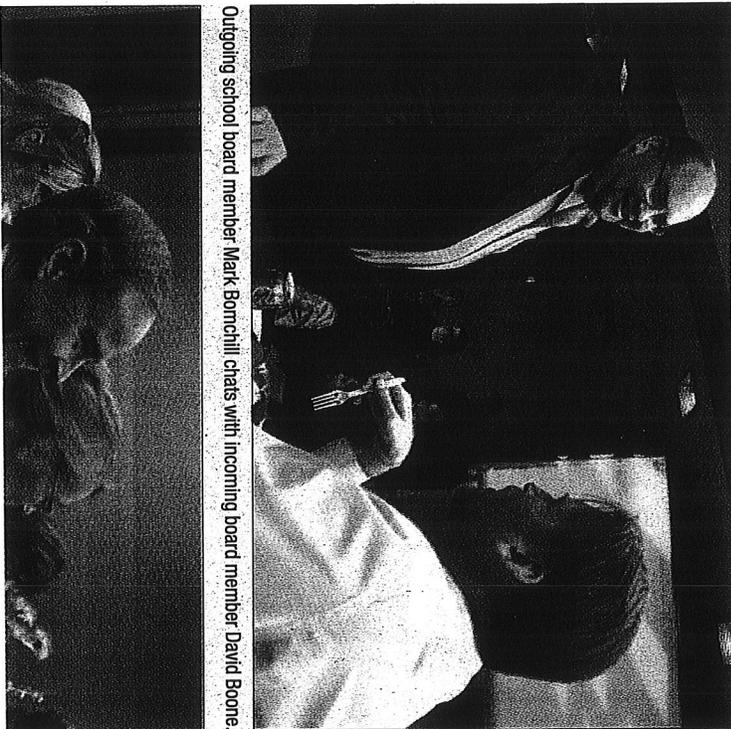
Robbinsdale Area Schools and the City of Crystal held receptions honoring their outgoing school board and city council members prior to their meetings on Dec. 15 and 16, respectively.

Mark Bomchill, Linda Johnson and Tom Walsh will not be returning to the board after a combined 27 years of service. Bomchill joined the board in 2009, Johnson in 2001, and Walsh in 2005.

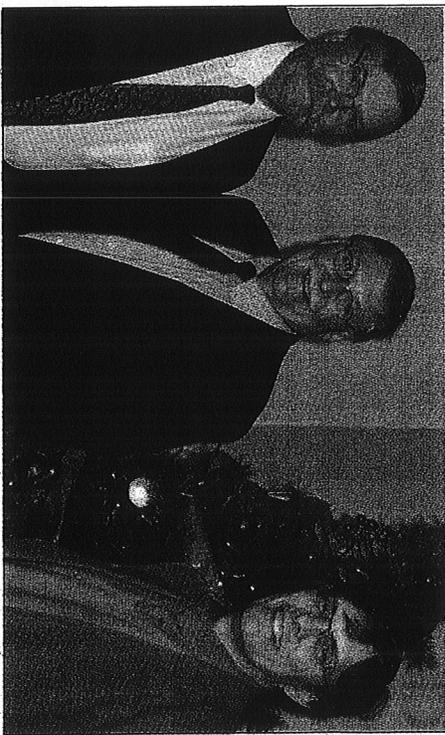
Walsh and Johnson board opted not to run for re-election, while Bomchill narrowly lost his campaign for a second term.

Hoffmann's first year on the council was 1996, and he served on several committees for years before that. Selton was first elected in 2006, and Budziszewski served since 2010.

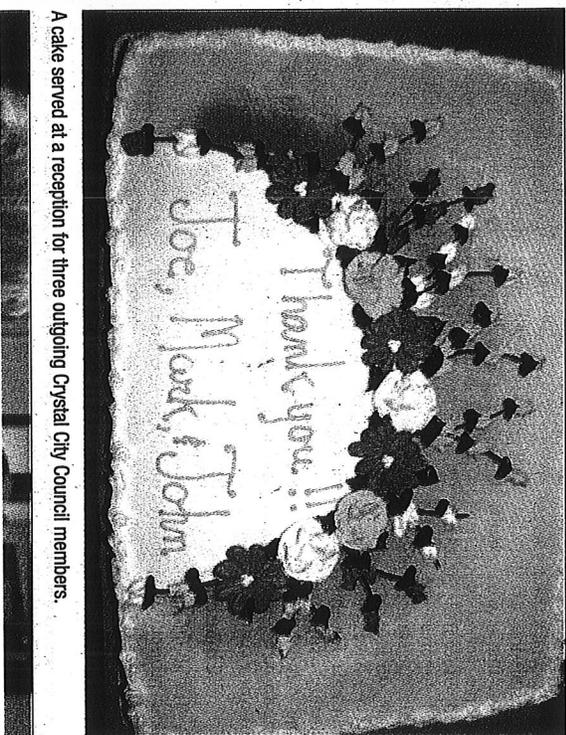
All three lost their re-election bids this past November.



Outgoing school board member Mark Bomchill chats with incoming board member David Boone.



From left, outgoing Crystal City Council members Joe Selton, Mark Hoffmann, and John Budziszewski.



A cake served at a reception for three outgoing Crystal City Council members.

Upcoming community events for Crystal, Robbinsdale, New Hope, and Golden Valley residents

By Joe Bowen

December 19, 2014 at 12:55 pm

There are several events scheduled for residents of Crystal, Robbinsdale, New Hope, and Golden Valley through the Crystal and Robbinsdale recreation departments.

Robotics: Jedi & Imperial Droids Dec. 29 and 30

Youth ages 7-12 are invited to "Robotics: Jedi & Imperial Droids" 1-4 p.m. Monday, Dec. 29 and Tuesday, Dec. 30 at the Crystal Community Center, 4800 Douglas Dr. N.

Participants will use the "Micro Scout" Lego Mindstorm Robotics System's microcomputer for the brain of their droids. They can also use the built-in light sensor, motor and sound to bring the droids to life.

Students will learn about robotics and engineering as they build the base models, then customize the droids.

Possible models include the micro-walker, L8GO Trainer, Starfighter, and X-Walker.

The program fee is \$62 for residents of Robbinsdale, Crystal, Golden Valley, and New Hope. For non-residents, it is \$69.

Info and registration: 763-531-1278.

Baby Boomers and Beyond Jan. 2-30

Come join us on Friday mornings at the Robbinsdale Police and Fire Building Community Room, 4101 Hubbard Ave. N, to see how much fun we're having with this newly offered program!

Nancy Stoneberg, Certified Personal Trainer and owner of StoneFitness has dedicated much of her time in training and educating 55+ and helping them realize that it's never too late to make a positive difference in strength, balance and overall wellness.

These classes are for all levels and abilities. Nancy's motto is "Yes, you can!"

Classes meet 9 – 9:45 a.m. Friday mornings.

The next session is January 2-30.

The program fee is \$24.

Info and registration: 763-531-1278.

Total BODY Workouts begin Jan. 5

It's a proven fact exercise improves your life physically and mentally.

This one-hour class is divided into three parts: 20-minute, low-impact aerobic warm up, muscle toning with

weights and bands, and a cool down component. Mats provided.

Two sessions are available:

- 9-10 a.m. Mondays, Jan. 5 – May 18.
- 8:45 – 9:45 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 7 – May 20.

All sessions are held at the Crystal Community Center, 4800 Douglas Dr. N.

The activity fee is \$45 for Friendship Center members and Crystal residents. Otherwise, it is \$52 to non-residents for 15 classes.

There is also a \$5 “drop-in” fee.

Zumba classes begin Jan. 6

This cutting-edge, high-energy fitness system with a fusion of Latin and international music is fun and easy to do. A combination of unique body sculpting and dance steps gives participants high energy and motivation to incorporate in your own fitness program. Zumba is not only great for the body but for the mind too.

Zumba meets 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays, Jan. 6 – Feb. 3, at the Crystal Community Center, 4800 Douglas Dr. N.

The fee is \$35 for Crystal residents and \$42 for non-residents.

Registration deadline is Dec. 30.

Info and registration: 763-531-0052.

Firelake Grill House & Sea Life MN Jan. 15

Stay young at heart with a weekday visit to the Mall of America from 10:50 a.m. – 3:40 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 15, pick up for which will be from the Crystal Community Center, 4800 Douglas Dr. N.

Enjoy lunch at the new FireLake Grill House restaurant in the upscale Radisson Blu Hotel. Order from a modified lunch menu of a soup & salad or salad & sandwich.

Participants can then walk over to the Sea Life Minnesota Aquarium to explore the exhibits: jellyfish discovery, sea horse kingdom and the 300 foot long ocean and fresh water tunnel. See first-hand how the aquarium staff cares for over 10,000 + sea creatures with a behind-the-scenes tour. The tour guide will take participants up on deck above the tunnel system where you can see animals that are currently off-exhibit. The tour continues to the laboratory to find out how staff treat and maintain the 1.3 million gallons of water that make up the aquarium. Finally, the tour guide will take participants into the food prep kitchen to see what they feed the creatures in order to keep them healthy and strong.

This trip will include a lot of walking, and participants are therefore asked to wear comfortable shoes.

Register deadline is Dec. 30.

The activity fee is \$54.

Info and registration: 763-531-0052.

Updated: Pair of Dec. 18 burglaries may be linked, Crystal police say

By Joe Bowen

December 19, 2014 at 3:00 pm

This post was updated at 4:41 p.m. on Dec. 19 to add additional information and to correct a misnomer in its headline.

Crystal Police responded to two burglary calls north of Bass Lake Road and west of Broadway Avenue at approximately 8 p.m. on Dec. 18.

Similarities between the two incidents have lead officers to believe they are related. Footprints from the suspects at the first house matched those at the second, said Deputy Chief Mike Meehan.

“It is believed that there were two suspects and a vehicle involved – and that they may have been ringing doorbells in the neighborhood and/or looking for other signs that residents weren’t at home – possibly posing as solicitors. If a residence was found to be empty, the suspects attempted entrance through the rear of the house (out of sight of the street),” reads a post on the department’s Facebook page.

Nothing was stolen from the first home, but more than one laptop was stolen from the second, Meehan added.

The post also notes that Crystal requires solicitors to have a valid permit from the city.

“If you do witness suspicious activity, or believe that somebody may be operating as an unlicensed solicitor, please don’t hesitate to contact the Crystal Police Department for immediate assistance,” the post reads.

Meehan urged residents to call 911 if they see suspicious activity.

“If somebody comes up to your door and you think it’s a ruse or a trick...just give us a call,” he said.

Police are urging anyone with information regarding the incidents to contact the department.

Crystal Police Department main switchboard: 763-531-1014.

Anonymous tip line: 763-531-1020.

gosh,

EDA / Council

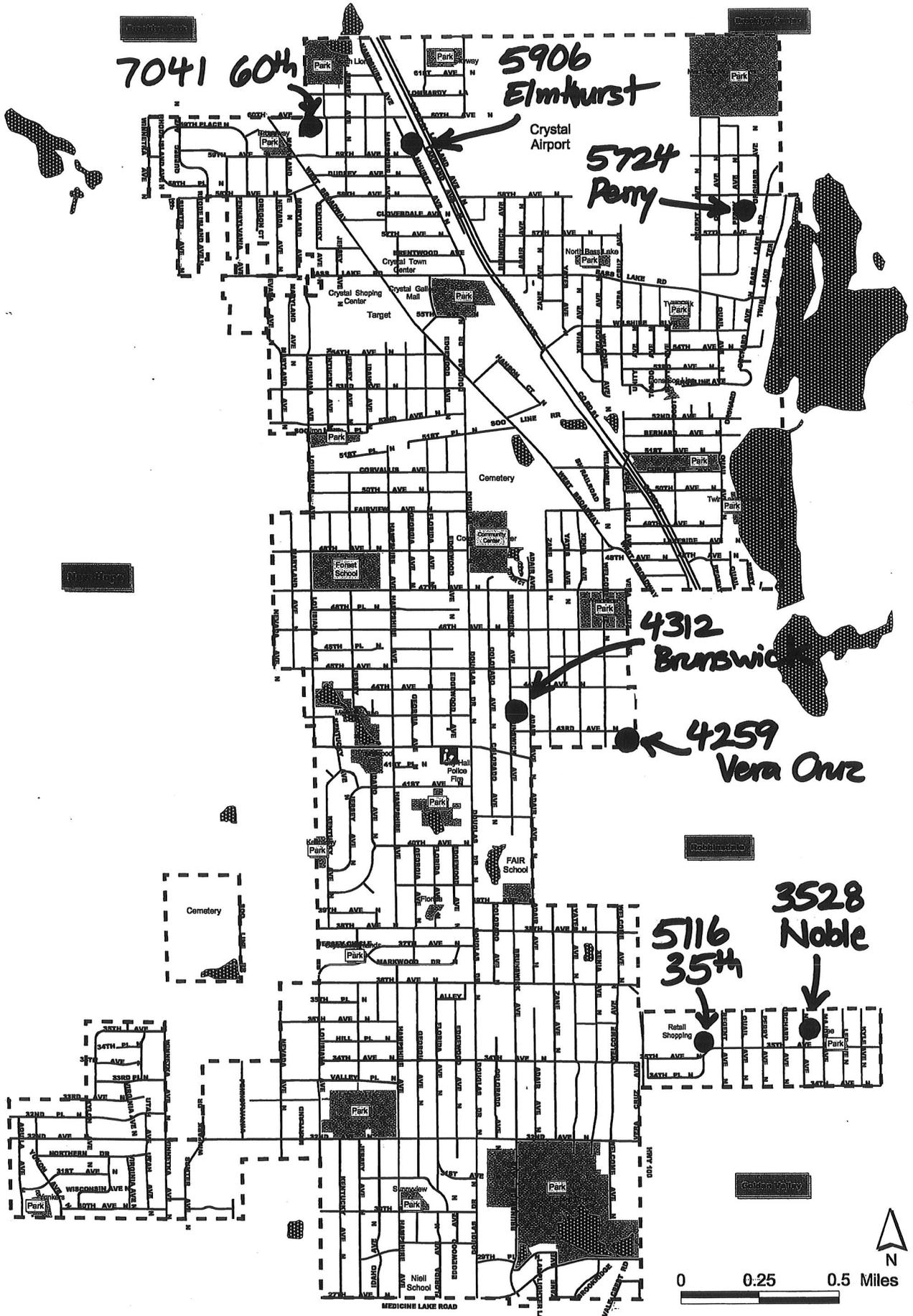
(re: seven NSP-
-funded lots, now
with new Habitat
houses on them.)

We have been so pleased to have several families these past few years able to call Crystal their home. Thanks for the help and support in making that happen wishing you and your family the joy and warmth of home this holiday season.

From your friends at
Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity

John
your support & assistance for
our projects is greatly appreciated
looking forward to more successful
projects in the future. EJ

David
Thanks for
your support!!
BTSY
Kristy
Michelle
Nook
Christy
Amanda
Christy



7041 60th

5906 Elmhurst

5724 Perry

4312 Brunswick

4259 Vera Cruz

5116 35th

3528 Noble

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