

NORTH NEWS

October 27, 2023

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Liquor license clash

Resident have long wanted Merwin Liquors closed.
But a peace group wants to take over sales.

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Nakaiya Abdullah wanted a memorable senior year.
So she joined the North High football team.

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Photo by David Pierini



David Pierini,
Editor

Northsiders seeking good pay and prosperity have strong allies

There is a lot of energy currently powering different organizations to help Northsiders establish generational wealth kept out of reach by systemic racism for so long.

I'd like to point out two: Build Wealth

MN, which helps Black families buy their first homes and long-time vocational trainer, Summit Academy OIC.

The door to the so-called American Dream has been locked shut for countless Black and Brown people because of several factors: Inequity baked into the mortgage industry and issues like poverty and a lack of job opportunities persist to name a few. Just over 25 percent of Minnesota's Black population owns their own home. Compare that to 77 percent for whites.

Through credit and personal finance counseling and a down payment fund that sidesteps some of the stubborn bias in the traditional loan process, students of Build Wealth MN are eventually able to turn a key to open the door of their first home.

Summit Academy also plays a role in getting families to the doorstep.

In October, Summit announced a partnership with First Independence Bank, a Black-owned bank in Minneapolis to start training students for careers in financial services. A clear goal is to increase diversity in a field once off limits to people of color.

The 20-week program starts in March and provides training in mortgage processing, securities, insurance annuities

and customer service. The training also prepares students for a critical exam and jobs start north of \$20 per hour with quick-moving potential to grow into a more life-sustaining salary.

Think about what Build Wealth MN and Summit Academy are doing to change the face of lending and homeownership, from process to prosperity.

Build Wealth founder David McGee launched a big campaign last year called "9,000 Equities." That's 9,000 new homeowners, 9,000 new legacies, over the next five to seven years.

This year, Summit announced a few initiatives, each with a mission of moving families onto prosperity's path by getting individuals ready for in-demand careers.

Summit began the year training workers in food manufacturing that placed them in jobs with a starting wage of \$20 per hour with benefits.

Food companies came out of the COVID-19 with significant workforce shortages, and many partnered with Summit to ramp up a program that trains students to process, package and deliver food to grocery shelves. Most of the training was on-location and got students working in seven weeks.

The seven weeks is not a misprint. Over the course of one week in October, Summit announced its new financial services training program and a \$13 million fundraising campaign to add more programming.

Money from the campaign will allow Summit to invest in increasing enrollment and instructors, paid internships, student support, such as housing and childcare costs, and grow its STEM program for local students K-12.



North Minneapolis at a glance

African American Heritage museum is 'Woven' into film festival

A short film by the Minnesota African American Heritage Museum and Gallery is an official selection for the Twin Cities Film Festival.

Woven is the story about the museum's Community Quilt Project and highlights what happens when community connects around art. The film was produced by Tina Burnside, the project's curator and the co-founder of the museum. Kevin Sullivan directed Woven.

The film was scheduled to be shown on Oct. 28 at the Ikon Showplace West End theater in St. Louis Park. The museum is located in Regional Acceleration Center, 1256 Penn. Ave. N.



Coming together

The flags of Indigenous nations were displayed proudly at the Minneapolis Public Schools' annual Community Partner Powwow on the North High football field on Sept. 30. This event aimed to celebrate MPS students and educate visitors about Indigenous culture. Organized by the MPS American Indian Education Department, the celebration welcomed the community to witness the traditional Powwow, explore vendor stalls and share a community meal. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson

Harrison coffee shop has new operator

Le Café, a coffee shop that opened in the Harrison neighborhood in the Spring of 2021, is now operated by B'Berl Desserts. Le Café is part of Alliance Francaise Mpls/St. Paul, an organization that promotes French language and culture at the corner of Colfax Ave. N. and Second Street North.

B'Berl Desserts started out a farmer's market favorite for its eclairs. It is operated by Diane and Fritz Ebanda who have more than 20 years in the pastry industry.

Be an intern of Champion's

State Sen. Bobby Joe Champion is looking to hire two interns for the 2024

legislative session.

The internship will run late January through May. Anyone 18 or older interested in the legislative process must fill out an application, resume and cover letter to be sent to internship@senate.mn by Nov. 9.

Visit <https://www.senate.mn/departments/secretary/info/interns/index.html#header> here to find the application and additional information about the internship.

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Vote to determine whether Merwin alcohol sales continue

By Azhae'la Hanson, Reporter

Criminal activity has subsided outside of Merwin Liquors after the crime intervention organization We Push for Peace, was hired last fall.

The organization's leadership is now pushing for a liquor license to run the store.

After a contentious public hearing, community members said no.

The city's Business, Inspections, Housing & Zoning Committee will vote on Nov. 9 whether to recommend a liquor license to TXT Wine and Spirits, the LLC owned by We Push for Peace leader Trahern Pollard.

The TXT request will go before the City Council for approval on Nov. 16. If it passes, it will require Mayor Jacob Frey's signature. If TXT receives a liquor license, the Merwin license will be deactivated. If TXT's license application is denied, Merwins' liquor license will be up for renewal in January 2024.

The intersection of West Broadway and Lyndale Ave N has been a hotspot for crime in North Minneapolis for generations outside two establishments Merwin Liquors and Winner Gas Station. Residents complain absentee owners enable an epicenter of drugs, violence, and other illegal activity on their properties. Last fall, community members rallied outside of the businesses and blocked customers from entering to call for an end to violence, following a series of shootings that occurred on the properties.

In response, Attorney General Keith Ellison launched an investigation into Merwins Liquor to determine if they were a nuisance property and at risk of being shut down by state. At the same time as the investigation began, Merwin owners hired the crime intervention organization We Push For Peace to take over daily operations and keep crime out of the liquor store property.

After We Push For Peace's arrival, there was a day and night transformation from a parking lot that was packed to the brim, to a lot that was empty. The AG's investigation into Merwins was closed in June and concluded that crime at Merwins significantly decreased from fall to spring.

A meeting in October was held to gain community feedback on the renewal of Merwins liquor license. However, the application did not bear the name of the current owners; instead, it was

submitted by Pollard and TXT Wine and Spirits.

Pollard explained that his intent in seeking the liquor license is to do more than just run the daily operations like they have for the past year. If approved for the liquor license, it would be one step to his ultimate goal: buying and owning the liquor store all together.

"It was always the plan for me," Pollard said. "When we first took over day to day operations, I say my ultimate goal is to own it."

Pollard says with a liquor license, he could create enough revenue to purchase the liquor store property and transform it into something that benefits the surrounding community.

When We Push for Peace took over operations, they introduced a resource center for job placement and a free commercial drivers license program in their office inside the liquor store.

"You got someone that could potentially own it, that's gonna sow seeds back into the community, I think is a win win personally. What people have to be aware of is that regardless of if they vote to transfer the license to me, or no, a is still going to be on the corner. "So rather I own it, or rather the people that own it now continue to own it."

During the hearing, the room was packed with community members that shared an overwhelming opposition to a liquor license being given regardless of who owns it.

Residents expressed that the work We Push For Peace has been able to accomplish doesn't negate the decades of trauma the liquor store has been associated with in the community. They want the store gone. Testimonies of the liquor store's impact were shared with the city staff of how trauma has impacted North Minneapolis residents.

A woman who spoke in opposition for her son, who was among four people shot on September 8th last year in the series of shootings that led community leaders to shut down the liquor store.

"If there's going to be anything done with this, do something positive. Because putting a liquor store there is not going to do anything to attract more fighting, it doesn't matter who's in there. It's still going to happen."

Another woman shared that her aunt



A woman spoke up in opposition to the liquor license approval. She says the liquor store needs to be gone regardless of who owns it because violence will still continue on the property. Her son was among those shot last year that prompted the AG's investigation. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson



Jessie Ross and members of Sanctuary Church raised their hands in opposition to the license approval of TXT Wine and Spirits. As Merwin Liquors' next door neighbor, the church says problems are still ongoing on Merwins property and they envision something better for the community that isn't the liquor store. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson

had been a prostitute near the store for a long time.

"How many families have to be broken and hurt because that business is allowed to stay there," she asked. "It has been this way since I was born and I'm 42 years old."

"If that liquor store was a resident you all would have shut it down and kicked everybody out," said the Rev. Jerry McAfee, pastor of New Salem Baptist Church. "Most of us here who've been on the Northside,

you know two or three people who've been killed and you that gas station or Merwin liquors. What is the value of our blood?"

"For so much death, for so long. How do we even get to a question or whether or not they should get a license. They ought to be closed."

City Council Member Jeremiah Ellison was present during the hearing. Afterwards

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Hennepin County votes to close HERC, but critics say it's not soon enough

By David Pierini, Editor

Hennepin County commissioners formerly directed staff to develop a formal plan to close the HERC, a downtown trash incinerator activists and Northside residents say has been a notorious air polluter since it opened 34 years ago.

But the unanimous vote on Oct. 24 was met with disappointment from some 20 activists and residents who held protest signs outside the county board chambers.

The timeline for the HERC's shutdown is 2028 to 2040, much too long a wait for opponents who were pressing for a 2025 closure.

Nazir Khan, co-director of the Minnesota Environmental Justice Table, called the board's closure plan unacceptable. "The 2028 date was just to appease us,

make us think that we should just go away and trust them," Khan said. "That's not going to happen. We're going to increase the pressure."



Signs of protest lined the windows looking into the Hennepin County board chamber on Oct. 24, when commissioners voted on a controversial plan to close a downtown trash incinerator. Photo by David Pierini

Commissioners acknowledged the plan lacks the desired speed and vowed to snuff its burners as soon as possible. But ASAP comes with a lengthy list of conditions for the county to phase out an incinerator that consumes 1,000 tons of garbage each day.

Closure, commissioners said, would arrive sooner if state lawmakers pursue policy actions that prioritize zero waste, composting and recycling within communities. They would need to lift barriers to composting and recycling, especially in apartment complexes, and set new rules on collection and hauling, industrial packaging and material bans on landfills.

"I'm going to say something which may be heresy, but this is the easy part," said Commissioner Jeffrey Lunde. "There's a bunch of stuff from this point forward on the cities, on the state... there's a lot of players."

The Democratic-controlled legislature currently in Saint Paul provides a good opening for the county. In the spring, lawmakers awarded the county \$25 million to build an anaerobic digester on the condition it write a plan to close the HERC.

The new facility would handle organic

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catch up with our Council Members



WARD 4:
LaTrisha Vetaw

Hello, Ward 4! I have nearly completed my first term on the Council, so I wanted to take this opportunity to fill you in on what I've been working on. I am proud of what my office has achieved this term, especially in the areas of constituent services, public safety, livability, and economic development.

In the year and a half I have been in office, we have responded to thousands of calls and emails, gone to hundreds of constituent meetings and events, and voted in well over a hundred committee meetings (I've only ever missed one!). We have been hard at work serving the residents of Ward 4 and it has been gratifying to see positive changes in our community.

- Public safety wins I am proud of include:
- Secured \$300,000 for Northside lighting improvements and \$1 million for crime prevention activities
 - Worked with partners at the state legislature to secure \$1 million in funding for capital improvements at the

substance abuse treatment center Turning Point, Inc.

- Secured \$19 million in public safety aid from the state legislature

The number one thing residents contact me about is livability concerns like: inadequate snow removal, problem properties, litter, abandoned cars, etc. I take these concerns very seriously. We all deserve to live in clean, well-maintained neighborhoods. My team and I work hard to help residents solve their livability concerns. In fact, this is how we spend most of our time at City Hall. We even spend our Fridays visiting properties and speaking with neighbors. We can only fix what we know about, so please don't hesitate to reach out for help by email ward4@minneapolismn.gov or leave a message at 612-673-2204.

There are lots of exciting development projects recently completed or underway in Ward 4. Many of these projects were supported by the City's Commercial Property Redevelopment Fund:

Minneapolis City Council members LaTrisha Vetaw (Ward 4) and Jeremiah Ellison (Ward 5) were inaugurated in January 2022 and January 2018, respectively. We have invited them to keep in touch with the community through this monthly column in our newspaper.

- The Camden Social (4601 Lyndale Ave N) is now open and serving great food and cocktails
- The Camdentown Flats (1500 44th Ave N) is complete and the rental units are filling up fast
- The Upper Harbor Terminal is now under phase 1 of construction that will create infrastructure, park improvements, mixed-use affordable housing, living-wage jobs, and a community performing arts center

These projects are a great start, but we need more! I meet regularly with entrepreneurs who are interested in starting or bringing their business to Ward 4. I am proud to say that Ward 4 is now a place where business owners and developers want to come to and offer their services.

A couple of longer-term projects I am working on are improving our train crossings and securing more reliable internet for the Northside. I have heard from so many of you about how disruptive

blocked train crossings can be. I also have my own firsthand experience. I've started meeting monthly with representatives from CPKCR. They've agreed to work with my office to improve operations at these crossings at much as possible. I am also exploring possible infrastructure solutions in partnership with MnDOT, Public Works, and U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar. We have also heard from many of you that the current available internet options are unsatisfactory for a variety of reasons. We are exploring more options such as fiber internet that could help solve this problem.

Voting Information

Don't forget to vote on or before Election Day (November 7th)! You can vote early in-person at 980 E Hennepin Ave until November 6th. Daily voting hours can be found on the City's website: vote.minneapolismn.gov/voters/vote-early-in-person/

You can find your polling place for Election Day at pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us



WARD 5:
Jeremiah Ellison

The Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee has signaled its support for advancing further analysis of a light rail track route for 21st Ave North and general locations for stations on the Northside. There would still be some related construction impacts on West Broadway, including the opportunity to fully reconstruct the roadway to improve infrastructure and safety, and make other improvements.

The advisory body of elected officials and non-elected community representatives passed a resolution Sept. 14 in support of the Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County continuing to advance the track route and stations through the federal environmental review process. The route will be further studied through preparation of a document

known as the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. This further analysis will bring a more detailed understanding of the potential opportunities and impacts of the route through additional engineering, design, community engagement and environmental evaluation.

"This is a big milestone for the project," said project director Christine Beckwith. "Now that we have a better idea of where our tracks could go to best serve the community and general station locations to study, we will be able to develop enough detail to answer questions about how the project will benefit residents and businesses. We will also be able to address how to avoid impacts during construction and from train operations."

My office will be hosting a

community conversation about the METRO Blue Line Extension project on Monday, Oct. 30 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Juxtaposition Arts. This is an important conversation about the project. While the Blue Line Extension Project is not a city-led project, it's important to me to create a space for Northsiders to engage, share feedback, and ask questions. We have invited the project team which includes staff from the MET Council and Hennepin County. This is open conversation so we can hear from you.

We are here to listen because your voice is crucial to shaping the future of our community. I want to ensure this project looks how our community wants it to look, that it adds value to our neighborhood, and that anti-displacement is a priority to ensure that folks

who call Northside home will continue to do so without fear of displacement. I hope to see you there! Dinner will be provided by Accolades, An Expression of Love. Please RSVP here: bit.ly/Ward5BlueLineConversation

As always, join me from Noon-1 p.m. every Monday for Open Coffee Hours! These are informal and a chance for me to hear directly from you while we share coffee or a meal (virtually). Office hours are on a first come first served basis. Please try not to call past 12:50 p.m. as we want to leave enough time to chat about what you'd like to discuss. Please RSVP at www.minneapolismn.gov/ward5, and my staff will follow-up with the call-in details. If you have any questions or concerns, reach out to Dieu Do, Policy Associate, at dieu.do@minneapolismn.gov.

Methadone clinic vows to be good West Broadway neighbor

By David Pierini, Editor

Northsiders are protective of West Broadway Avenue. From fighting to keep light rail off its narrow passage to pressing the city to not extend the liquor license of Merwin Liquors, community leaders have battled outside forces for the agency to decide how this historic business corridor will grow.

A methadone clinic set up shop in the former Broadway Family Medicine offices, and some are feeling, well, broadsided.

Community Medical Services opened at 1101 West Broadway Ave. N. on Oct. 16. Based in Arizona, CMS also just opened a Roseville clinic, bringing the number of methadone treatment facilities in Minnesota to 19.

CMS officials say their clinics are good

neighbors in all their locations and invite anyone with questions to visit and talk with staff. A 2016 John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health suggests outpatient methadone clinics attract less serious crime than other businesses.

Still, some Northsiders remain skeptical.

Inspector Charlie Adams, who oversees the Minneapolis Police Department's Fourth Precinct, said "a lot of us were told about the clinic late."

He said clinic managers told him staff navigators would handle any issues that might occur during clinic hours.

Kristel Porter, executive director of the West Broadway Business and Area Coalition, said her organizations worries about additional challenges to recruiting new business on the corridor.

"A lot of businesses are saying this may add to what we are already seeing," Porter said. "Another issue is it is going right next to U.S. Bank, and they are definitely a bank that takes the Community Investment Act seriously."

A U.S. Bank spokesperson said the branch is staying put and has no plans to

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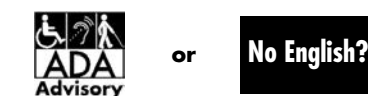
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Pamela Weems dazzled the room during a Pink Party fashion show. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson

Two-time breast cancer survivor brings a party to advocacy

By Azhae'la Hanson, Reporter

When Pamela Weems became pregnant with her youngest son, she noticed a lump in her breast and asked her primary doctor if she should be concerned. They told her no, that it was a swollen milk gland. It would dissipate in time.

Weems went on with her life. Three years later, when former Miss Minnesota Mary Kay Sanders passed away from breast cancer, Weems was again concerned about her lump. She went back to the doctor for a mammogram.

That same year, Weems was diagnosed with stage-four breast cancer.

"At first I never felt like nothing was wrong because my doctors had told me that nothing was wrong," Weems said. "It was a very dark time for me."

Weems was overwhelmed with a deadly disease she knew nothing about. She looked for support and was disappointed to learn there weren't a lot of support groups for Black women with breast cancer.

She started her own support and advocacy group, the Pink Ladies, a collection of women committed to turning advocacy into a celebration. They push for early detection to stop misdiagnoses like her own.

Weems was not alone, Riona Berry,

founder and president of the African American Breast Cancer Alliance, vividly remembers the climate of silence surrounding breast cancer within the Black community in the early '90s.

"In the Black community, most don't talk about the 'Big C.' We found out by a lady whispering it to you in church," Berry said. "Too many of us were dying, and we didn't know why."

It isn't just a lack of awareness in the Black community, she said, but also racial disparities in health care that creates righteous distrust. This creates a perfect storm for an epidemic for Black women who are dying from breast cancer.

According to a study done by the American Cancer Society (ACS), white women are diagnosed with breast cancer more than any other group, but Black women are 40 percent more likely to die from the disease. It's a statistic that hasn't changed in decades. The study also revealed that Black women younger than the age of 50 had a death rate that is twice as high as white women.

It was this alarming lack of awareness and discussion that drove Weems to start the Pink Ladies, aiming to shine a light on the disease that was silently claiming the lives of women around them.

"After I'd gone through my surgery and

chemo, I wanted to be a part of awareness because I didn't want any other women to go through what I had gone through," Weems said. "I survived. And I felt that my purpose was to get the word out."

For Weems, the question was, "What is a better way to combat a silent killer in the Black community?"

The answer was clear – make some noise.

"After I'd gone through my surgery and chemo, I wanted to be a part of awareness because I didn't want any other women to go through what I had gone through. I survived. And I felt that my purpose was to get the word out."

Pamela Weems

Before her diagnosis, Weems was a beauty consultant at Dayton's and a well known event-promoter. By day she would help customers reach their beauty potential and by night, she placed flyers on every car and store window to bring troves of party seekers into venues with big artists.

Weems leaned on these foundations in forming the Pink Ladies. October, which was Breast Cancer Awareness Month, also happened to be the 10th anniversary of the Pink Ladies.

The Anika Foundation hosted a Pink Out Party in honor of breast cancer awareness month and had the Pink Ladies as honored guests. Weems could be seen helping her fellow Pink Ladies with their signature outfit: Pink makeup, pink custom t-shirts, and their pink afro that is so iconic, it has stopped traffic while they're out in public

"The party is all about that," Weems said. "Because if you're having a good time next thing you know, people are interacting and they're talking. It's all about giving a space for people to feel safe and talk about breast cancer."

Some women at the event shared their stories of their first doctor visits with concerns about lumps or pain in their breasts. The distressing commonality: Doctors were dismissive with their concerns, told them it wasn't cancer, and they had nothing to worry about because they weren't 40 years old.

These women grew frustrated when it felt like doctors ignored their pleas. So they joined the Pink Ladies so they could listen to each other. Through the support of other women in their lives, after going back, all of

them were diagnosed with breast cancer. Recently, they achieved an important milestone by obtaining an LLC and were honored at a recent Vikings game for their work as hometown heroes.

"We need people like her [Weems]," said her daughter and Pink Ladies Vice President Tadaci Johnson. "I started giving myself breast exams because of her, I

started telling others to because of her. Her advocacy could be saving lives." The venue was decorated room to room with pink and was filled with laughs one moment and tears the next.

A fashion show was also incorporated into the night, one of the shining stars of the show was Weems herself, dressed in a handmade jumpsuit by Minneapolis based

fashion designer Neekmolac. Weems confidently strutted down the runway with a bright smile and spectators in awe.

"When I first found out about my diagnosis, a part of me died inside. You hear the word cancer and you immediately think

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Weems helps fluff out the afro of another Pink Lady, Shondra Dickson, before the start of a Pink Party. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson



After receiving \$1,000 from the ANIKA Foundation, Weems, her mother, and daughter gathered together. Weems' mother told her how proud she was of the work being done with the Pink Ladies. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson



During a panel, the audience was asked if they know anyone who has been impacted by breast cancer and several hands shot up. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson

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Football player leaves a legacy for the girls at North High

By Azhae'la Hanson, Reporter

As Nakaiya Abdullah ended her junior year in high school, she wanted to stamp her legacy on the community of North Minneapolis before she graduated. She became so underwhelmed by the lack of celebration of women in the community in sports that she began wondering how she stood out.

So she began her senior year by joining the North High football team.

"You don't hear a lot about women in the Northside, you always hear about the boys," Abdullah said. "I want to leave a mark in my community, to let people know they can do something different."

When there's speeches given in team huddles, she hears "boys boys boys, fellas fellas fellas."

A player could be heard jokingly adding, "and Kaiya."

She felt the challenge of being a girl on the football team. She learned legacy can be a lonely pursuit. She couldn't suit up with the team, and would often resort to changing in her car, and she says it took a moment for people to acknowledge her as a team member.

She recalls being annoyed by locker

"I had to prepare myself for the reality that people might not take me seriously, or think they could run over me and think I'm weak because I'm a girl. That thought makes me mad... I can take those feelings and push them through the sport."

Nakaiya Abdullah

room talk at first, but after a while she would start to hear different comments as she came off the field. Players would approach Kaiya for handshakes and banter.

"You got this Kaiya, don't give up," shouted a player.

"Good job!" shouted another.

A few comments came from Lamarqus Osborne, a varsity defensive lineman and



Nakaiya Abdullah says huddles were intimidating, but now she's front and center for the pre-game rituals. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson

longtime friend of Abdullah's.

"It takes a lot of courage," Osborne said. "It's cool to see her actually on the field with us."

Football was always indirectly a part of her life. She grew up with a lot of the boys who are currently on the team, including Osborne. When she was younger, she would watch them play football along with her older brother at North Commons Park.

"I was always going to football practices and just watching them," Abdullah said. "Since I was always there I thought, why not play?"

Some of the players she knows from the parkboard days have become friends in school and reliable teammates to help her navigate the game. She takes pointers from Osborne when she needs help on defense.



Abdullah engages in some friendly banter with a teammate on the sidelines during a practice. Photo by Azhae'la Hanson

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GUEST COLUMN

TODD document makes it easy to pass on property to a loved one

By **Patty Walton** and **Frank De Jong**, Legal Aid

Minneapolis Homeowners, there is a process that is very low-cost and simple to protect and build generational wealth.

Wills, deeds, and probate can be complicated and expensive for you and your loved ones. Fortunately, Minnesota has an easy and inexpensive way to leave a home or property to a loved one when the current owner passes away. It is called a Transfer on Death Deed, and the legal clinic at the Harrison Neighborhood Association can prepare it for you for free.

A Transfer on Death Deed, also called a TODD is a document that is filed with the county. It is a simple process, where a homeowner describes the property, designates a grantee, and has the form notarized. Once it has been filed it is legally binding.

After the owner passes away, the home immediately transfers legal ownership to the grantee. There is no need to go through a probate process or pay anyone to help with the transition.

Using a TODD avoids courts and

is much easier to create than a will. Also, the original homeowner can revoke it at any time or update it as easily as they created the first TODD.

There is a \$46 filing fee that is paid directly to the registrar's office, but that is the only cost associated with this process. Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid can help with all Transfer on Death Deed issues for free to any homeowners in Hennepin County.

Whether you are the one receiving a home through a TODD and wondering what the next steps are, or you are hoping to leave your

home to loved ones with a TODD, the free legal clinic at Harrison Neighborhood Association would love to help.

Every Tuesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at 1501 Glenwood Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55405. Walk-ins Welcome, Appointment Preferred. Call 612-746-3611 and leave a message to schedule an appointment.

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Parks board puts a North Commons refrigerated rink on ice

By David Pierini, Editor

A refrigerated ice rink was considered disposable when the cost of renovating North Commons Park started to get real with project planners.

So when the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board voted on Oct. 4 to greenlight the least expensive of two multimillion-dollar proposals, a state-of-the-art rink for the storied North Commons skating and hockey program was left out.

But the discussion over whether to include a refrigerated rink for a few more million dollars seemed to indicate it still has a chance to eventually join the \$35 million expansion.

In recent winters, climate change has shortened the season of outdoor ice. Pastor Dale Hume's New Directions Youth Ministry provides lessons in skating and hockey, with all the equipment, at little or no cost. The program gives kids from low-income households a taste of either sport and helps them find funds to continue in more advanced programs.

Commissioner Billy Menz put forward an amendment to add the rink, believing it may never get done unless it is added to the plan.

"This is a need for the Minneapolis parks system and it's a need for folks who don't necessarily always look like me," Menz said. "And know that if it gets to the point we don't raise enough money for it, it will probably get cut. But if we don't put it in here now, I don't know if it ever gets done."

The Menz amendment died, but the votes didn't necessarily kill the rink, projected to cost between \$4 million and \$6 million.

Commissioner Becky Alper worried the amendment could create a scenario in which another part of the project gets reduced in order to afford the rink if the money does not get raised.

She suggested the board pursue a larger commitment to refrigerated rinks in various parts of the city. Alper also proposed a "memo of understanding" with Hume's group to fundraise for a North



Mick Kukielka, a longtime coach with the North Commons Park hockey program, ran kids through a puck-handling drill on a cold night in January 2020. Photo by David Pierini

Commons rink.

"I like skating and last season was remarkably short," Alper said. "We need to seriously plan for the future of what winter ice looks like in Minneapolis. I'd rather we put the money toward a higher target and maybe have a few rinks that are easier to maintain. I can definitely see North Commons being a destination."

The board approved a \$35 million North Commons makeover that will include three new indoor basketball courts (the current

Continued on page 19

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Parks officials asking funders to help with EAB tree removal debts

By David Pierini, Editor

State and local leaders responded to the cries of Northside homeowners who were caught off guard having to pay for the removal of trees infested with emerald ash borer.

The City of Minneapolis Health Department recently won an \$8 million grant to help low-income property owners with a bill should they get a tree condemnation notice. But the rules around financial relief, thus far, provide no retroactive help.

Officials with the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board, which is charged with the oversight of the city's tree canopy, say they are trying to raise money to help those who couldn't afford the upfront cost and now pay for it over time with interest on their property tax bill.

Emerald ash borer has been sweeping through the city and has been concentrated in North Minneapolis for the last couple of years. Organizers say the costs associated with removing a diseased tree disproportionately impact seniors and Black and Brown people.

At an Oct. 4 MPRB meeting, parks Supt. Al Bangoura and board President Meg Forney said they are both talking with private funders to find relief. They could not provide additional details, including how a fund for retroactive assistance would work.

"I have worked every day on this. This is a priority," Bangoura told commissioners. "Once we are able to discover with our partners the possibilities of what we can do in support of this, I will share with the board."

The parks board earlier this year briefly delayed levying assessments to see

if public and private dollars could be raised to assist low-income property owners. MPRB Finance Director Julie Wiseman said about 560 North and Northeast properties are currently listed for assessment. She said most of the removal costs citywide are around \$3,000 but some approach \$5,000 with a small percentage of properties greater than \$5,000.

"I have worked every day on this. This is a priority. Once we are able to discover with our partners the possibilities of what we can do in support of this, I will share with the board."

MPRB Supt. Al Bangoura

By law, property owners are responsible for the cost of removing a condemned tree. If residents don't find a service to cut down the tree, the board's forestry department will hire a service and

the bill will be attached to property taxes over five, 10 or 20 years with interest.

Residents have criticized MPRB for not proactively engaging the community in tree treatment options. Forestry staff say the best way to stop the spread is remove diseased trees, however treatment can prevent infestation and possibly stop it in the early stages.

Forestry director Ralph Seifert acknowledged his staff purposely withheld treatment information because of a city resolution in 2010 discouraging pesticides to protect pollinators.

A resolution is not an ordinance, and it did not legally bind the park board from communicating treatment options.

"If there has been some sort of report on the science of (pesticides), I would love to see it," Commissioner Billy Menz said. "The thing that's come to me in the past couple weeks is we have been omitting that information. I think it's because we don't (agree with) pesticides. But it might be a bit unauthentic for what homeowners could do with a condemned tree. And that leads to mistrust."

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COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Youth Club: St. Olaf Lutheran Church, 2901 Emerson Ave. N. grades 6-12, Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. Transportation available. To enroll, call 612-529-7726.

Hockey for boys and girls ages 6-17: at North Commons Park and Northeast Arena during the months of November through February. All equipment is provided and the cost is minimal. Register and get more information at North Commons Park, 612-370-4921.

First-home buyers and grant seminar: Sponsored by the Minneapolis NAACP Housing Committee, Saturday, Nov. 11, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the ECMN Building, 1101 W. Broadway Ave N. The NAACP has assembled a group of professional to discuss steps to homeowners and the grants that are available when purchasing in Minneapolis. Visit <https://bitly.ws/XJRV> to register for this free event.

Safe Station: Struggling with substance abuse? Start your recovery journey at Minneapolis Fire Station 14, 2002 Lowry Ave. N., where a firefighter or recovery coach can help get you a variety of services. Open 24 hours. No judgment or shame.

Safe Station is a partnership with the Twin Cities Recovery Project and the Minneapolis Fire Department.

Yard waste collection in the City of Minneapolis will end for the year during the week of Nov. 27.

Free legal advice: Legal Aid takes on civil cases, such as housing, family, consumer tax, immigration and public benefits. The non-profit organization now has a clinic in the office of the Harrison Neighborhood Association, 1501 Glenwood Ave. Services are free for those who qualify. Must be 200 percent of federal poverty guidelines or age 60-plus. Hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m.. Walk-ins welcome, but appointments are preferred. Call 612-746-3611 to make an appointment.

Library closing: Sumner Library will close Oct. 7 for renovations and reopen in the fall 2024. Sumner will set up a temporary sight on OCT. 23 at UROC, 2001 Plymouth Ave. N. Limited service includes homework help, computer access, on-site technology assistance and printing and copying.

The Healing Place: The Healing Place is back at Zion Missionary Baptist Church, 621 Elwood Ave. N. It is committed to healing trauma in the Black community by helping to break the cycle of oppression. It is a safe

space if you need a prayer, a conversation or just a place to sit. Every Wednesday from 1 to 5 p.m.

Food Distribution: Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church, 3355 4th Street N., will distribute free fresh food on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month from 10 a.m.-noon. There are no pre-qualifications. Everyone is welcome.

Free Dinners: The Camden Collective and the Sanneh Foundation sponsor a weekly free food pickup at Salem Lutheran Church, 4150 Dupont Ave. N., each Saturday from 1-3 p.m. Call 612-521-3644 for more information. Walkups are welcome.

Pet supplies: Are you in need of pet supplies or pet resources? The North Minneapolis Pet Resource Center, 1401 44th Ave. N., is open for curbside pickup Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5 p.m.-8 p.m. and Saturday 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Call 764-273-0710 to place an order and leave a voicemail.

Radio updates in your language: Tune into Minneapolis's cultural radio programs for COVID-19 updates. The city is broadcasting updates on KMOJ 89.9 FM (English), La Raza 95.7 FM (Spanish), KALY 101.7 FM (Somali) and WIXK AM 1590 (Hmong).

Minneapolis Ward 4 contact info: If you live in Ward 4 and want to reach City

Councilwoman LaTrisha Vetaw, contact Maggie Kohl via email: maggie.kohl@minneapolismn.gov or cell: 612-258-3982. Contact Betsy Brock with other needs via email: betsy.brock@minneapolismn.gov or cell: 612-257-5242. You can also reach Vetaw via email: latrisha.vetaw@minneapolismn.gov or cell: 612-322-1143.

Minneapolis Ward 5 contact info: If you live in Ward 5 and want to reach City Councilman Jeremiah Ellison, call his office at 612-673-2205 or email him at ward5@minneapolismn.gov. You can also contact his policy associate Bethny Turnwall at bethany.turnwall@minneapolismn.gov.

Hennepin County District 2 contact info: To reach Hennepin County Commissioner Irene Fernando, call 612-348-7882 or email her at irene.fernando@hennepin.us. For constituent services contact policy aide Bill Emory at 612-348-3526 or at bill.emory@hennepin.us.

Minneapolis Public Schools, District 2: Sharon El-Amin is the Board of Education director representing North Minneapolis. She can be reached at 612-986-3281 or Sharon.El-Amin@mpls.k12.mn.us.

Do you have an ongoing program, meeting or event you would like to see published in North News? Please send the details to DavidP@pillsburyunited.org.

NOTICES

NEWS

Merwin Liquors Continued from page 4

he reflected on what the community had to say.

"In terms of action taken against Merwins in the last 30 years, I have been the only one to successfully take action against it. Since the corner has been cleaned up, that has sort of complicated some of that," Ellison said. "I want to figure out a pathway for him [Pollard] to continue to do good work on that corner. But, I definitely agree with the community and understand where they're coming from when they say they don't want a liquor store."

Sanctuary Church, located next to the liquor store, was originally negotiating to buy the store's property but the deal fell through when they couldn't agree on a price. They say in combination with efforts from We Push for Peace, there haven't been frequent shootings like before.

"I think it's really important for us to recognize again, it's not pitting people against Pollard, it's recognizing that something different deserves to be there," said Jesse Ross, spokesman for Sanctuary Church.

Although the research reports crime has significantly gone down, Ross says staff sees illegal activity still occurring on the property. He says drugs are still being trafficked on the property and people who suffer with substance use disorders can often be seen behind the building.

"Everything that was happening in the parking lot moved to the back of the building," Ross said. They're still drug transactions and are still homeless folks, there are still folks that need naran on a regular basis, robberies that are happening, etc, so it's hard to say that just because deaths have gone down that the problem is solved."

HERC Continued from page 5

waste (from food scraps to biodegradable packaging) and convert into fertilizer, compost soil and biogas. This would remove some of the waste currently sent to the incinerator.

Commissioners Irene Fernando and Angela Conley represent communities disproportionately impacted by pollution. North Minneapolis, which is in Fernando's district, has the worst rates for respiratory illness. Both commissioners favor closing HERC sooner, but knew the plan would need a broader timeline to garner yes votes from other commissioners.

"So, for me, it's imperative and in alliance with several of our goals as a

county, including our declaration that racism is a public health crisis," Conley said at a meeting of the Administrations, Operations and Budget Committee on Oct. 10. "HERC is a facility that is affecting peoples' health and, primarily, these are black and brown people."

Plans can unravel with one election. More cautious commissioners at the Oct. 10 meeting insisted on a longer timeline.

"I would love to put a better date on this, but my problem is I don't know what kind of legislature we're going to have," said Commissioner Debbie Goettel, during a meeting of the board's Administration, Operations and Budget Committee. "If it swings – and they do often – they will set us backwards. It's just because of that. Not knowing what we face in the future is what I'm concerned with."

The county recently adopted a zero-waste plan with a goal of closing HERC, formally known as the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center. While the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency says its emissions consistently meet safety standards, environmentalists say the tests do not measure everything that goes in the air.

Miasia Wise Asia, a Northside resident, said if closure drags on, "2040 is entirely too late."

"So much of the community has shown up at meetings and rallies so to me, this feels like a slap in the face," she said. "So for them to say that they are listening to community and are making a decision that is based on our health and well-being, it doesn't feel that way at all."

Methadone Clinic Continued from page 7

relocate.

At an open house in early October, clinic leaders said its location is critical. With fentanyl's ravages, a visible part of West Broadway, a recovery path is a few steps away.

"We just want to be part of the community," said program manager Liz Scott. "This is healthcare. We don't turn anyone away. Everybody has a chance to come in and get treatment."

Pink Ladies Continued from page 9

of death. And for a moment I thought that was it for me. But then I came back to life," Weems said. "For as long as I'm around I'll keep the party going."

The Anika Foundation awarded Weems \$1,000 for programming. Weems says she currently has other projects in the

county, including our declaration that racism is a public health crisis," Conley said at a meeting of the Administrations, Operations and Budget Committee on Oct. 10. "HERC is a facility that is affecting peoples' health and, primarily, these are black and brown people."

works, such as Rebel With A Cause, a kids food shelf for families affected by cancer in honor of her grandson.

To the people reading this, Weems says "Check yourself before you wreck yourself, and take care of each other."

Football Legacy Continued from page 11

"It's still strange at times, but I began to feel less weird because I proved to everyone that I was taking it seriously," Abdullah said.

She attended every summer practice and always asked coaches for advice to get better.

"Kaiya is great. She's working hard. It's great to have her out here," assistant Coach Josh Corrigan said. "I commend her, this sport is a male dominated sport and there's boys in high school that can't handle being here everyday. One of the hardest things to do in sport is being out there every day trying your best, and she does that. That's pretty powerful."

As the season approached, Abdullah was nervous. She was comfortable with the Polar team, but worried she would be singled out once opposing teams found out she was a girl.

"I had to prepare myself for the reality that people might not take me seriously, or think they could run over me and think I'm weak because I'm a girl," Abdullah said. "That thought makes me mad, it bugs me that that's how people may think, I can take those feelings and push them through the sport."

During her first game of the season, Abdullah was on the defensive line when she came head to head with an opposing player.

She entered the defensive line ready to play. She was met with points, whispers, and laughs from the opposing team.

"I laughed with them," Abdullah said. "I love proving people wrong."

The opposing team snapped the ball and Abdullah got her first tackle.

"I haven't been tackled yet, she said proudly.

She was a regular contributor to the Polars C and JV squads. She celebrated her senior night in October. On the sidelines a crowd of her teammates could be heard chanting her name as she entered the field. Her mother and brother arrived in custom t-shirts in support.

Her brother and former player, Jaheim Abdullah, says he remembered when Kaiya came to him with the idea of playing football.

"I encouraged her to get out there," her brother said. "She's going to stand up for

whatever she believes in, I hope she takes what she is doing and applies it to life and be that girl that does whatever she wants to do in life."

"I was scared but Nakaiya has never been one to not do her own thing, she does that quite well actually," Nakaiya's mother, Marilyn Abdullah, said. "Nakaiya is always front and center and goes above and beyond. She was 4 years old and trying to direct the choir, she doesn't settle for less and always goes the extra mile. I'm proud of her."

By completing the season Abdullah is indeed leaving a legacy of her own. Head Varsity coach Officer Chales Adams said only two girls before Kiya have had the courage to join the football team since 2011. Abdullah however, is the first girl to ever finish the season.

She will carry out the rest of the year as student council president and upon graduation, she wants to go to college to pursue a career in the medical field.

"Like Nike, just do it," she said with a laugh. "People are gonna tell you you're not able to do something. But you don't need anyone else's opinion to live your life because it's your life. So at the end of the day, do whatever it is that you want to do."

Refrigerated Rink Continued from page 14

recreation center has just one) with suspended walking track, a remodeled recreation center and a 40,000-square-foot waterpark.

A proposal projected to cost \$49 million would have included four new indoor courts and more substantial upgrades to the waterpark and existing recreation center. It failed to attract support because project planners said fundraising efforts, including additional state funds, were unlikely to come through.

North Commons Park boosters were disappointed that the plan voted on falls short of a grander vision for more courts and a completely new recreation center.

The renovation plan approved by the board still has the footprint for a refrigerated rink. Hume, who helped start the North Commons skating and hockey program in the early 1980s, wants to raise funds for a new rink, warming room and equipment storage.

"Many people in North Minneapolis learned how to skate at North Commons," Hume told the board before the vote. "New Directions is taking the responsibility for finding the funders. We're hoping to get a memo of understanding so we can go ahead with the fundraising."



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