

# CITY OF SAINT PETER HOT SHEET



All the City news you need to know and a little bit more.  
City Info Line 507-934-0675 TDD #711



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The following information is a publication of the City of Saint Peter, City Administrator's Office, 934-0663, 227 South Front Street.  
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01/22/20

**CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS** – Action at the City Council meeting held on January 13, 2020 included approval for purchase of replacement laboratory equipment for River's Edge Hospital; authorization for City assistance for the Special Olympics Polar Bear Plunge event on February 1<sup>st</sup>; and approval for replacement of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) equipment for the Fire Department to be funded by a combination of Federal grant funds and the 2019 Equipment Certificate.

The next regular City Council meeting will be Monday, January 27<sup>th</sup> beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Governors' Room of the Community Center.

## **MAKES ME WONDER (BY CITY ADMINISTRATOR TODD PRAFKE)** – *So here we are....*

I happen be fascinated with the new genetic testing kits that you can buy to help determine your ancestry. Have you done it? I have not yet, but I think I may give one a try.



At my house we laugh that I may not want to know who my relatives are and even funnier they may not want to know I am related to them! Ha, ha. Anyway, I am just so interested that this stuff gives you a map, or maybe a pie chart, that shows you are maybe 40% English, 20% Portuguese, 30% Germanic, and 10% central African. It is truly wild how all that can be figured out.

As I read more about this testing I understand folks put their information on public databases that can help find lost relatives and law enforcement is finding ways to use the information to solve crimes. Fascinating, fascinating.

One of my friends did the test. His entire life he had been told he was part Danish but his test showed no Danish genetics - lots of English but no Danish. The story of his family's ancestry, passed

down over the last three generations, was his family migrated from Denmark but as it turned out, they had only spent the two weeks before leaving for America in Denmark. In reality they had lived in England for 100+ years. So when they arrived in the United States in the early 1900's and they were asked "where did you come from", they said "Denmark".

Technically that was true and from that point on they were Danish when actually they were English by way of Denmark. I bet you know someone who took one of these tests and has a similar story about not really being from where they thought.

So why do I share this story? It got me to thinking that it didn't really matter to me where my friend came from. All that mattered was that he was here and he was my longtime friend.

Although it's cool to know this stuff, to know our genetic heritage, it doesn't really matter when it comes to community. For our future it doesn't matter if you were really Danish or English by way of Denmark. It's where you are today that matters and no matter where we come from, here we are and we are all part of our community so let's work together to make the "here we are" better.

Where are you from? It makes me wonder.....

**POLLING PLACE CHANGE** - Voters in Ward I (the north ward), will face another change of polling place in 2020 beginning with the March 3<sup>rd</sup> Presidential Nominating Primary. For the last two elections Ward I voters cast their ballots at Johnson Hall at the Nicollet County Fairgrounds. This was necessary as the National Guard Armory underwent a lengthy renovation project. But that project is now completed and the National Guard folks are ready to welcome voters back to their building on Election Day.

Official notice of this change in polling place will be sent by the Secretary of State's (SOS) Office to all Ward I households with at least one registered

voter. The SOS website that helps people find their polling place, already reflects this change in location.

For questions about voting, please feel free to contact the City Administrator's office at 507-934-0663.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT YOUTH FISHING CONTEST** - Mark your calendars now for the annual Saint Peter Volunteer Fire Department Youth Fishing contest on January 25<sup>th</sup>. The fun takes place starting at 1:00 p.m. at Hallett's Pond.

The fun event is free and open to all youth 15 years of age or younger. Bring your own pole, but the Firefighters will provide bait.



**SNOW DAY IN THE PARK** - It's time for some free family fun in the snow at Veteran's Park! Join the City's Recreation and Leisure Services Department at the park

on Saturday, February 1<sup>st</sup> from 1-3 p.m. for ice skating, music, a bonfire, s'mores, snowshoeing and other snow day activities. Please provide your own skates.

As you can see from the photos, last year's Snow Day In The Park was kind of a sloppy affair, but by all accounts great fun for everyone involved.



This great event is happening on conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce's Winterfest celebration. For more information about Winterfest activities, check out the Chamber's Website at <https://www.stpeterchamber.com/>

**WINTERFEST MEDALLION HUNT** - The Chamber of Commerce's annual winter celebration called "Winterfest" will get underway on January 31<sup>st</sup>. One of the most popular activities during Winterfest is the search for the elusive medallion.

As the medallion is usually hidden on City owned property, we would like to extend our annual words of caution to protect City property.

- The medallion will only be located in an area that is entirely accessible by the public. It won't be behind locked doors, gates, or fences.
- No digging is allowed. The medallion is hidden above ground and no digging anywhere on City property is allowed or necessary. Likewise, you won't have to climb a tree to get it.

- Be respectful of public property and be careful not to damage any facilities or structures as you search for the medallion.

The medallion hunt is a fun event for everyone so please be careful as you search and good luck!

**RECYCLING NOTICE FROM NICOLLET COUNTY** - In response to misuse (see examples shown here) of the Tri-County Solid Waste Office recycling containers provided for use by Saint Peter residents, County officials have asked the City to pass along the following notice:

"Recycling Reminder/Recycling Etiquette: St. Peter residents are reminded that the recycling containers at the City's yard waste drop-off site and the Nicollet County Highway shop are to be used as an over flow and not as the main source to recycle materials.



Residents are asked to break cardboard boxes down and save room for the next person. If recycling containers are full or overflowing, residents are asked not to stack materials in between or on the side of the containers. Please take materials back home and wait for the containers to be serviced. Containers are serviced on Monday and Thursday afternoons. These locations are for household recycling materials only and illegal dumping will be prosecuted. Please call Tri County Solid Waste with questions or concerns at 507-381-9196."



The containers provided by the County are located at the City's yard waste drop-off site (intersection of North Swift and West St. Julien Streets) and at the Nicollet County Highway Department facility on Sunrise Drive.

In addition to the two sites accepting recycling household materials, City residents can also dispose of other materials as follows:

- TV's, appliances and computers can be recycled for only \$5.00 per item using the coupon that will be provided in the February utility bill. The discounted price is valid through the end of February and the coupon can be provided with payment in electronic or paper format.

- Can't wait until the spring household hazardous waste collection? Household hazardous waste (such as cleaners, solvents, old gas or oil, garden chemicals, light bulbs and batteries, etc.) can be disposed of at the Blue Earth County Household hazardous waste facility (651 Summit Avenue in Mankato) by appointment. Please note the appointments are only available on Tuesdays. Call 507-304-4381 for an appointment.

**PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATING PRIMARY** – Did you know there will be an election on March 3<sup>rd</sup>? If that's a surprise, you're not alone.

Switching from caucuses to a presidential primary was a legislative decision in 2016 and the March 3<sup>rd</sup> election will allow voters to cast ballots for major political party presidential candidates. Previously this was done through the caucus system which will still be held on February 25th in order to discuss and vote on other issues.



So what happens at the March 3<sup>rd</sup> election? Changes...important changes everyone should understand before going to the polling place. Here's a sampling.....

- When a voter signs the roster book they will be certifying to the following statement...*"I am in general agreement with the principles of the party for whose candidate I intend to vote."*
- Voters will be required to select a party preference at the time they sign the roster book. Based on that selection, they will be provided a ballot specific to that major political party (Republican or Democrat-Farmer-Laborer). These will be the only two ballot choices and whichever ballot a voter chooses, they will cast one vote on that ballot.
- If a voter refuses to select one party's ballot, they will not be allowed to vote.
- The voter's choice of ballot will be made available to the chairs of each major political party after the primary; however, the candidate you cast a vote for will not be provided.

Voters will still be able to register to vote at the election and the same proofs of residence can be used.

Last year the State of Minnesota asked jurisdictions responsible for conducting elections to estimate the cost of the primary with an eye to reimbursing those jurisdictions for an election that is being conducted for the benefit of the political

parties. The estimated costs were substantially higher than expected and that most likely means not all of the City's costs will be reimbursed for this presidential nominating primary election leaving the balance to be funded by local taxpayers.

Two important deadlines related to this primary election should be noted:

- Voter pre-registration is open until end of day on February 11<sup>th</sup>
- The absentee voting period is January 17th-March 2<sup>nd</sup>. As with all elections, absentee ballots are available from the Nicollet County Property Services Office at the Government Center (501 South Minnesota Avenue).

**SAINT PETER POLICE RESERVES NEED YOU!** - The Police Reserves are an integral part of Police Department operations. This all-volunteer group provides thousands of hours of service to the community each year and provides support to the Police Department with duties like:

- Assisting with patrol activities
- Emergency Management Response and Support, e.g. floods, etc.
- Assisting with missing persons searches
- Securing and guarding crime scenes
- Organizing community events and special activities

The Police Reserve Unit has evolved over time into a true community service unit with an authorized strength of 24 volunteer members. Each member is trained in various areas of police response and members undergo various application and screening processes to become members of the organization.

Without the service of the Police Reserves it would be extremely difficult for the Department to maintain order and provide for the safety of the community during large-scale community events such as the Fourth of July. Reserves provide in excess of 3,000 volunteer hours during the course of a year and without their efforts, the cost for large-scale events would be substantial.

This important group is in need of new members. If you or someone you know is seeking a highly rewarding volunteer opportunity in Saint Peter, please contact Sgt. Paul Hagen at the Police Department (931-1550) to request an application.

**2020-2021 CITY COUNCIL** – Councilmembers Emily Bruflat, Keri Johnson and Bradley DeVos took the oath of office as part of the regular City Council meeting on January 12<sup>th</sup>. Along with Councilmember Shanon Nowell who was sworn in at the December 9<sup>th</sup> meeting, the new members join Councilmembers Stephan Grams, Edward Johnson and Mayor Charles Zieman to comprise the newest

City Council. The official photo for the 2020-2021 Council is shown below:



Back row L-R...Emily Bruflat, Bradley DeVos, Shanon Nowell, Ed Johnson; Front row L-R... Stephan Grams, Charles Ziemann, Keri Johnson

**CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT ACCESSIBILITY GRANT PROGRAM** - The City Council has recently adopted the Central Business District Accessibility Improvement Grant program to assist with financing building renovations intended to improve access for those with mobility impairments. It is anticipated that the funds will predominantly be utilized to fund improvements to doorways, handicapped ramps, wheelchair lifts or other improvements such as an installation of automatic door opening systems.

All commercial properties within the Central Business District are eligible to participate. If the structure is located within the Historic Preservation District, any exterior renovations or alterations would first need to be reviewed and approved by the Heritage Preservation Commission.

The maximum grant amount is \$25,000 per property. Projects exceeding \$25,000 may still be considered if the borrower demonstrates they have access to the funds necessary to complete the project. The grant is to be provided interest free.

Participants will be required to enter into a grant agreement with the City of Saint Peter which would obligate that the renovations funded under the grant program will be maintained and repaired as necessary for at least 15 years. The agreement will also require that the property is adequately insured. The grant will be forgiven at a rate of 1/15th per year.

Grant applications are due by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, February 28, 2020. Following a review of the applications, those chosen to receive funding will be notified and projects can commence as weather allows. The program is financed by the interest income of the City's revolving loan fund. It is anticipated that the funds available will be sufficient to undertake two or three renovations in 2020.

For more information of the program please contact the Community Development Department at 507-934-0661.

**WARMING HOUSE HOURS AT VET'S PARK RINKS –** Breaking news!!!! The warming house and ice rinks are opening Wednesday, January 15<sup>th</sup>! The warming house will be staffed with an Attendant during the following scheduled hours:

Mon.–Fri. from 4–9 p.m.,  
Saturdays 10 a.m.–9 p.m.  
Sundays 1–9 p.m.  
School Vacation Days from 1–9 p.m.

Leisure skating only will be available at one of the Veteran's rinks during the following days/times:

Monday–Friday, 6–7 p.m.  
Saturday/Sunday from 1–3 p.m.

The rink/warming house will be closed if any of the following conditions exist:

- Air temperature at -15° or colder,
- Wind chill temperature at -20° or colder,
- Temperatures that soften the ice,
- More than 1" of snow accumulates on the ice and maintenance crews are not available (e.g. holidays, weekends).

The rink may also close early due to lack of skaters.

For more information on warming house/rink closures please call the Rec Hotline at 934-0070. Parents are encouraged to call the Rec Hotline prior to dropping kids off or sending them to the rink to make sure the warming house is open.

**SIDEWALK CLEARANCE REMINDERS –** It's January and winter is official here. What do winter and sidewalks have in common? The need to clear those sidewalks of winter snow of course!

City regulations require sidewalks to be cleared the entire width within 24 hours of snow ending. This also includes keeping the sidewalk clear of blowing snow and ice.



It's a hefty charge (minimum of \$75) if City crews come out and do the work for you so, and certainly the Public Works crews have other things to take care of than shoveling sidewalks, so please make arrangements to get those walkways and handicap sidewalk corners shoveled!

**TREE TRIMMING** – (Not the Christmas tree kind of trimming!) Why is it important to keep trimming our boulevard trees? The City’s Parks crews trim trees to raise the tree canopy over sidewalks to a height of 8 feet and over roadways to a height of 14 feet.

Not only is it required by City Code regulations, but this allows larger trucks, (garbage, snow plows, etc.), to travel next to the curb without hitting and breaking off lower limbs. This also helps with intersection visibility and street light obstructions. In January City crews will begin tree trimming of boulevard trees for areas north of Broadway Avenue.



Of course this work is weather dependent and may be put on hold if the crew spends lots of time in snowplow trucks!

Property owners are reminded to remove Christmas lights from all boulevard trees when the

holidays are over so the lights aren’t damaged by this work.



Contact Public Works for more info at 934-0670.

**SNOWSHOES FOR RENT** - Bundle up, get outside (when the weather cooperates!),

and experience nature. Enjoy the winter by taking a snowshoe stroll through the woods. The Saint Peter Recreation Department offers rental of adult and youth size snowshoes for \$5 per pair per day, \$10 for the weekend, (Deposit of \$50 per pair due upon pick up). Please call ahead for larger groups (934-0667).

**CITY MEETING CALENDAR** – This calendar is subject to change. Should you have a question on a meeting date/time, please contact the City Administrator’s Office at 934-0663.

Monday	January 27	7:00 p.m.	City Council Meeting
Tuesday	January 28	5:30 p.m.	Heritage Preservation Commission
Monday	February 3	3:30 p.m.	Housing and Redevelopment Authority
Thursday	February 6	5:30 p.m.	Planning and Zoning Commission
Monday	February 10	7:00 p.m.	City Council Meeting
Monday	February 17		LEGAL HOLIDAY – President’s Day City Offices Closed
Tuesday	February 18	5:30 p.m.	City Council Workshop
Tuesday	February 18	7:00 p.m.	Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Monday	February 24	7:00 p.m.	City Council Meeting
Tuesday	February 25	5:30 p.m.	Heritage Preservation Commission
Wednesday	February 26	12:30 p.m.	Hospital Commission
Thursday	February 27	12:00 noon	Economic Development Authority
Friday	February 28	8:00 a.m.	Tourism and Visitors Bureau

