City staff respond to questions about letters from Service Line Warranties of America

The City has partnered with Service Line Warranties of America (SLWA) to offer protection for homeowners in the event of damage or breakage in their sewer and water lines.

Residents have received letters from Service Line Warranties of America (SLWA) that have used the City’s logo and City signature in their marketing materials. The letters were approved by staff and Council. The Council will readdress the marketing campaign at a future work session.

Following the launch of the program, the City has received several inquiries. Below are the questions being asked along with responses from City staff.

**How did this partnership come about?**
The City partnered with Service Line Warranties of America after receiving calls from residents over the years who have asked whether the City offered this type of program.

**What does the partnership entail? Is the City making money from the program?**
The partnership with SLWA is a marketing agreement only. SLWA offered, and the Council declined, to receive royalties or revenue from its partnership with SLWA.

The intent of the program is to offer affordable insurance to homeowners, most of whom are not aware that they are financially responsible for service line repairs on their property.

**Are residents required to have sewer and water service line insurance?**
No, residents are not required to carry insurance or to choose this company as their insurance provider.

The coverage is optional for residents and residents are free to respond or to discard the letters. As with any program offering, residents should check their homeowners’ policies and do research before choosing to participate.

**Why did the City partner with SLWA?**
Staff met with City Council members and an SLWA representative during a Council Work Session to discuss the partnership details. SLWA and its parent company, Homeserve, are the largest provider of water and service repair plans in North America and have an A+ rating from the Better Business Bureau.

More than 400 cities across the country have affiliated with their services, and they have been endorsed by the National League of Cities. Several Minnesota cities are in long-standing partnership with SLWA. It appears that the rates offered by SLWA fall in line with similar programs.

**What has been the response to date since launch of the program?**
Since launching the program with SLWA, the City has received several inquiries. Some residents have general questions about the program, some of them have thanked the City for making the program available, some have noted difficulties when contacting SLWA, and some have alerted the City to negative national press about the program, including some cities across the country that have opted to end their contracts with SLWA.

Staff is not aware of any Minnesota cities that have rescinded their contracts.

**What should I do if I have more questions?**
Residents who have questions about the details of the insurance provided by SLWA, should contact SLWA directly at 1-844-257-8795 or visit SLWFA.com.

Residents who have concerns with SLWA’s customer service, or the City’s partnership, should call the City at 651-792-7800, or fill out a Request Tracker complaint on the City website.

At this time, because the program is so new, and the City has received some positive feedback thanking staff for offering this service, staff will continue the program and will monitor responses. Please contact City Hall if there are direct service concerns with SLWA.

**Where can I find more information?**
There is an article and fact sheet on the City website homepage in the City News section that outlines the program and frequently asked questions.

The program was also outlined in the May issue of Arden Hills Notes.
Arden Hills “Hot Dog with a Deputy” set for July 11

Join members of the Ramsey County Sheriff’s Department (RCSO) at the popular “Hot Dog with a Deputy” event on Wednesday, July 11, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Perry Park, Arden Hills.

“It Hot Dog with a Deputy” is a summer initiative to build connections with the communities served by the RCSO. Join members of law enforcement for hot dogs, chips, bottled water and fun. The event includes equipment demonstrations and conversations with deputies.

Staff and equipment at the event could include Patrol Deputies, K-9, Water Patrol, SWAT, Mobile Field Force, Reserve Deputies, Mounted Unit and volunteers.

Register your neighborhood Night to Unite event by July 20

It’s time for neighborhoods to plan for their annual Night to Unite activities. As a neighborhood organizer, you can register for neighborhood events by July 20 on the Ramsey County Sheriff’s Office website.

As a resident, please mark your calendars to participate in your neighborhood’s event this year on Tuesday, August 7.

Penny Carnival to be held July 27 at Perry Park

Gather up your pennies and come celebrate the end of the 2018 Summer Parks & Recreation program.

A Penny Carnival will be held Friday, July 27 at Perry Park, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Calling all dog lovers to Bark and Rec Day on July 28th

The City’s annual Bark and Rec Day event for dogs and dog lovers will be held Saturday, July 28, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., in the off-leash dog area at Perry Park.

This is a free event for all ages. Refreshments and snacks will be available.
Lawn maintenance tips for protecting waterbodies

There are numerous lakes, streams and ponds in Arden Hills, and you can protect our water by following these lawn maintenance tips:

1. **Fertilize smart**
   Use phosphorus-free fertilizer and sweep up fertilizer spills on hard surfaces. This helps prevent fertilizer from getting into the storm drain.

2. **Mow smart**
   Aerate your lawn, seed bare patches and mow at a healthy setting. A healthy, vigorous lawn needs less water, fertilizer and maintenance.

3. **Don’t sweep or dump grass clippings into the street**
   Remove grass clippings and leaves from the street, sidewalks, trails and driveways. Grass clippings and leaves in the street end up in the storm sewer and are carried to area water bodies.

   In fact, according to the City’s Illicit Discharge Ordinance Section 1020, “No person shall intentionally dispose of grass, leaves, dirt or landscape material into a water resource, buffer, street, road, alley, catch basin, culvert, curb, gutter, inlet, ditch, natural watercourse, flood control channel, canal, storm drain or any fabricated natural conveyance.”

4. **Scoop the poop**
   Please pick up after your pets. Rainwater washes pet waste into lakes and streams. Pet waste contains bacteria that can cause illness.

**Please note:** For its Annual Stormwater Meeting, the City will have an informational booth at the Penny Carnival, July 27, Perry Park, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., to provide residents with information on the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan.

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**City Council filing packets available July 12**

The Mayor and two City Councilmember seats will be up for election this fall. All three open seats will be for four-year terms (2019-2022).

If you are interested in running for one of the open seats, you must file an Affidavit of Candidacy. Candidate filing packets will be available July 12 at City Hall or at the Ramsey County Elections Office (90 West Plato Blvd., Suite 160, St. Paul).

The filing period will open on Tuesday, July 31 at 7:30 a.m. and will close on Tuesday, August 14 at 5:00 p.m. The cost to file is $2 and must be paid with cash or check.

Candidates may withdraw from the ballot by filing an affidavit of withdrawal at any time during the filing period and through Thursday, August 16 at 5:00 p.m. Filing fees are not refundable. For more information about the filing process, contact the City Clerk at 651-792-7811, or Ramsey County Elections at elections@co.ramsey.mn.us or 651-266-2171.

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**Benchmarks: A review of recent City Council action**

**May 14, 2018**

Unless otherwise indicated, all items approved unanimously by 5-0 vote.

- Accepted donations from the Arden Hills Foundation for use at Floral Park gardens from the Graco Foundation in recognition of volunteer time given by Dan Dietz and Renee Schmidt, and for a memorial tree planting at Arden Oaks Park from Steven Johnson for Gary Kremer.

- Held a special assessment hearing, awarded the contract and adopted the special assessment roll for the 2018 street and utility improvement project for street reclamation at Wedgewood Circle, Parkshore Drive and Blueberry Lane; and street reconstruction at Indian Oaks Court, Indian Oaks Trail, Floral Drive, Norma Circle, Gale Circle and James Circle.

**May 29, 2018**

Unless otherwise indicated, all items approved unanimously by 5-0 vote.

- Adopted an ordinance amending the 2018 fee schedule updating the utility rates for water, sewer and stormwater funds based upon a utility rate study performed by the City’s municipal advisor, Ehlers, to assess current and future needs for actual operating costs and costs of future infrastructure improvements for these utilities.

- Held a public hearing and approved the preliminary plat, final plat and Comprehensive Plan amendment at 3246 New Brighton Road for a subdivision to create three single-family residential lots at the former Lake Johanna Fire Station No.1 property.

- Tabled to June 11, 2018, a site plan review request by Primrose Schools for site modifications at 4061 Lexington Avenue. Primrose Schools is considering purchasing the property currently owned by Bremer Bank for a new daycare center (4-1, Holmes opposed).

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For a complete and detailed listing of recent City Council action, please review the meeting minutes on the City website at cityofardenhills.org and click on Agendas & Minutes.
From the City Council

A Word to the Class of 2018. A picture, actually. After all, they say a picture is worth a thousand words.

A little over 50 years ago as 1968 began, I was halfway through my junior year in high school. It was perhaps one of the most violent and divisive periods of my lifetime.

My wife Eileen and I recently visited the 1968 exhibit at the Minnesota History Center in Saint Paul, which brought back many of those memories. It marked the heaviest and bloodiest fighting of the Vietnam War, resulting in public opinion turning sharply negative. Widespread anti-war protests, some violent, sprang up on college campuses and spilled out into our streets.

President Johnson shocked the country by announcing he would not seek, nor accept, a second term as U.S. president despite his signature Great Society initiatives advancing civil rights, voting rights, the establishment of Medicare/Medicaid and the war on poverty.

Noted civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., who had devoted his work encouraging non-violent protest, was assassinated in Memphis. U.S. Senator Robert F. Kennedy (NY), brother of slain President John F. Kennedy and a leading prospect to become president, was assassinated soon after in Los Angeles.

The Democratic National Convention in Chicago was marred by massive protests, riots and arson fires. It was a long, hot summer.

By contrast, Christmas of 1968 ended the year with a global message of peace and optimism. The Apollo 8 astronauts had rocketed into deep space days earlier to become the first humans to venture beyond Earth orbit. Command Module Pilot Jim Lovell took this infamous Earthrise photo from lunar orbit while Commander Frank Borman read an excerpt from The Book of Genesis during his Christmas Eve broadcast to hundreds of millions of listeners back on Earth.

The Earthrise photo is proclaimed as one of the most historically significant photographs ever taken and led to the birth of the environmental movement. It serves to remind us we occupy a very small, delicate and yet perhaps the most beautiful object in our known universe. Its fate will be up to you, the leaders of tomorrow.

My generation was perhaps not the best stewards of this lovely planet. Sure, we’ve tried and made some progress, but 50 years later are still bitterly locked in debate over not only how we should treat the environment, but each other.

Congratulations to the graduates of Irondale, Mounds View, Roseville, Bethel, Northwestern and the dozens of private schools, vocational schools and alternative schools.

Yours Truly,

Steve Scott
City Councilmember