In early November, Ramsey County Manager Ryan O’Connor informed city staff that he was significantly reducing resources devoted to the Rice Creek Commons development project, citing the lack of a shared vision with the City of Arden Hills. Neither county commissioners nor county staff attended the first Joint Development Authority (JDA) meeting of the New Year.

“It’s very unfortunate that Ramsey County has currently chosen to halt negotiations with the City of Arden Hills,” said Mayor Grant. “The city has called a special meeting of the JDA for February 4 to try to move things forward, as it’s unclear what the county plans are for continuing with a mixed-use development on the site for the foreseeable future.” Results of that meeting will be included in the March issue of Arden Hills Notes.

“We previously agreed to a vision for the property and we were finally getting close to agreeing to terms related to the financing of the plan,” said Grant, saying that earlier concerns about sewer and water credits and fees were resolved. “Then Ramsey County decided at the last minute to temporarily divert resources from the project, citing the lack of a shared vision.”

County officials have asked for more density and affordable housing on the property and a greater financial contribution from the city. These demands reflect recent changes from prior agreements reached by the county and city in 2012, 2016 and 2018.

The city held a public forum on November 15 to review the proposed TCAAP/Rice Creek Commons development plan to date, including overall financing, parks, amenities and a proposed civic site on the former TCAAP property.

Some 50 residents were asked to provide feedback on two surveys. One was on the project's overall scope and financing. The other was on the proposed civic site. Forty-one people responded to the overall TCAAP/Rice Creek Commons survey, and 34 people responded to the civic site survey.

Survey respondents wanted a better understanding of the projected costs to the city and more details on the open space plan for Rice Creek Commons. Some also cited concerns related to additional density requests, traffic and impact to schools. They cautioned the city to avoid duplication of amenities of neighboring cities, chains and franchises, public management of private facilities, and a fast pace in building out a community center or civic building. In light of Ramsey County announcing a scale back in resources the week prior, some residents wanted more information and open discussion.

Desired Civic Site Amenities

The majority of respondents wanted a civic site on the property. The following are amenities that were suggested by those who completed the surveys: a walking track, fitness classes, a gymnasium, meeting spaces, banquet space, cross-country ski trails, skating rinks, a restaurant and underground parking. They indicated they would like to see a well-planned site with multi-use spaces.
Affordable housing and density

The county’s goals related to affordable housing and density have changed since approval of the TCAAP Redevelopment Code (TRC) in 2016. The TRC approves 1,460 housing units with a goal of 10 percent reserved for residents who make 80 percent of the area median income. Grant said the city is committed to providing the previously approved affordable housing and density. Current plans are in line with Metropolitan Council requirements for Arden Hills.

“At our November public forum, we heard from residents, the majority of whom encouraged the city to stick with the original goals for density and affordable housing,” said Grant. “As it is currently planned, there will already be increased traffic with the number of estimated vehicles coming in and out of the site, from both Highway 96 and County Road H. Increased density will only put more stress on these areas.”

Site plans include varying levels of density with larger and smaller single family homes, attached and detached townhouses, senior living facilities, condominiums and apartments for rent. The density on the site will be significantly higher than the currently developed Arden Hills.

The most recent draft of the Master Development Agreement between the county and the developer seeks additional units reserved for those who make significantly less than 80 percent of the area median income.

City fees and financing

In 2012, the city and county agreed in a Joint Powers Agreement that the city would contribute an estimated $8.2 million towards infrastructure improvements, which the city is still willing to participate in; however, the county, in March of 2018, had unilaterally requested the city contribute an additional unspecified $1.8 million to fill a county budget gap.

The city continues to work toward a mutual cooperative agreement, which details financing commitments and terms. The city held a special work session on January 16 to review the details of the draft agreement.

Brian Holmes named JDA chair

In January, Joint Development Authority (JDA) commissioners and the chair were up for reappointment. The city sought and interviewed applicants for the JDA chair position and selected Brian Holmes (no relation to Councilmember Fran Holmes) to serve as the new chair. He was to lead the January 7 JDA meeting, but the meeting was cancelled due to a lack of a quorum. The county representatives did not attend.

Brian will serve through 2020. He is a resident of Arden Hills and the assistant vice president of real estate and facilities for Prime Therapeutics.

Mayor Grant and Councilmember Brenda Holden will represent the city on the JDA through this term.

Next steps

A city Civic Site Task Force meeting that was scheduled for January 29 was rescheduled to February 5 due to the cold weather. The committee will remain a standing committee, but no additional meetings will be held until the county agrees to reengage with the project and the Joint Development Authority.
December 10, 2018

Except as indicated, all items approved unanimously by 5-0 vote.

- Approved extending Fire Protection Service Contract with Lake Johanna Fire Department for fire protection for five years (thru December 31, 2023).
- Approved 2019 Fee Schedule, including increases to water utility rates, along with increases to city water availability charge (WAC) and sewer availability charge (SAC) fees.
- Conducted Truth-in-Taxation hearing on the 2019 Tax Levy and Budget.
- Adopted the 2019 Budget and Tax Levy.
  1) Adopted the Proposed 2019 Budget in the amount of $13,972,990.
  2) Set the Final Tax Levy for Taxes Payable in 2019 with a tax levy increase of 4% in the amount of $3,938,420 (Motion carried 4-1, Holmes opposed).
  3) Approved the 2019-2023 Capital Improvement Plan and Proposed Budget.

December 17, 2018
Special City Council Meeting

All items approved unanimously by 5-0 vote.

- Approved 2019 Tobacco License Renewals for five business establishments in the city, all of which have successfully passed a background check conducted by the Ramsey County Sheriff’s Office.
- Approved 2019 Liquor License Renewals for ten business establishments in the city, all of which have successfully passed a background check conducted by the Ramsey County Sheriff’s Office.
- Appointed Mitchell Gebauer to the position of Public Works Maintenance Worker.
- Appointed Brian Holmes (no relation to Councilmember Fran Holmes) as the 2019-2020 Chair of the TCAAP Joint Development Authority.
- Accepted the resignation of Building Official Dave Scherbel, whose last day of employment was January 11, 2019.

January 14, 2019

All items approved unanimously by 5-0 vote.

- Named the Shoreview-Arden Hills Bulletin as the official newspaper for legal notices; appointed Campbell Knutson, P.A. as city attorney with Joel Jamnik as primary city attorney; appointed Ehlers & Associates, Inc. as financial consultant; and appointed Malloy, Montague, Karnowski, Radosevich and Company (MMKR) as auditor.
- Reappointed John Van Valkenburg and Terry Finlay to the Parks, Trails and Recreation Committee for terms to expire December 31, 2021.
- Reviewed the city’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan and authorized submittal to the Metropolitan Council.
- Accepted the resignation of Building Official Dave Scherbel, whose last day of employment was January 11, 2019.

January 28, 2019

Councilmember Holden, excused. All items approved unanimously by 4-0 vote.

- Approved Land O’ Lakes site plan review for a sign standard adjustment for a deviation from the sign code to increase permitted size of freestanding monument and auxiliary signs.
- Amended 2019 fee schedule to add TCAAP development related professional service charge as a planning fee.

For a detailed listing of recent City Council action, please review the meeting minutes at cityofardenhills.org and click on Agendas & Minutes.
At its December 10, 2018 meeting, the City Council adopted a 2019 property tax levy of $3,938,420. This sets the city’s property tax levy increase for 2019 at 4 percent, which is down from the preliminary levy rate set in September 2018 of 5 percent.

Funding from the city’s share of regional fiscal disparities has decreased for 2019 and will contribute $311,064 toward the levy total. The city’s tax capacity has increased, and taxes paid by city property owners will account for the remaining balance, or $3,627,356.

The impact of a 4 percent levy increase translates to a $33.04 increase in annual city taxes paid by resident owners of median valued homes.

In Arden Hills, the entire tax levy goes toward the General Fund expenditures in the city’s budget. Due to under spending and unanticipated revenue in 2018, the city's General Fund ended with a positive balance that will be applied to 2019.

The Council also adopted a 2019 city budget of $13,972,990.

### 2019 General Fund Budget

**Revenues**
- General Fund revenues in the 2019 budget are set at $5,292,620.
- The property tax levy accounts for approximately 74 percent of the General Fund revenues and will be increased 4 percent or $151,478 over the previous year.
- Building permit and plan review fee revenues are expected to increase based on an analysis of historical revenues.

**Expenditures**
- General Fund expenditures for 2019 total $5,479,590.
- Public Safety costs are set to increase by 5.5 percent for the Lake Johanna Fire Department, 4.1 percent for the Ramsey County Sheriff contract and an increase of 5.1 percent for dispatch services.
- An additional $100,000 was added to the 2019 budget for street maintenance to help lengthen the life of the city’s roads.
- Two positions have been filled, including a recreation programmer and a senior engineering technician.

### Other Rate Increases

2019 utility rates have been adjusted based on the rate study completed in 2018. The changes will be reflected on the first quarter statements that will go out in April 2019.

The approved budget and tax levy information can be viewed in detail in the December 10, 2018 City Council agenda packet posted on the city’s website.

### Check Register – What your Arden Hills tax dollar buys you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Transaction</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety</td>
<td>$29.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Government</td>
<td>$16.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Recreation</td>
<td>$11.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>$ 9.48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital (transfers)</td>
<td>$ 3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDA (transfers)</td>
<td>$ 1.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A $346,900 home generates $867 in annual City property taxes. This comes to $72.24 per month for 2019.

### City Approves Draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan

The City Council approved the submission of the Draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan to the Metropolitan Council at its January 14 meeting. Following review by the Metropolitan Council, the plan will be sent back to the city for final revisions prior to official adoption.

The Arden Hills 2040 Comprehensive Plan defines the goals and long-term vision of the community. A copy of the plan is posted on the city’s website under Community Development. Please contact City Planner Mike Mrosla at mmrosla@cityofardenhills.org, or by phone at (651) 792-7822 with any questions.

### Perkins Restaurant Closes; New Tenant Sought

It has come to the city’s attention that the Perkins restaurant located at 3855 Lexington Avenue North has closed. Perkins has been a long time tenant of the building. The property owners are now actively marketing the property for a new tenant.

### City Snowplow Policy

The City's Public Works Department works to provide safe driving conditions for residents while balancing costs of snow and ice control.

Street plowing typically begins when 2 inches of snow have accumulated.

Please keep the following information in mind:
- Plows will get as close as possible to mailboxes, but the cleaning of the mailboxes and fire hydrants is up to residents.
- Please do not park vehicles on the street after the accumulation of two or more inches of snow and until plowing has been completed.
- Parking is not allowed on any city street between 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. year round.
New Sheriff and Department Changes Announced

Bob Fletcher returned to lead the Ramsey County Sheriff’s Office on January 7 following winning the election in November.

Jeff Ramacher is now Undersheriff, Public Safety Services. Jeff has served Ramsey County for 21 years and held the positions of Deputy, Sergeant, Commander and Inspector.

Bob Fletcher

Tony Waldo replaces Ramacher as Commander and oversees the patrol, including traffic patrol services. Mike Casey and Chris Moe are the traffic deputies.

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners awarded outgoing Sheriff Jack Serier with a Vision of Peace statue for his exemplary leadership and service to Ramsey County. It is the Commissioners’ highest level of recognition.

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners award outgoing Sheriff Jack Serier.

Local Government Innovation Award Winners Named

The Ramsey County Fire Chiefs Association in partnership with the Ramsey County Emergency Communications Center (ECC) received the University of Minnesota Humphrey School of Public Affairs 2018 Award for Innovation and Collaboration.

The Ramsey County Fire Chief’s Association, which includes the Lake Johanna Fire Department, and Ramsey County ECC were recognized as a Leading Innovator of the 2018 Local Government Innovation Award in the City Category. The award was presented for the county-wide “Closest Unit Dispatching Project.”

The “Closest Unit Dispatching Project” is designed to break down geographical boundaries to allow the “customer” the closest and quickest service to emergencies involving structure fires and those suffering a cardiac arrest. When a 911 caller reaches the Ramsey County ECC and is reporting a significant emergency, the system looks for the closest unit to the emergency location regardless of jurisdiction. Emergency vehicles within the County are equipped with an Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL). This allows dispatch to know their constant location, which allows the “closest unit” to be dispatched.

Prior to Closest Unit Dispatching, the Dispatch center would send the emergency call to the closest fire station within the city of the caller, regardless of whether a closer unit was available to assist.

Resident Joins Master Water Steward Program

Arden Hills resident Nick Thomas has joined the Master Water Steward program through Rice Creek Watershed District.

Nick and his wife moved to Arden Hills in the last two years and want to contribute to the community.

Nick Thomas

The Master Water Steward is an education and outreach program designed to provide citizen volunteers with the knowledge and skills needed to improve water quality at the local level. The program was developed by the Freshwater Society in 2013; Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD / the District) became a partner and sponsor in 2016.

Each Master Water Steward must participate in coursework, commit to 50 hours of volunteer service for water quality in the first year and 25 in subsequent years, and complete a capstone project in their community.

The District pays for the program registration and awards funds from the cost-share program to support the capstone projects. RCWD currently has 12 Master Water Stewards who have completed or are completing projects and volunteer throughout the watershed district.

RCWD sees the Master Water Stewards program as a way to develop partnerships, expand outreach and build capacity for water quality projects in the watershed.

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Four new businesses located at Lexington Station (Lexington Avenue and Red Fox Road) opened recently in Arden Hills. Check out the details below.

**Old Southern BBQ Smokehouse**

Three Things to Know
1. Old Southern BBQ Smokehouse’s focus is fresh – we smoke all of our meats daily at the restaurant and make everything from scratch.
2. We are expanding our catering operation and can facilitate all types of events, from small church gatherings or business lunches to large-scale weddings.
3. We love, live and are BBQ! We often smell like a bonfire and are proud of it – we use real wood fires to smoke all the meat. We’ve won prestigious awards. *National Barbecue News* voted us Top 20 BBQ Joints in America and at the American Royal our flagship sauce Dixie Red took 3rd Best Sauce on the Planet.

Why Arden Hills?
Arden Hills is a great community of people who live healthy, active lifestyles. This, coupled with an excellent area of convenience (694 & Lexington), where people can accomplish multiple things in the same vicinity, make it a wonderful location.

**Club Pilates**

Three Things to Know
1. Club Pilates provides full body, low impact workouts.
2. The workouts focus on improving core strength and flexibility, which allow you to be more active throughout life.
3. The small classes are fun and make for a great community of people improving their health.

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**Three Things to Try**
1. We are known for our BBQ Bowls – the Dixie Bowl is our top seller.
2. Pitmaster Platters – Our platters showcase the “star” of our menu which is our smoked meat. Guest favorite is the Ribs.
3. Smoked Wings – wings can be prepared a variety of ways (fried, etc.) but smoked (our way, in particular) is definitely the best.

**Hours of Operation**
We are open daily from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.
Grand Openings and Ribbon Cuttings Showcase New Offerings

**Pancheros Mexican Grill**

**Three Things to Know**

1. Our burritos are better built using fresh-pressed tortillas – each one is made and pressed fresh on the spot.

2. We use a unique spatula called BOB the Tool to blend the burrito ingredients together to ensure each bite is perfectly mixed and equally tasty.

3. The Pancheros concept is designed to be convenient for our guests – each entrée is made-to-order in under two minutes from start to finish.

**Why Arden Hills?**

After opening several other successful Pancheros locations in the greater Twin Cities region, Arden Hills was a natural fit for our next location. Arden Hills has a prosperous business community, is home to several large employers and educational institutions in the region and is conveniently situated near I-694 and I-35W for accessibility.

**Three Things to Try**

1. Fresh-pressed tortillas (which are used in all burritos, quesadillas and tacos).

2. Burrito (in which all ingredients of choice are mixed together using a special tool)

3. Queso (A good addition to any Pancheros entrée as well as with chips)

**Hours of Operation**

Monday to Sunday, from 10:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

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**Pet Evolution**

**Three Things to Know**

1. We are a locally-owned small business with locations in Arden Hills and Woodbury. Pet Evolution is the brainchild of Rian and Mike, who wanted to create a store where it was easy to find the very best products for your pet. It's our goal to help your pets live the good life.

2. We are committed to giving back. Pet Evolution has a long-standing history of fund-raising for non-profit organizations, and we look forward to working with more organizations around the Arden Hills area.

3. We provide the best and are dedicated to serving our customers and the pets in our community. We fill our store with only the best products and carry a full line of high-quality nutritional food products. We also have the best employees. Come by to discuss your pet's needs with one of our knowledgeable associates - we will give you a free pet food sample to take home.

**Why Arden Hills?**

We know there are plenty of pet-loving neighbors in the North Metro area who want only the best for their family pets! It's a convenient location for nearby families and an easy to find destination for our loyal customers who travel from downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul.

**Three Things to Try**

1. We have a full-service grooming salon in-store where our safety-certified groomers take pride in keeping our salon a safe, clean and calm environment.

2. Our unique and convenient self-serve dog wash is fun for the whole family. Our walk-up washing tubs are stocked with natural products, bath towels and state-of-the-art blow dryers.

3. We have many in-store events including Nail Trim Saturday and Small Dog Play Group. Nail Trim Saturday takes place the first Saturday of each month. Our Small Dog Play Group meets every Wednesday of the month (until Spring) from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the store.

**Hours of Operation**

Monday - Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Visit the City’s Redesigned Mobile-Responsive and Service-Centric Website

In late January, the city flipped the switch on a new website design aimed at better serving residents and visitors who access online information from multiple devices, including mobile, tablet, laptop and desktop computers.

Research on government websites consistently shows that visitors want to complete tasks online, whether it's paying a bill, applying for a permit, or registering for a recreation class. Buttons on the website home page, which also show prominently on mobile phones, makes it easier to do business online.

The global menu at the top of the website now includes a services tab, where visitors can find categories of centralized information. Visitors looking for information about pets and animals or content related to their home and yard can find it all in one location.

Parks & Recreation content is prominently featured on the website’s main menu, because city data shows it is one of the most popular sections of the website. In addition, a recreation calendar on the home page allows visitors to register for classes of interest directly through the calendar links.

The redesigned website also features more graphics, larger images and strives to comply with the most current ADA requirements. In many cases, website language has been re-written and shortened, so visitors can access information quickly.

Website edits will continue in the first quarter of the new year, along with ongoing content updates. Visit us online and let us know what you think. We want to hear from you!

Additionally, we are seeking volunteers to help us test our new site. If you are a new resident, long-time resident, new or long-time business owner and you are able to give an hour of your time at City Hall, please contact Dawn Skelly, communications coordinator, at 651-792-7817, or dskelly@cityofardenhills.org.

www.cityofardenhills.org