Where the spirit of Christmas lives year round.

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Notice of Violation for Utility’s Sewer Discharge Permit

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Sulfolane Update

Groundwater contaminated with sulfolane continues to be a concern in North Pole. All the occupied properties within the City located above the sulfolane plume are either connected to the City’s utility or have a source of clean water provided by Flint Hills Resources.

The City has made efforts to achieve solutions to sulfolane contamination in and outside of the city limits. In June, the City Council adopted an ordinance requiring permits for installing drinking water wells. Well permits are no-fee permits, but are intended as a mechanism to educate property owners and well-drillers about sulfolane. The Cities of North Pole and Anchorage are the only municipalities in the state that regulate wells. In October, the City passed a resolution that it would consider providing water to properties outside the city limits with contaminant- ed wells.

The lawsuit the City initiated in 2014 against Flint Hills Resources and Williams Petroleum for the harm sulfolane has caused to the City continues. The lawsuit is in the discovery stage. The City has proposed solutions to avoid a lengthy and expensive court battle, but to date, neither Flint Hills nor Williams have seriously responded to the City’s offers.

For information about sulfolane contamination, see the DEC website: dec.alaska.gov. In the Quick Links section, click North Pole-Sulfolane.

Improving Our Infrastructure

The road projects that occurred in the City this past summer included repaving of parts of 3rd and 8th Avenues, Blanket Boulevard and Davis Road; all of Ouida Way; and paving road approaches along 5th and 8th Avenues. These projects were funded by the Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System (FMATS).

As a FMATS member, the City is eligible for funding to improve its transportation infrastructure. The City’s cost for these projects is 9% of the total project cost. The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities manages FMATS projects for the City including design and hiring and overseeing the construction contractors.

Next year’s planned FMATS project includes paving the pedestrian paths on Blanket Boulevard, Snowman Lane and 5th and 8th Avenues and preventative maintenance fixing cracks on roads throughout the City.

Skateboard Park Equipment from Eielson AFB

This past spring, Eielson AFB contacted the City to see if it was interested in receiving their surplus skateboard park equipment. The Public Works Department first had to register to receive surplus government property before we could collect the equipment. This process took several months, but finally in September we collected the equipment.

The equipment will enable the City to significantly increase the size of our skateboard park. Our skateboard park now has a half dozen pieces of equipment. The equipment from Eielson has the potential to quadruple the pieces of equipment in our park. Expansion of the skateboard park will occur in phases as the Public Works Department rehabilitates the equipment.

The expanded skateboard park will make it an improved resource for local youth. Like the musical equipment installed in Terry Miller Park, the City’s investments in its recreational facilities is an effort to improve the quality of life within the City for its residents and visitors.

Utility Received $1.9 Million Grant

In July, the Utility received a Municipal Matching Grant (MMG) for $1.7 million to renovate aging sewer lift stations. The Utility was one of only four communities awarded a MMG in this year’s State Capital Budget—there were 51 grant applicants. The MMG requires a 30% match totaling $840,000. The Utility estimates the lift station project will cost $2.8 million.

The Utility will use the grant to rehabilitate four lift stations not upgraded in the first two phases of lift station rehabilitation. The lift stations to be rehabilitated are on Cary Street, Hurst, Tanana, and Mockler Roads. If there are sufficient funds, the Utility will also upgrade the lift station on Patriot Drive. The Utility expects construction to begin in June 2016 and construction will be completed by October 2016.

The rehabilitation work will repair rusting buried lift station cans; replace aging pumps, pipes and hardware; and upgrade the electronic controls. The prior lift station projects incorporated sophisticated electronic controls and a telephone-based warning system. These systems will be the model for the lift stations included in this project.

Stantec Engineering will provide the Utility with engineering and construction management services for the lift station project. Stantec purchased USKH, the engineering firm that provided engineering services for the two prior lift station projects so there is consistency across the projects.

Musical Park Equipment at Terry Miller Park

The City continues to improve its recreational resources. The latest addition to our parks was installation of Harmony Park musical equipment at Terry Miller Park. Installation of the equipment was made possible by a generous donation of $25,000 from the Snedden Family Foundation. Virginia Farmier, the Executive Director of the foundation, was instrumental in securing the gift for the City. The Foundation was also a donor to the 1st Sergeant Thomas Upgren Senior Fitness Trail. The City’s investments in its recreational facilities is an effort to improve the quality of life within the City for its residents and visitors.

North Pole Dogs now have their own Park

It has been several years in development, but the North Pole Dog Park is completed. We plan to continue to make improvements to the park, but it is open for use. The fences are closed and there is a parking lot on 3rd Avenue for park users.

The dog park is two parks in one. There is a large area open for dogs of all sizes. The entrance to this section of the dog park is located on 3rd Avenue. There is a section of the dog park made exclusively for smaller dogs if their owners do not feel comfortable around larger dogs. The entrance to the small dog park is through the gate located along the trail that parallels the elementary school fence.

When using the dog park be considerate of other users and please clean up after your dog. There are dog waste stations with bags and trash cans at the park.

In 2014 against Flint Hills Resources.

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