

# News Briefs

## Rotary hosts July 4 fireworks

The Saint Paul Rotary Club will host Saint Paul's 4th of July fireworks show beginning at dusk on Saturday, July 4, from the heights of Cathedral Hill at 215 Summit Ave.

The public is invited to come early and join in the festivities. Bring a picnic supper to enjoy in a nearby park, or grab dinner from any of the food trucks that will be parked along Dayton Avenue beginning at 6 p.m.

A free concert of favorite patriotic and folk music will be performed by local pianist Steven C & Friends beginning at 7:30 p.m. inside the Saint Paul Cathedral and piped outside.

The Saint Paul Rotary Club Foundation has donated \$20,000 to help pay for the event, but \$125,000 is needed to cover all of the costs. Businesses, community groups and individuals are being asked to donate to the cause.

Individuals giving \$30 or more will receive a commemorative T-shirt designed by Ezra Young, a student at the University

of Minnesota and a descendant of a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Donations may be made by visiting [stpaulrotary.org/donate/red-white-boom](http://stpaulrotary.org/donate/red-white-boom). Event updates, parking information, and additional details will also be available at that website.

## Afton Park receives state grant for Grand-Victoria development

Afton Park Development's plan to construct a six-story apartment building with first-floor retail on the northeast corner of Grand Avenue and Victoria Street is moving ahead with the Saint Paul City Council's acceptance of a \$350,000 state grant for the project on May 27. The redevelopment grant is from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

Afton Park's \$44 million redevelopment involves the demolition of the old Victoria Crossing East mall and an adjacent mixed-use building at 841-857 Grand Ave. The new building will include 90 market-rate apartments, underground and at-grade parking and 12,800 square feet of ground-

floor commercial space.

Efforts to salvage parts of the old mall have been underway, including the restoration and reuse of the iconic Chinese dragon sculpture over the front door.

The City Council approved a controversial tax increment financing district for the Grand-Victoria project last December. Several individuals and the fiscal watchdog group In\$ight Saint Paul opposed the TIF district as an unnecessary reduction in property tax revenue from the new development.

## Proposed tree preservation ordinance is laid over once again

By the time it is finally adopted, Saint Paul's long-delayed tree preservation ordinance could resemble a mighty oak. The Saint Paul City Council on May 20 laid over the proposed ordinance for another public hearing.

The ordinance, which has been on the drawing boards for more than a year, continues to be amended. The community-led Tree Preservation Ordinance Public Input

Group has continued to make recommendations. So has a group of staff from the city's departments of Public Works and Parks and Recreation.

According to City Council president Rebecca Noecker, city officials intend to have the ordinance and related rules ready for approval by late June. However, she added, the tree preservation measures need to be implemented correctly.

Saint Paul's tree canopy has been decimated in recent years by the emerald ash borer. Tree diseases and weather extremes, including severe storms, have also taken a toll. Many of the city's low-income neighborhoods also contain relatively few trees along city boulevards and parks, raising concerns about equity and urban heat islands.

Tree preservation became a hot-button issue in the fight over the proposed off-road bike trail along Summit Avenue, which could necessitate the removal of hundreds of mature trees.

*News briefs were compiled by Jane McClure and Dale Mischke.*