

# COMMUNITY LINK

MARCH 2009



CITY OF CHATFIELD

## HERITAGE PRESERVATION WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT??

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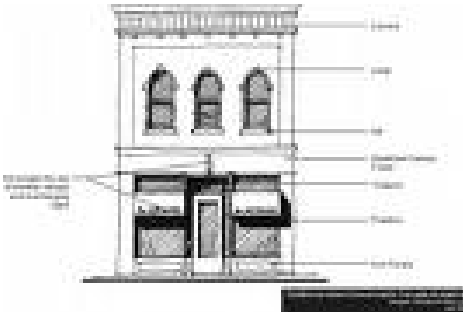
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When Chatfield's Heritage Preservation Ordinance was adopted for the first time, in 1997, it was because an interested group of citizens were sincerely interested in doing their part to add value to the community.

The individuals involved, at the time, suggested that the preservation of buildings, structures and sites that are significant to the history of Chatfield could be an important element in forging Chatfield's future. It wasn't about saving everything that was old, rather, it was about raising awareness of the significance of certain properties, about developing an appreciation for those properties and, to the extent possible, to create ways to assist the property owners who are interested in repairing, enlarging or otherwise improving those properties, to do so.

Several months ago, the City retained the services of Mr. Robert Vogel to facilitate the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) and to breathe new life into the effort of heritage preservation. Mr. Vogel is a historical geographer with approximately 30 years of ex-

perience in cultural resource management. He is the managing partner and Senior Historian of a group that provides services primarily in the Mississippi Valley region of North America as well as the Middle East. In addition to facilitating the Chatfield HPC, he also serves in a similar capacity at the cities of Newport, Farmington, Pine Island, Edina and others.



The philosophy behind Chatfield's Heritage Preservation program rests upon five basic concepts:

1. Historic buildings, sites, structures, objects and districts represent a set of scarce, non-renewable heritage resources that should be treated as critical assets for community development;
2. Heritage preservation is an important public service and a legitimate responsibility of city government;
3. Not everything old is worth preserving: protective measures

should focus on significant heritage resources;

4. Saving significant heritage resources for the benefit of future generations is always in the public interest; and
5. Effective heritage preservation policies are those which create a partnership between the owners of heritage resources and city government.

Some of the tasks that are before the Commission for these next several months include:

1. Submit grant applications for one or more high priority preservation projects;
2. Work with Main Street commercial property owners who are interested to have their buildings nominated for designation as Heritage Preservation Sites;
3. Work with city and school district officials to develop a preservation plan for Potter Auditorium;

Residents who are interested in this kind of work are encouraged to contact Mayor Knutson or the City Clerk's office. Currently, the HPC is composed of Laurel Hermanson, Ruth Ann Lund, Michael Martin and Ginny Engle and there is room for three more people. An interest in learning and serving the public is all that is needed to qualify.

### CITY OF CHATFIELD

[www.ci.chatfield.mn.us](http://www.ci.chatfield.mn.us)

Phone: 507-867-3810

Fax: 507-867-9093

21 Second Street SE

Chatfield, MN 55923

In Case of Emergency:

9-1-1

Ambulance (Non Emergency)

507-867-4446

Police (Non Emergency)

507-867-3331

Chatfield Public Library

507-867-3480

## STREET LIGHT REPAIR



Do you have a street light in your neighborhood that is out, dim or blinking? If you notice a street light that needs attention, you can deal with that in one of two ways. The old fashioned way to report a burnt out light is to call the City Clerk's office, which you are always welcome to do. A much more efficient way, though, has recently been made available by Alliant Energy.

Nowadays, if you need to report a failing light, just go on-line to [www.alliantenergy.com/streetlights](http://www.alliantenergy.com/streetlights) and you will find a form, all ready to go. All you will need to provide is the name of the city & state, the street address and the name of the nearest intersection. That is about all you will need to know and your light will get fixed.

Alternatively, if a computer is not your thing, so to speak, you are welcome to call the toll-free number that Alliant provides, and the work order will get processed. To do that, just call 800-255-4268. Please report poorly functioning street lights promptly. Thanks!!

## MARCH 2009

- **Mon Mar 2nd- Planning & Zoning 7:00 pm**
- **Mon Mar 9th- City Council 7:00 pm**
- **Wed Mar 11th-Cable Television Board 7:00 am**
- **Mon Mar 16th— Heritage Preservation Commission 7:00 pm**
- **Mon Mar 23rd- City Council 7:00 pm**
- **Thu Mar 26th—Economic Development Authority 5:00 pm**

## CITY OFFICIALS

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## THE FALTERING ECONOMY AND THE CITY—WHAT DOES IT MEAN??

It seems that every day, the news reports tell us of another set of lay-offs, of certain sectors of the economy needing a bail-out and so forth. Naturally, all of this affects the City, too—it just takes a little longer for these things to affect a city.

In this economy, there are three basic factors that can affect the City of Chatfield's budget negatively. The quickest and most dramatic impact on the City's budget occurs when the State of Minnesota cuts the amount of Local Government Aid (LGA) that it pays to the City.

LGA is a fundamental element of the State's effort to keep property taxes affordable. This is the program that ensures basic services at affordable rates, regardless of where one lives in Minnesota. Since this program has been around for quite awhile, it has undergone enough reforms that some have forgotten the real purpose of the program, which is property tax relief. Make no mistake, if this program disappears, there will be dramatic impacts on every small city in Minnesota as well as on the largest and oldest of cities, such as Minneapolis and St. Paul. In Chatfield, the City receives almost as much money in LGA as it does from the property tax.

The second factor that negatively affects the City's budget is the rate of delinquencies in property tax payments and utility bills while the third factor is a fairly new phenomena, that being home foreclosures. The nature of home foreclosures is such that it can be difficult for a city to become aware of a foreclosure situation and, when it does become aware, it can be difficult to get the authority to ensure that the property is cared for well enough that it doesn't de-value neighboring properties. This can be a tough situation for everyone.

In late December, when the Governor used his "unallotment" powers to balance the State's budget the City lost approximately \$72,000 of LGA, which came right off the bottom line of the City's finances. In January, the Governor's proposed budget needed to deal with a budget deficit of \$4.8 billion. Part of that proposal included a reduction in LGA payments—which translates into a \$93,000 loss to Chatfield in 2009 and an additional \$101,000 loss in 2010. And, due to a gloomy prediction that is expected in early March, it is likely that this scenario will further deteriorate.

Currently, the Mayor, along with the City Council and staff, are actively working to identify which cuts in services need to be made and when. Your input will be solicited, needed and appreciated.

