

## Start times

Robbinsdale Area School Board approves new start times for the 2022-2023 school year.  
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## Back on the field

The Champlin Park girls lacrosse team gets off to a strong offensive start in 2021.  
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Thursday, April 29, 2021

## Business incubator mulled in BP

### Indoor greenhouse part of proposal at former Huntington Pointe site

By KEVIN MILLER  
kevin.miller@apgecm.com

A developer is considering building a business incubator and year-round greenhouse at the site formerly occupied by the Huntington Pointe apartment complex. The proposal, which is still in its early development phases, was supported by the Brooklyn Park City Council at its April 19 meeting.

The project could potentially bring between 150 and 300 jobs to the now-vacant site.

“It’s a grand vision, and it’s very intriguing and it does align with some of the planning that’s been done around the site, but we do need to explore funding options, and there are a lot of questions that still need to be answered,” said Sarah Abe, project facilitator.

The City Council, acting as the Economic Development Authority, approved a \$12,500 grant for the developer to continue analyzing the unsolicited proposal’s feasibility. The grant is a local match required to apply for a larger \$50,000 Metropolitan Council Livable Communi-

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A woman stops to view the Daunte Wright memorial at 63rd Avenue and Katherine Drive April 20, the night Derek Chauvin was found guilty of murdering George Floyd. Wright was shot and killed by former Brooklyn Center police officer Kim Potter near the memorial. (SUN POST STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN MILLER)

# Responding to the Chauvin verdict in the wake of the Wright shooting

By KEVIN MILLER  
kevin.miller@apgecm.com

The fatal shooting Daunte Wright occurred a week and half before a jury found former Minneapolis Police Officer

Derek Chauvin guilty of murdering George Floyd April 20.

While protests in front of the Brooklyn Center Police Department slowed as the verdict was announced, in Minneap-

olis, multitudes flooded the streets following the Chauvin verdict in a collective, if short-lived sigh of relief.

Many elected officials representing Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn

Park were quick to respond to the guilty verdict. All called it the right decision, and many pointed to continuing injustices as a reason to continue pushing for public safety reforms and

racial equity.

## Brooklyn Center

After Wright, 20, was shot and killed by former

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# Verdict

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Brooklyn Center Police Officer Kim Potter during an April 11 traffic stop, the city found itself uniquely

situated, as one instance of filmed police violence unfolded to national – if not global – attention while another neared its closure in neighboring Minneapolis.

The first-ring suburb and its high-ranking local

officials were thrust out of relative anonymity and into the national psyche as hundreds gathered nightly outside the Police Department following Wright's death at the hands of a veteran police officer.

Brooklyn Center, the

most diverse city in the state of Minnesota, is now pictured clearly in the foreground for debates on police reform, accountability and racial justice.

Several nights of relative calm that preceded April 20 continued in the nights after Chauvin was found guilty. The city again issued an 11 p.m. city-wide curfew the evening of jury's decision.

At approximately 8 p.m. that day, reporters represented the bulk of those camped outside the Police Department. A lone driver parked to wave a "Black Lives Matter," flag out of their sun roof, while a few cars driving down Humboldt Avenue honked at the still-barricaded Police Department.

Multiple National Guard armored vehicles sat near the entrances of the double line of chain link fences surrounding the department, while a few soldiers stood guard in the nearby grass, mulling about in their camouflage fatigues.

A CCX Media report later showed a relatively small group of protesters set up across the street from the police department.

Mayor Mike Elliott called a press conference to address both the Chauvin verdict and the status of protests in the city.

"This is an historic day for the state of Minnesota and for this country," he said. "For Black Minnesotans and Black families all around this country, today's jury's decision has a very particular feeling. What makes this day historic also highlights the systemic inequities that exist in our system, and those inequities remain. And the



(SUN POST STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN MILLER)

Minnesota National Guard vehicles sit parked near the gates at the Brooklyn Center Police Department April 20. The Police Department had been the site of protests for more than a week following the shooting of Daunte Wright during a Brooklyn Center traffic stop.

fact that they remain is still something that we all must be shameful of."

The jury's decision "intensified a conversation that needed to happen for many years. Just because there was a guilty verdict, that does not mean our work is done," he said.

Elliott said that Brooklyn Center and Minneapolis share a bond, and both cities continue to grieve over Wright's death. "That connection is strong. We share a border. We share families," he said. "Daunte went to school in Minneapolis. He has family in Minneapolis. We have families that share connection between both cities."

Community partners have been on the front lines of protests to work on de-escalating otherwise tense situations, Elliott said. The partnership is among several to come out of the city's Community Crisis Team, a seven- to nine-member community group that recently formed to help respond to the protests.

"The community crisis team has been working very well with interfacing

with city staff and with the Police Department," Elliott said. "I think that they have worked in partnership to, again like I said, develop some of these skills with law enforcement, some new approaches that really helps law enforcement to practice greater restraint and have a better understanding of who's out there in the crowd."

The team and city have also worked with community members living very close to the police department, issuing vouchers to temporarily relocate during the protests, Elliott said.

"The verdict today has, I think, underscored the call for justice in Daunte's death, and that's why you see people gathering, continuing to protest in front of the police station here in Brooklyn Center," Elliott added.

### Brooklyn Park

Brooklyn Park's City Council released a statement after the jury's deci-

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# Verdict

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sion.

“We know and support that people have the right to peaceful protest,” the statement reads. “We also know this trial, and the recent killing of 20-year old Daunte Wright in Brooklyn Center, and related civil unrest has created great emotional stress and trauma for our Brooklyn Park community. By coming together during these challenging times and working together, as one united Brooklyn Park, we know we can get through these trying times together.”

The city is working to improve the Police Department through a Wilder Research study of the department and through partnership with Cities United, the statement said.

“As your City Council, we couldn’t be more proud to serve and represent our community made up of many diverse racial and cultural communities. We welcome and value every person regardless of where they come from, what they look like, how they think, or what they believe in,” the council said in the statement.

## State legislators

Members of the state legislature representing Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center offered similar sentiments to Elliott.

“Nothing can bring George Floyd back to his loved ones, and justice does not stop with this guilty verdict,” Speaker of the House Melissa Hortman (D-Brooklyn Park) said in a written statement.

“Our work is far from done. Minnesotans deserve safe communities and a fair justice system – no matter what we look like or where we live – and we need to continue to improve accountability in our criminal justice system. Our communities are in pain and trauma. We remain committed to the work that needs to be done to dismantle systemic racism and ensure justice and safety for all Minnesotans.”

Rep. Samantha Vang (D-Brooklyn Center) is a member of the People of Color and Indigenous Caucus. She signed on to the caucus’s statement on the Chauvin verdict.

“This is not a joyful moment,” the caucus said in the written statement. “As we watched the trial and relived the desperate final moments of a man’s life and the cruelty of one who is supposed to protect, we were reminded that we do not live in a just society. The finding of guilt in the actions of an officer not only condemns the actions of that man, but our society and public safety system as a whole. While the verdict is guilty, we demand that Derek Chauvin receive the maximum sen-

tence for his crime.

“Justice cannot stop at punishment, it must continue in everything we do to ensure a tragedy like this never happens again. We have the opportunity to create a just society, this verdict has planted the seed of justice in tenuous soil polluted by years of oppression and injustice. It is now up to us, our white colleagues, and all Minnesotans who value human life to nurture this seed so that it may grow into true justice.”

Rep. Michael Nelson (D-Brooklyn Park) said he would fight for public safety reforms in the Legislature. “In finding former officer Derek Chauvin guilty on all three counts in the murder of George Floyd, the jury has helped move us toward justice in this instance, but there is more left to do to ensure all Minnesotans have access to the dignity and safety they deserve,” he said.

“As a community, we need to continue to call out racism in our systems, and as a legislator, I will continue to fight for public safety reforms and equity measures that protect and lift up everyone in our community, no matter what they look like or where they are from.”

Sen. Chris Eaton did not respond to a request for comment before the Sun Post’s press time.

## Federal delegation

The region’s federal



(SUN POST STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN MILLER)

Brooklyn Center Mayor Mike Elliott addresses reporters April 20 after former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin was found guilty of murdering George Floyd last May. The jury’s decision came shortly after the death of Daunte Wright, who was shot by former Brooklyn Center Police Officer Kim Potter during a traffic stop.

congressional delegation largely mirrored local opinions on the verdict.

“This feels different for our community, justice feels new and long overdue,” tweeted Rep. Ilhan Omar, who represents Minnesota’s Fifth Congressional District. “Rejoice, my beloved community. Grateful to (Attorney General Keith Ellison), jurors, and everyone who made this possible.”

Omar then called the decision a “minuscule step on the path to justice,” arguing for a need to demilitarize police departments, disband and deconstruct failed police departments, restore felon voting rights and create an independent agency that investigates police misuse of force, among

other police reform measures.

Rep. Dean Phillips, who represents the state’s Third Congressional District, offered similar sentiments.

“Justice was served for George Floyd today, but America’s work, our work, to ensure justice, safety, and opportunity FOR ALL will continue with even more intention, more fortitude and more purpose,” Phillips Tweeted. “Onwards in unity.”

Sen. Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith spoke the need for continued racial equity work.

“Today’s conviction was right,” Klobuchar said in a statement. “For the Floyd family, nothing will bring back George, but this verdict is a first step towards accountabil-

ity. ... And while Black Americans continue to be subjected to a system that keeps mothers and fathers up at night worrying about whether their children are going to come back home every time they get in the car, we know our work is not done.”

Sen. Tina Smith tweet-ed, “Convicting Derek Chauvin for the murder of George Floyd is a moment of accountability, and also a moment to recommit ourselves to the movement for racial justice his tragic murder sparked. What if we rethink public safety so that Black and Brown people, and all people, feel safe and protected in their homes, neighborhoods and communities? This is the work ahead of all of us.”



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