

Northeastester

May 5, 2021

Northeast Minneapolis | St. Anthony | Columbia Heights | Hilltop

Vol. 43, No. 9

Fire strikes Sacred Heart

by Patti Hoffmann

A massive blaze destroyed the rooftop and damaged the interior of Sacred Heart of Jesus, Polish National Catholic Church at 2200 5th St. NE. Captain Anura Si-Asar of Minneapolis Fire Department reported firefighters responded to the fire at 6:52 p.m. Monday, April 19. The two-alarm fire had flames shooting off the roof as well as the bell tower. The interior of the church sustained heavy damage from water and soot after the roof and ceiling collapsed. Father John Kutek, the pastor at church said, "All the parishioners have the church in their hearts, and all are grieving the loss."

The wood/stucco structure was built in 1914 and because of this construction, it was like tinder. There were no reported injuries. Responding to the Northeast, Minneapolis Fire Chief Bryan Tyner said the cause of the fire was undetermined. "Investigators were not able to access the building due to the structural damage" he said. "The case will remain open."

Although the city was on edge awaiting the verdict of the Chauvin trial, a spokesperson for the parish, Caroline Kutek, wanted

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Firefighters fought the Monday night blaze April 19 at Sacred Heart of Jesus Polish National Catholic Church, 2200 5th St. NE. Fr. John Kutek, quoted in the May 2 Star Tribune, said dents on the door indicate to him that someone may have broken in and set the fire; the cause is still under investigation. (Photo by Patti Hoffmann)

Johnson Street reconstruction gets underway



by Vince Brown

The half-mile long reconstruction of Johnson Street NE north of 18th Ave. NE and south of Lowry Ave. NE was scheduled to begin May 3, and at press time barricades and detour signs were being placed. The project includes pavement replacement, improvement of right of way for all users and modes of travel, and adding green space/boulevard.

The scope of work includes new roadway with curb and gutters, new sidewalk with ADA ramps, utility improvements (storm and water), landscaping (boulevard and trees), a shared use trail on the west side of Johnson, signal improvements at 23rd Ave. NE and Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at 22nd Ave. NE. Estimated cost is 5.8 million.

Construction will happen in four stages (areas) with one stage following another, then final asphalt (to grade) and striping of the entire roadway at the end. Stages are subject to change in regard to weather and underground surprises. Each stage will have pavement removal, followed by un-

derground work, soil corrections, backfill and final grading, asphalt paving, forming and pouring curbs and gutters and driveways. Temporary driveway ramps will be installed so property owners can access their property safely. The last step, raising the manholes with final paving and striping, is predicted to finish up in November 2021.

Residents with private property (sprinkler systems, decorative pavers, flowers, other items), in the boulevard or right of way (2-4 feet behind sidewalk) have been advised to relocate these items from the construction area.

From the city's construction notes for the project: "There will be times that will be difficult to access into and out of the area. We'll work with you on individual access to your property. Access to driveways will be closed for short periods during driveway apron concrete placement. We'll be coordinating with property owners. Typical work hours to be Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.-6 p.m." Any Saturday work will be communicated by email ahead of time.

Business and residential access will remain in place throughout construction. Large deliveries for businesses should be coordinated with the city ahead of time. Residents directly impacted by the construction are encouraged to park on side streets.

Traffic will be detoured onto 18th or Lowry heading west, using Central Ave. as the north/south connection.

Metro Transit buses will also be re-routed to Garfield (three blocks east) during construction. Northbound buses will travel on Johnson, turn right at 18th Ave, take a left on Garfield, left on Lowry, and right on Johnson to resume their regular route. Southbound buses will travel on Johnson, turn left at Lowry, right on Garfield, right on 18th, left on Johnson, and resume their regular route. Bus route and schedule changes can be found at <https://www.metrotransit.org/>.

Residents can see current construction information and sign up for weekly email updates at <https://www.minneapolismn.gov/government/projects/johnson-st-ne/>.

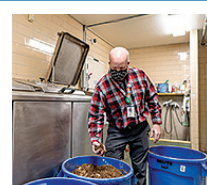
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