

## BYRON COMMUNITY NEWS

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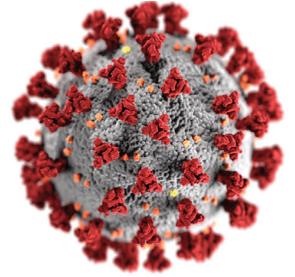
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In mid-March, footings for the loading ramp for the new Fareway grocery store have been poured and footings for the rest of the building will be in the ground soon, explained Emily Toribio, Fareway Stores Corporate Outreach and Communications Manager. Construction is pretty much on schedule for the store to open this year.

Photo by Gretta Becay

## Byron declares public health emergency



■ Story by Gretta Becay

At an emergency meeting held March 19, Byron city council members agreed with the recommendations of city staff members and approved a resolution following the lead of the President and the Governor in declaring an emergency within the city.

The action was taken to help “slow the potential spread of COVID-19 in the city while permitting normal activities.”

The declaration allows the city staff to temporarily close city facilities directly to the public at the end of business March 20.

### Essential Services

City workers will continue to deliver essential services while avoiding face-to-face contact during the closure. Members of the public are asked to interact with city staff via telephone, email or other electronic measures and provide paper documents via drop box, “when these steps can be accomplished consistent with state and federal data privacy laws.”

### Meetings

Meetings of the city council and other boards and commissions may be conducted by telephone or other electronic means as allowed by state statutes Section 13D.021. For any public meeting, members of the public will be able to hear all discussion, testimony, and votes of the members of the council.

### Emergency powers for City Administrator

The authority necessary to keep city operations running and to combat the spread of the virus during the state of emergency were granted to the administrator by the resolution.

A copy of the resolution is available on the city website. Please call (507) 775-3400 with any questions or concerns.

## BYRON WADING POOL WILL OPEN THIS SUMMER

■ Story by Gretta Becay

Byron City council members agreed at their meeting March 10, the wading pool should reopen this summer.

The wading pool was not opened during the summer of 2019 because of a recommendation by a pool consultant that the wading pool was not ADA compliant. However, after further research with other experts, it was explained that the pool is not deep enough to accommodate a chair lift and no one would be excluded from any classes because classes are not held in the wading pool. The main pool does have a chair lift.

Public Works Superintendent Tom Ricke reported that extensive work would be done on the main pool this spring involving resurfacing the sides and bottom. It is anticipated that the work will be completed in time for the pool to open for swimmers in June.



Starting mid-March households began receiving official Census Bureau mail with detailed information on how to respond to the 2020 Census.

**For more information visit:  
2020census.gov**

## It's a Toilet, Not a Trashcan!

- Just because an item is labeled “flushable” doesn't mean it should go down the drain
- Many “flushable” items do not break down when flushed
- These unwanted items hinder a toilet's flow, which eventually leads to sewer blockages that can cause backups or overflows
- Be kind to your sewer and watch what you flush!



**Flushable Items:** Please think before you flush. Disposable wipes cause significant damage to sanitary sewer systems. A proposed law is currently going through legislature to require new labeling for disposable wipes.

CITY OF BYRON MISSION STATEMENT:

To provide valued public service and guide the City with innovative thinking toward smart growth.

# Boulevard trees and road rights-of-way; what to plant where

■ Story & Photo by Gretta Becay



In Minnesota, boulevards are particularly valuable places to store snow that snowplows clear from the streets or people shovel off their sidewalks. The boulevard is the strip of grass that runs between the curb and the sidewalk on many city streets. If there is no sidewalk, the strip next to the street is still considered a boulevard.

Utilities may run under boulevards also. That includes cable, water lines, sanitary sewer lines, storm sewer drains, and gas lines. These utilities may be under the city's rights-of-way, which will be explained further.

For these reasons, city officials prefer boulevards to be kept clear of large trees.

These so-called 'street trees' typically don't have a long life; living on the street is hard

on their trunks; their roots must burrow under the pavement on one side and that is a harsh environment.

That being said, boulevard plantings are pleasant to view and provide shade and curb appeal.

If residents wish, trees can be planted in the boulevard. Residents should obtain a permit from the city that will show city staff where the tree will be. However, the city can remove the tree if the need arises.

A complete list of approved trees is on the city's website.

## RIGHTS-OF-WAY

How far back can you plant something or build a fence so it's not in the road right-of-way?

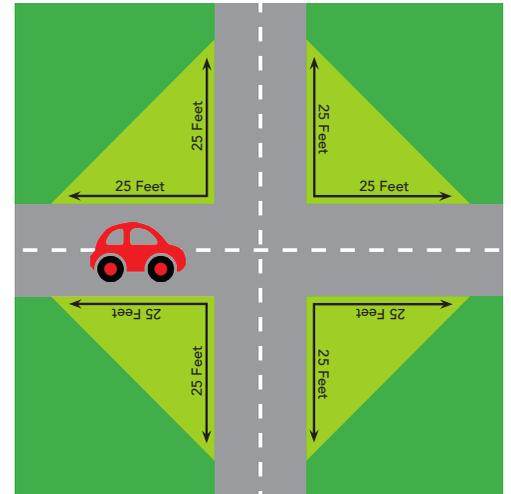
The answer depends on whether or not there is a sidewalk on the property. If there is, hedges and other plantings or fences cannot be closer than 18 inches to the interior of the sidewalk.

If there is no sidewalk, plantings or a fence have to be back at least 15 feet from the curb line.

If you live on a corner, the requirements change a little. There has to be a clear line-of-sight for driv-

ers who pull up to the corner. That means no vegetation can exceed three feet in height in a triangular area created by measuring 25 feet from the corner of both streets, then connecting the 'sides' with an imaginary line.

Fences and hedges should not be taller than six feet, even those not in the right-of-way or on the property line. And, fences and hedges shouldn't be placed directly on a property line without the consent of the adjoining property owner.



## SENIORS ENJOY K-9 DEMONSTRATION

■ Story & Photo by Gretta Becay

At their February luncheon, Byron Seniors enjoyed a demonstration by Olmsted County Sheriff's Deputy Ryan Mangan and his teammate K-9 Rajko, (pronounced Riko).

Rajko immediately captured the attention of the audience with his exuberant response to whatever Deputy Mangan asked him to do.

Rajko's reward was his toy, which he enthusiastically chewed when he had earned it.

Deputy Mangan explained that Rajko is trained to find things; most importantly lost people. If someone with dementia has become lost and disoriented, or a child has wandered off, or a perpetrator is hiding from law enforcement; Rajko is on the case.

Deputy Mangan explained that Rajko lives with his family but the dog must sleep outside. He does have a heated pad and house. Dogs in law enforcement must be able to go to work in any weather, so dogs that live inside would not be acclimated to Minnesota winters or summers and could not spring into action when needed.

Rajko wears a protective vest when he is on duty which was provided by the non-profit company, Vested Interest in K-9's. The company provides "...bullet and stab-protective vests and other assistance to dogs of law



enforcement and related agencies throughout the country," according to their website.

When new K-9's are brought onto the force, they and their handlers go through extensive and lengthy training before they officially go on duty. They must also be recertified each year.

All the dogs come from overseas from certain breeders. Rajko is a very impressive 80-pound German Shepherd from Slovakia. The dogs are brought from

overseas, selected, and then purchased from U.S. vendors, explained Deputy Mangan.

Deputy Mangan said that agencies have started to use more and more female dogs. They are as competent as their larger male counterparts but they are much lighter so deputies can lift them over fences or other barriers.

Other dogs in the K-9 unit include those that can detect different types of narcotics and explosives.

## ALERT

**DID YOU KNOW** that the city of Byron has partnered with Olmsted County and the city of Rochester to provide "Public Alerts"? These alerts are used to notify residents of snow emergencies, road closures, water breaks, etc. You can sign up for either text or phone call or both. Visit [Byronmn.com](http://Byronmn.com) for the link to sign up under "Emergency Alerts/Snow Notifications". When you click on the link it will direct you to "Rochester Alerts", however you will only receive notifications for what you select from the menu. Alerts from Byron will be clearly marked with the city of Byron flag. A paper form is available at City Hall for enrollment if preferred. **STAY IN THE KNOW, SIGN UP FOR PUBLIC ALERTS TODAY!**

The Byron Minnesota Fire Department responded to a total of 110 fire calls in 2019:

**67 calls..... BYRON**

**23 calls.....SALEM TOWNSHIP**

**15 calls ..... KALMAR TOWNSHIP**

**5 calls .....MUTUAL AID**

In 2018, the Byron Fire Department responded to a total of 83 calls.

*Thank you to the volunteers and all they do!*