



## Mayor's newsletter for summer 2017

By Mark Korin

**Well we did it!** The stars lined up, the numbers all fell in place, the cows came home and the chickens came home to roost. You're probably wondering what I'm talking about. **We won!** We won a significant battle for the residents of 2,200 acres of the southeastern portion of our city and to be honest, all of Minnesota. We stood up against an outrageous mandate that essentially took the developments right away from those citizens. For more than ten years, we have said no, this is not right; it's not fair, it's poor planning, it's a taking and they're completely out of touch. Who am I talking about? The Metropolitan Council of course. This is a monumental moment for the residents of our city and now others that are forced to deal with unreasonable mandates based on fairy dust, unicorns and subsidize poor planning that never materialized. We were also successful to change the language in the state statutes to allow cities and counties to legally ask the question; what the heck are you thinking Met Council? Now a judge **CAN** look at the reasonableness and impact of Met Council mandates on their communities. We, as elected officials, can question this omnipotent cartel and be able to make reasonable planning and growth decisions for the people that put us in a leadership role. As you can probably tell I have a few thoughts on the matter and after more than ten years, I'm frustrated, relieved, excited and a little bit perplexed. I was telling another town's Mayor about what happened in this 2017 legislative session with all the testimony I did at the State Capitol, the actions and major support from our legislators Representatives Cal Bahr, Speaker Kurt Daudt, Senator Michelle Benson and the committee members that helped us with this big win. But there was something missing. The best way I can explain it would be as an analogy. It would be like running an intense grueling marathon, being first through the finish line and no one showed up. There was no one waving the checkered flag, no media fanfare to spread the word or even cared to tell the story of how it benefits our residents, no ticker tape welcoming, and no marching band. What I realized that day was most people didn't even know their rights had been stripped away in the first place. The mandates Met Council tried to impose on Oak Grove by forcing our residents to make up for very poor planning projections and subsidize a failed and costly East Bethel sewer system where there's no money, infrastructure or even a planned need well beyond the year 2060. If they were to force us to connect to this boondoggle, it would take tens of millions, huge connection fees and monthly service bills that would rival a car payment. This was completely unacceptable for me to tolerate as Mayor. And for those that don't live in the southeastern part of our city? This unelected, out of touch government bureaucracy, was taking our ability as elected officials to reasonably plan for our cities needs and growth. That all ended with this years legislated action. To me, it was all well worth it. No more being told "remember what they did to Lake Elmo", "you'll never win", "It's a waste of time". This was about standing up for those that didn't even know there was a marathon to run. It was about speaking up, loudly, defending Minnesotan's rights today and for the future. There's an old saying, "**If a bigger and more intrusive government is the answer, it must have been a very stupid question**". Did I just say that out loud? Oh well, it's a great day for **ALL** of Minnesota and the residents of Oak Grove! **TO BE CONTINUED.....**