

Dayton's Bluff DISTRICT FORUM

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Community Calendar

Saturday, May 1 & June 5, 10:30 am
Dayton's Bluff Take-a-Hike
(see page 7)

Thursday, May 6, 6:30 pm
*Community Meeting

Monday, May 10
*Greenspace Committee 6:00 pm
*Council Meeting 7:00 pm

Monday, May 17
*Arts & Culture Committee 6:15 pm
*Council Meeting 7:00 pm

Wednesday, May 19, 6:30 pm
Friday, May 21, 9:30 am
Eastern District Police Meeting
722 Payne Avenue

*Meetings at Council office
798 East Seventh Street

Special housing deals in Dayton's Bluff

By Ed Lambert
District Council Executive Director

Homes for sale in Dayton's Bluff are attracting a rising number of inquiries from prospective homeowners this spring. Zong Vang, Housing Program Coordinator at the Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Service (DBNHS), recently stated "our new mortgage and mortgage assistance financing products are bringing a sharp increase in inquiries . . . properties are selling much faster than last year."

DBNHS is a major local source of "special" financing options for purchases of, or rehab work on, Dayton's Bluff housing (some options are unique to Dayton's Bluff). They also build some new homes for sale, but specialize in purchasing, rehabbing and reselling existing housing to new homeowners. As of this writing, for example, they have three single-family homes for sale (including the one pictured) and will have another three ready later this spring.

The agency works very closely with the city's Invest St. Paul program, among others, and works especially hard to encourage investment in Dayton's Bluff.

It has loans available at three to five percent interest for interior or exterior improvements, and also provide free assistance from its rehab counselors for improvement projects. In selected circumstances, the agency also has second mortgage financing, down payment assistance funds and even a contract-for-deed option. For more information on housing finance, rehab help, and available properties contact Ms. Vang at 651-774-9064 or zvang@dbnhs.org.

What may be the agency's most ambitious "new housing" effort is known as "The Brownstones on Swede Hollow." This development on Payne Avenue near East 7th Street consists of three buildings, each with eight units, and each unit with two bedrooms, two baths, and a tuck-under, two-car garage. Just a few weeks ago it had nine units available but, as of April 12, there are only three left.



723 Margaret Street, featured on the Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Home Tour

Check out www.brownstoneson-swedehollowpark.com to see what they're about. The site includes information on floor plans, the association, financing, the immediate neighborhood, and Swede Hollow Park. Just 12 to 14 months ago, the agency worried it might be 2012 before they sold out (if they sold out). Contact Seanne Thomas at 651-230-4070 or Brad Griffith at 651-263-2830 for details on these remaining units.

Lately, the Dayton's Bluff Community Council staff and Board members have been hearing from an increasing number of residents and local business owners about a welcome increase in housing renovation activity in the community. Ms Vang said "at this time last year we were getting two applications a month for rehab help and financing; now we get six to eight every month and it's growing!"

Residents and local business people are strongly encouraged to contact Karin DuPaul at Karin@daytonsbluff.org or 651-772-2075 if they want to help promote Dayton's Bluff as a place to live, work, and make investments. She can tell you about a task force of local residents you can join that is having a lot of fun and success doing just that. You are needed . . . you can make a difference!

Invest Saint Paul Dayton's Bluff

Incubator Kitchen comes to the East Side

By Tabitha Benci DeRango

What a progressive place Dayton's Bluff is becoming. Would you ever have imagined that we would be the site for an incubator kitchen? What is an incubator kitchen, you ask? It's an entrepreneur's dream.

Jenna Matthews is one such entrepreneur. Working out of the Incubator Kitchen, she creates a product called Ka-yan, a food widely eaten in

Africa. It is made from peanut butter and cassava root and no salt. It is not only nutritious but delicious. In Africa peanuts are a staple food, similar to how meat products are consumed in the United States. Jenna markets her product to a few stores in the Twin cities area like Makala Market on University Avenue in St. Paul.

The Incubator Kitchen is a family-run business, with A Toast to Bread operating out of this location. Mervyn Hough, manager, is key to the operation. A former Peace Corps volunteer, he sees the value in being able to pursue your dreams.

The location was formerly underutilized with only A Toast to Bread operating out of the facility. The transformation allows many people to use a licensed kitchen to make their food products legally and then sell them. The kitchen charges an hourly fee to the bakers and allows them to keep costs low for start-up. They are also permitted to use existing site equipment for their production. In addition, several individual caterers use the kitchen to prepare their foods. Mervyn is also helpful in assisting with key details in marketing products, like packaging for example. Jenna says, "This is my dream, and Mervyn is a godsend."

Currently the Incubator Kitchen is open to the public on Saturday mornings from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. They sell breads, pastries and sometimes even homemade soups.

People come from all over the metro area to use the Incubator Kitchen. Mervyn told me that while Wisconsin has a network of incubator kitchens, he is unsure if any besides his exist in the state of Minnesota.

I was very impressed with the diversity of individuals utilizing this facility and with the fact that it is a business that makes sense for our community and our current economic environment. It is definitely worth stopping in at 703 East 3rd Street just to smell the baked goods and to meet Mervyn, who is full of enthusiasm about this project. Hurray for the dreams of entrepreneurs!

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