

Source of fuel leak couldn't be traced

Contrary to a continually circulating rumor, a fuel leak spotted in Commercial Bay more than two years ago could not be traced to its source.

At the time, that appeared to come from the Ramsey County Sheriff's Boston Whaler docked at the VFW. There was also speculation it came from Tally's Dockside.

Water Patrol Officer Sgt. Jeremy Bolen recalls that fall day. "I responded to that call," he said. "A fuel stream worked its way through the docks and pooled near the sheriff's boat at the VFW. White Bear fire, Hugo fire and

a hazmat unit responded. The fire chief made us pull out the boat and inspect it. There was no gas leak. It would be impossible for fuel to leak into the water from the sheriff's boat. It has a solid hull." Bolen said the fire department used cotton mats to soak up the gas. He tried to follow the stream to other docks, but the fuel was dissipating and they couldn't pinpoint from where the gas came.

In 2020, a lawsuit was filed by Docks of White Bear owner Brian McGoldrick, who hoped to stop his neighbor, Tally's Dockside, from

dispensing fuel from a tank located on public right of way. A judge ruled that the tank's location and its operation did not pose an imminent threat and allowed gas sales to continue.

An affidavit filed with the court from an individual who rented a slip from McGoldrick claimed he saw what he believed to be a "huge gasoline spill" near the two marinas the previous September. The only possible source for that much gasoline in the bay was Tally's gas tank, he said.

Tally's owner Keith Dehnert disputed the report in an affidavit of his own

a week later. In the filing, Dehnert attested that there was no spill or leak related to dispensing of gasoline on that day, adding the tank is electronically monitored for spills or leaks.

Dehnert noted that other sources of fuel spillage could be boaters or other marinas filling fuel tanks with gas cans. Bolen agreed, iterating that the leak could not be traced. "To say who it was, we couldn't pinpoint it. We know it wasn't our boat."

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