

12th ward news

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[August, 2013]



Picture from last year's Lake Hiawatha Neighborhood Festival. This year the event is on Wednesday August 7 at Lake Hiawatha Park. See calendar for more info.

Property Tax Relief & More Firefighters, my 2014 Budget Priorities

The budget process begins for the City Council when the Mayor presents his budget recommendation next week on August 15th. I have worked hard in my time on the City Council to keep the property tax burden as low as possible. The property tax increases we have seen are not the result of out of control city spending. Taxes went up because revenue sources went dramatically down. This happened for many reasons including the home mortgage crisis and home property values going down, and a \$455 million dollar shortage in Local Government Aid from the State since 2002. Increasing the pain was a change in state law several years ago that dramatically reduced the amount contributed by commercial properties to the cost of running the city and that burden shifted heavily onto homeowners.

We have done our best to cope with the lost revenue by cutting costs and trimming our city workforce while managing the finances of the city responsibly for the long-term without gimmicks. The costs of some of those cuts are hard to see, but one is glaring: we have fewer firefighters and that results in longer response times, especially in the corners of the city. And response times can mean the difference between life and death.

After years of being shorted by late in the year cuts and formula changes to Local Government Aid, we will receive \$11.9 more in 2014 than this year. I will advocate

Moody's Downgrade?

Get the real scoop. Keep scrolling down to read the article on the left hand side.

Storm Drain Stenciling Helps Water Quality

Ever wondered about those painted messages near City storm drains that say "do not dump" or "drains to river?"

The Stenciling Program began four years ago to raise awareness about how our individual actions can impact the water quality in Minneapolis.

Some residents are not aware that discarded cigarette butts, garbage and litter from our streets and driveways end up in the lakes, rivers and streams of Minneapolis.

The program seeks to reduce storm water pollution and help improve water quality. Volunteers have helped to stencil more than 2,400 drains.

For more information, visit the catch [basin stenciling website](#) or call 612-673-2522.

very strongly for two things: tax relief - zero increase, and more firefighters. When you see your tax bill, please remember that the city is only a portion of it.

I will absolutely fight to ensure that taxes will not go up. We have turned to the citizens in difficult times and now that our circumstances will improve, thanks to the work of our legislators, we need to share that relief with the residents of Minneapolis. As a member of the Ways & Means Committee that will be debating the budget and bringing a recommendation to the full Council for a vote in December, I am interested to hear from you. What is important to you in the 2014 budget?



Congressman Ellison to Host Meeting about Airport, August 27

Congressman Ellison, in collaboration with the City, is hosting a community meeting to talk about the status of RNAV - a type of navigation that puts planes on a more precise track, leading to consolidation of airplane traffic and noise. The meeting is **August 27, from 5:30 to 7:00 at Washburn High School, 201 W. 49th Street** in Minneapolis.

Congress has directed the FAA to have RNAV used at as many airports as possible, as quickly as possible. They believe that there are benefits from an ease of navigation standpoint as well as potential fuel savings. Minneapolis successfully halted implementation of RNAV over our city back in November, citing insufficient information and unanswered questions about how the consolidation of flights would affect residents in an area without the unpopulated corridors that make it successful in other cities. The city did that by building a strong coalition with State and Federal representatives who have been very supportive.

Facing tremendous pressure to someday consider the use of RNAV at MSP, the city and Congressman Ellison are being proactive. The purpose of the meeting is to determine what we expect, in terms of information and public engagement, if or when the FAA wants to discuss RNAV again. The meeting will help identify what people want to know about RNAV, such as- *will the altitude of planes be affected? Will there be more planes? Where will the tracks be? Can they be changed?* The goal is to be clear, in advance of the FAA process, the information that this community requires in order to have a constructive, informed conversation about RNAV.

Open Streets Minnehaha is August 11. Don't Miss it!

This Sunday, August 11th, the first Open Streets event in the south east corner of Minneapolis will create a safe, car-free environment on two and half miles of Minnehaha Avenue (between Lake Street and Minnehaha Park) to allow people to play, be physically active and take part in a wide range of activities from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

In addition to allowing families and neighbors to come together to mingle, have fun and shop in a safe, car-free environment, there will be numerous activities for

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Events

Hennepin County and partner cities are hosting community collection events where residents can safely and properly dispose of their unwanted household hazardous wastes. The events scheduled in Minneapolis:

- August 15 – 17 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. at the City of Minneapolis - Public Works Department, 3607 East 44th Street, Minneapolis
- September 12 – 14 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. at the University of Minnesota Parking Lot C66, 2904 Fairmount St. SE, Minneapolis

Materials accepted include household, lawn and garden products, electronics, mercury-containing items and auto wastes. Visit the county's [website](#) for a full list of materials accepted and maps to the event sites.

Council Member Colvin Roy would welcome your input on the proposed layout. You can reply to this newsletter or write to: Sandra.colvin.roy@minneapolismn.gov

[Public Meeting Boards - Area Enhancements - July 2013 \(pdf 2067k\)](#)

[Public Meeting Boards - Buffered Bike Lane Exhibits - July 2013 \(pdf 5995k\)](#)

[Public Meeting Boards - Two Way Cycle Track Exhibits - July 2013 \(pdf 7297k\)](#)

[Comment Cards - July 2013.pdf](#)

[Public Meeting Q and A - July 2013.pdf](#)

[On-road buffered bike lane concept \(pdf 3858k\)](#)

[Two-way cycle track concept \(pdf 3216k\)](#)

28th Ave - CenterPoint Project and Resurfacing

28th Avenue will be resurfaced this year. Before a street gets a new surface, any required utility work under the street is done. In the case of 28th Avenue, CenterPoint Energy had a significant amount of work to do to between 40th and 50th Streets to replace a large gas main and connect each home and business to the new main. Once the new 16 inch pipe is installed, new connections to each home are made, and the old gas main will be terminated. The project is expected to be complete in mid-September.

This week, CenterPoint is working on 28th Avenue where it intersects the westbound lane of Minnehaha Parkway. **Therefore, the westbound lane of the parkway is closed at 28th and there is a detour.** The work in that intersection will be complete by the end of the day Friday and the westbound lane will be reopened at that time.

City paving crews are coordinating with CenterPoint to begin street resurfacing as soon as possible. You may have noticed that some curbs and gutters also needed replacement and that work has already been done. Minnehaha Parkway between Cedar Ave and 28th Ave will also be resurfaced this year but that work must wait until after 28th is completed so that it can be used as a detour. All work is planned to be done this season.

City Elections & Ranked Choice Voting

Election Day in Minneapolis is November 5, 2013. Voters will elect their Council Members, Mayor, Park Board Commissioners and Board of Estimate & Taxation members. The city's website includes a list of all the people who have filed to run for office: vote.minneapolismn.gov. The deadline to file is August 13. The city will be using Ranked Choice Voting for the second time.

Keep in mind that Ward boundaries have changed after redistricting. Those new boundaries go into effect after the newly elected officials are sworn in next January. That means if you live in Ward 12 now, you may not in the future, even if you don't move! For example, next year the Cooper neighborhood in greater Longfellow will be part of Ward 2, and not Ward 12. In November, Cooper residents will vote to choose a representative for Ward 2. Visit the [city website](#) to verify your future ward and polling place.

Get a Behind the Scenes Look at City Government through the City Academy

How are emergency calls handled in Minneapolis? What does it take to plow city streets? How does water get to your faucet? The Minneapolis City Academy program, which begins Sept. 18, is a chance for people to learn about all these things and more. Registration is limited, so to join the Academy, visit the [City's website](#) to register, or call 612-673-3163.

City Academy will give residents a behind the scenes look at how the City functions and give them a unique opportunity to City staff and leaders. Sessions will be held weekly from Sept. 18 through Oct. 16 at locations throughout Minneapolis. Sessions will run from 6:30 to 9 p.m.

The program is open to all Minneapolis residents who are 18 years or older and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Register by Thursday, August 15th. Visit the [website](#) for details. Questions? Contact Howard Blin, 612-673-3163.

Voter Ambassadors Sought for Nov. 5 Election

Voter Ambassadors will work to raise awareness about the election and to engage voters so more people vote. Since this year's election will use ranked-choice voting, it's especially important to help educate friends and neighbors on voting this fall.

The Voter Ambassadors network of community volunteers will provide resources and information about the election to their neighborhoods and/or civic circles. Ambassador training will include election law fundamentals, voting procedures, and how ranked-choice voting works. Each ambassador will be given maps to polling places, pamphlets, sample ranked-choice ballots (without candidate names) and guides to answer frequently asked questions about ranked-choice voting. In addition, they'll have access to videos showing how to use a ranked-choice ballot. The materials will be available in multiple languages.

Ambassadors will also receive regular updates about the election, such as:

- instructions on how to pre-register voters and confirm registration status
- how to vote by absentee ballot
- how to register on Election Day
- how to vouch for other voters

Each volunteer ambassador will be asked to make presentations within their community. The concept is that volunteers connecting with their own community will increase the engagement of voters across all segments of the community—including those populations who have historically been under-represented in voting. For more information on becoming a voter ambassador, go to vote.minneapolismn.gov/volunteer.

The Real Story Behind Credit Rating Change

You may have heard that one of the bond rating agencies, Moody's, has changed the city's credit rating from Aaa – the highest rating possible - to Aa1 which means "stable" and is the same rating as the State. Naturally, this change has people wondering if the city's financial condition has changed. The downgrade was a result of a new methodology used by Moody's, not a change in circumstances at the city. To understand the issue a little better, here is a communication from the City's Finance Director, Kevin Carpenter:

As you know, Moody's announced in April 2013 that it had put in place a new methodology for how it analyzes and adjusts pension liabilities as part of its credit analysis of state and local governments. At that time, Moody's also announced that it had placed the general obligation ratings of 29 local governments and school districts – including Minneapolis, Chicago, Cincinnati and Portland, OR - on review for possible downgrade based on this new methodology.

Today we received word from Moody's that the City of Minneapolis has been adjusted by one notch, from Aaa to Aa1 - stable. Minneapolis retains its AAA

Recent String of Fires, Including Two in Ward 12, Prompts Warning

The Minneapolis Fire Department experienced its busiest June for fires in six years and averaged just over one fire a day for the month of July. Thirty-six percent of the fires fought in June and eight of the nineteen structure fires in July have been determined to be arson fires.

There were two recent fires in Ward 12 including a fatal fire that originated from a hot pan left on a countertop. A second fire appeared to start in the basement and the cause is still under investigation.

The Minneapolis Fire Department and Fire Chief John Fruetel offers these tips to prevent fires in your home or neighborhood:

- Do not leave open flame or cooking unattended.
- Properly dispose of cigarettes and charcoal.
- For suspicious activity in your neighborhood, call 911.
- For arson reporting call the arson hotline at 612-673-3070 or 800-723-2020.

Fighting fires in this heat can be extremely dangerous to firefighters. You can help by taking steps to minimize the chances that you will need

bond rating from both Fitch, and Standard and Poor's, the highest rating those agencies provide.

While the Aa1 – stable rating is the second-highest rating that Moody's places on credit ratings, it is still unfortunate that Moody's took this action, particularly as we believe that the new methodology is overly simplistic and puts too much emphasis on long-term pension obligations. Certainly pension obligations are important to the City's overall financial position, which is why we have worked so hard to stabilize our pension funds over the past decade. Indeed, this action by Moody's comes less than one year after Minneapolis had received a Aaa rating from the agency in 2012, and since that time our financial situation has continued to improve.

The fact is that the City of Minneapolis is in a much better financial position today than it has been the past decade or more, thanks to lots of hard work and financial discipline.

- The City has paid down or avoided more than \$531 million in debt (\$50 million of which was pension debt) since 2004, all the while meeting all of our pension obligations.
- The City has always paid its pension obligations in full at the time they were due and payments and benefits to pensioners have not been cut by the City. The City even pre-funded the retirement of pensioners in its largest employee plan (MERF) for most of its recent history. Additionally, the City has paid off the bonds it had previously issued to cover pension expenses.
- In 2010 & 2011, the City partnered with the State to merge the City's three remaining closed pension funds (the Minneapolis Employees Retirement Fund, the Minneapolis Police Relief Association and the Minneapolis Fire Relief Association) into the professionally-run statewide system (Public Employees Retirement Association). The merger of the City's closed pension funds into the statewide funds stabilized the City's contributions and resulted in significant short-term tax relief and long-term levy stabilization for City taxpayers. In 2012 alone, this reform saved taxpayers \$20 million. This merger also eliminated much of the inherent volatility in our obligations due to the ways those funds were operated.

While we think that the action by Moody's is an overreaction to one element of the City's financial portfolio, you should remember that Minneapolis remains among the top-rated cities and local districts in the country. Less than 10 percent of those jurisdictions, and just a handful of major cities, have a Aa1 rating or higher from Moody's, and many of those do not also carry AAA ratings from Fitch and S&P.

Furthermore, according to Moody's, Minneapolis' stable outlook "reflects the expectation that the city's tax base will strengthen in the long term as the city continues its role as the economic engine of the state, and that financial operations will remain healthy given strong management policies and positive performance despite revenue pressures."

to call 911.

Finally, because Minneapolis retains the highest possible credit ratings from the other two rating agencies, Fitch and Standard and Poor's, we do not anticipate that this 1-notch adjustment from Moody's will have any material financial impact on the City's fiscal health moving forward.

Events & Meetings

30th Annual National Night Out

August 6 National night out is an annual nationwide event that encourages residents to get out in their community, holding block parties and getting to know their neighbors as a way to encourage crime prevention. This event is a great way to promote community-police partnerships and enjoy a Minnesota summer evening surrounded by friends and family. August 1 was the deadline to register to have your street blocked off, for a fee of \$100. If you missed the registration deadline, don't worry, you can still have an event in your front or back yard! For more information, call Minneapolis 311.

Lake Hiawatha Neighborhood Festival

August 7, 5-8 pm, Lake Hiawatha Park, 2701 44th Street East. Kids can enjoy face painting, hair painting, games, an inflatable water slide, a 5-in-1 sports moonwalk and for those under 10 years of age, pony rides. There will be a family fitness challenge and talent contest – please pre-register by calling 370-4930. There will also be a raffle and medallion hunt. Food will be available for sale. The Minnesota Lynx WNBA team will have a booth at the festival. They will bring their inflatable basketball pop-a-shot, have giveaways for kids, and you can even enter to win free game tickets and other fun prizes. **Traffic Alert:** If 28th Ave is still under construction, you can approach the park from the east on 44th Street or from the west on 43rd Street. Plan to park on a side street and walk to the event.

Longfellow Corn Feed

August 8, 5:30-8 pm, Longfellow Park, 3435 36th Avenue South. This year will have all the staples of the Corn Feed, such as live music, a resource fair featuring local businesses and organizations, ice cream, games, activities and, of course, roasted corn. An Unlimited Youth Activity Wristband will be available for \$5. Without the wristband, the activities are \$1 each. Fresh, roasted sweet corn will be \$1 per ear and fair-style food will be available for purchase.

Southside Star Community Garden Open House

August 10, 4-8 pm, 4100 block of 32nd Avenue South. Celebrate Community Garden Day with garden tours, kids' activities, food & drink and more:

4:30 pm – Compost tea demonstration with Southside Star Gardener Bob Weber;

5 pm – Storytime in the Garden with Roosevelt Library – for all ages;

6 pm – Fruit tree guilds and other concepts of permaculture with Standish-

Ericsson resident Heather Ilse;

For more information on this event, call Dana at 721-5058. For information on Community Garden Day, visit www.gardeningmatters.org.



Visit your
neighborhood
organization:

LCC

NENA

SENA



“Open Streets” Event on Minnehaha Avenue

August 11, 10 am - 4 pm, Minnehaha Avenue between Lake Street and Godfrey Parkway. Open Streets events are designed to help promote environmentally friendly transportation choices, such as walking, bicycling and mass transit. They were also created to promote good public health by encouraging active, healthy lifestyles. In addition to closing the street to automobile traffic, the day-long event will highlight healthy living and fitness activities through a series of displays and activities. The event is an initiative of the Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition and is co-sponsored by the City of Minneapolis. For more information on this family-friendly event, visit www.openstreetsmpls.com.

Public Hearing on Stadium Design

August 12, 4:30 pm, There is a public hearing to comment on the Stadium Implementation Committee’s recommendations for the Stadium Schematic Design. The meeting will be held on August 12 in Council Chambers at City Hall, 350 S. 5th Street.

MPS Back to School Jam

August 17, 10 am – 2pm, Davis Center, 1250 West Broadway Avenue. Join the fun when Minneapolis Public Schools hosts its Back to School Jam At the Jam, families and students can learn more about school enrollment, educational programs, family resources and community partners. Entertainment, refreshments, games, prizes and giveaways will also be available.

Visit the [Back to School Jam webpage](#) on our MPS site to view a flyer for this event and to read more on back to school information.

Information also available in [Español](#) | [Soomaali](#) | [Hmoob](#)

LoLa Art Crawl

August 24 & 25, 10 am – 5 pm LoLa (the League of Longfellow artists) will be opening their doors for the fifth annual LoLa art crawl. Smaller and more intimate than many art festivals, the LoLa art crawl will give you a glimpse into the creative workspaces of artisans working on jewelry, glasswork, painting, photography, textiles, pottery, gardens, sculpture and more. A map will be available mid-August at www.lolaartcrawl.com

Dowling Garden 70th Anniversary Celebration

August 24, 11 am – 1:30 pm, 3901 46th Avenue. Learn about the history and impact of the Dowling Victor Garden. Enjoy tomato tasting throughout the event. There will be a short celebration program at Noon. For information visit www.dowlingcommunitygarden.org.

Boards & Commissions Openings

There are currently many openings on the City’s Boards, Commissions & Advisory Committees. Applications are accepted in the spring and fall. Please visit <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/openings/index.htm> for application information.

I am honored to serve the residents of the 12th Ward. If you have any questions or comments please call me at 612-673-2212 or e-mail me at Sandra.Colvin.Roy@minneapolismn.gov

To subscribe or unsubscribe to the 12th Ward News, contact Loren Olson, with your request at Loren.Olson@minneapolismn.gov or 612-673-2378.