5th Ward News

Harrison , Jordan, Near North, Sumner-Glenwood, North Loop, Willard-Hays

from Council Member Don Samuels

DECEMBER 2006

SEASON'S GREETINGS!

Happy Holidays to all the residents of the 5th Ward. We wish safe travels to the outward bound and great times to those staying closer to home. May you find great comfort in the company of family and friends! In this season of Good News, it is appropriate that we share with you, some of the great news of 2006 in the 5th Ward. I hope you will agree that these are exciting times for North Minneapolis. Many projects are underway and many on the drawing board. Northside…

It's Our Time!

INSPECTORS SWEEP NORTH SIDE CLEAN & SAFE

This year, the Minneapolis Housing Inspections focused its resources on making sure homes and yards on the city's north side are well maintained. Well kept homes and properties help make neighborhoods healthy and livable places for residents and visitors, and also help to deter crime.

Housing inspectors work year-round to identify issues and properties that need maintenance. This summer inspectors focused their attention on properties in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Wards. They inspected 21,521 homes.

They looked for things like broken windows, garages and houses with peeling paint, roofs with missing shingles, and steps in disrepair. They also sent citations to houses with tall grass, inoperable vehicles, and garbage in yards.

Do you need help with those home repairs? Many resources are available. The Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation (612-378-7985) has information on home and rental property improvement loans. You can also contact your neighborhood organization or call 311.

Have you heard? *Minneapolis is making your life easier*

Instead of having to weed through a list of more than 200 City numbers, all you need to know is 311. This simple to remember three-digit number can help you reach the City to inquire about services, report problems or check the status of issues. It also serves as an information hotline for those with questions about preventing foreclosures. From getting library hours, to finding out where to vote, to reporting graffiti in your neighborhood and a whole lot more, 311 operators are ready to help.

Safety First on West Broadway

The new Safety Center opened at 1011 West Broadway. City leaders, police, neighborhood groups and businesses are partnering on the project. The Center, while still in development, will provide a visible presence in the neighborhood to reduce crime and spur economic development by engaging community in public safety. To start, the Safety Center will have limited, but focused resources. The police SAFE civilian employee, Rowena Hicks will be based in this office. In the near future, there will be work stations for officers to drop in to file reports, do research or get some coffee. The West Broadway Business Association (WBBA) will have a staff person in the center two days per week. The space is also available and is already being used for community meetings. I will also be working out of that office on most Mondays and will be visible from the street in my windowed corner office. **Do come by** with your safety and other concerns or just to say Hi. Services at the Safety Center will expand with added community collaborations and the organizers plan a full-service Grand Opening next year.

Jordan Neighborhood to get $1 million Nip & Tuck

In July, the City Council approved a project that will dedicate $1 million toward eliminating blight and increasing home ownership opportunities in the Jordan Neighborhood. Two non-profit housing organizations will develop a mix of newly-constructed and rehabilitated single-family homes to sell to owner-occupants.

The Jordan project is part of a larger strategy known as the Northside Home Fund (NHF) whose aim is to assist in improving the quality of the housing stock in north Minneapolis and strengthen the home ownership market of neighborhoods in the area. The Jordan project is the first of five NHF projects currently underway in North Minneapolis. For more information call 311 or go to www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/nhf_home.asp.

Great plans for Broadway

Have you noticed that White Castle is missing from West Broadway? How about the former Furniture Liquidation business (originally a Mercury dealership)? A non-profit developer, American Indian Development Corporation, has bought both properties. They are merging those sites and developing great plans. While it is not certain what that final project will include, the possibilities include a sit-down restaurant and a running track. If you want to see the previous work of this developer, take a look at the commercial development at 11th & Franklin that includes Maria's restaurant. While this project is in the 3rd Ward, it will be a great asset to our community.

$3.5 Million Investment at 1101 West Broadway

Construction is well underway at Broadway & Emerson. After 4 aborted tries, a high capacity developer has finally taken on this antique jewel of a building. The Ackerberg Group is spending $3.5 Million to rehabilitate the 1101 Building to its historic glory. The first floor will house a City, County, Federal Credit union and a Bean Scene Coffee Shop. Upstairs will be a Work Force Center run by Emerge a Pillsbury United affiliate, providing job training and for Northsiders.

Penn and Plymouth Redesign Partnership Will Increase Services

The Northside Redesign Partnership, proposed $60 million development on Plymouth and Penn Avenues to provide health care, preschool, education, training, and mental health services to the Northside neighborhoods. The Partnership will be working with Northpoint to expand and strengthen services currently offered.

The University of Minnesota, Northpoint Health and Wellness Center, the City and County are working in partnership with the Northside community to create and support programs to improve school and learning outcomes for young children; assist with job training and business opportunities; provide treatment and research to children and families struggling with depression, child abuse, and other problems; increase access to higher education; and meet other identified needs and interests of the community.

Thanks to all who took the time to attend the planned community meetings on the U of M portion of this project. I join with the community in the conviction that this is a tremendous opportunity for the Northside.

Closing Those In-Convenience Stores

Citing code violations and noting concerns related to crime, city officials have closed two troubled North Side business that have attracted criminal elements. The Big Stop at 26th and Knox and Low Cost Records at 1001 W. Broadway have had their licenses suspended this summer due to significant code violations. The business had numerous code infringements from graffiti to ceiling holes and one building was deemed structurally unsafe.

The council also voted to close Wafanas at 24th and Lyndale and Uncle Bills at Sheridan and Plymouth. Both of these orders are under appeal, but the city is confident they will ultimately be upheld. The council has another dozen convenient stores under observation for possible action. If you live next to one of these stores, call 911 as often as you see crime. The record of your calls is the greatest weapon in the fight to shut problem stores down.

Cottage Park: More Than a Facelift

Drive around Cottage Park at James, North of Broadway and you will see the tiny park is being upgraded. This is the beginning of a major plan to restore that entire circle. The Ackerberg Group has adopted Cottage Park as a major project. They are building 4 beautiful market rate houses on the empty lots around the park. They are also acquiring several boarded houses for rehabilitation and resale to homeowners. The city will then make low interest loans available to current owners and incentivize landlords to upgrade and maintain their houses. In the end, this will become the cozy, safe circle of homes it has the potential of being.

Cameras on West Broadway

Another initiative to cut crime and increase accountability has the City of Minneapolis integrating technology with its public safety efforts. Cameras will be installed on West Broadway in the spring of 2007. The city is also exploring linking cameras to the shot-spotter system in North Minneapolis. Such an arrangement would be the first of its kind in the country.

Lt. Lee Edwards to be 4th Precinct Inspector

Minneapolis Police Chief Timothy Dolan announced Lt. Edwards as 4th Precinct Inspector. The Lieutenant has been with the Minneapolis Police Department since 1989 and was promoted in 1999 to Lieutenant, where he served for five years as the 4th Precinct Sector Lieutenant. He also led investigations in the 5th Precinct before serving as commander of the Internal Affairs Unit as commander of the Homicide unit since December 2004.

Plans for A New West Broadway North Minneapolis' Main Street

West Broadway has historically been the most significant commercial and cultural destination in north Minneapolis. Although much reduced from its boom years, it remains the main street of north Minneapolis. **West Broadway Alive!** (WBA) is to lay the groundwork for the revitalization of West Broadway as a recognized and cherished place and the activated center of commercial and community activity in north Minneapolis. The planning document will establish guidance for future development and public improvements, and offer a roadmap for revitalization by naming near-term priority actions to be undertaken around which resources can be focused.

A steering committee representing a wide range of stakeholders has been established to help guide the planning process. The steering committee has selected Short Elliot Hendrickson to assist with the process and to produce the plan document by summer of 2007.

The next public meeting will be on February 10th. Location and time yet to be determined. More details at www.WBalive.Info.

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5TH WARD NEWS FROM YOUR COUNCILMEMBER DON SAMUELS

ON CRIME & SAFETY

The solutions to our crime problems are many and we are going to aggressively pursue each and everyone. As chair of the Public Safety and Regulatory Services Committee, I have worked hard to steer the council and city resources to address the safety issues of our Northside community. We have closed 3 troublesome convenience stores. We have revoked the rental licenses of 8 landlords that own 32 properties: more than the city has revoked in the last 6 years combined. We have introduced progressive increases in fines for frequent violators of our housing code, motivating them to do better property management and maintenance.

We have increased our police presence in the Northside and will get our fair share of 40 additional officers next year. Our new Juvenile Unit had scooped up 170 most dangerous offenders off city streets this summer. More of you are calling 911, contacting my office and the offices of the council and mayor to demand better services. Keep up the great work. Together we can make North Minneapolis and the 5th Ward the pride of our great city.

- Don Samuels

HAPPY KWANZA!