



City of Minneapolis — Council Member Sandy Colvin Roy

12th Ward Update

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ALLEYS AND FREEDOM

Who knew that alleys could be such a controversial subject? A proposal to restrict the use of alleys by pedestrians garnered strong media attention the moment the idea was introduced. My office received many comments from residents (thank you!) and I believe the result has been a high quality public debate that has touched on a number of important and timely topics.

Briefly, the ordinance would prohibit the use of alleys for pedestrian traffic except for owners, tenants, guests, and various public and utility functions. The goal is to reduce the amount of trouble-making traffic in alleys. Much of our crime, both nuisance and serious, happens in alleys.

I voted against the ordinance (it was defeated by the City Council on a 10 to 3 vote). In the end, a broad and complex policy debate boiled down to the potential benefit of the new ordinance versus its cost, and on this rare occasion, "cost" does not refer to money.

I don't believe the new proposal would have improved the tools available to police officers in the fight against alley crime. Officers always have the right to investigate suspicious behavior. While criminalizing walking in an alley would automatically give police a reason to stop every person walking in an alley to check their ID., the police would never be stopping everyone and so suspicious behavior would remain the standard for police action.

With such a questionable benefit I could not vote to make our city a place where, to be safe, everyone must carry an ID if they want to walk in their neighborhood, even though some testimony in favor of it was heart-wrenching. This debate made it clear that the security vs. personal freedom debate is not unique to our national government, our freedom of movement must be defended even at the local level, even in our alleys.

HELP PLAN THE FUTURE OF OUR MINNEAPOLIS PARK SYSTEM

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is hosting meetings throughout the city to gather information for a long-range comprehensive plan for the park system. The Park Board wants to hear community values, the system's strengths, and how the Park Board can best serve park and recreation needs.

Saturday, September 30th, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Nokomis Park Community Center
2401 East Minnehaha Parkway

This is the first comprehensive planning effort since 1965. The final product will define funding and service priorities, so it is a very important process and I urge everyone to take some time to express your opinions and ideas. Residents can call 612-230-6597 for a list of all public input opportunities.

GRAFFITI ORDINANCE — A CHANGE IN PLANS?

Our city's graffiti problem is undeniable. Graffiti is the most frequent complaint into the 311 system (3,607 calls since April) and graffiti report tracking shows that it is a citywide problem.

We have been working on multiple fronts to reduce this costly and destructive crime. This year, the city will spend \$250,000 for graffiti removal from private property in addition to all of the staff cost that goes into removing graffiti from public property and tracking and enforcing graffiti abatement across the city, or the prosecution costs from our City Attorney's Office.

At the same time we are doing our best to keep up with graffiti removal, we are not ignoring the prevention side of the equation. I co-sponsored a new ordinance with Council Member Schiff that would require all spray paint in the city to be sold from a secure location, i.e., behind a counter, from a locked storage unit, or in a room separate from the retail space. The goal is to make spray paint, the graffitiist tool of choice, more difficult to obtain.

Some local store owners and a national association objected that this measure would be onerous for them and unlikely to make a difference. Neither C.M. Schiff nor I want to put unnecessary burdens on local businesses. I suggested that to prevent purchase by under 18 year olds we could try the model the city uses to enforce prohibitions on sales of tobacco or alcohol to minors, a "sting" operation using under-age buyers with strict supervision, if we could find funding. The Council postponed a vote on the lock-up ordinance while industry representatives look for partners to raise \$40,000 for such a program.

EVENTS & SPECIAL MEETINGS

Household Hazardous Waste Drop-off
September 14-16, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
3607 East 44th Street

Park Board Comp Plan Community Meeting
Saturday, September 30, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Nokomis Park Community Center
2401 East Minnehaha Parkway

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

SENA Annual Meeting
Sibley Park

September 11, 6:00 p.m.

For more info, visit www.standish-ericsson.org

LCC General Membership Meeting & Potluck
Brackett Park
September 13—6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

NENA Town Meeting
Minnehaha United Methodist Church
September 14, 7:00 p.m.

LCC Board Meeting
Longfellow Park

September 21, 7:00 p.m.

For more information, visit www.longfellow.org

NENA Board Meeting
3000 East 50th Street

September 28, 7:00 p.m.

For more information, visit www.nokomiseast.org

50TH STREET RECONSTRUCTION PLANNED FOR SPRING 2007

50th Street, between Lake Nokomis and 43rd Avenue, was constructed in 1964. It has served well beyond its design life and is now slated for reconstruction starting next spring. When the city engineers evaluate a road's condition they also look at the condition and functioning of the curbs and gutters, an important part of our stormwater handling system. The road bed and curb and gutter will be removed and replaced as part of the project, but this gives our community the chance to talk about traffic-calming possibilities other than speed-bumps (50th is one of the streets where I have had many complaints about speeding traffic over the years), how bicycles should be accommodated and what lighting should be used.

Public Works is in the early stages of planning and is looking for resident ideas and concerns regarding the project. **The project engineer will be at the Nokomis Town Meeting on Thursday, September 14th at 7 p.m. The meeting will be held in the basement of Minnehaha United Methodist Church at 3701 East 50th St.**

I am grateful that the Nokomis East Neighborhood Association was willing to give the city some time at their Town Meeting because, while the immediate neighbors will be most affected by the construction, 50th St is an important street and it will affect everyone in the community.

Residents will get an overview of the project, including the timeline, opportunities for public comment, and project funding. A road project always raises a lot of questions and this is the first opportunity to identify issues and start working toward a design toward solutions.

NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORT PROJECT BRINGS \$21 MILLION TO MPLS

There are a number of reasons to promote a transportation "mode" shift, with an obesity epidemic at the top of the list and reducing pollution a bonus. Minneapolis is one of just four communities in the country chosen for this federal funding. I had the opportunity to talk with the author, Congressman Oberstar, last March. He was very clear that it was a report on the level of obesity among U.S. school children that prompted him to look for ways to get people moving through the use of their bodies again.

This is a different premise in transportation planning. Where we have been working to move people out of cars and into more efficient mass-transit, this pilot project is designed to find ways to encourage people, especially school kids, to use their feet or bicycles everyday to get where they need to go.

I will serve on the Bike-Walk Advisory Committee (as an alternate) to advise Transit for Livable Communities (TLC) on the design and selection of projects for this four year experiment. It is important for Minneapolis Public Schools to be very connected with this great opportunity for our kids but they were not originally appointed by TLC to the B-WAC, so I am facilitating a connection with the project.

The goals of the program are exciting: to increase trips by walking and biking, decrease motor vehicle trips, decrease energy consumption and pollution, and promote a healthier lifestyle. Residents can expect to see both capital projects and programs to encourage walking and biking, perhaps even a "walking school bus" concept that has been successful elsewhere. Visit www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2006-meetings/20060804/Docs/09_Work_Plan.pdf for more information.