



# 9th Ward E-News

From Minneapolis Council Member Gary Schiff

April 4, 2008

Contact Gary!

> [Click here to send Gary an email](#)

More contact information

> [Inspections](#)

> [Report Graffiti](#)

> [Animal Control](#)

> [Public Works](#)

> [Summer Jobs-14 to 15](#)

> [Summer Jobs-16 to 21](#)

En Español

> [Presiona Aqui](#)

## City sues to stop real estate fraud scheme

The City of Minneapolis has joined three neighborhoods in filing a [lawsuit](#) against a real estate business blamed for worsening the foreclosure crisis in the city. The suit seeks redress from TJ Waconia, which engaged in a complex and fraudulent residential real estate scheme that converted owner-occupied homes to rental units, most of which have since been foreclosed and many of which are vacant. TJ Waconia's practices have left many north Minneapolis homeowners unable to sell their homes or owing significantly more for their homes than they are worth.

The suit seeks the appointment of an administrator to manage the properties and remedy code violations. The city is also looking to recover monetary damages as well as injunctive relief against TJ Waconia to prevent it from continuing its fraudulent activities.

Plaintiffs include the [Folwell Neighborhood Association](#), [McKinley Community](#), [Webber-Camden Neighborhood Organization](#), [Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation](#) and local residents. Council Member Gary Schiff serves as a board member of the [Family Housing Fund](#), which is also a plaintiff in the suit.

From 2003-2006, TJ Waconia purchased and flipped 140 north Minneapolis homes, 88 in three neighborhoods of Folwell, Webber-Camden, and McKinley. The city claims TJ Waconia's systemic, targeted, and intentional overvaluation of these homes used fraudulent appraisals to falsely inflate property values in north Minneapolis. Of 140 TJ Waconia homes, at least 108 are vacant and 89 have been sold through foreclosure.

## State legislature considers future of NRP

The Minnesota legislature is considering a bill that will extend funding for the [Neighborhood Revitalization Program](#) (NRP). Senators [Torres Ray](#), [Higgins](#), [Dibble](#), [Sieben](#), and [Berglin](#) are co-authors of [SF 3643](#) which provides for the extension of the tax increment financing funding that originally funded the program and mandates the retention of an independent governance structure for the program. In support of the legislation, the Minneapolis City Council unanimously approved a resolution on Friday, March 21 to urge the State of Minnesota to enact legislation that would effectively fund the NRP beyond 2009.



The Corcoran Neighborhood Organization is one of 70 groups relying on NRP funds.

"The city must support continuous funding of NRP," Council Member Gary Schiff said. "It is equally important to make sure that neighborhood groups retain their independent ability to set funding priorities."

In downtown Minneapolis, there are fifteen tax increment financing districts that are set to decertify in 2009. The bill asks the legislature to extend the districts for the minimum time necessary to provide \$100 million to fund the needs of NRP after 2009. Public and community leaders originally conceived of the NRP in the late 1980s as a way to invest in neighborhoods and quell the trend of people moving from urban areas into the suburbs.

## \$150k available for Latino gang prevention program



According to the [MPD gang member fact sheet](#), the average life expectancy of a gang member is 24 years.

The [Hennepin County Board](#) has set aside \$150,000 for a six-month pilot program targeting early gang intervention among Hennepin County's Latino population. "Latino gangs constitute the largest and fastest growing gang population in Hennepin County, with over 1,200 members among six different groups. This money represents the most significant governmental effort to date to create effective youth programs that will shrink the size of these gangs by redirecting our youth," Council Member Schiff said. The expected outcomes of the chosen program are to avoid gang involvement and to improve school

success for Latino youth. For a program to be considered, it will need to target Latino youth ages 9-21 that are exhibiting pre-delinquent behavior, low-level delinquent behavior or are involved in the juvenile justice system.

The ideal program will engage youth one-on-one and develop individualized case plans to address the issues that got the youth involved in gang and pre-gang activities. Youth will be referred by county probation officers, community organizations, faith-based organizations, parents and other family members, schools, or will be self-referred to the program.

Organization wishing to submit proposals need to have experienced bilingual/bicultural staff, a history of connections with Latino organizations throughout Hennepin County, the ability to work with gangs and corrections, the ability to serve families throughout Hennepin County, and the ability to track and report outcomes. Proposals are due on April 14, 2008. Organization wishing to submit proposals may do so electronically by emailing [lisa.thornquist@co.hennepin.mn.us](mailto:lisa.thornquist@co.hennepin.mn.us) with the subject line: "Proposal: Resource Development Latino Gang Intervention in Hennepin County". For more information, proposal requirements and specification, [click here](#).

## Dine Out for Life and fight AIDS on April 26<sup>th</sup>

The Minneapolis City Council has proclaimed April 24, 2008 as Dining Out for Life Day. Participating restaurants will contribute a portion of meal expenses to the [Aliveness Project](#)'s work helping people living with HIV and AIDS in Minneapolis. Last year, more than 1,450 people with HIV benefited from the Aliveness Projects services, including meal programs, a food shelf and health care advocacy.



Last year's event rose over \$112,000 from more than 22,000 diners. Participating restaurants near the 9th Ward include [Clicquot Club Café](#), [The Craftsman](#), [Manny's Tortas](#), [Rail Station Bar & Grill](#), [Jakeeno's Pizza & Pasta](#), [Midori's Floating World Café](#) and the [Riverview Café & Wine Bar](#).

## Plant a tree this spring





Clockwise from top:  
Japanese Lilac, Pagoda  
Dogwood, Oak, Fiesta Maple.

The City of Minneapolis and [Tree Trust](#) are making a thousand trees available to Minneapolis residents to help repair some of the damage done by storms and Dutch elm disease.

Planting a tree is the easiest way to improve the value of your property, reduce your energy needs and improve our air and water quality. Residents can order one tree per household, and all trees will be made available on a first-come, first-served basis. There are five varieties to choose from: Bicolor Oak, Fall Fiesta Sugar Maple, Pagoda Dogwood, Japanese Tree Lilac or Welch Juniper. The cost of the tree is \$25 and must be ordered by April 15.

Trees may be [ordered online](#) or through an order form available at neighborhood associations and local libraries.

For more information on how to order a tree, contact Tree Trust at (651) 644-5800.