

12TH WARD UPDATE

Council Member Sandy Colvin Roy

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Quality of Life Takes a Back Seat in MAC Decision on Sound Insulation

Six years of work by residents and Minneapolis officials to keep reasonable sound mitigation intact was thrown aside by the Metropolitan Airports Commission when they voted in favor of a drastically reduced sound insulation program. Instead of keeping their previous commitments of a sound insulation program out to the 60dnl, MAC will only offer to partially pay for central air conditioning in homes. This is a mere shadow of the Noise Oversight Committee's recommendation (made up of industry and community representatives), which itself was a compromise from the original commitment made by MAC in 1996 after the decision was made to keep the airport where it is. The City Attorney is preparing legal action against the MAC for their failure to deliver on the contents of the Environmental Impact Statement that allowed the construction of the new runway. **MAC will hold a public hearing on Sept. 7th (7 p.m. at the Ramada Inn Airport).** If their final decision in October shows this disregard for their neighbors, the city will be forced to involve the courts on behalf of the citizens.

Smoking Ban Passes

The debate on a smoking ban was difficult. Health risks, the power of the free market, individual choice, individual responsibility, and the economic interests of business owners all converged in this one issue, making it very important that a thoughtful debate precede any decision by the City Council.

In making my decision to support the smoking ban, I listened to 12th ward residents, who were in favor of a ban by more than two to one. I listened to businesses who would be affected, to advocates from health organizations, and to staff who would have to enforce the new regulation. The views diverged in many areas, but found common ground on the health risks of second-hand smoke.

During the long debate I supported two amendments that failed, one exempted 75 of our 1148 licensed establishments, the other, 272. Both amendments kept a significant smoking ban intact. I supported amendments because I felt obligated to consider the small business owners who have their financial well-being put in peril with such a large regulatory change. While economic studies from other cities show that eventually restaurant and bar sales increase, they also show a period of decline and small businesses often do not have the ability to survive that period.

Passage of the smoking ban is a big step forward in the protection of public health and it will change our public life here in Minneapolis. My hope is that our region or our county will enact a ban so that our businesses do not lose customers to nearby areas. In the short term, I hope everyone will make an effort to support our small local restaurants and bars (and bowling alleys) to help them through this period of change.

Cooperation Solves Crime Problem

Suspicious activity in a Wenonah neighbor house raised concern for neighbors. They contacted my office and I was able to help them use their Police contacts effectively. Good work and cooperation between neighbors and the Police Department lead to an arrest and successful prosecution of the person responsible for the illegal activity. Crime Prevention Specialist Sue Roethle collected impact statements from neighbors which helped convince the Judge to impose a sentence more severe than the standard. The Judge included in his sentence a requirement that the resident leave the house. My office has learned that the house is now sold and I expect the new owners to be a positive contributor to the neighborhood.

A problem house on your block can produce fear and frustration. At times, the near-neighbors to this house were angry because they didn't see any progress on solving the problem. I think the final result in this case serves as an example of why patience is important. Taking the time to acquire evidence lead to a stronger court case and a better, long-term, solution. I applaud the neighbors for their patience, diligence, and courage in standing up for their block and taking proactive action to solve a problem. I also want to thank the county attorney and all MPD individuals who worked together to get this result.

Free Graffiti Removal Solution

If property owners would like to remove graffiti from their property, a graffiti removal product is once again available free-of-charge to residents and business owners at all Fire Stations.

EVENTS & SPECIAL MEETINGS

National Night Out

Tuesday, August 3rd

Lake Hiawatha Neighborhood Festival

Wednesday, August 4 – 5 to 8:30 p.m.

Lake Hiawatha Park

Minnehaha United Methodist Church

Outdoor Music Concert

Friday, August 6th – 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Jazz, Pop, Reggae. Root beer floats. Bring a food shelf item.

AARP Ice Cream Social Fundraiser

Thursday, August 12th – 1 p.m.

Keewaydin Park

Citizen's Concerned for Nokomis Library

Yard Sale Fundraiser

Sunday, August 15 – 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Nokomis Library Parking Lot

Dedication of Edward C. Solomon Park

Friday, August 20th – 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Intersection of East 58th St. & 13th Ave. South

Dowling Garden Heirloom Vegetable Event

Saturday, August 21 – 10 a.m. to Noon

46th Avenue and 39th Street

MONTHLY NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

SENA Board Meeting

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, 4000 28th Ave. S

August 9, 7:00 p.m.

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

LCC Board Meeting

Longfellow Park

August 19, 7:00 p.m.

For more information, visit www.longfellow.org

NENA Board Meeting

3000 East 50th Street

August 26, 7:00 p.m.

For more information, visit www.nokomiseast.org

Open Appointments

- Minneapolis Charter Commission (open indefinitely)
- Civilian Police Review Authority (CPRA) (closes 8-13-04)

For more information, visit:

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/boards-and-commissions/open/>

One Minnesota: Building Partnerships Around the State

Many residents don't know that I represent the city on the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) Board of Directors. This chance to work with cities across the state became crucial for Minneapolis during the cuts to Local Government Aid (LGA) and legislative decisions to change the distribution formula. I have worked hard to build relationships between Minneapolis and other cities and it paid off when cities from around the state lobbied together, rather than isolating the two largest cities. We did not have to stand alone.

To continue this better understanding, I recently hosted a visit by Les Heitke, Mayor of Willmar, and Brenda Johnson, Vice-Mayor of Chatfield. We rode LRT out to lunch at Cap's Grill, shared with Vice-Mayor Johnson our work to improve water quality, sent Mayor Heitke on a police ride-along, and talked with our Finance Director about what our city did after LGA budget cuts. What we already knew is that we share many of the same challenges to delivering core services. What we learned is that we also took the same approach to cutting our budgets AND that the level of cut (as a %) was very close to the same.

Cities of all sizes work on many of the same problems. Sharing ideas and experience with colleagues from across the state has been a tangible, if not very visible, benefit to Minneapolis.

Capital Budget Process

The Minneapolis budget is cumbersome and complicated. One way to make it more manageable is to consider it in sections. The section that funds major projects (think of that addition you want to put on your house) is the capital budget. The city pays for large projects, such as the addition to the 3rd Precinct building or road construction, in the same way homeowners pay for large projects - debt is incurred. For the city, this is done by selling bonds as a form of borrowing. Property tax dollars are used to make the debt payments over term of the bond.

The first stop for all capital projects is the Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee (CLIC). The CLIC is comprised of 33 appointed citizens – two per Council Ward and seven Mayoral appointees – who hear formal proposals on projects for the next five years, rank them based on contribution to city goals, city priorities, and qualitative criteria. CLIC's recommended five year plan is forwarded to the Mayor.

Mayor Rybak now has CLIC's ranking for 2005-2009 projects. He will consider their recommendation, then submit a proposed capital budget to the City Council during his budget address on August 12th. The Council will take a final vote in December. If the Mayor agrees with the Council, he will sign the final budget.

CLIC's recommendations are well respected, but changes can be made by the Mayor and Council. My job is to reflect the priorities of the 12th Ward and city so that the limited resource of capital dollars is spent wisely.