



9th Ward E-News

From Minneapolis Council Member Gary Schiff

June 6, 2008

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Minneapolis gives booting the boot



In response to citizen complaints, the Minneapolis City Council unanimously voted today to ban the booting industry from Minneapolis, except in rare circumstances where towing is not possible due to the configuration of small lots. The ban affects nine companies who will cease business after June 14th.

The new ordinance, authored by Council Member Gary Schiff, follows a three-year attempt at regulating vehicle immobilization. During those three years, [city staff](#)

documented numerous violations of city rules and issued \$25,000 in fines to six companies. In a public hearing, citizens whose cars have been booted testified of being confronted by booting employees with attack dogs and tasers, unprofessional conduct and high fees.

Reviews of laws in 20 cities showed only five allow booting on private property, with most capping fees at \$50. Minneapolis' charge of over \$100 was the second highest in the country. "By failing to adequately regulate this industry, we created a monster," Schiff said. "We want parking lot owners to share parking with surrounding businesses rather than profit from booting. Today's action will give relief to visitors to our city and end a practice that has become predatory."

Council adopts temporary protest policy for RNC

In an 11-2 vote, the City Council adopted a revised resolution today that lays out a permit process for groups planning to hold demonstrations that would block pedestrians from city sidewalks or crosswalks.

The sidewalk permit process is modeled after a similar policy in Washington D.C. and calls for groups planning public assemblies that block other pedestrians from using sidewalks and crosswalks to voluntarily register the gathering with the city.

A motion made by Council Member Elizabeth Glidden (Eighth Ward), successfully limited the new rules to the duration of the Republic National Convention, September 1st – 4th, 2008.

"While I don't agree that we need to create sidewalk protest permits, I am pleased that it is not permanent," Council Member Gary Schiff said. Schiff joined Council Member Cam Gordon (Second Ward) in casting the two dissenting votes. "Sidewalks are for everyone, and police have adequate powers to separate groups if a conflict arises. Reserving a sidewalk for any one group raises questions about access for people who live, work and shop nearby."

On Tuesday, Council Members Schiff and Gordon held a [press conference](#) with the American Civil Liberties Union, Women Against Military Madness and ACORN opposing the proposed language. AFSCME Council 5 and the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation have sent letters to the City Council expressing their opposition. The [Star Tribune editorial board](#) urged the council not to adopt additional permits and wrote "The plan would create a strange new environment in which organizations might try to preempt each other's protests -- say, on the sidewalk in front of a convention hotel."

Portions of the resolution dealing with police process for crowd dispersal were sent back to the Public Safety & Regulatory Services committee for additional discussion.



Thousands of protestors are expected to take to the streets in Minneapolis during the 2008 Republic National Convention as they did in 2004 in New York City, above.

Schiff criticizes EPA cleanup plan



Phillips, Powderhorn, Corcoran and Longfellow are the neighborhoods most affected by arsenic.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency will hold a public meeting announcing the next phase of arsenic cleanup in south Minneapolis on Wednesday, June 11 at the Midtown YWCA, 2121 East Lake Street. After meeting with EPA officials regarding the plan, Council Member Gary Schiff criticized the proposed cleanup as inadequate.

“The EPA is proposing an easier and cheaper final cleanup plan—leaving too many households at risk,” Council Member Schiff said.

The EPA studied six different final cleanup plans, affecting a range of households depending on the depth of soil cleanup and pollution levels. The smallest cleanup option covers 488 properties, while the largest includes 782 properties.

The [proposed cleanup plan](#) calls for removing shallow soil with arsenic levels higher than 25 parts of arsenic per million parts soil, affecting 488 properties. Schiff wants to see properties cleaned up to a 16 parts of arsenic per million, affecting 631 properties.

During the meeting, EPA will give a presentation to explain the proposed plan and allow residents the chance to speak for the public record during the hearing phase. Neighborhood comments and information may lead to the EPA revising the selected cleanup plan or to picking another option. The comment period runs from June 2 through July 1. To submit comments on the proposal, use the [online form](#), send comments via [email](#), or submit written comments on paper to Cheryl Allen, Community Involvement Coordinator, Office of Public Affairs (P-19J), US EPA Region 5, 77 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL 60604-3590 or via fax at 312-353-1155.

For more information about the cleanup site, [click here](#). All arsenic soil sample results have been mailed out. If you haven't received the results for your property, please contact [Tim Prendiville](#). If you are a tenant, please contact your property owner for the results.

Public forum will examine police internal affairs unit

The Minneapolis City Council has contracted with the [Police Executive Research Forum](#) to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the police department's internal affairs division. PERF will examine the city's investigation process for police misconduct and make recommendations for improvement.

Based in Washington, D.C., PERF is a private, non-profit membership organization that performs police research and policy development and provides vital management and leadership service to police agencies. As part of the assessment of the Minneapolis Police Department's Internal Affairs operations, PERF will facilitate two public forums to hear directly from the community their personal experiences with the department's Internal Affairs Unit.

All members of the public are invited to attend one of the meetings and express their views. The meetings will be facilitated by PERF staff and no members of the Minneapolis Police Department will be in attendance. The first forum will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, June 16 at the [Minneapolis Urban League North](#), 2100 Plymouth Avenue North. The second will be on Tuesday, June 17 at 6:00 p.m. at the [Minneapolis College of Art and Design](#), 2501 Stevens Avenue South.

Additional funds approved for NRP

Actions by the Minnesota Legislature and the Minneapolis City Council will provide additional funding for the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. The Legislature approved use of tax increment financing for the third phase of NRP slated to start next year, while the City Council freed up immediate funds that can be used by neighborhood groups currently in their second phase. "Dedicated funding for neighborhoods was a key priority for many Minneapolis residents for this legislative session," State Representative Jim Davnie (62a) said.



The Corcoran Neighborhood Organization will receive an additional \$17,000 in reallocated funds for NRP this year.

The State action assures dedicated funding for Minneapolis neighborhoods through 2019. Funding will come from downtown tax increment districts, the original funding source for NRP's first phase. "The provision also allows the city to use tax increment districts as a funding source to retire the Target Center debt, which will relive pressure from affordable housing and other economic development programs," Council Member Gary Schiff said.

In today's meeting, the City Council also approved an additional \$1.7 million for the second phase of NRP, as a result of a request by Council Member Schiff in February to find money to keep neighborhood groups funded until the start of the third phase. [Click here](#) to view the reallocation formula or [click here](#) to review the request for council action.

"These additional funds should help keep the doors open at most neighborhood groups until the Council approves the third phase of NRP," Schiff said. A preliminary proposal regarding the structure of Phase III is scheduled to come before the City Council for discussion on June 19th. Final action approving Phase III isn't anticipated until September.

