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# 12<sup>TH</sup> WARD UPDATE

Council Member Sandy Colvin Roy

April 2003

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Sign up for the monthly Update by sending an e-mail with "Update" in the subject line to:  
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## MAC Ducks their Commitment to Sound Insulation Again

Residents within the 1996 65dnl who have been waiting years for the promised Noise Insulation Program will have to wait longer. The Metropolitan Airports Commission sent the latest proposal to complete the program in 2003 back to their Policy & Environment Committee. The staff recommended that remaining homes within the 1996 agreed area be insulated, but there was reluctance among the Commissioners to fully fund program for 2003. The proposal was referred back to committee rather than defeated, despite Northwest Airlines' statement that "postponing" the insulation program would not add any money to the airline's bottom line. Even the premise that this is a "postponement" is misleading because in one breath Northwest is saying they only want a postponement of the program until new noise contours are drawn. In the next breath they say the remaining homes won't qualify for insulation under the new contours. **We need as many residents as possible at the May 19<sup>th</sup> MAC meeting. Commissioners commented after their last meeting that few citizens were present, they must not care any more.**

## Governor's LGA Cuts Reduce Core City Services

After alarming headlines about hundreds of police officers and firefighter lay-offs, many residents wrote and called to express their opinion that public safety is the fundamental job of city government. I agree. Some wondered how I could even consider cuts that would lay-off firefighters and police. It's not something I ever wanted to do, or for that matter, ever thought I would face. Because those services are fundamental, they make up a huge part of our budget, and being that large, we could not cut as much as the Governor recommended without some cuts to public safety services. They were not the first cuts made, only the first reported.

On March 13<sup>th</sup> the Council voted to direct where to cut \$20.6 million, the amount cut from Local Government Aid (LGA) to Minneapolis in Gov. Pawlenty's budget. Some of us worked hard to avoid public safety lay-offs. The best news is that my work with Council Members Johnson and Schiff to put \$1 million back into both the Police and Fire Departments succeeded. Knowing that some cuts had to be made in these departments simply because they represent more than half of the budget to be cut, our goal was to maximize the number of police officers and fire fighters kept on duty.

The city continued working with the Police and Fire departments and Unions to stretch the extra \$2 million dollars to save as many jobs as possible. Because of great work by city managers in 2002, Finance Director reported over \$5 million in savings that can be used for one time costs like retirement incentives (for those already eligible) and unemployment compensation costs for those laid off. Flexibility, creativity and the use of the one time money reduced sworn police officer lay-offs to 25. Staffing structure in the fire department is less flexible, allowing for fewer job savings, so 55 firefighters received pick slips.

Talking with the people who have lost their jobs is probably the most difficult thing I have been called to do in this job, second

only to the actual vote to make the cuts for which we had no options within the time frame. The idea of Public Service has been wounded in this statewide exercise and I'm not sure how many years we will live with the effects.

More bad news is that the \$2 million put back into public safety had to come from other departments. As Chair of the Transportation and Public Works Committee, I struggled with the decision to take an additional \$767,000 (on top of \$5.5 million) from the department. Reducing the Public Works budget by this much will remove our ability to do maintenance. For the long term it is essential that we quickly return to sufficient maintenance for our roads and bridges. We will also be reviewing with our new PW Director, Klara Fabry, how those services are delivered. It is essential for our quality of life in Minneapolis to find efficiencies.

Public Works is a very big department with a high turnover rate, as well as a big construction season in 2003 with funded capital projects to pay for the work. These factors explain why 87 positions were eliminated but only one person was laid off. The others have been offered positions within the department, although often at reduced wages and/or responsibilities. By mid-April, there may be some openings we could make available to those laid off in other departments.

Budget cuts are not the only action the city has taken due to the Governor's budget. We enacted a hiring freeze; approved a plan to phase out property tax and LGA support of the Health and Family Services Department; and gave direction to our labor negotiators to cap salary increases at 2%, all inclusive (meaning many employees in bargaining units may receive no increase).

The budget problem our city now faces is unprecedented and not of our own making. I am focused on doing everything possible to protect core services. This round of cuts was very difficult, but we did not have the choice to wait longer – any delay would only have meant more lay-offs and fewer services.

## Community Events

### NENA Annual Neighborhood Meeting

Minnehaha United Methodist Church  
April 10<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 p.m.

### SENA Earthday Celebration

Nokomis Community Center  
April 19<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 - 12:00 p.m.

### LCC Earthday Cleanup

36<sup>th</sup> and River Road  
April 19<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 - 1:00 a.m.

### GMHC Housing Resource Center Open House

3749 Cedar Avenue South  
April 24, 3 - 6 p.m.

### Monthly Neighborhood Meetings

#### SENA Board Meeting

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, 4000 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue S  
April 14<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m.

For more information, visit [www.standish-ericsson.org](http://www.standish-ericsson.org)

#### LCC Board Meeting

Longfellow Park, 3435 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue S  
April 17<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m.

For more information, visit [www.longfellow.org](http://www.longfellow.org)

#### NENA Board Meeting

3000 East 50<sup>th</sup> Street  
April 24<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m.

For more information, visit [www.nokomiseast.org](http://www.nokomiseast.org)

### Open Appointments

Application Deadline, May 2<sup>nd</sup>

- Heritage Preservation Commission (2 Positions)

For more information:

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/citywork/clerk/boards/open/index.asp>

### 2003 Storm Drain Stenciling Underway

Volunteers are needed to help educate the public about the effects of pollution on our rivers and creeks by stenciling "Please Don't Pollute! - Drains to River" next to storm drains. There are also opportunities to distribute literature. Contact Beth Storey at 651-222-2193 if you are interested.

### Your Suggestions Please!

The "12<sup>th</sup> Ward Update" is a work in progress. Please let me know what topics interest you or how this publication can be more useful.

### 46<sup>th</sup> and Minnehaha Development Update

Longfellow Community Council held a meeting on March 27<sup>th</sup> regarding development at 46<sup>th</sup> and Minnehaha. A vocal crowd of over 200 residents packed Hiawatha Park to hear about Oppidan's plans for a Cub Food Store, housing, and other retail on a site south of 46<sup>th</sup> Street, between the railroad tracks on the west and Minnehaha Avenue on the east, excluding the homes on Minnehaha Avenue.

Oppidan presented a concept of their development to get an initial community reaction. Their goal was to determine if they could configure the development in way that the community would be happy with the outcome. Attendees expected to review a specific proposal, so were not happy; and a majority stated that they don't want a CUB.

It was clear by the end of the meeting that residents remain committed to the community vision in the 46<sup>th</sup> Street Master Plan. This plan includes a smaller grocery store which will bring less traffic, senior housing, and a great sense of "place" to the area.

### Street Sweeping and Yard Waste Pickup Starting Soon!

Spring is here and so is city street sweeping and yard waste pick-up. Weather permitting, both activities will begin on the week of April 7<sup>th</sup>. Make sure to keep an eye out for parking restrictions during street sweeping. Please direct street sweeping questions to our Public Works District (612-673-5605). Yard waste questions can be answered by Solid Waste and Recycling (612-673-2917).

### HWY 55 Speed Limit Update

My goal on the taskforce is to make the corridor as safe and inviting as possible for pedestrians. Here are some pedestrian considerations Mn/DOT has already agreed to install:

- Countdown Pedestrian signals of remaining seconds to walk across some intersections.
- Zebra stripes for pedestrian crossings.
- Signals or stop signs to control turns at "free rights," the currently uncontrolled right-hand turns from Hiawatha.
- Pedestrian crosswalk markings at free rights.
- Interim/permanent "Pedestrian Crossing" signs at the free rights.

### Animal Shelter Hour Cuts

The Minneapolis Animal Shelter has shortened its hours to reflect a smaller budget. As of March 16<sup>th</sup>, the shelter will be open Monday through Friday, 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Saturday hours will still be noon to 4:00 p.m. and the shelter will no longer be open on Sundays. To compensate for the loss of Sunday hours, Animal Shelter staff will redouble their efforts to return lost pets with licenses to their owners by Saturday and the daily boarding cost for Sunday will be waived when lost pets are recovered.

Please help our staff and your pet by properly licensing your pet. A license helps us return your pet more quickly and saves city resources. License information is available at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/animal-control/>