

# WARD NEWSLETTER



Council Member Scott Benson

DIAMOND LAKE, FIELD, HALE, KINGFIELD NORTHRUP, PAGE, TANGLETOWN, WINDOM, and WENONA

## Weigh in on proposed street light fee at two public meetings

Two meetings are set for the public to comment on a proposed change in the way the City pays for the operation of street lights throughout Minneapolis.

Currently, the \$3 million a year needed to keep the street lights on in the city comes from the general fund, which gets around 20 percent of its money from the State of Minnesota's local government aid. Local Government Aid received by the City was recently cut \$21.3 million.

One option being considered to replace the dollars cut is a street lighting operations fee for all property owners. Before any such fee can be assessed, the City's ordinance will need to be changed to allow such funding.

### A community meeting will be held for you to learn about the proposal:

#### Thursday, July 16

6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

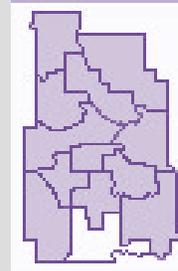
Martin Luther King Park, 4055 Nicollet Ave. S



The City Council's Transportation and Public Works Committee will conduct a public hearing on the proposal on July 21 at 9:45 a.m., in Room 317 City Hall. The hearing on the amount of the proposed fee is tentatively scheduled for September 22.

The City operates and maintains approximately 17,000 street lights and 1,700 Parkway lights. It also contracts with Xcel Energy to operate and maintain an additional 28,000 wood pole street lights.

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Inside this issue:

<i>Living Well Report</i>	2
<i>Water Your Trees</i>	2
<i>Budget cuts</i>	3
<i>Walkable City</i>	3
<i>Energy Efficiency funds</i>	4
<i>Community Meetings</i>	4
<i>Open Appointments</i>	4



# Living Well report shows improvements in livability issues

Lead poisoning in Minneapolis children has decreased, juvenile crime is down, and water quality has improved at some of our lakes. Those are some of the ways our city is making progress toward becoming a more vital, livable city, according to the Minneapolis - Living Well, the City's 2009 sustainability report that was recently released.

Living Well is the City's fourth annual report taking stock of its work on 25 sustainability indicators, which include things ranging from air quality and solar power, to healthy infants and airport noise. The report tracks targets, trends, and recent activities related to those indicators. That lets Minneapolis measure progress and match actions with goals. The report is now available on the City's Web site at [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/).

**Minneapolis made progress on many goals. Some of the highlights in the Living Well report include:**

## **Testing for lead**

In the past year, Minneapolis achieved a 22-percent decrease in the number of children identified with lead poisoning and made the standard that triggers mandatory home inspections for lead more stringent.

## **Youth violence**

There was a 29-percent decline in violent crime with juvenile suspects, which follows a 27-percent decrease the previous year.

## **Water quality**

The water quality improvement target for Lake Calhoun was met for the fourth year in a row, while Brownie Lake reached the goal for the first time.

## **Local, healthy food**

Minneapolis supported the development of six mini farmers markets that provided 58 market days of locally grown, fresh produce in primarily low-income neighborhoods.

## **Land cleanup**

Minneapolis facilitated \$4.35 million in grants to clean up 26 brownfield sites, which are current or former commercial or industrial properties that are difficult to redevelop because of actual or suspected contamination. The cleanups in 2008 covered 62 acres.

Creating a more sustainable community is a top priority for Minneapolis leaders. The quality of life in Minneapolis is linked to the health and well-being of our community and our environment. All of us can take actions every day that will make Minneapolis better today and create a positive legacy for future generations.

## Got a new boulevard tree? They are thirsty!

May went down as one of the driest on record so please water your boulevard trees, especially those planted this spring. A simple trick is to water your tree on the day your trash is picked up. For more information on the Urban Forest visit [www.minneapolisparks.org](http://www.minneapolisparks.org)—Caring for Trees— Urban Forest.



## **Governor cuts Minneapolis funding by \$30 million through 2010**

On June 16 Gov. Tim Pawlenty announced \$2.7 billion in cuts he is making to provide a short-term fix to the State's budget crisis. These cuts, known as an "unallotment," slash Minneapolis' funding by \$8.5 million in 2009 and \$21.3 million in 2010, for a total cut of \$30 million through 2010. This is not the first time Pawlenty has cut funding to Minneapolis and communities throughout Minnesota. Including the governor's action this week, the City of Minneapolis receives 43 percent less in local government aid than it did just six years ago.

The City of Minneapolis anticipated cuts from the governor and based its budget on a worst-case scenario, which means the City will not need to make any additional cuts to its 2009 budget. In January, Minneapolis officials revised the City's 2009 budget and made \$17 million in cuts in anticipation of state cuts. By taking action early, the City is in a stronger position to deal with the additional cuts in the 2010 budget to make up the governor's unallotment.

Over the past several years Minneapolis has eliminated nearly \$90 million in debt, controlled its spending much better than the State and made city services more efficient. As a result, the City has balanced its budget every year and will continue to balance its budget in the years ahead.

Although Gov. Pawlenty cut from the fund that Minneapolis uses to pay for basic city services, City officials will be working harder than ever to maintain the highest level of service possible, to keep the city safe, and to maintain the public safety gains made in reducing crime for more than two years in a row.

## **Help make Minneapolis the most walkable city around**

You can help the City improve walking in Minneapolis. City staff have taken public input and drafted a pedestrian master plan to improve the city's pedestrian infrastructure and get people walking more. Now they are seeking public input on the draft plan. Attend an open house to learn about the draft plan and give your feedback. Come early for two walking workshops conducted by the Bike Walk Ambassadors: a neighborhood walkability audit and a workshop on staying safe as a pedestrian.

### **Pedestrian master plan walking workshops and public meeting:**

**Thursday, July 16**

**Walking workshops at 5:30 p.m.**

**Public meeting 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**

**Master plan presentation at 6:30 p.m.**

**Minneapolis Central Library**

**300 Nicollet Mall**



You can also learn about the plan and provide your comments online at [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/pedestrian](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/pedestrian).

The plan addresses a broad range of pedestrian issues beyond simply providing sidewalks. It includes ways for Minneapolis to foster a culture of walking and street life. It addresses trees and boulevards, crosswalks and intersections, street lighting, bridge design, street furniture, accessibility, snow and ice clearance, sidewalk cafes, construction zones, and funding pedestrian improvements.

## Monthly Community Meetings

<p><b>Field Regina Northrop</b></p> <p><a href="http://FRNNG.org">FRNNG.org</a></p> <p>Meets Third Wednesday</p> <p>6:30 PM</p>	<p><b>Hale Page Diamond Lake</b></p> <p><a href="http://HPDL.org">HPDL.org</a></p> <p>Meets Fourth Monday</p> <p>7:00 PM</p>	<p><b>Kingfield</b></p> <p><a href="http://Kingfield.org">Kingfield.org</a></p> <p>Meets Second Wednesday</p> <p>7:00 PM</p>
<p><b>NENA</b></p> <p><a href="http://Nokomiseast.org">Nokomiseast.org</a></p> <p>Meets Fourth Thursday</p> <p>7:00 PM</p> <p>NENA Office</p>	<p><b>Tangletown</b></p> <p><a href="http://Tangletown.org">Tangletown.org</a></p> <p>Meets Third Monday</p> <p>7:00 PM</p> <p>Fuller Community Center</p>	<p><b>Windom</b></p> <p><a href="http://Windomcommunity.org">Windomcommunity.org</a></p> <p>Meets Second Thursday</p> <p>7:00 PM</p> <p>Windom Community Center</p>

## Minneapolis approves \$3.9 million in Recovery Act energy efficiency funds

The Minneapolis City Council and Mayor R.T. Rybak approved plans to use \$3.9 million in energy efficiency funds from the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act. Minneapolis is among the first cities in the country to commit to using the highest possible amount of its grant to help small businesses conserve energy and save on energy costs.

The Mayor and City Council have approved using 20 percent of the City's EECBG funding (the maximum allowed by the Department of Energy) to establish a revolving loan fund for non-residential energy efficiency and conservation. This \$780,000 will be used to leverage existing incentives and business loan programs by partnering with utilities, other governmental units, and energy nonprofits that offer assistance to small businesses.

Another 20 percent of the funding, about \$780,000 will be used to support energy efficiency improvements to residences in Minneapolis. This will include \$75,000 to fund additional climate change grants, a successful program the City of Minneapolis has pioneered in the last several years to partner with non-profits on programs and projects that encourage residents to take actions to reduce their energy use.

"The quality of life in Minneapolis is linked to the well-being of our community and our environment," said Minneapolis City Council Member Scott Benson, who chairs the City Council's Health, Energy, and the Environment Committee. "We all have a role and a common interest in making Minneapolis a better place to live now and a responsible user of resources and protector of the environment for future generations."

## OPEN APPOINTMENTS

Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC) (open until filled)

Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee (closes 7/17/09)

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

Council Member Benson publishes an electronic newsletter to keep you up to date on what is happening at City Hall. If you would like to receive this update, please e-mail me at [scott.benson@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:scott.benson@ci.minneapolis.mn.us) and put the words "E-mail Update" in the subject line.