



9th Ward E-News

From Minneapolis Council Member Gary Schiff

February 29, 2008

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Anti-graffiti grants now available



The Corcoran Mural Project, under the guidance of Elise Kylo (third from right), completed seven murals last year. The murals successfully stopped gang graffiti from reappearing.

The City of Minneapolis is offering grants to neighborhood groups to support anti-graffiti projects. Up to \$10,000 will be made available for projects that incorporate landscaping, murals and other innovative approaches.

“Neighborhoods have consistently come up

with innovative approaches to fight graffiti,” Council Member Gary Schiff said. “Whether it involves working with youth or landscaping, the best solutions can often be found at the grassroots level.”

For a grant application, [click here](#). An informational meeting for those interested in learning more about the grants will take place at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 5, 2008 at the City of Lakes Building, 309 2nd Ave. S., Room 203. Questions can also be submitted in writing prior to the meeting by emailing graffiti@ci.minneapolis.mn.us or by faxing them to (612) 673-2250. The application deadline is Friday, March 14, 2008.

City moves to recoup costs for boarded buildings

The Minneapolis City Council approved an increase today in the annual registration fee for vacant and boarded properties. [A fee study](#) conducted by the city determined that the city spends an average of \$6,000 monitoring each boarded house. “Over eighty percent of the boarded homes in Phillips are owned by lenders and banks,” Council Member Schiff said. “As a matter of fairness, they should cover the city’s costs.”



There are more than 800 boarded properties in Minneapolis. (MPR photo/Brandt Williams).

Along with most other cities in the country, Minneapolis has experienced a dramatic increase in boarded and vacant properties due to the foreclosure crisis. Boarded and vacant structures have a significant impact on neighborhoods, ranging from a depression in adjacent property values to an increase in crimes like copper theft. Schiff told [Minnesota Public Radio](#) that over 90 percent of abandoned buildings have required at least one or more police call, grass cutting, rubbish removal, a re-boarding or visit from the fire department.

Sara Bergen, a board member of the Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association, testified in support of the new fee. “As neighbors of these properties, we are already forced to bear the negative social and community consequences these boarded and

vacant properties create. We should not also have to pay the financial costs. This fee will help to recover the costs associated with these properties from those who create and perpetuate the boarded and vacant conditions."

New food standards for convenience stores passed



New requirements for Minneapolis convenience stores aim to increase the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables in inner-city neighborhoods.

"The availability of higher quality, fresh foods from all of the food groups is crucial to stopping the rise in obesity and diabetes among inner-city children," Council Member Gary Schiff said. "All residents should have ready access to healthy foods."

The standards require a variety of staple food items such as meat, poultry, fish, bread, cereals, vegetables, fruits, fruit and vegetable juices, and dairy products. The new language clearly specifies the amount and diversity of fresh, perishable foods that must be available. For more information on the new language, [click here](#).

Waite House pancake breakfast to support youth programs

The [Waite House](#) from will hold a pancake breakfast on Saturday, March 8th from 9:00 a.m. to noon to help support its youth service learning programs. The Waite House made national news in August when a bus carrying youth participants survived the 35W bridge collapse.

Waite House hopes to raise \$10,000 to support service-learning programs, including a trip to Mexico in April, volunteer activities and a community garden.

"Jeremy Hernandez and I have the opportunity to take ten teens to Oaxaca, Mexico for a service learning trip focusing on community building," Julie Graves, youth program coordinator for Waite House said. "I truly think this will be a crucial experience for the bridge-involved youth in getting them back on a path toward leadership, becoming a global citizen, and moving on with their recovery through serving and connecting with others."

Waite House is located at 2529 13th Ave. S. The event is open to the public and there is a \$5 minimum donation per person.



The Waite House community garden is one of the programs the pancake breakfast will help fund.

Sustainability conference helps activists connect



The 2008 Neighborhood Sustainability Conference will take place on Saturday, March 8 from 8:30 to 4:30 at Augsburg College. The conference will bring together 700 volunteer leaders from block clubs, neighborhoods, schools, congregations, garden clubs and lake associations to plan projects aimed at reducing global warming and preparing for energy and climate uncertainty.

Jay WallJasper, former editor of Utne Magazine and author of *The Great Neighborhood Book: A Do-It Yourself Guide to Placemaking* will be the keynote speaker. The conference will cover topics including: energy, water quality, community gardening, urban forestry, walking/biking & transit use, local food,

waste reduction and developing a community-wide sustainability plan.

Conferees can share outreach tips with successful congregations, schools, neighborhoods and block clubs and meet with others from their community to discuss next steps. Volunteer teams will also be able to track their projects and share ideas with other groups working on similar projects through the conference web site. Community volunteers will also be able to learn about many different project grant opportunities to fund grassroots projects in the areas of energy, water quality, waste reduction, graffiti prevention and Climate/Energy Citizen Partnerships. Register for the conference at www.sustaincommunity.net.