



9th Ward E-News

From Minneapolis Council Member Gary Schiff

November 20, 2009

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Minneapolis finding more ways to go solar

Minneapolis has issued a [request for proposals](#) to design, install, and operate a solar power system on the roof of the Minneapolis Convention Center. The system is proposed to receive two million dollars in funding from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. With



Solar panels at Fire Station number six, 121 East 15th St, generate 5.0 kilowatts of electrical power.

600 kilowatts, the project would be the largest array of photovoltaics (solar electric) in the Upper Midwest. All of the electricity produced by the grid-tied system will be used by the convention center under a 20-year solar services agreement with the company that develops the system.

This move towards solar energy is continuing efforts from recent years. Minneapolis already has [three solar arrays](#) producing power at Fire Station number six, as well as the Currie and Royalston Public Works facilities. In 2008, the U.S. Department of Energy named Minneapolis a [Solar America City](#) to develop a strategic plan to make solar energy more accessible for homes and businesses by the year 2015. Minneapolis is partnering with a number of local organizations to develop mainstream solar in the coming decade and implement dozens of projects during the next two years. Also, additional dollars in recovery funding are directed to help with [solar efforts](#) in Minneapolis. This funding will be used to conduct a feasibility study on integrating solar into district and cooling services to over 100 buildings in downtown Minneapolis.

City to hold public hearing on 2010

budget

On Monday, December 7th the Minneapolis City Council will listen to residents' thoughts on the 2010 proposed budget. The public hearing will be held at 6:00 p.m. in room 317 of City Hall, 350 South 5th Street. The Mayor's 2010 proposal calls for a seven percent pension debt levy and a four percent levy increase for the city's general fund. For complete details on the proposed budget, [click here](#).

Minneapolis is facing a number of serious fiscal challenges that affect the city's bottom line. This includes state cuts to Minneapolis of more than \$40 million during 2009-2010 and escalating health care and pension costs. In 2010, the city will spend \$48 million on employee health care and \$25 million in pension obligations, which will climb to \$52 million by 2014.

Will Xcel build an underground substation?



This two-acre park is the site of an [underground electric substation](#) in Anaheim, California.

As Xcel Energy applies to the Public Utilities Commission to place above ground high-voltage power lines and two substations in the Phillips neighborhood, Council Member Gary Schiff is advocating for buried lines and a buried substation.

A few years ago an underground

substation would have been unheard of. In October of 2007 the Anaheim Public Utilities in California pioneered the first underground electric substation in the United States. The substation is nestled below a two-acre park.

Xcel says that a power line above the Midtown Greenway is needed to meet growing demand for electricity but a Minneapolis City Council resolution co-authored by Schiff calls for Xcel to pursue energy conservation and to bury the line. Xcel's preferred location for a substation is the greenspace on the east side of Hiawatha Avenue, where the Midtown Greenway bike path connects into the Longfellow neighborhood.

"Although only the Public Utilities Commission has the power to approve these lines, the City Council will continue to strongly fight any above-ground high voltage power lines in Minneapolis neighborhoods." Schiff said. "Whether these

utilities are buried will set a precedence for all neighborhoods in the future.”

Help for pet owners in abusive situations

The City Council recently approved a measure that will help pet owners in domestic abuse situations. The Domestic Violence Intervention Initiative involves [Animal Care and Control](#) partnering with the Minneapolis Police Department to identify victims who are afraid to leave a violent domestic relationship because they have nowhere for their pet to go.



For pet owners leaving a domestic abuse situation, [Animal Care and Control](#) can provide a no cost five day stay for their pet.

In many cases, crisis shelters do not allow pets. There is also a relationship between domestic abuse and animal abuse. Up to 75 percent of domestic violence victims report their partners threatened or killed family pets. Up to 48 percent of battered women delay leaving abusive situation out of fear for the safety of their animals. The City Council will allow Animal Care and Control to provide temporary (five days or less) no cost kenneling for victims in abusive relationships to support them in leaving a violent relationship.

Ninth Ward Award nominations open



Neil Thompson was Ninth Ward ["Citizen of the Year"](#) in 2009 for

his work helping to expose Walgreen's overcharging of Medicaid by millions.

January's Breakfast with Gary will feature the Seventh Annual State of the Ward Address and Ninth Ward Awards. Awards will be given for Citizen of the Year, Block

Club of the Year, Neighborhood Project of the Year and Youth Leader of the Year. "The Ninth Ward is a community of activists who impressively fight for the betterment of their community. This event is a time to celebrate our successes," Council Member Gary Schiff said. To make a nomination, write a brief description of the accomplishments that you think deserve recognition.

Please submit your Ninth Ward Award nominations via [e-mail](#), fax (612-673-3940) or by mail to Council Member Gary Schiff, 350 South 5th Street, Room 307, Minneapolis, MN 55415 by Friday, January 15th. Breakfast with Gary will take place Friday, January 29, 2008 from 7:30 to 8:45 a.m. at Mercado Central, 1515 E. Lake Street. Food is \$7. RSVP encouraged: (612) 673-2209 or via [e-mail](#).

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