

12th Ward news

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[December]

Property taxes, 2011

Minneapolis property owners received their Proposed Property Tax for 2011 notices the week of November 15. I understand that most residents are surprised and many are unhappy with the amount of taxes they are being asked to pay. I knew that the increases would be a burden and that for some households, whose economic situation has worsened due to the faltering economy, the hurt would be even worse. I am doing what I can to reduce 2011 taxes and levy from the City.

I always thought it very important to give property owners a chance to comment on the proposed budget and levy with enough time remaining in the process for their comments to make a difference, so I proposed an additional hearing. This year it occurred on November 18th. I believe that those comments, as well as those called in or written to Council members, are making a difference.

Several factors have pushed property taxes up steeply for next year. The major increase in obligations to closed pension funds (additional \$17 million) accounts for the entire amount of money that would be raised by the Mayor's proposed levy increase. The cost of city operations in the Mayor's proposed levy would be less in real dollars than in 2010; adjusting for inflation, the proposed spending for 2011 is 7% smaller than the City's budget in 2001.

So, why are taxes going up so much more than the 6.5% proposed by the Mayor? A big decrease in Local Government Aid from the state means that a bigger part of the total bill for City operations must be covered by property taxes. Since 2003, the City has been shorted \$290 million of LGA. That's a big gap to fill. We have not simply passed that burden on to taxpayers, we have been cutting. It is a testament to the employees of the City of Minneapolis that many of the cuts have been invisible. In the last 10 years, we have shrunk the size of City government; 1,000 fewer people will work for the city and park board in 2011 than did in 2001.

Finally, recertification of the downtown Tax Increment Financing District to fund neighborhood revitalization (as it had for the last 20 years) and pay for Target Center obligations means that money is once again designated for those two purposes only

To reduce property taxes, the City Council will have to make further cuts in spending that we control. This does not include pensions since the ability for two of the closed pensions to manage themselves, as well as other factors that affect cost, is controlled by the State Legislature rather than the city. I am working with the Mayor and colleagues to make further cuts to his original proposal so that the budget and levy approved December 13th will lead to smaller tax increases.

The mailed notices included the taxes to be levied by Hennepin County, Minneapolis Public Schools and special taxing districts like Metropolitan Council and watershed districts. Because property taxes in our state are not simple, the City has produced a website to help property owners understand what all goes in to those taxes.

The site, www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/city-budget/2011truthintaxation, answers many questions about the process and explains the City's different funding sources.

There is one more public hearing on the City's proposed 2011 budget where the public will have a chance to share their thoughts on the proposed budget and tax levy.

Public hearings on tax levy and 2011 City budget

Monday, December 13 at 6:05 p.m.

City Hall, 350 South 5th Street, Council Chambers (Room 317)

To view the complete proposed 2011 budget, go to www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/city-budget/2011recc.



Don't miss NENA's
Night Before New
Years Eve Party. A
great event for the kids!
See calendar for more.

Free Sand

Spreading sand after clearing away snow can be helpful to provide traction for pedestrians.

The City offers free sand for residential sidewalks at these sites, 24 hours a day. Please bring your own pail and shovel.

Free sand locations:

- 6036 Harriet Ave. S.
(on West 60th Street between Lyndale and Harriet)
- 1809 Washington St.
NE (18th and Jefferson)
- East 27th Street, just east of Longfellow Avenue near the Public Works gate

What do Demographers Say about the Future of Minneapolis?

In October, the City Council heard a presentation by two state demographers about the changing demographics of our city and what it means for taxes, jobs, services and needs. If you are interested in how Minneapolis may change in the years ahead, check out the power point:

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/news/docs/StateDemographicTrendsOct2010.pdf>

LCC meetings: Howe Site and Longfellow Station

Meet the Potential Developers for Howe School

Howe School has been listed for sale again. LCC will host an informational meeting to hear short presentations from each developer that has submitted proposals for the Howe School site. Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) staff will also be present to describe the evaluation process and next steps going forward.

Thursday, December 2 6:30-8:30 pm

Minnehaha Academy South Campus
4200 W. River Pkwy

Hear New Plans for Longfellow Station

George Sherman has assumed the role of developer for the old Purina Mill site at 38th and Hiawatha, now called the Longfellow Station. He will describe his plans and timeline for this long awaited project.

Sherman has been working with LCC on revised designs for the project and to hear and address community concerns. The development will be similar to the plans submitted under former developer Dale Joel and include approximately 180 units of mixed income rental units and 10,000 square feet of commercial retail space on the corner of 38th and Hiawatha. Initial plans have been submitted to the City and will go to the City Planning Commission on December 13th.

Wednesday, December 6:30-8:30 pm

Hiawatha School Park (4305 E 42nd St.)

Please contact Kim Jakus with questions about either meeting: 612-722-4529 x5 or kim@longfellow.org.

Are you ready for a Snow Emergency?

When snow emergencies are declared, City Public Works crews have an enormous job to do: more than 1,500 miles of streets, parkways and alleys need to be cleared. It's important for drivers to follow parking rules so plows can do the best job possible of clearing snow and making way for emergency vehicles to pass when needed. Towing and impounding vehicles is expensive, so it's in everyone's interest to help drivers follow the parking rules and avoid a ticket and tow.

The City has a number of tools to help people learn when Snow Emergencies are declared, and what to do. Use more than one and give yourself a better chance to avoid a ticket.

- **Call the hotline** - (612) 348-SNOW to find out if a Snow Emergency has been declared. The hotline has information on parking restrictions in English, Spanish, Somali, and Hmong.
- **Check out the City's website** - Go to www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/snow to find out whether a Snow Emergency has been declared and for a wealth of information. Also, check out the street lookup, which lets you put in an address or a neighborhood to see where you can park during a Snow Emergency.
- **Phone alerts** - An automated notification system that places thousands of calls per hour to notify residents when a Snow Emergency has been declared.
- **E-mail alerts** - You can sign up to get Snow Emergency alerts automatically e-mailed to you at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/snow/esubscribe.asp.
- **The media** - News releases are sent to the media so TV, radio stations and other news outlets can inform their viewers and listeners when a Snow Emergency is in effect.
- **On cable** - Tune in to cable channels 14 and 79. These channels will have information in several languages when a Snow Emergency is declared.
- **Facebook** - "Like" Minneapolis Snow Emergency on Facebook. Go to www.facebook.com/MinneapolisSnowEmergency.
- **Twitter** - twitter.com/minneapolisnow. If you have a Twitter account, just follow us. Both the Twitter and Facebook pages will tell fans and followers when a Snow Emergency is declared.

Tips for a Greener Holiday Season

Records show a 25% increase in household waste from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day. Check out these tips to reduce holiday waste.

- Use reusable tableware.
- Buy LED holiday lights. They are more energy-efficient and last longer.
- Make it easy for your party guests to recycle soda cans and bottles.
- Wrapping paper isn't recyclable, so try the comics or sports section of newspaper, old posters, old maps, sheet music, reusable shopping bags or scarves.
- Rethink your tree. Many of the city's garden centers and other retailers offer Christmas trees that are grown locally or sustainably, or decorate a poinsettia, potted evergreen, bonsai or even a live tree that you can plant in your yard in the spring.

Find out more at www.doitgreen.org

New Parking Meters Accept Credit and Debit Cards

Crews are installing the first of a new generation of smart parking meters in downtown Minneapolis. The multi-space meter pay stations are designed to make it easier for on-street parkers by letting them pay for meter time with credit cards. Cash will still be accepted. Unlike traditional meters, each parking space will not have its own meter. Instead, spaces will have unique numbers that can be used to pay for time at any one of the City's multi-space meter pay stations. Drivers just need to input their space numbers and then pay.

The new meters have other advantages. They're programmable, and have the ability to handle variable parking rates at different times of day. They can warn drivers of "tow away" zones during peak periods so they'll know that they need to move their car by a certain time. They also will not allow drivers to pay the meter during these times.

This technology provides better services economically. The pay stations are solar powered and will take advantage of the city's WIFI network by transmitting real-time data on parking meter usage to the Traffic Control Agents and Traffic Engineers. A six month pilot test of the equipment showed that more than half of payments will be electronic. That, along with having just one meter pay station for each side of a block, means crews will spend less time collecting money from the meters.

Most of Minneapolis' current single-spaced parking meters were installed in 1992 and are nearing the end of their useful lives, resulting in more break downs. The new multi-spaced meters were chosen as a result of a selection process that included written proposals and a six-month field test along Minneapolis streets. For more information on Minneapolis parking meters, go to www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/parking.

I-35W Bridge Memorial Site Approved by Park Board

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board approved West River Parkway as the site for the Remembrance Garden – a memorial to the August 1, 2007 collapse of the I-35W Bridge in Minneapolis. The site is directly across from Gold Medal Park, which became a gathering place in the days and weeks following the bridge collapse.

The design for the Remembrance Garden was unveiled in September. It is linear in nature, rather than a circle within a square as originally designed; the water feature has changed from a circular granite table to a linear water wall to complement the new context and design; and names of survivors and those who acted with heroism are now included, engraved on the face of the water feature. Oslund and Associates of Minneapolis designed the Remembrance Garden.

New membership sought for the City's Bicycle Advisory Committee

Do you love your bicycle? Do you have the energy to help make Minneapolis an even better place to bike to work, for errands, and -- yes -- for fun? If so, we need people like you on the Bicycle Advisory Committee.

The City is taking applications for new members of the Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee. Thirteen members are being sought to join the committee and help promote bicycling, safe riding and bike infrastructure improvements in Minneapolis.

There will be one committee member chosen for each city council ward. Council members will select one resident to represent the ward from the pool of applicants. Once this group is established, committee members will elect a new chair, a vice chair and a secretary. Terms for the new Bicycle Advisory Committee members will begin on January 1, 2011 and run through May 31, 2012. Subsequent terms will be two years long and begin on July 1 of even numbered years.

Anyone interested in membership in the Bicycle Advisory committee may apply on their own behalf. People may also nominate others for consideration, or contact the Office of the City Clerk to have application materials sent to someone. For applications and additional information, go to www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/boards-and-commissions and click on "current openings." The deadline for applying is Friday, December 10, 2010.

In addition to the ward-specific members of the committee, there will be three at-large members selected by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. Also, the Minneapolis Department of Public Works will continue to staff the committee and assist in agenda setting.

Minneapolis 2nd Best Eco-City in Nation

Mercer conducts the ranking as part of their quality of living assessment. The information is used to help governments and multi-national companies compensate employees fairly when placing them on international assignments.

Eco-City rankings are based on the following criteria: Water availability, water potability, waste removal, sewage, air pollution and traffic congestion. The top eco-cities include:

1. Calgary, Canada
2. Honolulu, USA
- 3 & 4. Tie. Ottawa, Canada and Helsinki, Finland
5. Wellington, New Zealand
6. Minneapolis, MN, USA
7. Adelaide, Australia
8. Copenhagen, Denmark
- 9, 10 & 11 tie- Kobe, Japan ; Stockholm, Sweden and Oslo Norway.



Abandoned Vehicles

Crime Prevention

Utility Billing

Housing Inspections

Metro Transit

Report Graffiti

Animal Control



LCC

NENA

SENA



Formed in February 1990, the Bicycle Advisory Committee advises to the Mayor and City Council as well as the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. The committee also serves as a liaison to bicyclists, businesses, neighborhoods, and other communities and agencies.

The Bicycle Advisory Committee is in the process of updating its membership, bylaws, and roles/responsibilities. A subcommittee comprised of several committee members was formed in 2009 to make recommendations. Those recommendations were presented to the full committee and, after several months of discussion, the committee unanimously passed a motion to restructure its membership and to pass a set of bylaws.

Events & Special Meetings

2011 Holidazzle Parade

December 1-19, Thursdays – Sundays 6:30 pm, Nicollet Mall from 12th St. to 4th St. Bundle up the kids and head downtown to the parade! Watch streetside or in one of the downtown skyways. Visit www.holidazzle.com for more information.

Meet Potential Developers for Howe School Site

December 2 6:30-8:30 pm, Minnehaha Academy South Campus, 4200 W. River Pkwy. Hear short presentations from each of the developers that have submitted proposals for re-use of the site. Mpls. Public Schools staff will describe the evaluation process and next steps going forward. Contact Kim at Longfellow Community Council for more info. 612-722-4529 ext 5 or kim@longfellow.org.

Longfellow Station Development Update

December 8 6:30-8:30 pm, Hiawatha School Park, 4305 E. 42nd St. George Sherman of Sherman Associates, will present his plans and timeline for the long-awaited, mixed-use development at the former Purina site on 38th St & Hiawatha Ave. Initial plans have been submitted to the City and will go before the City Planning Commission on December 13th. Contact Kim at Longfellow Community Council with questions. 612-722-4529 ext 5 or kim@longfellow.org.

2011 City Budget Public Hearing & Adoption

December 13 6:05 pm, Minneapolis City Hall, 350 S. 5th St., Council Chambers, Room 317. City Council members will take public comment then vote whether to pass the Mayor's Recommended Budget for 2011.

NENA Annual Night Before New Year's Eve Party

December 30 5-8 pm, Nokomis Community Center, 2401 E Minnehaha Pkwy. This annual event is free for everyone! Hay rides, bonfire, food, live music, KidsDance DJ & dance contests, prizes, carnival games, face painting, fortune teller, photo booth, balloon magician, crafts. New Year's countdown at 7:55 p.m.

Open Appointments for Boards & Commissions

Bicycle Advisory Cmte Closes December 10th
Public Health Advisory Cmte Open until filled
Youth Violence Prevention Exec Cmte Open until filled

For information on openings: ci.minneapolis.mn.us/boards-and-commissions/open

