

PAUL REPORTS

A NEWSLETTER TO THE RESIDENTS OF THE 9TH DISTRICT

From Alder Paul Skidmore

July 2007

Staying in Touch

As alder, I attend many meetings, including the Common Council, committees, commissions and meetings with staff. I also attend many neighborhood meetings. I welcome the opportunity to meet and talk with all residents of the 9th District. I hope that this newsletter will be one more tool for us to stay in touch. Please feel free to contact me with questions, concerns, and suggestions. You can give me a call, drop me a line or send an e-mail. You can reach me at:

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My most recent newsletters are posted at my City web page:
<http://www.cityofmadison.com/Council/district09/news.cfm>

I also e-mail my newsletters to Neighborhood Associations for publication in their newsletters. If there is a matter of special significance to a particular neighborhood, I have a limited official budget for mailings of special notices.

The April Elections

I would like to thank the residents of the 9th District for their support in the recent election. I would like to commend my opponent, Larry Pasha, for running a clean and positive campaign. Unlike some other races, Larry and I stuck to the issues that matter to our community, and I hope he will remain active in local politics.

My Committees

For the next two years, I will be serving on the following committees:

- Public Safety Review Board
- Commission for People with Disabilities
- Ped/Bike/Motor Vehicle Committee
- Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Long Range Transportation Planning Committee

While the Mayor makes committee assignments, I have always tried to indicate my committee preferences with an eye to the important issues in our district. The Public Safety Review Board (PSRB) keeps me in the forefront of the fight against crime in Madison. I have served on this committee for 4 years. By serving on the PSRB, I have been able to develop a strong relationship with our Police and Fire fighters. I will continue to serve on the Commission for People with Disabilities because of my personal commitment to the issues involved. As traffic and transportation are clearly important to the 9th District, I am pleased to be re-appointed to the Ped/Bike/Motor Vehicle Committee.

This year, after many years of service, I am no longer on the Park Commission. While I will certainly miss the commission and the people and staff involved, I am very pleased to be afforded a new challenge, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). This important committee is the primary transportation planning agency in the Madison area. The MPO was originally a part of the Dane County Regional Plan Commission. When that body was scheduled for dissolution in 1999, the City of Madison came forward to take responsibility for transportation planning and preserve the millions of Federal transportation dollars that are critical for our region. The MPO includes representatives from Madison and the bordering villages, cities and townships. It prepares the annual TIP, or Transportation Implementation Plan. A road improvement not included in the TIP has essentially no chance of gaining federal funds. Again, considering the importance of transportation planning to our district, I am very excited by this new appointment.

On Crimes of Opportunity

In many parts of Madison, we have seen a rise in “crimes of opportunity”. As the name implies, these are crimes that are planned when the criminal expects that there will be no witnesses and less security. In particular, we have had many crimes committed in our neighborhood parks (Wexford Park and Walnut Grove) that involved vandalism, drugs, and intimidation. In August, I will be organizing a meeting between apartment owners, businesses and other residents with our Police to discuss the problems and potential solutions. As soon as the date is set, I will be sending out the meeting date and time, and other information. We will also be discussing traffic problems, such as speeding arterial violations, and noise throughout our neighborhoods.

Keeping the Focus – Snow Removal

Now that temperatures have risen and the flowers are blooming, we can't forget the snow storm of March, 2007. As you may remember, I fielded many complaints about snow removal and problems many of our residents have had. These problems also affected school buses and public protection. After the storm, I went to Al Schumacher, the City Streets Superintendent to discuss the problems of servicing our neighborhoods. He agreed that the peripheral districts were not receiving the same level of service as the rest of the City and agreed to review the City's snow plowing procedures and adjust them to better serve our neighborhoods. I will be meeting with Al and other City Street Division personnel to discuss how to meet the needs of our residents adequately.

Regional Transit Authority

You may have heard much recently about the proposed Regional Transit Authority. In a nutshell, the Mayor and County Executive have authored a resolution supporting the creation of a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) for Dane County. The proposed RTA would have the ability to levy an additional 1/2% county sales tax to fund transportation improvements approved by the RTA. Furthermore, the proposed resolution identifies that commuter rail is the #1 priority for funding by the RTA and that the Mayor's proposed "trolley" is also a possibility. I support improving mass transit. I think that commuter rail is a viable option to bring people downtown and relieve traffic and parking congestion. I also think that we could greatly improve our Madison Metro Bus system with modest investments. However, based on my research and from input from my 9th District constituents, I do not support the funding for further planning or construction of a downtown trolley system. At this time I support further study of mass transit options for Dane County, but I do not support the RTA resolution as proposed by the Mayor of the City of Madison and the Dane County Executive. I would appreciate your input on this issue. Please feel free to contact me with your opinions and suggestions.

Madison Water Utility

Over the last year you have probably heard about the issues that have plagued the City Water Utility: manganese problems, poor communications among staff, and chlorine problems. Most recently you may have heard about the problems regarding the consultant hired by the City to help prepare a strategic plan and assist the City in solving its problems. In a nutshell, last year the City Water Utility Manager authorized the consultant to proceed to the implementation phase of the project without a contract and without authorization from the Water Utility Board or City Council. The work completed by the consultant, without authorization from the City Council was at a cost of more than \$125,000 to Madison taxpayers. The Madison City Council was made aware of this fact in June 2007 when we were asked to approve an extension to the consultant's contract to cover the work that they had already completed without authorization or a contract from the City. At its July 17, 2007 meeting the Common Council passed a resolution approving an extension of the consultant contract, contingent upon their providing a revised proposal as to how they will complete their work on time and on budget. I am deeply troubled, as are many of my fellow Council members, that this situation has occurred, given the fact that we have put the Water Utility Director on notice that we are concerned about the accountability of the Water Department. We will be reviewing the consultant's revised proposal at a future council meeting, and we will be monitoring the status of the Water Utility closely. Finally, I want to reassure you that, to the best of my knowledge, the problems associated with the City Water system do not affect the 9th District. Water Utility officials have assured me that our west side water is safe.

Mineral Point Road Improvements

Mineral Point Road is finally being improved! Starting on July 16th, 2007 and extending through October 2007, two lanes of Mineral Point Road will be removed and reconstructed. The innermost 2 lanes (plus the turning lanes) between Gammon Road and High Point Road will be

reconstructed. The outermost lanes (the bus lanes) will not be reconstructed this year - they will be reconstructed in 2008 (according to the City Engineering Department). Please take these improvements into consideration when you are traveling on the west side of Madison - it may be difficult to access businesses on Mineral Point Road. Also, these improvements may increase traffic, and traffic related problems on Tree Lane, Old Sauk Road, and other local streets. Please take this into account when you are making your travel plans.