

May/June, 2005

Greetings from your Alder,

Spring has arrived again and has brought its annual new beginnings. The spring rains have brought forth flowers and new growth. The first Tuesday in April has brought forth the annual spring elections, including elections for all 20 aldermanic seats. Now that the dust has settled, we know that we have six new members on the Common Council, replacing six alders who chose not to run for re-election. Six incumbent alders had opponents but were re-elected. Eight incumbent alders (including me) ran unopposed for re-election. I am pleased and honored to serve as your alder for two more years. Alder Paul Van Rooy, from the 18th district, was elected as President of the Council this year. Alder Santiago Rosas, from the 18th district, was elected president pro-tem. Both are moderate, reasonable individuals, and I look forward to working with them.

I am pleased that the mayor reappointed me to all of the committees that I have been serving on over the past two years. I will continue to serve on the Park Commission, Public Safety Review Board, and Commission on People with Disabilities. Additionally, the mayor has appointed me to the Pedestrian Bicycle Motor Vehicle Commission. I also serve on several sub-committees and task forces appointed by these bodies. Furthermore, Alder Van Rooy has re-appointed me to serve on the Common Council Organizational Committee for the next year.

Once again, I walked along with the Police Department's Special Events team at the 2005 Mifflin Street Block Party. This year, the party organizers moved the event ahead one week (to April 31) at the insistence of party organizers, which created some logistical problems. Since the Police Department had been planning for a May 7th event, they had to rework their security plan. The revised plan resulted in a change in staffing, and a resulting increase in costs. They also had to plan for a potential second event (on May 7th), since they had no guarantee that there would be only one party. This year's party had fewer attendees than last year, due to cold and wet weather. However, there were more arrests than last year, mostly due to alcohol related offences. There were numerous instances of public urination, underage drinking, and intoxication to the point of incapacitation. Many individuals (including juvenals) were taken to the detoxification facility for treatment. Police officials commented on how they were overwhelmed with the number of offenses that they witnessed. They were able to cite only a fraction of those who broke the law. Since this year's party was held one week earlier than planned, it will likely cost city taxpayers about \$100,000 more than last year. Furthermore, since the Police Department (and Sheriff's Department) allocated more than 100 officers to keep this event safe, there were fewer officers patrolling other districts in the City. I continue to believe that the Mifflin Street Block Party is a series of large private parties that has public security provided at public expense. Some officials claim that this event was a "success" since no one was seriously hurt and that there was not a riot or serious public or private property damage. I think that we were very fortunate that we averted a serious event or injury this year.

Because of the behavior exhibited at the Mifflin Street Block Party and Halloween, I have introduced a proposed “keg ordinance” that would regulate the sale and use of kegs of beer at private parties in residential districts. My proposed ordinance change will be discussed at the Public Safety Review Board, Alcohol License Review Board, and City Council over the next several months. I would like to know how you feel about Mifflin and Halloween, and what we can do to control them.

As you are probably aware, the City is considering modifying its lobbying ordinance. There are proposals that are currently being discussed that will clarify the definition of lobbyist, expand the list of individuals who need to register as a lobbyist, and provide better education to help individuals and groups comply with the spirit of the law. The intent of the law is to provide a disclosure of anyone who is paid to influence the decisions that the City Council makes. Just before the spring election, the Council referred the proposed back to the Common Council Organizational Committee for further discussion, particularly with the new alders. Since I am on the CCOC, and will be taking a lead role in this process, I would appreciate your thoughts on this issue.

Recently, the Common Council debated and approved a resolution allowing illegal aliens the opportunity to apply for low interest loans through the City’s Community Development Block Grant Authority to help purchase homes. I opposed this resolution, and voted against it. I am unmoved by the argument that since the federal government approves, and the State of Wisconsin approves, the City should approve as well. Three wrongs don’t make a right. I cannot support the right of an illegal alien to compete with legal residents for funds to promote home ownership. I have received significant feedback on this subject. All but one person who contacted me (mostly from the 9th district - some city-wide) expressed their strong opposition to this program. Additionally, some supporters of this program have expressed a desire to allow illegal aliens to vote in local election. I strongly oppose this proposal as well. I would like your opinions of this subject.

Recently, the Park Commission received a request from the environmental committee of Progressive Dane requesting that we convert the Glenway Golf Course to an organic (pesticide free) facility. Progressive Dane wanted to demonstrate how a golf course could operate without pesticides. I opposed this effort, as did the Park Commission - the request was denied by a unanimous vote. Park staff, golf course staff, golf course users, and commission members expressed opposition to this proposal. Our parks and golf course staff are leaders in using integrated pest management techniques. They use non-pesticide methods where ever possible, and only use pesticides when other methods will not work. When they use pesticides, they use the least toxic ones in the least invasive manner. Eliminating pesticide use from golf courses would result in a deterioration of the courses, and a reduction in their use. This in turn, would result in a loss of revenue, a potential operational subsidy to keep the course open, or a probable conversion of the golf course to another use.

Madison Park Department staff only use pesticides on organized athletic facilities, such as golf courses, baseball diamonds, soccer fields, and other areas that required a

higher level of pest control, and have an informed consent for their use. These facilities are only used by participants who know that pesticides may be used to control pests. No pesticides are used on neighborhood parks, area parks, or general park lands used by the majority of Madison's park users.

Thanks to all of you who have called or e-mailed me with your comments or questions. Please feel free to contact me with questions, and concerns at:

E-Mail: district9@cityofmadison.com (please note my new e-mail address!)
Phone: 829-3425