

Looking Back and Looking Forward

The New Year lends itself to reflection, so I'll take a minute to reflect on some of the important issues that have come before the City Council this last year, and what we will see in 2008.

Water

The quality and security of our drinking water was a prominent issue in 2007. We saw the abandonment of Well #3 because of high levels of carbon tetrachloride, and we saw some significant changes in the way the Water Utility interacts with the public. While there's more to do, particularly on water conservation, I think we're headed in the right direction. In 2008, we'll hire a new general manager for the Water Utility and continue to improve communication with the public. We'll also look at a more permanent solution to the manganese issue, and how and where we put new wells.

Public Safety

Towards the end of 2007, we started a community-wide conversation about safety and how to address neighborhood quality of life. This discussion became the centerpiece of the budget debate. The Council struggled to balance "police, prevention and pocketbooks." The last is as important as the first two, and my vote reflected a balance among the three. I'm hopeful that the outcome of those discussions and the budget will be not only to police more, but also to police smarter.

I've also been working recently with the folks at East High School to improve safety and lessen some of the impact on the neighborhoods. I've been very encouraged by these discussions, and I hope to continue them.

Snow

What a winter it's been! I and other Eastside alders are working with City staff to figure out better ways to address snow removal, parked cars, and the impact that snow emergencies have on all our lives. We've already moved some proposals forward – three downtown parks lots (including Burr Jones) are available for off-street parking during snow emergencies, for example. Expect to see a few more changes in 2008.

Community Garden?

There are discussions going on about putting a community garden in Demetral Park behind Deon's. Pending soil testing, I think this is a great idea. If you're interested, the Parks and Gardens Committee of the Emerson East Neighborhood Association is working on this and would love your help. Our fearless co-chair, Paul, or I can put you in touch with them.

This is only a partial list, of course. My day-to-day work as an alder is filled with all sorts of interesting things. And I'm sure there are other things on your list. As always, your concerns and ideas are of great interest to me. I look forward to seeing you around the neighborhood.

Stay warm and be well –
Satya