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alder larry palm district 15 alder reports

Improving Neighborhood Communications

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On January 14, I invited District 15 community leaders to an all-district forum to discuss issues and share concerns and solutions.

This was one of the first times many of the leaders of interconnected neighborhoods have gotten together in this fashion. In addition, representatives of the East Isthmus Planning Council (EINPC), the North and East Police Districts and the Planning Unit's Neighborhood Support Service were present.

The discussion was lively and broad. While I didn't know what to expect from this initial meeting, I am excited about the positive feedback and results that I have received. Two of the major concerns ex-



pressed by participants were communication (between each other and with City representatives) and training.

First, I hope publishing a semi-regular newsletter will help bridge some connection to your Alder.

Second, I hope to work with EINPC and the City's Neighborhood Support specialists to offer more training to neighborhood activists. For instance, many neighborhood newsletter editors were present and wanted to know more about how other neighborhoods manage their publications.

Thank you to all who attended the meeting. I look forward to seeing you again!

City Policy Initiative: Sick Leave



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In the next few weeks, the Madison Common Council will be discussing the sick leave proposal. Basically, the ordinance will require companies that operate in Madison to provide a certain number of sick days a year to all employees. The proposal would exempt small businesses, new(er) employees, those that currently have more sick leave than required, and organizations that are covered under collective bargaining. The details can be found on the City's Legistar website (must use Internet Explorer - sorry!) at:

<http://legistar.cityofmadison.com/DetailReport/?key=2841>.

For more information about the reasons for supporting sick leave, you can look at the local Healthy Families website at: www.healthyfamiliesmadison.org.

Information from the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce is available at: www.greatermadisonchamber.com/

2006 City Budget Adopted

While we didn't quite make it to 4.1%, this year's City of Madison budget and the corresponding taxing authorities (state, school district, county and MATC) gave most people a break this year. Some people have seen their taxes go down, while others - like myself - have seen more modest increases.



Mayor Cieslewicz oversees one of the three budget meetings for 2006.

District 15 residents have always expressed concern about the City's increasing reliance on property taxes to pay for its operations. Unfortunately, this burden most directly affects people who live on fixed incomes or have purchased a home but have not seen a corresponding increase in their wages.

Working through the budget is quite difficult. While this year's tax increase was less than past years, we did budget to spend significantly more! While I hate to add fees to all sorts of items (parking fines and building permits took the biggest increases), my goal was to stop our use of property taxes to fund our programs.

One proposal I thought was pretty good was funding Overture Center with revenue from the Room Tax. This would have saved Madison

tax payers \$400,000! We fund Monona Terrace operations in much the same way, given that both are components of our greater Madison community and draw people from all around the nation (and world) to Madison.

Unfortunately, this effort did not pass.

One effort that did pass was adding resources to Metro - an additional \$720,000 over the Mayor's request. I know from my conversations with many residents in our district that there is wide concern about Metro's operations. I believe this money should have been set aside and provided to Metro only when they met certain operational standards set by the Common Council.

I also supported adding police officers and an engineer to continue the successful work of the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program, continuing library hours at Central on Sundays (a resource used by residents of all parts of the city), and an additional planner to assist in developing neighborhood plans.

City Budget and Neighborhood Planning Councils

A significant number of budget contacts were specifically about changes to the Neighborhood Planning Council funding (the infamous Budget Amendment #41). My intent in supporting this budget amendment was to move the funding from the Office of Community Services to the Planning Unit - both part of the Department of Planning and Development. At the time, we made this budget amendment to simplify things in the 2006 City budget.

Unfortunately, the language in the submitted budget (drafted by the Comptroller's Office) did create quite a stir. Long story short - this



Planning Councils are an integral part of neighborhood associations.

item has been referred to a future meeting of the Common Council, after the Planning and Development staff have written a report about the plan. This is a positive step that will provide all residents of District 15 an opportunity to talk about this issue.

Most residents in District 15 are a part of the East Isthmus Neighborhood Planning Council (EINPC), except the Lake Edge Neighborhood (sorry!). Take a look at their website at <http://eastisthmus.org/>. Regardless of how the City funds planning councils, you should consider getting more involved with EINPC and, of course, your local neighborhood association!



Ald. Larry Palm inadvertently drew some laughs when he told them the instructions he took from his constituents on the east side: "I'd like you to stop putting your hand in my pocket." The laughs increased when he said those instructions came from "an old lady." - WSJ 11/18/05

Wisconsin & Southern Railroad and Royster-Clark Corporation

Over the years, the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad (WSOR) and the Royster-Clark fertilizer plant on Cottage Grove Road have been a benefit and a concern to residents in the area.

While Royster-Clark provides employment for many Eastside families, many others are concerned about the environment, noise and safety.

Through Federal policies, Wisconsin & Southern Railroad has the ability to operate on railroad tracks at any hour of the day. While Royster-Clark does not accept deliveries after 7:00 p.m., WSOR continues to make deliveries



Royster-Clark's only plant in Wisconsin is located on Cottage Grove Road.

whenever they want. Late night deliveries disturb working families, seniors and children.

I recently sent a survey to over 500 households near the Royster-Clark plant to determine their current concerns and priorities. (This survey is also available on the District 15 website at www.cityofmadison.com/council/district15.)

I will then work with plant managers to put together a plan that the neighborhood can use to gauge progress. We'll also keep pressure on Wisconsin & Southern to continue making deliveries exclusively during the day in order to reduce disturbances to the neighborhood and residents.

Eastmorland Park Planning Underway

Residents near Eastmorland Park, behind Woodman's on Milwaukee Street, have been meeting to discuss the future of this park. City Park Superintendent Jim Morgan has been leading a process to determine what the community would like to see happen in the green-space.

The park, nearly fifty years old, has not had a 'plan' for some time. Playground equipment,

paths, "no-mow" areas, and other environmental concerns have not been studied in a comprehensive manner.

All concerned residents are invited to attend the planning session. The next session is scheduled for Thursday, March 23, 2006, at 7:00 p.m. in the Schenk Elementary School cafeteria, 230 Schenk Street.

Eken Park Safety Committee

Recently, the North District police and the Eken Park Neighborhood Association have been working through local neighborhood policing issues.



of the neighborhood. Therefore, the Safety Committee has been working to inform residents about what to do when they see negative behavior.

Eken Park has an active Safety Committee, chaired by resident Jim Wold, that engages the police on a number of issues. In the past, the neighborhood has been very aggressive on a North Street patrol near Red Letter News. This has subsequently been expanded to include more of E. Washington Avenue during weekend nights in the summer. Now, the residents are concerned about specific "drug houses" that might pose a threat to the interest

The North District has encouraged neighborhood residents to bring anything of concern to their attention, either by calling 9-1-1 or 255.2345, the non-emergency number. I mailed a letter to affected residents letting them know about the neighborhood concerns and providing a "What to Do" flyer. If you would like a copy of the flyer, you can find it on the District 15 website: www.cityofmadison.com/council/District15/ekenpark/flyer15.pdf.



Your opinion counts:

Please share your ideas and comments with me.

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No Surprise: Traffic Needs to Slow Down!

As expected when I took office in April, traffic issues have been my number one priority. Whether it is the speed and volume of moving vehicles or where we should park them when they are no longer on the go, residents have strong opinions about traffic.



Please slow down and respect the neighborhood you're traveling through.

Sometimes there is very little I can do to change a specific situation. However, I have been working to host "street-level" meetings with those who live there to see if we can come up with a common solution. While there are many vocal residents, there are many residents who like it - whatever "it" may be - just the way it is.

That's why I ask you one simple favor: Please **SLOW DOWN** when you drive in Madison.

Neighborhood streets are generally posted at 25 miles per hour. I know many of us are busy and are rushing to go some place, but that is when we are most dangerous behind the wheel.

Even relatively calm streets, such as Schenk Street in front of Schenk and Whitehorse Schools, can have an average daily volume of over 2,400 vehicles. Combined with speed, this can create a dangerous interaction between moving vehicles and pedestrians.

During one of the police department's efforts to enforce the speed limit, they found out how high the number of *residents* who speed on their own neighborhood streets is. Please do not be one of them, and we'll all be safer.