

Saint Paul Ward 5 Update

Vol. 6
December 2012

Wishing you a wonderful holiday season and a Happy New Year!

From Your Ward 5 Council Office:

Amy, Kim & Donna

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[St. Paul City keeps budget flat at \\$501 million for '13](#) (Pioneer Press)

[2012 Re-Opening of the Union Depot - video](#)

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2013 Budget Approved

The Saint Paul City Council voted unanimously to pass the 2013 budget last week. The budget reflects Saint Paul's core values of safety and livability and continues to build a strong foundation for the future. In Ward 5, the Payne-Phalen neighborhood's Wilder Recreation Center (which operates as City Academy charter school during the day) will see a permanent expansion of evening hours and staff. The McDonough and Conway Rec Centers partnering proposal will be on-hold for at least six months while the city conducts a community process on the matter (read below for more on this). The Police Department will fill vacant officer positions, making our streets safer. Como Zoo and Conservatory expansions are also planned. The budget results in a 1.9% increase in the levy, although most homeowners will see their taxes go down this year. Details on the budget can be found online at www.stpaul.gov/budget.

Railroad Island Holiday Party and Food Drive

The Railroad Island neighborhood, nestled in the southeast corner of Ward 5, is an area I have chosen to spotlight in my first term in office. The neighborhood, home to St. Paul favorites including Morelli's Market, Yarusso Bros. Italian Restaurant, La Palma Mercado and Swede Hallow Park has incredible promise as well as high needs. As part of the spotlight initiative, my office has supported the work of the local District Council's citizen-led Railroad Island Task Force. On December 13, Task Force members, community partners and neighbors gathered to celebrate the holiday season at Yarusso's and collected canned food to support families served by the neighborhood-based nonprofit, Merrick Community Services. A special thank you this holiday season to the incredible volunteers on the Railroad Island Task Force for working to make this community a great place to live.



Photo taken at Yarusso's. From left: Linda Arneson (Chair, Railroad Island Task Force), Ken Iosso (Aide to Commissioner Ortega), Amy Brendmoen (City Council), Dan Rodriguez (Merrick)

McDonough Rec Center in the 2013 Budget

The 2013 budget includes a plan to re-partner two Saint Paul Rec Centers, including Ward 5's McDonough Rec, located in the McDonough Homes public housing development in the North End. The other is Conway Rec Center on the East Side. I have heard from many residents expressing concern about the proposal and I share your concerns. I am working with the Mayor and the Parks and Recreation Department to ensure that recreation services at McDonough not only remain available, but provide a better service to the community.

The city seeks non-profit partners to offer services in existing city-owned facilities. Rather than selling or demolishing centers, re-partnering allows the city to remain at the helm to ensure that the community continues to benefit from public spaces and beneficial youth programming.

On a monthly basis, I hold Community Office Hours at McDonough Rec Center to meet with constituents. I have witnessed first-hand the high demand for rec programming in this space. Many area youth benefit from a place to safely gather, learn and play and develop positive relationships with quality staff. Since the Mayor's budget was announced, I have been clear in my priority that any partner selected must result in an

Upcoming Events

[District 6 and District 10 Boundary Community Meeting](#), 1/9

Neighborhood Honor Roll, 1/25
(Contact your District Council)

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ultimate improvement, not abandonment, of these vital community services.

Working with Mayor Coleman and Council President Lantry, we have successfully amended the proposal to include a six-month hold on re-partnering the sites until the City completes a thorough community input process. For McDonough Rec Center, this process must include collaboration with the Public Housing Authority (PHA), key service providers, residents of McDonough Homes and members of the surrounding community.

I am committed to bringing your voice to this important discussion. You can contact me with your thoughts at ward5@ci.stpaul.mn.us or 651-266-8650.

Neighborhood Representation in the District Councils

Saint Paul's District Council system was established in 1975 as a citizen participation process. The mission of this system is to facilitate effective, informed, and representative community participation in local governance issues. Today, the 17 District Councils offer a neighborhood perspective on matters that come before the city and at times other governing entities. The existing District Councils were organized based on neighborhood geography, focusing on common community interests. The system is a unique model of civic engagement and I think we are fortunate to have a system in which citizen participation is embedded in to the city process. Saint Paul's success is bolstered by the ability of citizens to be a part of the decision making that affects their lives.

District 6 Planning Council serves Saint Paul's North End, as well as the South Como neighborhood. South Como is located west of Dale Street and South of Maryland Avenue. It shares a border with Como Community Council (District 10) and contains about 1,200 households. Como Park Senior High School and Calvary Cemetery are both located in South Como, as well as a number of businesses along Front Avenue and on the west side of Dale Street.

Since taking office nearly one year ago, I have heard from a number of South Como residents that the issues most relevant to them are addressed more often and directly by the Como Community Council. South Como Community members have raised this issue many times over the past 20 years, but there been no formal response to their request. In keeping with the overall mission of the District Councils, I have agreed to raise the issue of the District boundaries between District 6 and District 10. Both District Councils have declined to voluntarily change the boundary lines, so the next step was to request that the City of Saint Paul's Planning and Economic Development department (PED) study the issue. The PED studied the boundary question and concluded that it would be appropriate to convene a meeting where both District Councils and the PED could hear from the affected community members directly.

Therefore, in partnership with District 6 and 10, the PED is holding a community meeting on **Wednesday, January 9, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. at Blackbear Crossings on the Lake**. All residents of District 6 and District 10 are invited. Residents of South Como will receive a mailed post card from the City of Saint Paul notifying them of the meeting. For anyone who cannot make it on January 9, the City has an online forum in which citizens can post comments on the issue at www.stpaul.gov/open. Testimony at the hearing and in the online forum will be considered as the City develops a recommendation on the boundary.

It is my hope that through this process residents engage in a positive and productive conversation about civic participation and that ultimately, the District Council boundary will best reflect each community's sense of place.

Community Office Hours

I am holding office hours in the community on a weekly basis for constituents to conveniently drop-in to discuss neighborhood and city-wide issues. Thanks to those who have already taken the time to visit with me. To discuss your issue, please stop by and visit me the below times and locations. If you require a meeting lasting longer than 10-15 minutes, please contact my office to schedule an appointment.

- **Rice Street Public Library**--First Monday of the month, 4:30-6 p.m.
- **McDonough Recreation Center**--Second Monday of the month, 4:30-6 p.m.
- **North Dale Recreation Center**--Third Tuesday of the month, 4:30-6 p.m.
- **Wilder Recreation Center/City Academy**--Fourth Tuesday of the month, 4:30-6 p.m. (*CANCELLED on December 25*)

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