



The Lexington-Hamline Community Council

THE EAVESDROPPER

The bridge between your home and your neighborhood

Vol. XXXIV

St. Paul January, 2007

No. I

Community Calendar

Tot Time at Dunning

Inside in the Multipurpose Room
Wed 9:30-11:30am

Eavesdropper Deadline

Wed, January 10

Community Meeting on the Unification of District Council 13

Tues, January 16, 7pm

St. Paul District Council 2006 Volunteer Awards Night

Fri, January 19, 5:30pm
(see additional information inside)

Executive Committee Meeting

Mon, January 22, 7pm

Board Meeting

Tues, January 29, 7pm

Community Meeting on Lex-Ham Scattered-Site Housing

Mon, February 5, 7pm

Community Meeting on the Unification of District Council 13

Meeting Time:

**Tuesday, January 16, 2007
Dunning Rec Center, 7pm**

As many of you know, the St. Paul City Council unanimously passed a resolution in December to create a unified District Council 13 out of Lex-Ham, Snell Ham and Merriam Park. (See the text of the resolution reprinted below.) This means the end of a 30-year-long arrangement unique in the district council system, by which three small neighborhood organizations separately tended their own ends of the district.

We want to assure you that this does not mean the end of Lex-Ham. Lex-Ham was founded before the district council system was even created, and we will continue as a neighborhood organization even if we lose the status of district representative. We were, in fact, one of the model organizations that the district council system was based on.

But the City Council has asked the three councils in District 13 to work out the details of our future arrangement. That means that we need to decide what matters most about Lex-Ham in order to form a plan for what we want to keep doing on our own, what we want to pass on to District 13, and what role we want Lex-Ham to play in the larger District 13 organization.

We invite you all to a community meeting on Tuesday, January 16, at 7pm. We want this to be a listening session, where

you have the opportunity to speak your mind about the direction you want Lex-Ham to head in. You are welcome to come to blow off steam, or to offer your legal or political expertise, or to give us your perspective as a new or long-time resident, or just to find out what's going on.

We hope to see you there!

Text of the December 6, 2006 resolution of the Saint Paul City Council, passed by unanimous vote:

RESOLUTION CITY OF SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA

Resolution Addressing Saint Paul District Council 13 Organization and Funding

WHEREAS, in 2003 and 2004 the City of Saint Paul worked with all of the City's district councils to redefine the funding formula to better meet the needs of the City's citizens by more equitably apportioning City funds among the City's 17 district councils; and

WHEREAS, District Council 13 is comprised of three distinct community councils: Lexington-Hamline Community Council, Snelling-Hamline Community Council and Merriam Park Community Council; and

Who are we?

The Lex-Ham neighborhood in St. Paul is bounded by University Avenue, Lexington Parkway, Summit and Hamline Avenues. Since the Lexington-Hamline Community Council was established in 1969, it has been the cornerstone for organizing and serving the 3,000 residents living in this neighborhood. The Council's goal is to strengthen the neighborhood and to continue to build a sense of pride and confidence in the community through a wide variety of activities and services ranging from cooperative home maintenance, crime prevention, energy conservation and recreational programs.

Editorial Guidelines

The Eavesdropper is delivered monthly to every home and business in the neighborhood. Notices and articles should be submitted in electronic Word format to lexham@lexham.org. Please keep submissions to a length of 150 words or fewer. For other guidance, contact the Lex-Ham office. Eavesdropper reserves the right to refuse any submission.

Submission Deadlines

Articles for the January issue must be submitted by Wednesday, January 10th. Please keep entries short, so we can include all of them!

Eavesdropper Volunteer Staff

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WHEREAS, the community councils are not in agreement that the current funding formula is fair and equitable;

WHEREAS; historically, funding within District Council 13 has taken into account not just the population of the individual community councils, but also the capacity of the community council organization to continue their mission; and

WHEREAS, in the current environment of significant fiscal constraint, Merriam Park Community Council has expressed deep concern to other community and district councils and the City about its ability to continue to manage effectively; and

WHEREAS, Council File #06-759, a resolution which establishes a new district council (District 18) comprised of only Merriam Park Community Council, was an attempt to rectify this ongoing structural problem with District 13; and

WHEREAS, the idea of creating an additional district council (District 18) is fraught with sufficient difficulties and complications to make it an unviable solution; and

WHEREAS, the introduction of this resolution (Council File #06-759) did provide the impetus for the City to request that the three community councils comprising District Council 13 meet to see if an arrangement could be reached among the three to address the concerns already brought forward by Merriam Park, and address additional concerns that Lexington-Hamline or Snelling-Hamline brought forward; and

WHEREAS, the City Council provided staff to support and convene the discussions of these community councils and there have

been three lengthy meetings on November 3, November 13, and December 4; and

WHEREAS, on November 15, the City Council laid this resolution over to allow additional time for the group to come to consensus by December 4; and

WHEREAS, the three community councils have not been able to reach agreement on a joint statement to the City Council by the City Council deadline; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul City Council hereby directs that all 2007 City funding for Lexington-Hamline Community Council, Snelling-Hamline Community Council and Merriam Park Community Council not be released, and shall instead be placed into a contingency fund for District 13; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the City Council directs that 2007 funds be made available to District 13, as a singular entity, operating under a single board with its own bylaws; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the City Council directs that the Board of Directors of the newly constituted District Council 13 shall be selected (and subsequently elected) according to a grid system based on population with the areas represented by Lexington-Hamline and Snelling-Hamline having at least one additional representative to be elected at large from each of their districts, and additional representation for those areas shall be negotiated in the development of the bylaws for District 13; and

RESOLVED, that the City Council directs Planning and Economic Development to make available for January 2007 a pro-rated amount of annual funds, using 2006 funding formulas and levels, for

each of the three community councils; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the City Council requests a report from these community councils on February 7, 2007 which 1) indicates the governing board structure; 2) provides the City Council with a draft of the organization's bylaws; and 3) provides the City with an application for funds which includes a plan for the allocation of funds within the district.

Celebrating St. Paul's District Councils 2006 Volunteer Awards Night

You and your guest are cordially invited to join us in honoring the "Neighborhood Honor Roll - Outstanding Volunteers of 2006" and in celebrating their contributions to the St. Paul District Council System - a national model for citizen participation in civic affairs.

Friday, January 19, 2007

5:30 p.m. - 7:30pm

University of St. Thomas -

Binz Refectory

2115 Summit Avenue

St. Paul, Minnesota

City Council President Kathy Lantry
Will recognize Honor Roll Recipients
for 2006

Guest Speaker: Bob Kessler, St. Paul
Director of L.I.E.P.
"My Perspective on District Councils and
Volunteers Since 1973"

Musical Entertainment and
Complimentary Hors D'oeuvres Provided
\$15 in advance, \$20 at the door - Casual
Attire

Please RSVP to: District 16
Planning Council By Friday, January 12,
2007, 860 St. Clair Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105.

For additional information contact
651-222-1222.

The 2007 Board of Directors

Executive Committee
Chris Wood , President
Barb Gunther, President-elect
Karen Minge, Treasurer
Paul Sherburne, Secretary
Laura Nevitt, Past President

Directors
Julie New-Landrum
Jamie Parker
Bill Bush
Denise Fosse
Amy Caron
Craig Lindeke

Executive Director
Sarah Kidwell

Community Meeting on Lex-Ham Scattered Site Housing

Meeting Time:

Monday, February 5, 2007

Dunning Rec Center, 7pm

In 1985, Lex-Ham acquired 7 single-family homes that had been administered under a HUD scattered-site affordable housing program. We took on the ownership and management of these homes because HUD had decided to shed these properties, and we wanted to preserve affordable housing in the neighborhood, and we wanted to prevent the demolition of these homes or their transference into uncertain hands.

Twenty years later, our affordable housing project has reached a turning point. In May of 2005, the Lex-Ham board began a thorough review of the condition of the houses and their finances. We discovered that there has been significant mismanagement of the properties, that there are unmet

maintenance needs, and that our current financial model is not sustainable. In October of this year we fired our management company and hired another. We also began discussions with our public-sector lenders about the steps that we can take to restore the quality of these houses and to place them on a firm financial footing.

Our lenders, and other experts, have advised us that the best course of action begins with the sale of one of more of our currently vacant homes in order to finance the repair and rehabilitation of the others. Beyond that, we have many decisions to make, including whether we want to continue to manage an affordable housing program; whether to sell all or a majority of the houses; how to provide for the fair treatment of any current tenants in any sale; whether we want to preserve some element of affordable housing in

any sale we might make; and how we might want to condition any sale to ensure a final disposition of the properties that is most beneficial to the neighborhood.

We need to make these decisions as soon as we can. Our lenders (led by the HRA as the City's public housing arm) require us to submit a plan of action before allowing us to sell any property or to otherwise raise the rehabilitation financing that these homes badly need.

At the community meeting, the board will present a draft action plan that has been developed by our working group. We invite you to become involved in this process, either by contacting us now or by attending our community meeting on Monday, February 5, 2007, Dunning Rec Center, at 7pm.

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