

# District 10 Community Council News

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Your Neighborhood News

Summer 2009

## Lexington-Larpenteur Ad Hoc Committee

Ted Sheu Council Vice-Chair

District 10's Board has created an Ad Hoc Committee to address the Lexington-Larpenteur Node Study and a redevelopment proposal by Paster Enterprises.

In early 2008, the City of St. Paul commissioned the Node Study to create a design for future redevelopment of the Lexington/Larpenteur intersection. The Node Study was in large part a response to a dispute between MGM Liquor and neighboring residents regarding MGM's removal of an alleyway fence behind certain residential homes on California Avenue, which MGM has purchased. Neighbors have expressed concerns about any commercial development along California.

Earlier this year, Paster Enterprises presented a redevelopment plan that included the construction of a new commercial building at the site currently occupied by Flowerama, Ted's Bar, and a couple of residential houses across Lexington from MGM's properties. Neighbors have expressed concerns about Paster's plans, as well as more general concerns about commercial redevelopment, traffic, congestion, and safety at this important entrance to Como Park. In response to neighbors' concerns, Paster has revised his plans to avoid any commercial expansion onto California Avenue. Neighbors' concerns of traffic, congestion, ingress and egress, and other quality of life matters remain as any redevelopment in this area is contemplated. Further, neighbors have requested changes to the Node Study as it was presented in April of this year.

The Ad Hoc Committee will address these difficult issues by engaging community members, City officials, MGM, and Paster, while developing a vision for the Lexington/Larpenteur, California area. With community input, the Ad Hoc Committee will present recommendations to District 10 regarding the Node Study and Paster's redevelopment plans. All interested community members should attend and participate in upcoming Ad Hoc Committee meetings. Please contact Barb Frick ([barb.frick@comopark.org](mailto:barb.frick@comopark.org)) or Leah Mesic ([leah.mesic@gmail.com](mailto:leah.mesic@gmail.com)) for more information.

**More on this story on page 2**



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## Staff

Rhonda DeBough

## Contact Info

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Office Hours: 10:00 to 12:00

Member email addresses are:

**[firstname.lastname@comopark.org](mailto:firstname.lastname@comopark.org)**

## National Night Out 2009

National Night Out 2009 is scheduled for Tuesday, August 4.

If you are interested in planning an event (such as a block party) for National Night out, and would like assistance in doing so, contact: Pam McCreary at: 651-266-5455 or by email: [pam.mccreary@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:pam.mccreary@ci.stpaul.mn.us)

District 10's community organizer, Rhonda, can also assist you; her contact info is: 644-3889 or by email: [District10@comopark.org](mailto:District10@comopark.org)

Events can be held daytime, afternoon, or evening. Whatever works for you and your neighborhood.

Visit District 10's website anytime for current issues and dates/times of neighborhood events.

**[www.comopark.org](http://www.comopark.org)**

## MGM Lawsuit Decision Issued

Edward (Ted) Sheu

On June 2, 2009, the Minnesota Court of Appeals issued a decision involving the City of St. Paul's legal dispute with MGM Liquor. In late 2007, the City brought ordinance violations against MGM based on the removal of an alleyway fence and the creation of access to and from the alley onto Lexington Parkway. MGM prevailed in the lower court by having the City's suit dismissed, and the City appealed. The Court of Appeals ruled that the lower court should not have dismissed the City's charges because it was unclear whether all affected property owners had consented to substitute screening for the fence and because MGM had not attempted to present a site plan to the City regarding the alleyway access. The Court's ruling has left the City free to recommence its legal action against MGM.

The MGM decision adds complexity to the ongoing Lexington-Larpenteur Node Study and to the scope of District 10's Ad Hoc Committee created to address the neighborhood's concerns over this important northern entrance to Como Park. Over the next several months, District 10 will be working with neighbors, business owners, and City officials to address the competing interests and concerns of redevelopment and land use in the Lexington-Larpenteur California area.

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### District 10 Council Giving Form 2009

I would like to support my non-profit neighborhood council with the following tax-deductible donation:

\$15    \$25    \$50    \$100  
 Other Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you*

## The Environment Committee has been busy this spring.

Mike MacDonald, Environment Committee chair

\*Joined local residents in the annual St. Paul Parks Clean-up in April.

\*Hosted a three-part lecture series. Topics included home energy efficiency, invasive buckthorn, and hosta care. We look forward to planning another series next year.

\*Informed District 10 residents about an energy efficiency program that will help them improve the efficiency of their homes. Participants are asked to track their current energy usage, make some improvements to their home, and then track their energy usage again. The data collected will help demonstrate how these improvements reduce our carbon footprint.

\*Hosted two rainbarrel workshops again this spring. Forty-three people took home 45 rainbarrels, which will reduce the amount of storm water runoff going into Como Lake by 2,000 gallons every rainstorm. By eliminating the volume of storm water runoff to the lake, we reduce the amount of excess nutrients, trash, and pollution going into the lake.

\*Partnered with Capitol Region Watershed District, Como Park Alliance, Friends of the Mississippi River, Como Woodland Advisory Committee, and St. Paul Parks and Recreation Department to remove trash from the lake and lakeshore. This event included the Environment Committee's annual Tree Trek, a tour of historical park features, and a neighborhood raingarden tour.

\*Working to restore and maintain the native plant garden just north of the Pavilion.

The Environment Committee meets at 7pm on the third Wednesday of each month at the Como Streetcar Station, and is open to the public. Please come to a meeting or contact: [mike@comopark.org](mailto:mike@comopark.org) for more information.

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## Emerald Ash Borers have arrived and threaten ash trees.

Deb Robinson, volunteer member on the city's Tree Advisory Panel

On April 7, an Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) infestation was discovered just south of Lacrosse Wisconsin and we were told to get ready for an EAB invasion of SE Minnesota. Then the mid-May surprise: Over 60 ash trees in the southern area of the St. Anthony Park neighborhood (just 3 miles East of Como Park) were found to be dead or dying from an EAB infestation that had gone undetected for several years.

Much has been written in the press regarding this threat to our ash trees, but the situation is changing daily. Visit the St. Paul City website to keep up with the latest EAB information and to address your EAB questions. What is Emerald Ash Borer? How might I know if a tree is infested with EAB? What should I do if a tree is infested with EAB? The St. Paul City's website can answer many of your questions, and there are links to the other agencies that are partnering with **St. Paul's Forestry Department: <http://www.stpaul.gov/index.aspx?NID=2495>**  
**Contact by phone: 651-632-5129.**

There is an EAB Insecticide Bulletin available at: <http://www.emeraldashborer.info/>. If you decide to go with insecticidal protection for your ash tree, make sure you use a reputable tree service.

A third of the trees growing on St. Paul's city boulevards and in our city parks are ash trees – let's do all we can to stop the spread of the invasive Emerald Ash Borer and help save our urban forest canopy.

## Neighborhood Safety Corner

Karl Koch committee member

The District 10 Neighborhood Safety Committee meets at 7:00 pm, first Monday of every month at the North Dale Community Center. These committee meetings are open to the public. Recently a St. Paul Police Officer spent some time talking with the Neighborhood Safety Committee. She communicated that the District 10 crime rate is relatively low compared to the rest of St. Paul. However, she also stated that 60% of the crimes in District 10 are unforced entries. These represent crimes of opportunity. Many crimes of opportunity can be prevented by simple security steps taken by property owners.

### The officer passed on several security tips, including:

- Make sure you have functioning motion sensor lights. And ensure the bulbs cannot be reached from the ground.
- Ensure bushes and trees are landscaped in such a way as not to allow coverage for would be burglars.
- Lock your home and garage, even if you go out only for a short time. Many burglars enter your property through an unlocked door or window.
- Record serial and model numbers of high priced items. Occasionally stolen property is discovered by local pawn shops based on these records.
- Utilize the city's non-emergency phone number, 651-291-1111, for suspicious activity. However, do not hesitate to call 911 in any emergency.

### Garages present special challenges for security. Here are some tips for keeping your garage secure:

- If you frost or cover your garage windows, burglars won't be able to tell if your car is gone.
- Keep your garage door closed and locked even when your car is not in the garage.
- If you have an attached garage, the door from your garage to your living quarters should have locks adequate for exterior entrances.
- Install a peephole in the door separating the house from the garage. If you hear suspicious sounds, you can check without opening the door.

Thank you for making District 10 a safe, family-friendly neighborhood! Keep safety in mind this summer as you and your family enjoy everything the Como neighborhood has to offer.

### Wipe Out Graffiti Program

If you see someone making graffiti in Saint Paul, call **9-1-1**

If you are the victim of graffiti on your property, call **(651) 266-8989** to make a report.

If you observe any type of graffiti in your neighborhood, call the **DSI - Complaint Office** at (651) 266-8989.

## Jump Aboard the New Como Shuttle!

New service addresses District 10 goal

After almost twenty years of discussion, visitors to Como Park can now 'get closer' using the Como Shuttle: a quick, convenient and free bus service to the Como Park Zoo and Conservatory that began Memorial Day weekend and will continue operating every weekend through September.

The Como Shuttle, funded with a \$1.6 million Federal grant, has long been advocated by District 10 as a partial solution to remediating traffic and parking impacts upon District 10 neighborhoods adjoining Como Park. Mike Hahm, director of St. Paul Parks and Recreation, has cited advocacy by District 10 and community members as a key factor in getting the shuttle program off the ground. Implementing a shuttle was an identified goal in the District 10 Land Use Plan (2006). District 10 also successfully advocated using low-emission diesel engines in the shuttle to reduce greenhouse gases.

The three comfortable 28-seat Como Shuttle buses are wheelchair and stroller accessible and are easily identified – their exteriors depict a leopard, a large daisy, and a zebra. Nine out of 10 park visitors arrive in a car, according to a City survey, and about two-thirds of drivers said they would be willing to take a shuttle. Ridership has already exceeded expectations during the first several weeks of operation.

Every weekend from 9:30 am to 6:30 pm through September, visitors can hop aboard shuttle busses at staffed parking lots at the Minnesota State Fair Grounds or the Saint Paul Public School District Service Facility, both on Como Avenue. Passengers will be dropped off at the front door of the Visitor Center. For more information, visit

[www.comozooconservatory.org/como\\_park/Shuttle.shtml](http://www.comozooconservatory.org/como_park/Shuttle.shtml).

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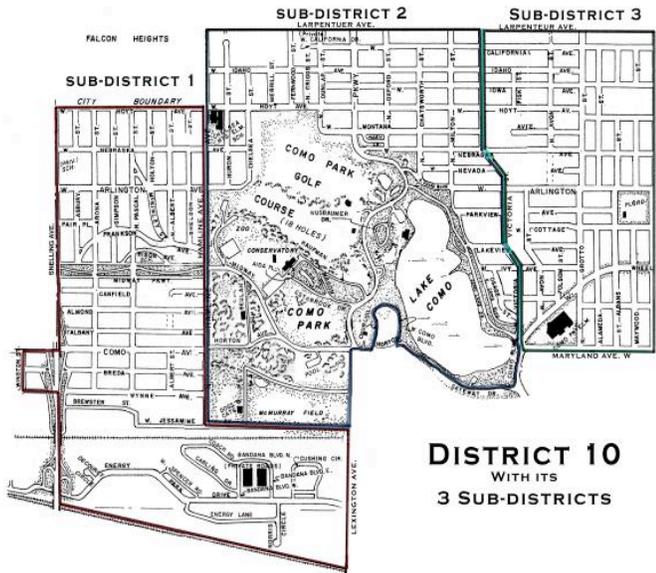
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### **Student Volunteers and Stimulus Spending for Infrastructure Improvements.**

Cate Edlund, HHH Job Corps Community Liaison

As part of the stimulus spending, Hubert H. Humphrey Job Corps reconstruction starts this summer. The upper floors of the dorm building that houses our Head Start center will be refurbished. Although infrastructure improvements (windows, roof, wiring, etc) were made when the child development center was built, there was not enough funding to finish the dorm rooms. Now, these eighteen dorms will be dedicated to 'parent with child' residents. For anyone who has watched our single moms struggle through the snow with their infants, this is welcome news. Also, the building on the corner of Nebraska and Snelling will be rehabilitated. This building was financed, in part, by a gift from James J. Hill when the original campus was being built. Solid on the exterior, it will need a lot of work inside to turn it into additional classrooms. One happy note – the building is so old it predates asbestos. Preliminary core samples show horsehair as the insulation of choice!

Our Facilities Maintenance students were over at Como Conservatory again. Flush with their success at the Sunken Gardens project, they were part of the prep crew for the Water Gardens that ring the Visitor Center. Since landscaping is part of their competencies training, they were able to get in at the ground level, literally, to learn the unique soil and techniques necessary for water plants to flourish.

Festival of Nations was also part of the volunteer efforts by Job Corps' students; it's their second year of set-up and help with the school groups. This festival has become a favorite among the students – the sights, sounds and food of so many cultures have them vying for the opportunity to help. On a more somber note, we had over fifty students who have made three trips, so far, to Feed My Starving Children. This international aid group developed a culturally sensitive formula that is easy to ship and volunteers to measure and pack are always welcome. Special Olympics work at Bierman Field is the last event before the students go on summer break over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Almost all our students relish these opportunities to be of service to the community. They know that what they gain is invaluable.