



## Issue of the week: Citizen Commissions and Boards

You open the letter from the Red Cross. It says in big red type, "**You will no longer be permitted to donate blood. You were seen at the opera.**"

It's not a Monty Python sketch; it's the Maplewood City Council majority refusing to reappoint a citizen with over twenty years of **professional** water quality management experience to the newly elevated Environmental and Natural Resources Commission. Who knows what some of them were thinking, but Mr. Hjelle expressed his view: "you cannot be on the Environmental Commission because you drive a gas-guzzling Porsche."

That kind of pretext was not used when the council majority refused to reappoint a citizen to the Maplewood Police Civil Service Commission (PCSC), even though she was the only applicant and had served well and honorably. What she had done, again according to Mr. Hjelle, was participate in the commission action ordering the city to reinstate Deputy Chief Banick. The PCSC receives its authority not from city ordinance but from the state statute that creates and regulates police civil service commissions. The PCSC reads that statute as giving civil service commissions the sole authority over hiring and firing police officers. This authority was ignored by the council majority in its reorganizing Deputy Chief Banick out of a job.

The Parks and Recreation Commission Chair had two opportunities to interact with the council and city manager at a recent council meeting. During the discussion of the 2008-2012 CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) which eliminates most park spending and radically changes the priority of what park funds were left, Mr. Copeland accused the chair of being 'disingenuous' for having pointed out the Commission's CIP recommendations had not been included in the council document packet. The packet did, however, include something else - the Commission's annual report. The chair had to wait until the end of the meeting to present the report to the council, since the majority had earlier refused to rearrange the agenda. The final item in the packet was a staff memo attached to the Park

Commissioners' annual report *that countered their recommendations*. The memo was signed by the two senior staff members who now oversee the functions transferred from the dismantled Parks Department. This unprecedented **process** likely had Mr. Copeland's blessing as he controls what is in the packet.

The council majority is fond of pointing out that the various commissions are advisory. They are less likely to mention the difficulties there have been finding enough citizens willing to be put in such positions. Try as they may, they have been unable to keep the commissions at their authorized levels.

Perhaps a new council appointed by voters this fall would have less trouble appointing commissioners to this opportunity for **public service**, and then listening to what they have to say.

## Next Issue: Costs of reorganization

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## Campaign Developments

The Lillie Newspapers *Maplewood Ramsey County Review* has printed council candidate profiles.

Lawn signs are permitted as of August 1st.

The DFL has endorsed Rossbach and Nephew.

## Maplewood Voters Coalition Activities

Endorsing committees have been named. The interview process will be complete by early August. Fundraising and volunteer recruiting are underway.

### How to Get Involved

Send a note to

**info@mvc07.com**

(that's zero seven, not oh seven)

or

**PO Box 9849**

**Maplewood MN 55109-0849**

or visit the campaign website

**<http://www.mvc07.com>**

**Coming soon: MVC candidate endorsements**

Original prepared and paid for by the Maplewood Voters Coalition, PO Box 9849, Maplewood MN - Crystal Bloecher, Treasurer