



Neerland & Oyaas, Inc.

Creative Public & Private Connections

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Opins & FAQs Re the State of Affairs

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We apologize in advance but here you'll find a great rehash.

Our ethic, Dear Reader, is new news, and the occasional bash.

The publishing schedule suffers from economic and emotional depression.

Soon back ahead of the game we've learned our lesson.

WINDOWS on...

Seeing Tomorrow Unfolding Today

We donned our black berets and joined the cognoscente at the Walker Art Center last night (1/27) to see the unveiling of the results of the *Minneapolis Riverfront Design Competition*. The process—sponsored by the Minneapolis Parks Foundation, the University of Minnesota's College of Design, the Walker Art Center and funded largely by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board—began with a Request for Qualifications from firms interested in presenting a vision for the Mississippi Riverfront stretching from Camden to the core of downtown Minneapolis. Submissions from more than 50 teams of architects and planners were narrowed and four groups were selected in November. Some of the best and the brightest in the business, representing firms from Bloomington to Beijing, presented last evening to an overflow crowd. The reverberations from their collective blasts will be felt in Minneapolis and across the Upper Midwest for the next 100 years.

While there were important distinctive features of each of the proposals, there were several concepts that created some overarching themes: restoration of natural habitat to promote flyways and return of native plants and water species (they were all big on mussels); creative use of storm water as amenities and delivery of clean water to the river; unique recreational opportunities that take advantage of existing conditions like back water ponds for wading and skating. Everybody promoted the Scherer Brothers Property on the east side near the Plymouth Bridge as a mixed use development anchored by a giant sandy beech with esplanades. Other commonalities included green connections into the neighborhoods; connecting Farview Park to the river with greenways over a decked I-94 was on all four teams' radar. A jury of 15 design pros and elected types have the unenviable task of selecting one team to lead the visions into realities. That selection will be announced on February 10.

It should be noted that each group was compensated \$30,000 but it is estimated that more than \$1 million of professional time and materials were put into the effort by the four teams. The event was captured and can be viewed on the Walker's website (www.channel.walkerart.org) and will soon play on the Regional Cable Channel, MCN/6. This project is the work of many and the interested should head to the website www.minneapolisriverfrontdesigncompetition.com to check proposal details and see the entire list of collaborators.

A special spotlight should be directed on a couple of key players, including Park Superintendent Emeritus David Fisher who in his capacity as acting Super last fall jumped on the opportunity to collaborate when invited by the Parks Foundation's Cecily Hines. His Board, now lead by John Erwin and new Super Jayne Miller enthusiastically supported the request. Another round of applause is due Mary deLaitre, the Project's Manager, a designer who leads by teaching. There are always cynics and skeptics waiting for efforts like this to stumble (usually we are among them). deLaitre has shepherded the flock in a masterful way, creating a momentum that will not be stopped. Finally, we want to thank MPR's Joann Eichten who, when she was a bigwig with the Walker, presented us with our black berets. "You poor, sweet misguided dupes will never be cool, but here, now you can pretend." Now at least we look like we fit in.

Oh yeah, one more thought. There is an epidemic, a scourge that has invaded the bodies of many local public officials across the country. Its chief symptom is deep disdain for public engagement, which is viewed as a nasty but statutorily-mandated step that just gets in the way of getting things done. "You don't understand, we have to have this up by 2014!" or "Great idea but I am not bringing it to my Authority, I can't afford to raise expectations." You are out there and may recognize these comments but the sad thing is you are elbow-to-elbow with legions of policy makers who have lost their belief in the power of inspiration. Lots of folks at the Walker called the riverfront project "once in a lifetime." That really is not the case. There are opportunities to dream every day: housing projects, school buildings, transit interchanges, public and private sector projects of every stripe. Yes, you are right, Mr. and Ms. Technocrat, there isn't always money to make every dream reality, but when you have inspirational vision as the unifier and motivator you can take a step at a time curating the vision, resulting in the tomorrow we are all after.

As we alluded to in the opening poem, your Editors have been a bit off their publishing game this first month of 2011. We pride ourselves in bringing you community news, that you can use, before you see it anywhere else. The following are some Bulletins and Bytes that you may have seen elsewhere but we still feel are worth noting.

BULLETINS and BYTES...

◆ Congratulations to *David Motzenbecker*, ASLA, who has joined the BKV Group as an Associate Partner to lead the Landscape Architecture practice area. He will provide design direction for site and landscape design, master planning, civic entitlements, and public engagement processes. Motz, as he is affectionately known in these quarters, is also the President of the Minneapolis City Planning Commission, serving that body as Mayor Rybak's appointment. We are soft on Motz for a number of reasons. We first met him as he was finishing Landscape Architecture school, paying the bills working for restaurant impresario Manny, then owner of the Café Un Deux Trois in the base of the Foshay Tower on Ninth Street. Mr. Motzenbecker also has a passion for public engagement and is a champion of the iterative Wiki planning process. He is in good company with Jack Boorman, who has been contributing to the civic and architectural landscape of the Twin Cities since the days of the Mayor Al Hofstede administration (he was a prodigy). Mr. Motzenbecker is sure to raise the profile of the BKV Group in this market.



◆ We heard a number of weeks ago from playwright-cum-contractor-cum-developer *Terry Lappin* that the bar in his 1111 Hennepin Avenue South building is reopening as the Cajun-themed *Bulldog*, a new venture of Matt Lokowich who currently operates the Uptown and Lowertown Bulldog gastro-pubs. Affordably-priced Cajun staples like po-boys, gumbo and crawdads will be a welcome addition to Upper Hennepin where the Eli's partners Johnny Mack and Tai have been doing the heavy lifting for a number of years. We know Lokowich has been in the bar-restaurant business for a long time. Does anyone know if he was the prodigy Matt behind the bar oh so many years ago at Lyle's in the pre-Mike Andrews days?

- ◆ There will be a big hole on Upper Hennepin, however, created by the move of Minneapolis-based advertising giant *Olson & Company* to the Renaissance Building located on Fifth and Nicollet Mall. The firm has made an outright purchase of the building and is renovating its entire ten stories for its own use. We don't know if they will resurface with some version of the old Hamline Café, a hot spot once upon a time for many of Minneapolis' movers and shakers like the great public finance mind *Dick Miller*. Others may remember the building as the home of the venerable Juster's, the go-to spot for business wear in Minneapolis for more than 50 years.
- ◆ Kitty-corner across the street on the block that once housed Powers Department Store, the newly-awakened *Opus Development Corporation* has signaled its interest in development by repurchasing the site from the Opus Holding Corporation. The aforementioned revitalized Renaissance Building will do a great deal, we believe, in attracting a development proposition to the Powers block.

***Don't Stop ...
there's more!***

Continued on Page 3

BULLETINS and BYTES...

continued

- ◆ Long-time readers of **Online** will know that one of the advantages of becoming a *Firecracker of the Year* is that we continue to chronicle their adventures as they move forward with their engaging and inspiring lives. Congratulations to last year's award winner, *Kieran Folliard*, who is taking on his own whiskey challenge. Folliard's *The Local* has for several years boasted its role as number one server of Jamieson Irish Whiskey in the world. One sultry summer afternoon, while chasing his wild-eyed standard poodles off-leash through Kenwood Park, it dawned on Kieran that why should the Jamison boys be making all the money? Having time on his hands without a new restaurant opening that week, Kieran collaborated with an independent distillery in his native Ireland and Twin Cities-based liquor distributor extraordinaire Dean Phillips to distill and import Two Gingers, an exclusively-branded Irish whiskey, for Kieran's locations. We are curious to see how the crafty Folliard will introduce his exclusively-crafted twelve-year blend only eighteen months after inception, but we know he is up to the task.
- ◆ We hope it is good news for *Firecracker* award winner and *Star Tribune* reporter *Rochelle Olson*, who has taken on an assignment to bolster the Strib's government and civic coverage in her adopted home town of Saint Paul. As previously mentioned in these pages, we believe Olson has done a spectacular job as court reporter, catching both the grit and the humor of the daily grind in our criminal justice system.
- ◆ Looking for opportunities to expand your business internationally? (And who isn't—hell, it sucks here!) Interested in exporting, but don't know where to start? Last year President Obama announced a goal to create US jobs by doubling exports by 2015, and launched the National Export Initiative. The initiative includes new tools for US businesses to identify international partners, conduct due diligence on market opportunities and finance export orders. On February 17, a team led by U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk, Small Business Administration Administrator Karen Mills, and Chairman of the Export-Import Bank of the United States Fred Hochberg will visit Minneapolis to talk with local businesses about these tools for expansion. So save the date! An invitation with further details will follow shortly, and registration information will be posted at www.export.gov/newmarketsnewjobs. Stay tuned there to get in on the fun.
- ◆ *Suit Up* will be moving for a limited time back to the skyway level of the Westin Hotel at the corner of Marquette and 6th Street in downtown Minneapolis. This will happen beginning on Tuesday, February 1, 2011. Hours will be 11 am to 3 pm. They have a great selection of men's apparel with suit prices ranging from \$99 to \$249! Shirts are \$49 and ties \$29. Go early for the best selection. Watch for the Uptown location to reopen later this spring with all new merchandise.