

Press Release

**For Immediate Release
August 30, 2005**

Park Watch Announces Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Endorsements

Minneapolis, Minnesota – August 30, 2005 – Park Watch, the Minneapolis citizens Park Board watch-dog group, announced Monday night, August 29, 2005, the names of candidates it endorses for the 2005 fall election to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

Park Watch is an ad hoc citizens group formed in January of 2004 when the Park Board voted to hire an individual who had neither been a candidate nor interviewed for the position of superintendent. That disturbing incident was the catalyst for Park Watch.

For the past 20 months, members and supporters of Park Watch have been attending Park Board meetings on a regular basis to observe first-hand how the Park Board has been conducting business. Park Watch has also examined the financial reports for 2002 through 2005, as well as numerous other sources of information.

Park Watch has concluded that the Park Board, the city's largest landowner with over 6,400 acres of land, is in trouble. It has been plagued by lawsuits, losses and a controversial majority coalition. Services are being cut and taxes are increasing.

The voters of Minneapolis now have the opportunity to make a difference in the membership of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. Park Watch co-founder Chris Johnson said, "We deserve a better Park Board. Taxpayers deserve a Park Board with commissioners who will actively support fiscal and administrative accountability, collaborative leadership and citizen participation."

Park Watch firmly believes the following candidates are capable of working together to identify and find solutions for the Park Board's existing problems:

- District 1: LuAnn Wilcox
- District 3: Scott Vreeland
- District 4: Tracy Nordstrom
- District 5: Jason Stone
- District 6: Jim Bernstein
- At-large (city wide): Rochelle Berry Graves
- At-large (city wide): Tom Nordyke
- At-large (city wide): Annie Young

No candidate is endorsed for district 2.

The selection process involved analysis of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board operations and finances, examination of the candidates' qualifications, and careful deliberations over the past year.

"It is time for a change. It is time to end the conflict and the controversy associated with the Park Board and its dysfunctional majority clique," Johnson stated.

"This is the year we can all check out candidates and decide, do we want our basics covered and our parks maintained, or do we want to become 'private enterprise developers,'" said Liz Wielinski, Park Watch member.

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