

Bill McGaughey, candidate for mayor

Why running for position? After two terms in office, the mayor has grown arrogant and unresponsive to the public. With his eye on running for Governor, he may not even want to serve much longer as mayor. The breaking point for me came in May 2007 when Mayor Rybak, aided by Don Samuels, virtually ordered Fire Department inspectors to close down a neighborhood grocery store, Uncle Bill's Food Market, blaming it for an unrelated shooting down the street. As mayor, I would break the unholy alliance between inspections and police matters. We need better crime-fighting strategies and a better relationship between property owners and the police.

Background: I am a homeowner and small-scale landlord in the city and am also co-director of Metro Property Rights Action Committee which holds regular monthly meetings to discuss issues related to city government. For the past five years, I've served on the board of Harrison Neighborhood Association. I can see both the bad and good side of city government and am not afraid to take on powerful persons and groups, if necessary. One of my mayoral rivals gives me credit for an unusual ability to "come to the point."

Work with neighborhood: It would not be up to me as mayor to prescribe how Lyndale neighborhood might be improved but to listen to people's concerns and try to use the resources of city government to aid in positive change to the extent that discretionary resources are available. Having served on the board of a neighborhood organization, I am familiar with some of the issues.

I think city government needs to regain the trust of Minneapolis residents, especially its small businesses. My top priority, by necessity, will be to try to deal with budget shortfalls. But we must not take the short-sighted approach of using inspections to pick people's pockets. Fines are a deterrent, not a revenue-raising device. We also need to try to build a better relationship with state government so that eventually more state aids will come our way. We need to grow our tax base by bringing more businesses into Minneapolis (or not driving away the ones we already have). We need to cultivate a better relationship between city residents and the police. I won't prejudge any situation.

(a) The relationship between neighborhoods and the city has recently changed, partly due to scarcity of resources. I will not promise to bring back the old system but to do the best we can within the limits of our financial capacity. We must exercise reasonable restraint on raising property taxes. Yet, while dealing with financial emergencies, we should also try to make room for expenditures that benefit neighborhoods and the city in the long run. We need to grow the tax base.

(b) Some wasteful parts of city government need to be eliminated such as the Problem Properties Unit. I do not support increases in pay or car allowances for city officials. We all need to tighten our belts in these economically difficult times. However, the other part of it is to make Minneapolis more attractive so that people and businesses want to be located here. We must end the vengeful use of inspections to punish people disliked by city officials. City government has itself become quite dangerous.