



March 29, 2015

Dear Fellow East Siders:

This week's letter discusses claims processing, neighborhood school assignments and City services.

When an owner's motor vehicle is damaged by a pothole on a City-maintained street, [State law](#) provides a maximum \$300 reimbursement if the owner files a claim within 7 days. The claim is reviewed by the City Solicitor, and under current practice is then forwarded to the City Council's Claims Committee to review and approve the Solicitor's recommendation. After I became Chair of the Claims Committee this year, I observed that the Solicitor's office is quite capable of making correct decisions regarding pothole claims without the Committee's prior approval, and that removing this step in the process will expedite the City's processing of these claims. I also learned the City has an [Ordinance](#) in effect that permits the Solicitor to settle smaller claims without the Claims Committee's prior approval. With that in mind, I asked the Claims Committee at its meeting last Tuesday (March 24) whether it would agree to defer this authority to the Solicitor. The members present agreed in principle; however, they asked that we defer a final decision until the full Committee attends the next meeting, which ought to take place in late April. It is my hope that we can streamline reimbursement for this type of claim.

The School Department's neighborhood school assignment plan is designed to allocate 80% of a neighborhood school's seats to those who live in the neighborhood, with the remaining 20% available for children living in other neighborhoods who choose that school, using lotteries when the number of children in either pool exceeds the number of seats. The School Department assigns the seats in March, in order to allow sufficient time to make internal administrative arrangements. (I understand that this year the assignments are running behind schedule.) Each year, many families move into a neighborhood after the administrative cutoff, at which point families are assigned wherever vacancies arise. In most neighborhoods, the 80% pool is filled with neighborhood children who apply in time for the March drawing; however, Nathan Bishop in recent years has been under-subscribed with neighborhood children, falling below 50% in each of the last two years. During the Spring and Summer, families move into the neighborhood and ask to attend their neighborhood school, but are told no seats are available. After watching the School Department lose around a dozen children to the private schools last year for this reason, I asked the School Department to consider deferring the assignment of a limited number of seats at undersubscribed neighborhood schools to address this inequity. Unfortunately, my efforts at informal resolution were not successful; therefore, I have written a [Letter](#) to each School Board member asking them to address this issue formally as a body in time for the upcoming school year.

The City has announced its [street sweeping schedule](#), under which the trucks will operate in our neighborhood during April 9, 12, 13 and 14. Speaking of City services, the Mayor will hold a **Citywide Conversation on City Services and Education** to take place this **Tuesday, March 31 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.** at the **Silver Lake Community Center at 529 Plainfield Street**. Residents from all neighborhoods are invited to attend and share their views.

Sincerely,