



City Councilman John Robinson

Robinson fights discrimination

Editor's note: This is the second of three interviews with Lincoln's newest City Council members. Today, staff writer Lori Demo talks with John Robinson about his ideas on minority representation and the Northeast Radial Hwy. Tomorrow, she will write about Councilman Max Denney.

By Lori Demo

"This is a very demanding kind of activity if you expect to do an adequate job," City Councilman John Robinson said of the position he won in last May's city elections.

A practicing lawyer in Lincoln, Robinson campaigned while still a law student at UNL. Last spring, he talked of assuring representation for minorities in city government and of opposing the Northeast Radial Hwy.

As a member of the city's Human Rights Commission, he has helped introduce to the Council a human rights ordinance that covers not only minority groups, but also discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, marital status and age.

"It took a great deal of time and work on the part of the committee to write this," Robinson said. "We gave it to the Council, and

they deferred action subject to the determination of its legality by the State Attorney General."

The ordinance covers three main areas: housing, employment and public accommodations.

"The report from the Attorney General said the ordinance was too broad compared to the state's ordinance, so we would have to delete the clause pertaining to housing," Robinson said. "It said that the city, which derives its powers from the State Legislature, has no power to act on housing."

The ordinance is scheduled to come up in the Council again. Robinson said he "thinks it will finally be passed."

As an alternative to the Northeast Radial Hwy, Robinson has helped introduce a street planning ordinance which the Council passed unanimously.

"It sets up planning for transportation in the city modeled after a federal transportation scheme," he said. "This includes a series of studies that must be concluded prior to actual development (of the Radial)."

Some of the necessary studies include an environmental study and an alternate route study for highway construction.

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