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St. Petersburg Politician Tells Residents Shoveling Snow Is Good for Them

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A St. Petersburg deputy governor said Sunday that residents should clear the city's streets of snow themselves.

A St. Petersburg vice governor has responded to criticism that City Hall is failing to keep the streets clear of snow by suggesting that residents grab a shovel and do it themselves, identifying dependence on social services as "the disease of modern Russian society."

Igor Albin, who sits on the city's development and maintenance committees, said Sunday that residents should look after their own backyards rather than wait for somebody else to, and that such work is "good for one's health and helped to order one's thoughts."

The politician was responding to a comment made Friday by local Shum (Noise) magazine editor Pavel Smolyak, who in a Facebook post complained about St. Petersburg's poor snow removal services.

"Maybe, instead of listening to the latest episode of a series and expecting manna to fall from heaven, it would pay to invite your friends, take a shovel and put things in order, at least in

your own backyard," Albin quipped in reply to the post.

He went on to say that "social dependence is the disease of modern Russian society," adding that people expect a "do-gooder [to] do their dishes, maintain the yard, raise their children, protect them from foreign aggressors, and put things in order in their country and their home."

Some social media users questioned Albin's logic, given that residents were paying taxes to City Hall, while others were quick to poke fun at his remarks.

"If there is a fire, then do not call the fire brigade. You need to call your neighbors, grab a bucket and douse the flames yourself. If you are robbed, there is no need to call the police. You should gather all your friends, find the culprit and lynch him," news site Rosbalt cited musician Mikhail Shevchuk as saying.

The city's maintenance committee, which is responsible for the upkeep of yards and sidewalks, is set to receive a budget of 7 billion rubles ($115 million) this year, local news site MR7.ru reported Sunday.

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