



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

Cam Gordon

City Council Member
Second Ward

350 South 5th Street - Room 301M
Minneapolis MN 55415

Office 612-673-2202
Fax 612-673-3940
Cell 612-296-0579
TTY 612-673-2157

**Council Member Cam Gordon's
Report to Southeast Como, 7-12-11**

Cam's next Southeast Como Office Hours:
Tuesday, August 9th, 9:30-11:00am
Muddsuckers Coffee, 1500 Como Avenue SE

Items:

- 1) Commercial Recycling Ordinance Passes Council
- 2) Outdoor Areas Ordinance
- 3) Household Hazardous Waste Recycling Facility
- 4) Household Hazardous Waste Drop-off Event
- 5) CDBG Funds
- 6) More Development Info Now Online
- 7) Fines for Occupying Units with Revoked Licenses
- 8) Elections Department
- 9) National Night Out
- 10) State Government Shutdown
- 11) Solid Waste and Recycling Director
- 12) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) The commercial recycling ordinance I have been working on for over a year unanimously passed the full Council Friday June 17th. I was pleased that groups as diverse as the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce and the Sierra Club supported of the new ordinance. It will go into effect September 1, and puts in place the requirement that all commercial properties in Minneapolis that have garbage service will also have recycling service. Soon, wherever you live, work or do business in Minneapolis, you will be able to recycle.

- 2) Last month the Council considered a new ordinance related to the regulation of outdoor dining areas. While I understand the concerns of residents who live near bars and restaurants with patio spaces, I did not think that this ordinance was a necessary, fair, or effective way to address those concerns. We already have ordinances related to noise and outdoor areas that could be used to address these concerns. Also, as it was written it would have had one set of regulations for downtown, and a more stringent set of regulations in the rest of the city. I fear that this would leave Second Ward businesses at an unfair disadvantage. At the Council meeting on June 17th the author of the ordinance amendment, Meg Tuthill, moved to postpone it for five weeks to allow time for her to form a task force to explore alternatives. While I had planned to vote against the ordinance if it was moved forward, I supported the postponement and will be interested to see what the task force brings forward. In the meantime I continue to encourage city staff to better enforce current rules and local business owners to work with residents to address noise and other complaints related to their business operations.

- 3) I joined the rest of my colleagues on the Zoning and Planning committee in unanimously voting against the appeal of the Zoning Administrator's finding that the proposed Minneapolis-Hennepin Recycling and Drop-off Center is a recycling center, not a waste transfer station. While I am sympathetic to many of the concerns of the affected neighbors, there are a few reasons that I voted against the appeal. The most important is that the Zoning Administrator's findings are **proscriptive**, meaning that the proposed facility will **have** to conform to the definition of a recycling facility into the future. I will continue to pay close attention to this project as it moves forward. Many of the legitimate concerns brought up by the appellants – including traffic, screening, noise and more – will be more effectively addressed by the Conditional Use Permit process that this project must still undergo.

- 4) Hennepin County has scheduled a short-term event to collect household hazardous waste from **July 21-23**, 9am to 4pm, at Dunwoody College of Technology, 818 Dunwoody Blvd. For more information, including a complete list of acceptable and non-acceptable items and directions to the temporary drop-off site, call Hennepin County Environmental Services at 348-3777 or www.hennepin.us/collectionevents.

If you need this material in an alternative format, please contact Matt Bower at (612) 673-2188 or Matthew.Bower@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

If you want help translating this call – Hmong– Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2188;

Spanish – Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llama 612-673-2188;

Somali – Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' an wac 612-673-2188.

If you need disability related accommodations, please contact Matt Bower at (612) 673-2188 or Matthew.Bower@ci.minneapolis.mn.us. TTY: 612-673-2626.

cam.gordon@ci.minneapolis.mn.us

- 5) Federal cuts to the Community Development Block Grant (CDGB) program have forced the City to adjust allocations it approved as part of the 2011 budget. I voted against a proposal that passed out one Committee because of what I saw as disproportionate cuts to Public Health grants that provide critical services to residents of Minneapolis, including one for \$75,000 to the Living at Home/Block Nurse program that supports the good work of the Southeast Seniors program. These programs were cut 60% while other Public Service CDGB-funded projects were not cut at all. At the Council Meeting on June 17th I attempted to amend this proposal to reinstate some of the funding cut to the Public Health grants by spreading the cuts across more programs but my amendment failed. I subsequently voted against the proposal that was passed by a majority of the Council.
- 6) City staff has announced a significant step toward providing more online information about proposed development projects in Minneapolis. The public now has easier access to development plans for any project that has submitted a site plan review application for City Planning Commission review (generally, this is required for new non-residential or mixed use buildings and developments with five or more new residential units). Links to development plans are available directly from online Commission agendas, which you can find here: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/agendas/planning-commission/>. The inclusion of development plans further advances the City's goal of providing easier access to information about planning and development-related activities. It's important to note that the plans will be draft form. These projects will be in the review process and will therefore be subject to revision based on City Planning Commission decisions and/or other factors that affect proposed new developments. Agendas (and the related staff reports and plans) will typically be available online Wednesdays prior to City Planning Commission meetings.
- 7) The Council has voted to increase the fine for occupying a rental unit after the license has been revoked from \$500 to \$2,000. I expect this change to pass the full Council this Friday. This is yet another example of the City getting serious about addressing the issues caused by a few problem landlords.
- 8) In June the Council voted not to explore contracting with Hennepin County for elections responsibilities. The vote followed a report provided by a consultant that commended the election division for its work on the senate recount of 2008, the implementation of Rank Choice Voting in 2009, and the Governor recount of 2010. The report identifies immediate needs to purchase RCV-capable voting equipment and wrote that, "The City election staff, in partnership with the Secretary of State, Hennepin County and other counties in the State of Minnesota, should join arms to work cooperatively to develop required RFP specifications. There can be significant cost savings to all jurisdictions (cities and counties) through a joint effort to purchase new equipment." The vote by the Council will allow us to move ahead filling the position of Election Director that has remained vacant since mid 2009.
- 9) National Night Out is Tuesday, August 2nd. If you're planning a neighborhood gathering, there are important deadlines for registering your event with the City and for blocking off your street. There is a single online process to register your NNO event and apply to close your street. If you want to close your street for your event, street closure is free if you apply by Tuesday, July 19. From July 20 to July 28, there is a \$100 fee for blocking off the street. You need permission of 75 percent of your neighbors to be approved for street closure—please have their names and addresses with you when you apply. (You do not need their signatures.) Get started at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/nno. You can also register your event and apply for street closure by calling 311 (or 612-673-3000). For ideas for greening your NNO event, visit www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/nno/Green-Block-Party.pdf.
- 10) The shutdown of state government that started on July 1 is having significant impacts on the City of Minneapolis. Before the shutdown, Public Works crews had to scramble to finish projects that are funded by the state, or by federal funds that have passed through the state, before the first, to avoid disruptions. The Council has authorized legal action to require the State of Minnesota to make Local Government Aid (LGA) payments during the shutdown. The City has taken on some functions normally provided by the state, including electrical inspections. The longer the shutdown continues, the greater the possibility for impact on the City of Minneapolis. More information is available here: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2011-meetings/20110722/Docs/2011StateGovernmentShutdownReport_final_draft.pdf.
- 11) Solid Waste and Recycling Director Susan Young is leaving the City of Minneapolis. I have appreciated Susan as a knowledgeable, can-do City employee, and have worked with her on several projects, most recently the commercial recycling ordinance. This transition also offers an opportunity to restructure the Solid Waste and Recycling department to have a greater focus on policy. Over the next few years, the leadership of solid waste and recycling will be faced with some great policy questions: how do we expand curbside organics collection citywide? Should we transition from our current multi-sort recycling program to a dual-sort system? I wish Susan well, and look forward to working on these complicated topics with her successor.
- 12) There are openings on the Latino Advisory Committee and Planning Commission. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.