



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood 2-23-11

Cam's next Seward Office Hours:
Tuesday, March 22nd, 9:30-11:00am
Birchwood Café, 3311 E 25th St

Items:

- 1) CDBG Funds for Block Nurses in Seward
- 2) Liquor Store Spacing
- 3) Dynamic Signs
- 4) Neighborhood Funding Work Group
- 5) Guns on the City's Legislative Agenda
- 6) Green and Healthy Housing
- 7) Solar Energy Systems
- 8) Urban Agriculture Topical Plan
- 9) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) The Council has awarded \$75,000 in Community Development Block Grants to Living at Home/Block Nurse programs that include Longfellow and Seward, along with Southeast and Nokomis.
- 2) The Regulatory Energy and Environment committee sent an ordinance amendment forward without recommendation related to off-sale liquor distance requirement to schools and religious institutions. Liquor stores are currently restricted from locating within 300 feet from a school or place of religious assembly (synagogue, church, mosque, temple etc.) as measured from front door to front door of the church or school. The proposed change that will come to the Council Friday would be to measure from the property line of the store to the property line of the school, park or religious gathering place.
- 3) The Zoning and Planning committee passed an amendment last week that restricts where dynamic signs can be located. It would no longer allow electronic changeable copy or "TV"-type signs in the Residential and Office-Residential zones or in some commercial (C1 AND C3A) zoning districts except for schools, libraries, parks where associated with a recreation center, and religious places of assembly, in the C1, C3A, and Industrial zoning Districts. The dynamic changeable copy signs would continue to be allowed in the C2, C3S, and C4 Districts and in Industrial Zoning Districts. They would be allowed as a conditional use in the C2 and C4 Districts, with the added provision of allowing them on freestanding signs. They would also have location restrictions designed to limit them to larger sites along commercial corridors. I successfully moved to prohibit electronic "dynamic signs" within Pedestrian Oriented Overlay Districts but suspect this amendment may be opposed by some at the Council meeting.
- 4) The Council has formed a neighborhood funding work group to facilitate decision making relating to the actions the Council will need to take on neighborhood funding this year. This work group includes the Council President and Vice President, the chairs of the Ways and Means/Budget Committee and the Intergovernmental Relations Committee, as well as a Mayoral representative, the City Coordinator, the Neighborhood and Community Relations Director, the Finance Director, the Communications Director and the Intergovernmental Relations Director. The Work Group's charge is to frame options and proposed actions for consideration by the Committee of the Whole and Ways & Means Committee relative to the 2011 Budget action that froze Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) spending. I would have preferred that the meetings of this group be open to the public and included representation from the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission and the NRP Policy Board.

If you need this material in an alternative format please call Ahmed Muhumud at 612-673-2162 or email Ahmed.Muhumud@ci.minneapolis.mn.us

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Hmong - Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800;

Spanish - Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llama 612-673-2700;

Somali - Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500.

- 5) A number of new pro-gun bills are being brought forward in the state legislature. One bill, known as "shoot first" would allow people to shoot anyone they don't know if they set foot on your property and eliminate the "rule of retreat" that means if a person can safely walk away from a situation, they are not entitled to kill someone just because they seem threatening. It would also allow the killing of anyone in a public place who seems "threatening." A second bill would prohibit state colleges and universities - including the University of Minnesota, located in the Second Ward - from banning concealed guns on campus. Some law makers are also trying to push through a Minnesota Constitutional amendment to "keep, bear and use arms" and a house committee recently approved an amendment that would completely repeal the law that established Minnesota's background check system. I believe that these proposals are moving us in the wrong direction and will put residents, visitors and police in greater danger. I have successfully moved to have the City's Legislative Agenda oppose these terrible ideas, and I thank my colleagues for joining me in standing up for sensible gun regulations. To learn more form a group also opposed to these pro-gun efforts see <http://www.endgunviolence.com/>.
- 6) The Council's Regulatory, Energy and Environment committee has received a report from staff on an ordinance change that would improve our ordinances in terms of making rental property safer, healthier, more economical and more environmentally sustainable. All landlords would be required to do a furnace/boiler safety test by a licensed mechanical or gas contractor every two years, unless the furnace or boiler is under 10 years old. All owners of single family rentals would be required to get an energy audit with a blower test and thermal scan by a certified auditor. If property fails the initial blower door standard, air sealing must occur resulting in at least a 20% improvement on the initial blower door test or attic bypasses and major air leaks discovered by the thermal scan must be sealed. It should be noted that energy audits are heavily subsidized by Centerpoint and Xcel. All owners of 1-3 unit rental properties built before 1978 where the City has found chipping or peeling paint would be required to get a lead safe clearance test by a third party lead certified technician. All of these changes are within the City's appropriate role of protecting tenants, and all will increase the livability, safety and health of our housing stock. As an added benefit, they will also reduce utility costs for renters – which renters often pay but can seldom control – and represent one of the City's only ways to get serious about the problem of climate change. I strongly support these amendments. In fact, I think they should have gone significantly further: staff made multiple changes to appease rental property owners, including dropping a proposed radon test, scaling back the lead testing and limiting the energy audits to single family homes only. Some of my colleagues have signaled that they will not support these amendments. The committee will hear this item again on February 28th, and I look forward to supporting it in the strongest form possible.
- 7) The Council has adopted new definitions and protections for solar energy systems. The new ordinance defines and sets standards for building mounted and freestanding solar systems and makes clear that solar access easements may be purchased by property owners. For the first time, it provides specific guidance to the Planning Commission that existing solar energy systems should be given special consideration if and when a proposed development would shadow them. Some amendments from the Council improved the proposal by raising the percentage of a residential lot that could be covered by a freestanding system from 3% to 5%. This means that for a standard 5,000 square foot city lot, the maximum allowable freestanding system went from 150 s.f. to 250 s.f. My staff worked with solar advocates and City staff on an amendment that would clarify that "passive" solar systems would be included in the protections we're giving to other types of solar systems. These include systems that are specifically intended to capture and store direct solar heat, but are not broad enough to allow any window to be considered a "passive solar" system.
- 8) The Urban Agriculture Topical Plan unanimously passed the Planning Commission yesterday. I look forward to strongly supporting it when it comes before the Council in late March. I am currently meeting with each of my colleagues, along with Planning staff, to answer any questions they have and make the case for the plan. I see it as a major step towards making Minneapolis more of a leader in the local food movement. Broad based community support may be needed to insure its passage.
- 9) There are openings on the Animal Care & Control Advisory Board, Charter Commission, Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee (CLIC), Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Latino Advisory Committee, Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission, Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Planning Commission, Public Health Advisory Committee, Advisory Group for Redistricting 2011-2012 of the Charter Commission, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, Thinc.GreenMSP Steering Committee, Workforce Council and Zoning Board of Adjustment. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.