

# Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the Prospect Park East River Road Neighborhood, 4-27-09

Cam's next Prospect Park Office Hours:  
Pratt School, May 19, 9:30-11am

## Items:

- 1) Central Corridor Mitigation Request
- 2) Historic District Meeting
- 3) Spring Jam
- 4) Meetings on Proposed Charter Amendments
- 5) Street Sweeping
- 6) Diversity Audit for City Boards and Commissions
- 7) Neighborhood Electric Vehicles
- 8) Park Dedication Fee
- 9) Beekeeping
- 10) Trader Joe's
- 11) Minneapolis Twitters
- 12) Free Wireless Accounts for Nonprofits
- 13) New Domestic Violence Prevention Program
- 14) "Sofa Ban"
- 15) Trees Still Available for \$25
- 16) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) Last Friday, the Council voted to submit a request for federal funding for the traffic mitigations necessitated by (but not funded by) the Central Corridor LRT project. This request includes the connection between E River Pkwy and Main St SE, the improvements to the intersection of Franklin Ave SE, 27<sup>th</sup> Ave SE and E River Pkwy, the completion of Granary Road and better access to I-35W to relieve pressure from University and 4<sup>th</sup> St SE. I strongly supported this application, and hope that it will be fully funded.
- 2) I am working with PPERRIA to put together a broad, inclusive meeting in late May or early June for all Prospect Park residents within the proposed Historic District to discuss local designation.
- 3) I was dismayed to learn about the Spring Jam-related riot that took place this past Saturday. I believe that the University District Partnership Alliance should address both this specific event and future U-related events that may create similar situations. I will be interested to hear an after-action report from the Police Department, to help me assess the appropriateness of their response. I also challenge the University to hold their students accountable for their off-campus behavior and potentially review whether Spring Jam is a net positive for the greater University community.
- 4) Council Member Ostrow's proposals to amend the Charter, including the elimination of the Park Board and Board of Estimate and Taxation, and the creation of a new City Administrator, will be discussed at four open meetings organized by the Charter Commission: Tuesday, April 28, at North Regional Library, 1315 Lowry Ave N; Thursday, April 30 at Northeast Library, 2200 Central Ave NE; and Thursday, May 7 at St. Joan of Arc Church (lower level), 4500 Clinton Ave S. All meetings will take place from 6:30-8pm. If you have any opinions on these proposed amendments, I encourage you to attend one or more of these meetings and make your voice heard. More information is available at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/charter-commission/>.
- 5) On Tuesday, April 14, Minneapolis crews began our annual street sweeping program, which keeps neighborhoods cleaner and protects our water quality by removing sand before it can wash down storm drains and into our lakes and waterways. Watch for "no parking" signs that are posted before the day before sweeping, and find out when your street will be swept by visiting [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/streetsweep](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/streetsweep) and clicking on "schedule lookup." Please also remember that you can help protect our lakes and rivers by bagging up your yard waste for curbside collection.
- 6) This month I am initiating a Diversity Audit project of all the City's Boards and Commissions that include individuals appointed by the Mayor and/or the City Council. Working with the City Coordinator's office my office will inventory the gender, racial/ethnic and age make up of over 40 Boards and Commissions. I expect this work to be completed next fall.

- 7) The Council has passed a zoning code text amendment to distinguish neighborhood electric vehicles from automobiles to allow their sale (under certain conditions) in more commercial, business and industrial areas of the City. I supported this and put forward a successful amendment to ensure that it will be consistent with recent state law changes to avoid any potential future conflicts with state law.
- 8) The Council passed a new Park Dedication Fee ordinance on April 10 that will require future developers to either dedicate land near their development site for public open space or to pay a Park Dedication Fee. State law requires that the same ordinance be adopted by the Council and the Park Board. The Park Board has yet to pass this ordinance. I am very supportive of this effort and worked for a fair compromise that will give us this tool (that is already in place in St. Paul and many suburban communities) to get needed funds to create new park space and make capital improvements to existing parks close to new developments. If approved by the park Board it will go into effect January 2011.
- 9) The Council, with my strong support, has approved a new ordinance amendment that allows and regulates beekeeping in Minneapolis. The proposed ordinance includes an application process similar to that which is required for the keeping of chickens with the exception that 100% of the immediate neighbors must approve the request. I successfully moved a small amendment to the action today to strip out what I felt to be an unnecessary requirement that beekeepers indemnify the City for any lawsuits that result from keeping bees. As we look to increase the amount of local food being consumed in the city, this is a good step in the right direction, both for the honey that bees produce and for their help in pollinating vegetable gardens.
- 10) I opposed and spoke against supporting legislation that would allow Trader's Joes to get a liquor license in a location (2309 Lyndale Ave S) that does not conform with current City policies. Unfortunately, it passed (7 to 6), so the City is now on record supporting state legislation to allow a liquor license at this address. It can still be stopped either at the legislature or when it returns to the Council when they apply for the actual license.
- 11) You can now get info on news and events happening in City government through Twitter. You must first have your own Twitter account. Click the "Follow us on Twitter" link on the City's home page, or visit [www.twitter.com/CityMinneapolis](http://www.twitter.com/CityMinneapolis) and click the "follow" button underneath the City of Minneapolis logo.
- 12) The City of Minneapolis is accepting applications for 100 free wireless internet accounts intended for non-profit organizations that provide free computer access to the public. Applications (available at [http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/wirelessminneapolis/WirelessMinneapolis\\_WhatsNew.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/wirelessminneapolis/WirelessMinneapolis_WhatsNew.asp)) are due by **Monday, May 18**, and will be reviewed by staff and the Digital Inclusion Advisory Board, which will make recommendations to the City Council on which organizations will receive free accounts in 2009. The accounts will be good through 2010.
- 13) The City is launching a new citywide program designed to reduce domestic violence. Officers who arrive at a misdemeanor domestic violence call will now do more investigative work at the scene, giving prosecutors more information to prosecute a case. These new strategies have been successful in increasing the conviction rate of misdemeanor domestic violence-related cases from 54% to 76% in the 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct pilot program. I am very supportive of expanding this program, which offers the opportunity to protect spouses, children and elders from abusers and interrupt the cycle of violence.
- 14) For a number of reasons I could not support the ordinance brought forward by Council Member Hofstede, which would have banned all upholstered furniture "not manufactured for outside use" from porches that are not completely enclosed. I believe that public safety benefits when people spend time on their porches, and would hate to put something in place that would discourage this positive behavior. I also had concerns that this proposal was redundant – couches on porches that are moldy, rotting, or habitat for wildlife are *already* prohibited. The evidence I have seen makes clear that couches on porches are not a significant fire risk. I am supportive, in general, of reusing existing manufactured goods as long as possible, rather than putting them into the waste stream. I am also concerned about the economic justice of this proposal, which would allow only those who can afford specifically-manufactured outdoor furniture to enjoy their porches. Lastly, I am uncomfortable telling people they can't do things that are not, in themselves, harmful. I voted against the proposal, which failed on a 9 – 4 vote.
- 15) There are still a few hundred trees remaining for sale for only \$25, through the City Trees program. You've got your choice of accolade elm, bur oak, black hills spruce and prairiefire crab. If you're interested, you should order soon - orders must be placed through Tree Trust by the end of April. Tree pickup occurs May 9th-11th. For more information or to order, go here: <http://treetrust.org/orderhere/index.html>.
- 16) There are current openings on the Minneapolis Workforce Council (closes 5/08) and Public Health Advisory Committee (open until filled). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).