

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood 2-25-09

**Cam's next Seward Office Hours:
Tuesday, March 24, 9:30-11:00am
Birchwood Café, 3311 E 25th St**

Items:

- 1) March Roundtable
- 2) Proposed Revisions to 2009 Budget
- 3) Heritage Preservation Meeting
- 4) Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission
- 5) Transfers of Animals
- 6) Franklin/E River Pkwy/27th Ave SE
- 7) Cradle to Prison Pipeline Study Session
- 8) Taxi Fare Decrease
- 9) Marriage and Family Protection Act
- 10) Binge Drinking
- 11) Grants to Seniors Organizations
- 12) South Minneapolis Housing Fair
- 13) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) Please join me, along with Park Commissioners Annie Young and Scott Vreeland and School Board Members Carla Bates, Pam Costain and Jill Davis for a **Roundtable Discussion: "Our Parks, Our Schools, Our City"** on **March 11, 7-8:30pm** at **Pratt School**, 66 Malcolm Ave SE. The future of our city depends on world class parks and schools. How can the independent elected boards and the City work better together? Please come and share your ideas.
- 2) Mayor Rybak has presented a revised 2009 budget to the Council. I am mostly supportive of his proposals, and I share his relief that the Obama Administration's stimulus package will help us fund 57 police officers this year. However, I have some concerns about three of the specific proposals that the Mayor has brought forward. First, the proposed budget enacts the Commercial Property Registration fee that many Second Ward business owners have contacted me to oppose, in order to prevent laying off firefighters. This fee was proposed earlier this year, and the majority of my colleagues joined me in returning it to staff. Second, the Mayor proposes enacting a street lighting fee that was also voted down by the Council in the past few years. Third, the proposed budget would completely cut Civil Rights investigations, relying instead on the State for this service. I have heard from the Civil Rights Commission that they strongly oppose this idea. I have not decided to support any of these proposals, and I would welcome your input.
- 3) The Council has appointed seven people to the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission. As outstanding as the recommended applicants are, I did not vote for the final list of appointees due to the lack of ethnic, geographic, gender and age diversity among the applicants brought forward. An amendment I supported to increase the geographic, gender and age diversity failed and those selected were predominately male(5), European Americans (6). No one was selected from the southeast quadrant of the City (wards 2, 9 or 12) despite the fact that many highly qualified people applied from those areas. I supported a staff direction to develop recruitment strategies for board members that will promote more diversity on this essential board, and I hope that the Park Board and neighborhood process will help fill the gaps left by the Council's appointments.

- 4) Responding to concerns from neighborhood organizations, I pushed Planning staff to hold a public meeting on their proposed changes to the Heritage Preservation ordinance. The meeting closest to Prospect Park will be held on **Thursday, February 26**, at **7pm** at Matthews Recreation Center, 2318 29th Ave S. To learn more, you can read the staff report online at http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2009-meetings/20090220/Docs/HPC_Chapter599Revisions.pdf or contact Brian Schaffer at 673-2670 or brian.schaffer@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.
- 5) Animal Care and Control staff proposed an ordinance change that would have prevented all transfers of all dogs declared either dangerous or potentially dangerous. I was concerned that this went too far, having known of animals whose behavior improves after a positive change to their environment. I pushed through an amendment that allows AC&C staff to control whether a transfer is granted, along with a staff direction requiring them to report back in a year on how many people have applied for transfers, whether the transfer was allowed and what happened to the dog in question.
- 6) Hennepin County is working on a plan to rework the intersection of Franklin, East River Parkway and 27th Ave SE. My office is following this closely, and I encourage SNG to be involved.
- 7) I am convening a special City Council Study session on March 13 on The Cradle to Prison Pipeline. Marian Wright Edleman, president and founder of the Children's Defense Fund will address Council Members and Mayors of Minneapolis and St. Paul as well as Minneapolis School Board Members and Park Board Members and share strategies for how we can better develop policies that can change the patterns that drive too many of our poorer youth towards violence, crime and incarceration.
- 8) The automatic taxi fare formula that the Council put in place to ensure that fares would keep pace with inflation has had an unforeseen consequence: fares are slated to decrease by about 15%. I have heard understandable concerns about this from taxi companies and taxi drivers who live in the Ward, and I agree that this was not the Council's intent. I am working with Licensing staff to find a solution for this problem.
- 9) I helped push the City to formally support an incredibly important bill to change the Minnesota marriage laws called the Marriage and Family Protection Act. If enacted, Minnesota will no longer discriminate against GLBT members of our community by preventing them from marrying their partners of choice. I'm proud that the City is out front on this. To see the bill, go here: www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/bin/bldbill.php?bill=S0120.0.html&session=ls86.
- 10) I am supporting a recommendation by the City's Public Health Advisory Committee to create a task force to study what role the City can play in reducing binge drinking. Despite what has been reported on WCCO, City Pages and elsewhere, there is no proposal to "ban happy hour" in Minneapolis. If there was, I would not support it. I am interested in exploring effective ways we could reduce the negative health effects of binge drinking.
- 11) Seward Longfellow Healthy Seniors, along with Southeast Seniors and Nokomis Healthy Seniors, is receiving a \$67,500 Community Development Block Grant through the City, to continue their good work on fostering elder-friendly communities.
- 12) On Saturday, March 28th, from 10am-3pm, the South Minneapolis Housing & Home Improvement Fair will take place at South High School, 3131 19th Ave S. The Fair is free and open to the public, and promotes home improvement, project financing, city living, and local neighborhood involvement. An updated list of Housing Fair seminars and presenters for 2009 can be found at www.housingfair.org.
- 13) There are openings on the Minneapolis Charter Commission (closes 3/06), Civil Rights Commission (closes 2/27) and Latino Advisory Committee (closes 2/27). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.