

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Southeast Como, 3-4-08

Cam's next Southeast Como Office Hours:
Tuesday, March 11, 9:30-11:00am
SECIA Office, 837 15th Ave SE

Items:

- 1) March Roundtable Reminder: University District Partnership Alliance
- 2) Maximum Occupancy
- 3) Alliance Demonstration Projects
- 4) NRP
- 5) Rental Conversion Inspection and Fee
- 6) Lighting Policy
- 7) Vacant Building Registration
- 8) Produce in Grocery Stores
- 9) DeLaSalle AstroTurf
- 10) Ranked Choice Voting Rules Ordinance
- 11) 2008 Climate Change Grants
- 12) 2008 Anti-Graffiti Grants
- 13) Bridge 9 Extension
- 14) BPA and Phthalates
- 15) Target Center Green Roof
- 16) Environmental Remediation Grants for Van Cleve Court
- 17) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) Please join me for my next **Ward 2 Roundtable: The University District Partnership Alliance: What is it? What will it do? Monday, March 17, 7-9 pm at Van Cleve Park, 901 15th Ave SE.**
- 2) On March 21, I will introduce an ordinance to change the maximum occupancy regulations in Minneapolis. My goal is threefold: 1) to make maximum occupancy regulations fairer, by treating all adults the same, regardless of their "relatedness;" 2) to address discrepancies between the zoning and housing safety codes; and 3) to tie the number of occupants in a dwelling unit to the size of the unit. My hope is to create consistent, more effectively enforceable and fairer standards that focus on maintaining healthy, safe housing for Minneapolis residents.

My current plan (which is, of course, open to change) will establish a uniform citywide cap of five legal adults per dwelling unit and stipulate that any sized unit is allowed to hold up to two adults. It will also establish occupancy limits within that range based on the square footage of individual units with each adult requiring a certain number of square feet. Basing the number on square footage will help take away the drive to carve up common space into bedrooms because such actions would not increase the occupancy of a unit. I also plan to prohibit property owners from increasing the occupancy of a unit by adding square footage. In some cases, this change will lead to an increase in occupancy of a given unit. In many cases, the occupancy limit will remain the same, and in some cases it will be reduced. I will also be adding a requirement that landlords disclose to renters the maximum occupancy of each unit and keep a form signed by tenants on file stating that tenants have received this information. The specific maximum number of adults that can live in each unit will also be clearly posted with each rental license.

After the subject is introduced it will be referred to the Public Safety and Regulatory Services and the Zoning and Planning Committees. I anticipate that it will take some months before the language is finalized and ready for a public hearing. I welcome thoughts and questions and will share more specific information as it is developed.

- 3) The UDPA Demonstration Project Team, which I am leading, has received 28 good ideas for Alliance demonstration projects, to be completed by January 2009. We are currently deciding which project(s) to recommend to the Alliance Steering Committee, with the hope that work can start by early May.
 - 4) I am working with my colleagues, especially Council Member Benson, to meet Legislative committee deadlines coming up in March, to get the legislature to extend the Common Project pre-1979 Tax Increment Financing districts (those that currently fund NRP) to provide funding to support a Phase 3 NRP program. I hope that we can convince the rest of my colleagues to publicly support this action, which would give needed direction to our legislative delegation on NRP, and could be what is needed to extend the life of this highly successful program.

- 5) The Council has passed an ordinance requiring an initial housing inspection of every rental unit that changes ownership or transitions to rental from homeownership, and charging a fee for these inspections. The conversion fee is \$1,000. This action accomplishes a number of important goals: 1) it ensures that every newly converted rental unit is up to code, protecting tenant safety; 2) it gives a financial disincentive to convert a homesteaded property to rental, helping to slow the rate of conversion. I strongly supported this initiative.
- 6) The Council has rejected the staff proposal to add a new "lighting fee" to pay for pedestrian-level lighting. Instead, pedestrian lighting will be added to major reconstruction projects unless a majority of property owners opt out, and will continue to use an opt-in petition process for non-reconstruction lighting installations, with a clearer, more streamlined assessment process.
- 7) The City has changed the vacant building registration fee from \$2,000 to \$6,000, to help cover our costs in dealing with vacant and boarded properties (which can be substantial) and to help encourage owners of vacant buildings to do something with them.
- 8) Last week, the Council passed an amendment to our regulations of grocery stores that included a requirement I have been fighting hard for: that all grocery stores in Minneapolis will have at least five varieties of fresh produce. This seemingly obvious regulation (which my office has heard, surprisingly, is extremely uncommon in other cities) will help increase access to fresh, healthy foods for all Minneapolitans. It will also help the City get a handle on some of the worst convenience stores in neighborhoods.
- 9) I led the successful opposition to the Park Board and De LaSalle High School's attempt to install artificial plastic "AstroTurf" on their proposed stadium. I was concerned about its toxicity, especially of the substrate "tire crumb" material, and did not believe it met the guidelines for historic appropriateness that the Council had to find. In the end, the Park Board withdrew their application. This field will be natural grass.
- 10) Working with Council Member Glidden, I will also be giving notice on Friday of my intent to introduce an ordinance establishing vote counting rules and procedures for Ranked Choice Voting elections. At a meeting of the Elections Committee tomorrow, I plan to call for a Request For Proposals for election equipment and/or services that will allow Minneapolis to implement Ranked Choice Voting in 2009.
- 11) I encourage SECIA to participate in the 2008 Climate Change Grants. There are two grant amounts available (with no match required), \$1,500 or \$10,000. Application deadline: 4:00 pm on Thursday March 20. For an application and more information, go to: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/ClimateChangeGrants_home.asp
- 12) I also encourage SECIA to apply for a 2008 anti-graffiti grant. Up to \$10,000 will be made available for projects that incorporate landscaping, murals and other innovative approaches. For a grant application, go to: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/graffiti/GraffitiMicroGrants.asp>. An informational meeting will take place at **1pm, Wednesday, March 5, at the City of Lakes Building, 309 2nd Ave S, Room 203**. You can also submit questions to graffiti@ci.minneapolis.mn.us, or fax them to 673-2250.
- 13) Last month, I convinced my colleagues to make a significant investment of up to \$1.2 million in the City's bike infrastructure to ensure that, as part of the new 35W bridge, there will be a tunnel will allow the City to construct an extension of the bicycle and pedestrian path over Bridge 9 into downtown. When it's finished (several years from now), this trail will allow bikes and pedestrians to much better use Bridge 9 to get from Downtown to the West Bank, the U, Southeast and even Northeast.
- 14) Last week, the Council unanimously supported a resolution I authored supporting bills in the State Legislature that would phase out Bisphenol-A and phthalates (known endocrine disruptors and suspected carcinogens used in certain plastics) in children's products. This has also gone onto the City's Legislative Agenda.
- 15) The Council has decided to go out for bids on constructing what could be the second largest green roof in the country, on top of the Target Center. I made the motion in committee to focus only on options that included green roof components. We will receive these bids back this fall.
- 16) The City has received environmental remediation grants, including \$156,780 for the Van Cleve Court project.
- 17) There are openings on Minneapolis Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners (closes 3/21/2008). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.