

# Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the Prospect Park East River Road Neighborhood, 2-23-08

Cam's next Prospect Park Office Hours:  
Pratt School, March 17, 9:30-11am

## Items:

- 1) March Roundtable: "Our Parks, Our Schools, Our City"
- 2) Heritage Preservation Public Meeting
- 3) Charter Amendments
- 4) 2009 Budget
- 5) Alternative City Financing
- 6) Southeast Seniors Grant
- 7) Pension Reform
- 8) Cradle to Prison Pipeline Study Session
- 9) City Wins IRV Lawsuit
- 10) Binge Drinking
- 11) Central Corridor Community Summit
- 12) Redistricting Process
- 13) Marriage & Family Protection Act
- 14) Unpaved Alleys
- 15) Housing & Home Improvement Fair
- 16) Openings on 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) Responding to concerns from PPERRIA and other 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](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](mailto:brian.schaffer@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).
- 3) I oppose the proposal by Council Members Ostrow, Remington and Samuels to scrap the independent Park Board, and plan to vote against putting it on the ballot this fall. I am also concerned about putting the proposal to eliminate the Board of Estimate and Taxation and the proposal to create a City Administrator, on the ballot. All three proposals would benefit from a larger community discussion. The current timeline is that CM Ostrow will bring the amendments before the Charter Commission on March 4, before they formally come before the Council.
- 4) Under the Governor's budget proposal, Minneapolis would be cut by \$17 million in 2009 and an additional \$18 million in 2010. This represents a nearly 40% permanent cut to Minneapolis. To put that cut in context, \$35 million is equal to Minneapolis' entire budget for all street and bridge maintenance and repairs, traffic operations, street lighting and maintenance of our malls and plazas. In a worsening jobs climate with dramatic increases in unemployment, this is exactly the wrong direction to go. These proposals reinforce the need to make significant changes to our budget in 2009. The Mayor presented a new 2009 budget to the Council today, aiming to solve some of the above problems. Some of his more controversial proposals include enacting the Commercial Registration fee and a new street lighting fee of \$8 per parcel, in an effort to increase revenues. The Council expects to adopt a revised budget on March 11.
- 5) The Council has directed our staff to study the fiscal relationship between the City and the State, including: 1) our current Local Government Aid (LGA) appropriation as compared to the LGA appropriation from 1998-2009 and 2) Data regarding sales tax, income tax and property tax generated within the City of Minneapolis from 1998-2009. Based on this information, staff is to come up with recommended alternatives to our current dependency on LGA from the state. These could include scrapping the current LGA system and retaining more of the sales or income tax revenues generated within the City. I strongly support studying these options, given the damage done to Minneapolis by the State budget processes over the past decade.

- 6) Southeast Seniors, along with Longfellow Seward Healthy 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.
- 7) The Council has voted to put reform of the closed Minneapolis pensions on our Legislative Agenda. As I reported last month, the investment decisions of some closed pension funds have created a situation in which the City is expected to pay out up to \$38 million over the next five years to meet our pension obligations. The City will be asking the Legislature to merge these closed pensions into other statewide pension funds, creating better oversight and reducing costs to the City.
- 8) 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.
- 9) The City, supported by FairVote Minnesota, has won the lawsuit regarding Ranked Choice Voting. Hennepin County Judge McGunnigle clearly and forcefully rejected all of the plaintiff's claims, including that Ranked Choice Voting is unconstitutional and that the City is preempted by State law. This is a great vindication for those of us who strongly support ranked choice elections. However, the Voters Alliance has appealed this decision. They have agreed to an expedited review directly to the Supreme Court (bypassing the Court of Appeals). The Council's Elections Committee has voted to move ahead on a "dual track" process, preparing for both our first ranked choice election this fall and, if absolutely necessary, a standard primary and general election.
- 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) I invite PERRIA to participate in the Central Corridor Community Summit on March 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, at the Central Corridor Resource Center, 1080 University Avenue W in Saint Paul. For more information and an event schedule, contact Carol Swenson, District Councils Collaborative of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, 651-249-6877 or [carol@dcc-stpaul-mpls.org](mailto:carol@dcc-stpaul-mpls.org).
- 12) I am working with Council Member Benson on amending the charter to change the process by which we determine our ward boundaries, something we are required to do every ten years. We are looking at what other cities do and working to identify a simpler, fairer and more transparent process than what currently is called for in the charter.
- 13) 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](http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/bin/bldbill.php?bill=S0120.0.html&session=ls86).
- 14) Public Works has prepared a report on how the City might address paving of remaining unpaved residential alleys, including a few alleys in Prospect Park. If the Council adopts the report and recommendations, a program will be introduced into the 5-year Capital Improvement Program, for construction starting in 2014. This would be the first year of a 10 year program under which the City would pave about eight alleys per year. Staff is also recommending that the City explore vacating some alleys, which will require shared use agreements between users to ensure continued access. For more information see the report to Council here: [http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2009-meetings/20090206/docs/Unpaved\\_Residential\\_Alleys\\_REPORT.pdf](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2009-meetings/20090206/docs/Unpaved_Residential_Alleys_REPORT.pdf)
- 15) On Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, from 10am-3pm, the South Minneapolis Housing & Home Improvement Fair will take place at South High School, 3131 19<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.housingfair.org).
- 16) There are openings on the Latino Advisory Committee (closes 2/27), Civil Rights Commission (closes 2/27), and Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners (Closes 2/13). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).