



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood 1-26-11

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

Items:

- 1) Mobile Food Vending
- 2) Loan to Touchstone
- 3) Snow
- 4) Urban Agriculture Plan
- 5) Summer Jobs for Teens
- 6) Bicycle Advisory Committee
- 7) Solar Energy Systems
- 8) New Drainage Regulations
- 9) 311 Anniversary
- 10) Department 5-Year Plans
- 11) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) The Mobile Food Vending ordinance that passed last year is being reopened for revisions. As you may recall, the ordinance was only open to vendors in downtown Minneapolis. During that discussion, I heard from a number of small businesses that they would be interested in having the more parts of Minneapolis included in any possible expansion. Before March of this year, we have the opportunity to discuss whether to expand the mobile vending ordinance to cover the West Bank. It is also possible that, as part of this change, mobile vendors could operate from parking spaces, rather than just on sidewalks and in commercial parking lots. I am asking that the Longfellow Community Coalition and Longfellow Business Association provide input on both whether to allow mobile vending in Longfellow and what sorts of specific regulations should be put in place. Among the specific questions I'd like input on:

- Should mobile vending be allowed only on sidewalks and in commercial parking lots, or in on-street parking spaces as well?
- Should mobile vending be allowed adjacent to residential uses, or only commercially or institutionally zoned lots?
- Should there be a limit on the number of mobile vendors allowed per commercial parking lot?
- Should mobile vending be allowed near events?
- Should there be a limit on the proximity of mobile vendors to other sidewalk uses, such as sidewalk cafes?
- What limits should be put in place on hours of operation for mobile vendors?
- Should mobile vendors be required to be open a certain number of days per year (as they are in downtown)?

- 2) The Council has awarded a \$400,000 loan from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to the Touchstone Mental Health project that is part of the Seward Commons redevelopment.
- 3) This winter has been one for the record books. In response, the city has declared Winter Parking Restrictions, which prohibit parking on the even side of all Non-snow-Emergency routes until enough snow thaws to allow good access to all residential streets. Please help your neighbors comply with these restrictions, and with any further Snow Emergencies that are declared. Thank you for your patience and help as we get through this snowier-than-usual winter.

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

Deaf and hard-of-hearing persons may call 311 or 612-673-3000. TTY users may call 612-673-2157 or 612-673-2626.

Attention: If you want help translating this information in language other than Hmong, Spanish or Somali, call 311

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.

- 4) The draft Urban Agriculture Topical Plan has been released. This is a major step forward in the work of Homegrown Minneapolis and I am very excited to see it coming forward. The plan recommends some significant policy changes such as allowing commercial growing of food in Minneapolis and allowing more community gardens. You can view the draft plan here: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/urban_ag_plan.asp. Comments can be submitted until January 31st. There will be a public hearing on the plan in February at the Planning Commission.
- 5) Teenagers can start applying now for the Minneapolis STEP-UP Program. All Minneapolis youth, ages 14-21, are eligible to apply. The program trains and places youth in paid internships at local businesses. Youth selected for STEP-UP must attend work readiness training in April to be considered for a summer position. Earn \$7.25 to more than \$10.00 per hour and work part-time for up to nine weeks during the summer. Applications will be accepted from now until February 4, 2011. Call 612-673-5041 for more information or see the website (www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/stepup.asp) for more information.
- 6) I have appointed longtime cyclist and Seward resident **Bob Hain** to be the Ward 2 representative on the new Bicycle Advisory Committee (or BAC). Bob has been active on the previous BAC for several years, as well as participating in various ways in the Seward Neighborhood Group. It was a difficult decision, because there were four great applicants from the Second Ward, including three past or current BAC participants. I look forward to working with Bob as the new group gets underway.
- 7) The City Council is considering changes to our zoning code that would add regulations to Solar Energy Systems. I successfully moved to postpone this amendment for two weeks at the Zoning and Planning Committee in order to get more time to gather input on the proposed standards. The proposal would provide greater clarity for City staff as well as solar installers and property owners; set standards for building-mounted and freestanding (i.e., ground-mounted) systems; clarify that solar access easements may be purchased from nearby property owners, consistent with state statute, and; require that the City Planning Commission, when evaluating new development projects, consider whether requests for increased allowable building height would result in shadowing of existing solar energy systems. I am generally supportive of these changes and very supportive of making solar energy more viable for homes and businesses, but want to make sure these changes help, and do not hinder, more use of solar energy in Minneapolis.
- 8) Environmental Services staff have proposed a new ordinance that would better regulate stormwater, including snow melt, to help prevent it from damaging adjacent properties. The proposal would establish clear drainage standards for construction activity and grading, snow melt from snow storage, sump pumps and downspouts and create penalties including administrative citations, assessments, license revocation and stop work orders. This proposal, which has been approved, with my support, by the Regulatory Energy and Environment Committee, would centralize accountability for enforcement within Regulatory Services.
- 9) This month, Minneapolis 311 marks its fifth anniversary. Since it opened in 2006 it has logged more than 2 million calls. Each 311 customer service agent answers an average of 100+ calls a day. Roughly seven out of every 10 calls to 311 are for information. In 2006, call volume averaged about 1,043 calls a day. Today, call volume is more than 1500 calls per day. Within that same time period, first-call resolution (calls that are resolved at the 311 center without transferring), has jumped from 60 percent to more than 85 percent. Minneapolis 311 makes access to City services and information easier and helps improve accountability by creating a central source for measuring departments performance. Calls are answered on weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. In addition, requests to 311 can be made via e-mail and self service options at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/311/>
- 10) For the next six weeks, each City department will be presenting its five-year business plan to City Council committees. This is a great opportunity to see department goals, performance measures and upcoming plans. So far I have heard reports for the Health and Family Services, Police, Intergovernmental Relations and Regulatory Services departments. I think these are very useful for the Council, staff and city residents alike to help us understand how departments prioritize services, effectively manage resources and measure progress. Departments create business plans with a five-year perspective but update them annually. The last plans were for 2007 to 2011 and these will run to 2014. Departments are presenting their business plans to their home Council Committee, and will be available on committee agendas as they come forward. Let me know if you are interested in a particular plan and I can send it to you.
- 11) There are openings on the Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Public Health Advisory Committee, Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, Thinc. Green Joint Powers Committee, and Zoning Board of Adjustment. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.