

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood, 2-28-07

**Cam's next Seward Office Hours:
Tuesday, March 27, 9:30-11:00am
Birchwood Café, 3311 E 25th St**

Items:

- 1) Library Merger meetings
- 2) East Lake Library Opening
- 3) Discussion at Saint Martin's Table
- 4) Pedestrian/Bicyclist Survey
- 5) Condo Conversion ordinance
- 6) Antiwar resolution
- 7) Seward Coop development
- 8) Comprehensive Plan Review
- 9) Community Benefits Agreements Study Session
- 10) Circus Reform
- 11) New Fire Chief James Clack
- 12) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) Two library advisory groups are wrapping up their deliberations on a possible merger of the Minneapolis and Hennepin County library systems. Representatives of the City, Library Board and County will discuss why a merger is being considered and what changes a unified system might bring at a series of upcoming meetings:

- Thursday, March 1, 7 - 8:30 pm, Walker Library, 2880 Hennepin Ave
- Saturday, March 3, 10 - 11:30 am, North Regional Library, 1315 Lowry Ave N
- Monday, March 5, 6:30 - 8 pm, Minneapolis Central Library, 300 Nicollet Mall
- Thursday, March 8, 7 - 8:30 pm, Nokomis Library, 5100 34th Ave S

This is a very serious decision that will have long term consequences for our city for generations to come. It is essential that questions and concerns about this proposal be brought up quickly. There appears to be strong support for this idea from the County Board, the City Council and Mayor and the Library Board. Though no Council committee has formally reviewed the work of the advisory groups so far, there is growing support for turning the Minneapolis system over to the County. I have concerns that we, as a community and as a Council, are not taking the necessary time to study, consider and discuss alternatives. If turning our public libraries over to the County is the alternative that will be chosen, I think that it is very important that we make certain that the people of Minneapolis get the best deal possible in the transaction. This may mean that more discussion and creative thinking is required, and that a rush to agreement is unwise. If you care about the library system and have ideas or concerns about this, please get involved. For more information, please go here:

<http://www.mplib.org/shapemplsfuture.asp> or

<http://hclib.org/pub/info/futureoflibraries/Guiding%20Principles%20ADOPTED.htm>

- 2) The newly renovated East Lake Library (2727 E. Lake S) will be re-opening March 3. There will be grand opening celebration Saturday from 1 – 6 PM.
- 3) Join me, at St. Martin's Table, 2001 Riverside Ave, Saturday, March 10, 10:00 – 11:30 AM, for a discussion sponsored by St. Martins Table's Weekend Events, about current and pending city issues and my role as the sole Green Party Council Member. Learn about the results of the 2006 Second Ward Survey, my accomplishments of 2006 and plans for 2007.
- 4) The Department of Public works held a Pedestrian/Bicyclist Open House last week. 125 attendees filled out surveys on problems and possible improvements to the current Minneapolis ped/bike system. If you're interested in filling out a survey online, please go here:
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=196693372440>
- 5) The Condo Conversion ordinance I sponsored failed on a 7-6 vote. I am disappointed that the Council missed our chance to gather better data on condo conversions, protect condo buyers and preserve affordable housing in Minneapolis. I hope that the extremely close vote in the Council has made the Realtor's Association more open to talking to affordable housing advocates than they have been in the past.
- 6) I co-authored a resolution calling for the immediate cessation of the war in Iraq with my colleague Ralph Remington. I'm proud that we got this passed without a single no vote (though several CMs declined to vote).
- 7) Seward Coop's redevelopment of the old Riverside Market site will be coming before the Planning Commission on March 26th. I am working with City Staff, Seward Redesign and the Coop to negotiate the outstanding development review issues, especially making sure that the alley to the south of the site can continue to support City vehicle use.
- 8) There will be a public outreach and engagement process starting in late March on the upcoming review and rewrite of the City's Comprehensive Plan, *the Minneapolis Plan*. I will give you more details when I have them.
- 9) I coordinated and led a City Council Study Session on Community Benefits Agreements (CBA) with the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability on February second. We heard from outside experts, city staff and from neighborhood group staff and activists about three case studies where CBAs are being developed. This helped improve my and my colleagues' understanding of this promising new tool to ensure that communities benefit from development projects.
- 10) I will be supporting an ordinance that my colleague Ralph Remington will likely introduce soon, prohibiting circuses from bringing wild animals such as elephants and tigers into Minneapolis. The purpose of this ordinance is to protect human and animal health and safety.
- 11) Last Friday, the Council unanimously appointed James Clack to serve as Fire Chief for a year, finishing the term of former Chief Bleskachek.
- 12) There are openings on the Charter Commission, the Empowerment Zone Board, the Housing Board of Appeals, the Latino Advisory Committee, the Public Health Advisory Committee, the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority Board and the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.