

News from Cam Gordon
Minneapolis City Council Member, Second Ward
June 2009
<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/ward2/>

Downtown Garbage Burner. Covanta energy, on behalf of Hennepin County Environmental Services, has submitted an application to amend their existing conditional use permit for their downtown garbage burner, known as the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC). They are asking to be allowed to burn an average of 212 more tons of garbage a day. The maximum allowed now is 1000 tons. So this is a 21 percent increase and could amount to over 77,000 more tons a year. This matter will be before the Planning Commission for a public hearing and a decision on **June 8th**. Planning staff are recommending approval. If the Planning Commission decision is appealed it will go to the city Council's Zoning and Planning committee and then to the full Council. If this does come to the Council on appeal, I am bound to withhold a final decision until the committee meeting and to base it on the public record. So, while I will be careful not to make a final decision prematurely, I will also be very careful to encourage and heed any and all information and views provided and I will help make sure that they are made part of the public record. If you have questions that you would like to ask planning staff or if you have comments or information you would like entered into the public record you can contact Kimberly Holien, City Planner at 612 673-2402 or at kimberly.holien@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

NCEC Elections and Public Meeting. The new Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC) is being formed to help guide future neighborhood revitalization efforts and the City's new Neighborhood and Community Relations Department. That commission has 7 seats appointed by Mayor and City Council, one appointed by the Park Board and 8 elected neighborhood seats. The 8 neighborhood seats will come from 8 districts that the city has been divided into. All the neighborhoods of Ward 2 are in District 8. Neighborhood groups are being asked to choose a representative elector who will vote for the District 8 seat on the commission. More information on the voting process will soon be available on the City of Minneapolis website. There will be a citywide meeting on **June 16th, 6 pm, at Van Cleve Park**, to meet the candidates, including the 5 candidates for District 8. The meeting will be moderated by the League of Women Voters and is open to all city residents. The goal of this election process is to have the 8 elected members of the NCEC in place by June 23rd, the next scheduled meeting of the full NCEC. In the meantime, if you have questions about the election process, or the NCEC in general, please contact David Rubedor, Neighborhood and Community Relations, City of Minneapolis, 612-673-3129.

Homegrown Minneapolis. The Homegrown Minneapolis report is being finalized. You can read the recommendations here: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/homegrown-home.asp>. The report will come before the Health, Energy and Environment committee on **June 15th**. I'm the lead author of a resolution that we hope to pass the same day, putting the City on record supporting healthy, sustainably and locally-grown foods, and creating an implementation task force within the City that will be charged with putting the Homegrown recommendations into action.

Future Funding for Neighborhoods TIF Plan up for review and approval. The proposal to establish a new tax increment financing (TIF) district to help pay off Target Center debt and fund neighborhood revitalization activities will be coming up for review, possible amendments and final approval this summer. The Plan can be found at http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/Consolidated_Redevelopment_TIF_Plan.asp. The plan calls for a Consolidated Redevelopment TIF District to be established in accordance with the legislation many of us worked hard to get passed in 2008. I am a strong supporter of the TIF district and believe that it is essential to future funding of neighborhood controlled planning and revitalization efforts. I support funding Target Center debt relief, (which will lighten the load on property tax payers) and neighborhood revitalization equally and will fight hard to ensure the neighborhoods get their share. The district will be comprised of all of the property currently

located within 15 existing TIF districts that are due to terminate on August 1, 2009. Maps and a list of parcels that are in the District are included in the TIF Plan. The TIF Plan is being reviewed by the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners, the Minneapolis Board of Education, the City Planning Commission, neighborhood organizations and other interested parties. The official public hearing for this will likely be at the Community Development Committee on **Tuesday, July 21** at 1:30 pm in Room 317 City Hall. The City Council is expected to consider the proposed plan on Friday, July 31, 2009. The Council can approve, amend or reject the proposed plan.

Comments are due by noon July 20 to be part of the official record. If you or your organization would like to meet to discuss the Consolidated TIF District, if you would like paper copies of the TIF Plan, or if you have any questions, you can contact me or Jeff Streder, at (612) 673-5130 jeffrey.streder@ci.minneapolis.mn.us

Civil Rights Community Social. The MN Council on American-Islamic Relations, the League of Minnesota Human Rights, the Minneapolis Civil Rights Commission, the Minneapolis Urban League and the Sabathani Community Center are sponsoring a discussion **on How to Save the Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights**, Thursday, **June 11, 2009 from 6- 8 pm at the Brian Coyle Community Center** at 420 15th Av S in Minneapolis. The event is a response to a recent proposal that I oppose to eliminate the Civil Rights Department's complaint investigation division. The event will include poetry, food, short speeches, a community discussion and an action plan on how to save the Department. For more information contact A. Lori Saroya at 651-645-7102 or Cheryl Morgan Spencer at 612-302-3125.

Civil Rights Task Force public meeting. The advisory group established by the City Council to make recommendations about possible budget cuts to the Civil Rights department, that could include eliminating the complaints division mentioned above, has scheduled a public forum, sponsored by the department and the Minneapolis Commission on Civil Rights, on Saturday **June 13, 2009 from 2-4pm at the Sabathani Community Center**, located at 310 E 38th St. The Civil Rights department is one of the City's smaller departments but manages three important divisions that I think should all be preserved and improved even in difficult financial times. They are: the Civilian Review Authority that investigates complaints about police misconduct; the Complaint Investigations Division that investigates reports of discriminatory practices against members of protected classes; and the Contract Compliance Division that enforces employment and purchasing goals for women and minorities on all City-funded construction.

New 2nd Precinct Inspector Named. Police Chief Tim Dolan has named Lt. Bryan Schafer to replace Inspector Bob Skomra as the new commander at the Second Precinct. I will be meeting with Bryan soon to discuss ways we can work together and begin building positive partnerships with neighborhood and business groups in the precinct. I welcome your suggestions. I thank Inspector Skomra for his years of outstanding service to the City and wish him the best in his retirement. I am excited about Lt Schafer's coming to the 2nd Precinct. I have worked with him on the Youth Violence Prevention Steering Committee where he has been a capable and effective member. He was most recently commander of the Juvenile Unit and has done a superb job of rebuilding the Juvenile Division and contributing to our reductions in youth violence and juvenile crime.

Franklin, East River Pkwy, 27th Ave SE. There will be an open house on **June 9th, from 6:30-8:30pm, at St. Francis Cabrini Church**, 1500 SE Franklin, to share some of the proposed reconstruction options for the intersection of SE Franklin, East River Pkwy, and 27th Ave SE. These options include several different types of roundabout and the creation of a new signalized intersection at Thornton and SE Franklin. I am very interested in ensuring that, as we try to reduce wait times for traffic at this intersection, we also take into consideration the impact of the design on pedestrians, bicyclists, and near neighbors.

Zoning, Planning, Regulatory Review (ZPRR) Report. The joint City/neighborhood ZPRR committee is bringing forward a report to Council. It includes a proposed ordinance establishing a University Area zoning overlay district, and requiring .5 parking spaces per bedroom for all new

residential buildings constructed in the district. There is a public meeting to discuss this proposal and other outcomes of the ZPRR committee, tentatively scheduled for June 24th.

Bike Lane Meetings. Public Works staff has scheduled a meeting for **June 10th**, from **6-7pm** at Augsburg College's Oren Gateway Center (2211 Riverside Ave), to discuss the plans for bike lanes on **Minnehaha** from 31st St E, continuing up **20th Ave S**, then up **19th Ave S** across the **10th Ave bridge**, and following **10th Ave SE** up to Como Ave SE. It will be preceded by a bike ride along the length of the planned route. Attendees should meet at the intersection of Riverside Avenue and 20th Avenue at 5:15 pm, next to the old North Country Co-op on the southwest corner. Staff has also scheduled a meeting for **June 18, 6:30pm** at St. Francis Cabrini Church, 1500 SE Franklin, to discuss the planned bike lanes on **27th Ave SE**. This meeting will also be preceded by a bike ride, meeting at 5:45pm at the southwest corner of the intersection of Franklin, 27th and East River Pkwy. These are the first of the Non-Motorized Transportation Program bike infrastructure projects to move forward in the Second Ward. Other Second Ward NTP projects include bike lanes on Riverside and Franklin Ave, the University of Minnesota trail, and bike lanes on Como Ave SE.

Open House on Changes to Interstate 94. Preliminary recommendations for Interstate 94 improvements between St. Paul and Minneapolis will be announced at an open house scheduled for **June 23, 5 - 8 pm at Van Cleve Park**, 901 15th Ave SE. Conceptual layouts and other exhibits will be on display and representatives from the Minnesota Department of Transportation will be available to answer questions; there will be no formal presentation. Attendees will have an opportunity to submit written comments. The recommendations are based on a draft study of I-94 between St. Peter Street in St. Paul and Highway 55 in Minneapolis that explored a variety of managed lane strategies in the corridor. A managed lane offers an advantage for transit and carpools and can be used to allow single-occupant vehicles the choice to pay a toll for a congestion-free trip. For information about the I-94 Managed Lanes Study, go to <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/i94study>.

Bike Education Classes. The City's Bike Walk Ambassador Program is starting their Bike Education series. In the wake of the recent bicycle fatality downtown, many people are concerned about their safety while biking. The Ambassadors are excited to offer these classes to help bicyclists improve their skills and confidence, and learn from certified and trained Bicycle Instructors. Go here to find dates for courses, and to register online: <http://www.bikewalktwincities.org/ambassadors/registration.html>. Attendees must possess a driver's license. Please register ASAP- Class size is limited to 8 people.

Results Minneapolis. As part of our ongoing effort to better measure and report on the performance of City departments, we've launched a new Results Minneapolis website, where you can track and watch in a dynamic way how we're doing on key measures. Check it out online at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/results. The site focuses on the City's performance in six key service areas: public safety, education, neighborhood conditions, housing & economic development, resident health and the environment.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) has now reached Minnesota, with the first case discovered in Saint Paul. EAB is an invasive pest that attacks ash trees and could cause serious damage to Minneapolis' urban forest. You can play a part in delaying and minimizing the spread of this invasive species. Since EAB adults can't fly far, its spread is largely due to people moving ash logs, ash firewood or infested ash trees from nurseries. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has issued a state quarantine on firewood, ash trees, and ash tree products in Hennepin County. This prohibits moving the following items out of the county:

- firewood from hardwood (non-coniferous) species,
- entire ash trees,
- ash limbs and branches,

- ash logs or untreated ash lumber with bark attached, and
- uncomposted ash chips and uncomposted ash bark chips larger than two inches in diameter.

Take steps to keep EAB from spreading:

- **Don't transport firewood, even within Minnesota.** Don't bring firewood along on a camping trip. Buy or harvest your wood near the area where you're going to burn the wood. If you are buying firewood, ask where it came from. Avoid moving firewood from its area of origination; don't bring extra wood home with you. In Minneapolis, firewood dealers are required to be licensed by the City, so ask firewood peddlers for their City license.
- **Don't buy or move firewood from outside your area.** If someone comes to your door selling firewood, ask them about the source of the wood.
- **Watch for signs of infestation in your ash trees.** The earlier that EAB is found, the sooner it can be addressed. Residents should also examine ash trees in their neighborhood for tree canopy thinning or small "D" shaped exit holes left in the bark by EAB.

If you suspect your ash tree could be infested by EAB, visit www.mda.state.mn.us/invasives/eab and use the "Do I Have Emerald Ash Borer?" checklist. Residents who suspect that a tree is infested with EAB can also contact the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's "Arrest the Pest" Hotline: 651-201-6684.

Please Help Water Trees. May went down in the weather history books as one of the driest on record, so the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's (MPRB) Forestry Division is encouraging residents to water their boulevard trees, especially those planted this spring. A simple trick for remembering is to water your tree on the day your trash is picked up. The best way to water a new tree is to use a garden hose with the water turned on at a slow rate for two hours. Let the water soak into the ground to a depth of 18 inches. This is where 90 percent of a tree's roots grow. If a garden hose is not available, 20 gallons of water will properly soak a new tree. Try to water the same amount at each watering.

Alarm Systems. Be wary of door-to-door home alarm sales efforts. Offers that include free alarm equipment can easily cost you thousands of dollars in the long run. A home alarm system can be a good idea for some homeowners, but it's important to make sure you understand all the costs that could be involved. In some cases, there are hidden installation fees associated with new alarm systems. All companies charge monthly monitoring fees which can range from \$30 to \$50 or more. Depending on the deal, homeowners can be locked into a servicing contract for three to five years. The alarm company may also require you to give them a checking or credit card account number for monthly billing. In addition, alarm users are required to pay for false alarms in Minneapolis. On the first false alarm call, residents are assessed a registration fee of \$30. The second alarm in a year costs \$100, and the charge goes up \$100 for each one after that. Poor-quality alarm systems could trigger false alarms on their own, making the resident pay this cost again and again.

National Night Out is coming up fast, and now is the time to start making preparations on your block for the night that brings neighbors together. This year, National Night Out is **Tuesday, August 4**. Online registration for National Night Out is now available. From requesting a street closure for your party to accessing materials and flyers for your event, this is the one place you need to go. Simply log on to <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/nno/> and follow the onscreen instructions. You can also register and get more information by calling 311. Remember, if you register by July 14th you will be entered into a drawing for prizes donated by area businesses that you can distribute at your party!

Second Ward Heritage Preservation Awards. Two great initiatives have won preservation awards from the Heritage Preservation Commission, the Minneapolis Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and Preserve Minneapolis. The Seward History Walk won in the Community Education and Advocacy category, and Bluff Street Park won in the “Good Luck and Godspeed” category. Congratulations to Seward Neighborhood Group, the Seward History Committee, Bluff Street Task Force, and two individuals in particular, Rosemary Knutson and Dick Westby, for this well-deserved recognition.

Ranked Choice Voting. The last opportunity for the Council to decide not to use ranked choice voting in this November’s election is fast approaching. The presumption is that we are moving forward, unless the Council certifies, by ordinance, that we are not prepared to implement the system this election. Council President Johnson has given intent of an ordinance that would do just that. I plan to vote against the introduction of the ordinance, and vote against it again if it comes before us. I believe that the test election conducted last month by Elections staff proves that the City is capable of conducting a ranked choice election this fall. We are still waiting to hear the outcome of the appeal to the Supreme Court, but if this decision is not made before the Council makes our final decision, I will advocate strongly for moving forward. Lastly, Elections Director Cindy Reichert is leaving her position with the City for another elections administration job. I wish her the best of luck. I will fight to hire a project manager to work specifically on the ranked choice aspect of this fall’s election, and I believe there are other strong advocates for that position, including the City Coordinator. It is my hope that by the end of this month, it will be clear to everyone that Minneapolis will make history by using ranked choice voting for the first time this November.

Central Corridor. The University has submitted a 26-page letter outlining their concerns about the vibration, electromagnetic, construction and traffic impacts of the proposed Central Corridor Light Rail line, and what they consider to be inadequate funding for mitigating these concerns. The Metropolitan Council has made clear that this sort of move by the University will very likely delay the start of construction on Central Corridor from the planned start date of next year to 2011. This means that the project cost will increase, due to inflation, potentially endangering the mitigation funding Minneapolis, St. Paul and the University have already been promised by the Project Office, for intersections like Cedar and Riverside. I am deeply disappointed that the University has chosen to take this action, and by doing so put at risk not just the mitigation funds but the light rail project as a whole.

Sandwich Board Signs. As part of a larger change to the way the City regulates business signage, Council Member Lisa Goodman has introduced language that would ban all free-standing signs (such as sandwich board signs) from the public right of way. This was delayed one cycle, until the next Council meeting on June 12th. I know that a number of businesses in the Second Ward use sandwich board signs without negatively impacting the pedestrian environment, and I’m reluctant to go along with this motion. I hope to be able to craft a compromise that could deal with some of Council Member Goodman’s concerns (mostly regarding sidewalk congestion downtown) while also preserving the right of small businesses to let the public know where they are.

New Rental License Standard. The Council has passed an ordinance requiring an inspection, along with a fee of \$450, for all changes of ownership of rental dwellings. I successfully introduced an amendment exempting properties that have been inspected in the past 6 months from both the inspection and fee.

2010 Census. The City has contracted with the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the University of MN for Census outreach coordination. I look forward to helping them, and the Census, count every Second Ward resident so that we can be sure that everyone will be fairly represented at all levels of government for the next ten years.

Hiawatha Trail Lighting. The City has requested \$1,000,000 in federal SAFETEA_LU funding for the Hiawatha Trail lighting project. I've been a strong proponent of getting this project finished as soon as possible.

The Green Institute has paid off their more than \$3 million loan from the City by selling the Eco-Enterprise Center. They will now rent space within the Center (for Green Institute and the ReUse Center) from the building's new owner.

Chindian Café is still in the process of applying for a strong beer and wine license. City staff is recommending a list of conditions, many of which address the unpaved lot to the east of Chindian, and will require that the lot be paved and landscaped, no longer used for storage of inoperable vehicles, and that the existing barbed-wire fence be removed.

Sporty's Pub has been exempted by the State Legislature from the "Seven Acre Rule", which will allow owner Joe Radaich to seek a liquor license upgrade from the City. I look forward to working with Joe and Southeast Como residents to find an outcome that works for everyone.

Old Seward Coop Site. Seward Redesign, on behalf of the new owner of the old Seward Coop at 2111 E Franklin, is coming before the Planning Commission next Monday, June 8, for conditional use permits relating to the reuse of the building. The reuse will include an expansion of Shega bakery (which produces Ethiopian bread called injera), a sushi restaurant and a copying and mailing retailer. Planning staff is recommending that the Planning Commission approve the applications. I wish the new owner and the related businesses success.

Palmer's Bar has received a license upgrade to a class "B" liquor license, after my office facilitated a meeting between the bar's ownership and the nearby Dar Al-Hijra mosque.

Dania Work Group. The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) is inviting West Bank organizations to participate in the process of redeveloping the Dania Hall site by appointing a representative to what they are calling the "Dania Hall Advisory Group," to help build off of the initial community meeting last January. This group will be charged with representing their organizations in an advisory role as we discuss options for formally marketing the Dania Hall site. The goal is to produce a document (possibly a Request for Proposals or something similar), that represents the needs and desires of the community and City. Additional public review will be built into the process beyond the advisory group; this is just one step in the process. The first Advisory Group meeting is slated for June 10th, 3-5pm at the Brian Coyle Center, and the group will determine if additional advisory group meetings are necessary at that meeting.

Augsburg College's application to vacate all of 7th St S between 20th Ave S and 21st Ave S to accommodate a proposed new science building and green space has been approved by both the Planning Commission and the City Council. Augsburg has also been authorized by the Legislature to receive a liquor license, and will be approaching the City for this license in the coming weeks.

Seward/Longfellow Healthy Seniors is slated to receive a 2% increase in their Community Development Block Grant funding from the City, due to an increase in federal funds.

Openings on City Boards and Commissions. There are openings on the Minneapolis Workforce Council (closes 06/05), the Family Housing Fund Board of Directors (Closes 06/26/2009), Minneapolis Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee (CLIC) and the Public Health Advisory Committee. For more information see <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/boards-and-commissions/open/index.asp> .To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Yours, in peace and cooperation,

Cam Gordon
Minneapolis City Council Member, Second Ward
673-2202, 296-0579
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