



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the Prospect Park East River Road Neighborhood, 1-24-11

Cam's next Prospect Park Office Hours:
Pratt School, February 15th, 9:30-11am

Items:

- 1) 2011 Budget
- 2) Mobile Food Vending
- 3) Solar Energy Systems
- 4) Summer Jobs for Teens
- 5) Bicycle Advisory Committee
- 6) New Drainage Regulations
- 7) ENS Receives County Environmental Ed Grant
- 8) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) For the first time as your Council Member, I voted against a budget last month. I do not take this vote lightly. In all past budgets, there have been things I would have liked to change and fights that I have lost. These issues have not been important enough for me to vote against the final budget. This year's amendment supported, by the Mayor and Council majority, to take already-allocated Neighborhood Revitalization Program Phase II funding is fundamentally different. I could not in good conscience vote for a budget that reneges on the commitments the Council unanimously made to our partners in neighborhoods this past June.

I am saddened that neighborhood organizations will no longer be able to rely on the commitments – or even the formal actions – of the Council majority. I am disappointed in my colleagues' decision that will, in my strongly-held opinion, fundamentally damage both the capacity of neighborhoods to serve Minneapolis residents and their capacity to collaborate with the City.

The action to freeze Phase II dollars has no impact whatsoever on the **2011** budget, the **only** action the Council was required to make this December. Rather, this decision improperly presupposes that the cuts in the **2012** budget will come from neighborhoods. Rather than taking the time to explore all options and work with our neighborhood partners, the Council decided on these cuts to neighborhoods this December.

City of Minneapolis leaders decry the decisions at the State level to renege on commitments made to local governments through Local Government Aid. Yet, when budget times get difficult, the Council majority makes clear that it will break its word just as readily as Republican governors.

Preliminary estimates are that \$122,142 of Southeast Como's allocated Phase II dollars will be frozen, and almost certainly taken from the neighborhood. It is very important to note that the neighborhoods most impacted by the freeze in Phase II dollars are among the poorest in Minneapolis.

I am strongly in favor of cutting property taxes. But I believe that there are deeply unpopular and unsustainable decisions that the City has made and should do what it takes to reconsider. One major example is the Target Center. It is critical for every resident to understand that while the Council majority was voting to damage neighborhood organizations by freezing their funds, Target Center debt payments were held completely harmless.

I will note that the Council majority and Mayor also held **ourselves** harmless, even as we were forcing cuts to neighborhood organizations. Neither the Council nor Mayor took a dollar in cuts. In fact, the Council amended the Mayor's proposed budget to shift a proposed one-time cut to the Clerk's Office. I find this highly objectionable.

I am deeply disappointed to have to disagree with my colleagues and the Mayor on this fundamental decision. But I am more saddened by the prospect of the very real damage that this budget will have on neighborhood organizations.

If you need this material in an alternative format, please contact Matt Bower at (612) 673-2188 or Matthew.Bower@ci.minneapolis.mn.us

If you want help translating this call – Hmong– Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2188;

Spanish – Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llame 612-673-2188;

Somali – Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' an wac 612-673-2188.

2) 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 parts of Ward 2 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 other parts of the city. 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 Ward 2 neighborhoods and business associations to let me know whether they would like this opportunity to be opened on their commercial corridors, and to give input on the following questions:

- 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)?

I will also be asking other Second Ward neighborhoods to weigh in on this question, and I plan to work with the University District Alliance to see if there can be one coordinated set of rules for the whole Alliance area.

3) 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 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.

4) Although it's winter, now is a great time to be thinking about summer jobs. Teenagers should start applying now for the Minneapolis STEP-UP Program so they'll be ready to earn money once school ends. 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**. Call 612-673-5041 for more information or see the website (www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/stepup.asp) for more information.

5) 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. My Policy Aide, Robin Garwood, will be seeking the Council Staff position on the new BAC, and given his years of work on the BAC and on bicycling issues generally, I'm optimistic that he will be appointed.

6) 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.

7) Congratulations to Eastside Neighborhood Services for applying for and receiving Hennepin County grants to implement environmental education projects in 2011. Eastside Neighborhood Services will facilitate environmental classes and implement service learning projects in order to empower youth and foster intergenerational relationships.

8) 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.