

**News from Cam Gordon**  
**Council Member, Second Ward**  
**May 2008**

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/ward2/>

**New Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator.** The City has hired Bass Zanjani to serve as the Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator for the City of Minneapolis. Mr. Zanjani's chief role will be to work with the City's Youth Violence Prevention Committee to implement the Blueprint for Action to Prevent Youth Violence, a multi-faceted action plan launched this year to reduce youth violence and crime. Zanjani brings to the city's Youth Violence Prevention team a broad and diverse public policy background. Previously, he served as Chief of Staff at NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center and has been a policy aide to two United States Senators (including Paul Wellstone). I believe that this is an important step forward on an initiative that has long been on the top of my list of priorities for the Ward and the City.

**Two Homicides in the area.** An 18 year old man, Abdullahi Awil Abdi, was murdered near Cedar and 6<sup>th</sup> last month. The victim was well known throughout the local Somali community. He was the youngest son of one of the first African entrepreneurs in the neighborhood, a former owner of the West Bank Grocery. This incident reinforces for me how important is for us to maintain a focus on public safety and on implementing our youth violence prevention plan.

[http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/communications/YouthViolencePrevention\\_home.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/communications/YouthViolencePrevention_home.asp)

Currently there are no charges in the case and the shooter is not in custody, but the police have identified suspects and are looking to make arrests when those parties are located. Additionally, we are working with law enforcement in other jurisdictions in tracking potential hiding places for our suspects. A second murder occurred in the ward later in the month when Robert Bavinck, age 38, was killed near West River Parkway. Bavinck's body was found in the evening hours of Friday April 25<sup>th</sup> in a wooded area adjoining West River Road just south of Lake Street. Police have arrested two people who in connection with this murder who apparently shared a homeless encampment area with Mr. Bavinck.

**32 New Officers.** A group of 32 new recruits were sworn in as new Minneapolis police officers in April, taking an oath "To Protect with Courage, To Serve with Compassion." This graduating class consists of 16% women and 28% minority officers. The new officers will now enter the Field Training Officers program, where they are paired with seasoned officers who mentor and guide them through their transition to precinct patrol officers. I see this as evidence of the City's continuing prioritization of public safety and the diversification of our police force.

**Safety and Outreach Intern.** My office has hired Annie Welch for another summer as a public safety and community outreach intern. She will be working to help organize neighborhoods in the ward around issues of safety and livability, distributing this year's Welcome Packets, and helping with community events. I am looking into possibly hiring other interns as well.

**Non-Motorized Transportation.** Acting on staff's recommendation, in April the City Council approved applying for several Non-Motorized Transportation Grants in the Second Ward that I described in my last e-news. The projects include a bike/walk street on 29<sup>th</sup> Ave S, pedestrian improvements at multiple intersections on Cedar on the West Bank, and an improved pedestrian connection between Seven Corners and Downtown.

**Climate Change Grants.** Congratulations to Second Ward recipients of the City's 2008 Climate Change grants, including: Cedar Cultural Center, who will use a \$1,500 grant to promote tap water over bottled water at their events; the West Bank Community Coalition, who will use a \$1,500 grant to plant and care for trees and translate energy conservation information to immigrant populations in Cedar Riverside; the Cedar Riverside Business Association, who will use a \$10,000 grant to get 20-25 small businesses an energy and lighting audit and help with related improvements; and Longfellow Community Council, who will use a \$10,000 grant to offer

energy audits and matching grants for rental properties. For information on other 2008 grantees and the progress made by 2007 grantees, go here:  
[http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/ClimateChangeGrants2008\\_Microgrants.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/ClimateChangeGrants2008_Microgrants.asp).

**Resurfacing Program.** Franklin and 18<sup>th</sup> Avenues Southeast, originally slated to be resurfaced this year under a new City program, have been put off indefinitely. This is due to the role that these streets have played in handling overflow traffic caused by the I-35W bridge collapse last summer. Public Works staff have been told by MnDOT that there is some possibility that state funds will be available to fix these streets. Instead, 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue will be resurfaced this year from its intersection at Minnehaha up to Riverside. I expect that Public Works staff will conduct a neighborhood input process before this project begins, and that it will be combined with the bike lane improvement funded by last year's Non-Motorized Transportation grants.

**University District Partnership Alliance.** In April, the University District Partnership Alliance Steering Committee approved a demonstration project that could bring up to \$730,000 to help preserve and encourage homeownership in the area. The Alliance includes the neighborhoods of Southeast Como, Prospect Park and Cedar Riverside. The approved proposal, entitled Preserving, Maintaining, and Increasing Homeownership, seeks to restore homeownership confidence and investment in the University District.

Major components of the proposal include:

- An 'option to buy' program for current home owners that will provide up to \$2,500 to people willing to give the Alliance a first option to buy their home when and if they decide to sell it. If it is sold to the Alliance it can then be held for, and sold to, a new owner-occupied home owner. This will be targeted to one area in each of the University neighborhoods, which can demonstrate the power to instill homeowner confidence. The target areas in Marcy Holmes and Southeast Como, however, will serve as the first demonstration project areas for the "option to buy" component in 2008.
- A "Live Near Your Work" campaign to promote the commitment of the University community and to market its homes to employees in and near the community who would like to live near their work places.
- A homebuyer assistance program that provides financial incentives of up to \$15,000 in the form of forgivable loans to promote owner-occupied homeownership available to new homebuyers anywhere in the District.
- Funding up to \$500,000 to provide rehabilitation gap financing to houses that will be bought as owner-occupied homes.
- Staff to manage the project.

**Central Corridor.** Despite the political wrangling around Governor Pawlenty's line-item veto, which will kill the Central Corridor project if he does not undo it, staff continue to work towards the September deadline for submissions to the FTA. The University continues to pursue a "Northern Alignment," which would route the LRT line down the existing rail trench through Dinkytown. I have some concerns about this alignment, especially with regards to its impacts on the West Bank. It will substantially increase the width of the Cedar bridge over the Washington trench, further separating Seven Corners from Cedar Riverside. It will impact Riverview tower and the scattered-site Section 8 housing nearby, as well as creating a new trench that will parallel 19<sup>th</sup> Ave S, cutting between the road and the law school. The most important questions, however, are whether this alignment can fit within the Federal Government's funding formula, and whether it will create a year-long delay of the project that will cost around \$40 Million in inflationary costs. If the U's alignment cannot fit into the formula on the current timeline, I believe that we should submit our application this year for the Washington Avenue alignment, which should include a pedestrian, transit, and bicycling mall. I steadfastly oppose any attempt to reroute buses to take them off of Washington, especially any plan that would send them across the 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue bridge.

**Lurking and Loitering.** I am moving forward with an effort to repeal the unjust and antiquated Minneapolis "lurking" ordinance. This ordinance disproportionately impacts homeless persons, people of color, and the poor. I believe that we must redirect precious law enforcement resources

to behaviors that actually harm someone, and laws that carry meaningful consequences. To accomplish this repeal effort, I will also be adding more behaviors to the loitering ordinance, making it cover crimes related to vandalism and theft. This whole package will come before the Public Service and Regulatory Services Committee on **May 21<sup>st</sup>** at 1pm.

**Racial Disparities.** At my urging, the City's Economic Development staff will present a report on the employment and poverty gaps between white and minority residents to the Health, Energy and Environment committee on May 5. Despite many efforts to address poverty and unemployment in Minneapolis, our best data reveal some striking and disturbing racial disparities. Roughly 11% of white people in Minneapolis live in poverty compared to 43% of all black people (including African immigrants), 43% of Asian Americans and nearly 35% of American Indians. Additionally, the unemployment rate for whites is just over 4%; for blacks it is just under 14%. At the May 5<sup>th</sup> meeting I plan to co-author a resolution with Council Member Benson that will outline this problem and, if passed by the Council, create a joint Minneapolis/Hennepin County Racial Disparities Steering Committee to help address it.

**Ranked Choice Voting.** The City has sent out a Request for Proposals for Ranked Choice Voting equipment and/or services, and passed an ordinance containing our RCV election rules. I worked to make sure that this ordinance conformed to national best practices for ranked choice elections, and that the RFP includes enough flexibility to get good responses, but a specific enough timeline. I continue to push for Minneapolis to conduct its first ranked choice election in 2009.

**Bike/Walk to Work Day.** My Aide Robin will again be leading a commuter convoy from the Seward neighborhood into downtown on Bike/Walk to Work Day, **Wednesday, May 14<sup>th</sup>**. Meet at the Birchwood Café for free breakfast items starting at 7:00. The ride leaves at 7:30. To lead your own ride or walk, or for more info on Bike/Walk Week activities, go here: <http://www.bikewalkweek.org>.

**No-Heat/Low-Heat.** The No-Heat / Low-Heat ordinance I've cosponsored with Ralph Remington has stalled in committee, and will come back again on May 7<sup>th</sup>. We are attempting to simplify regulations about when landlords must keep rental units adequately warm by basing them on date rather than external temperature. We are also raising the fine amount for no heat and low heat offenses, and writing language that will allow City staff to cite landlords who repeatedly violate this ordinance without 'reasonable notice.'

**Free Speech and the RNC.** I continue to vigorously oppose mandatory permit processes for protest groups, being brought forward by Council Member Ostrow. I do not believe that most protest groups will participate in a mandatory process, and I fear that lack of permits will become a pretext for unnecessary and counterproductive law enforcement actions during this summer's Republican National Convention.

**Mentoring Program.** In April I helped the mayor and other City leaders launch an effort to recruit City employees to mentor children in Minneapolis. Working with Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities (BBBS), we are seeking at least 50 City employees to volunteer as mentors for children in neighborhoods where kids have been waiting the longest for matches. Those 50 kids are just a small percentage of children throughout the city who are waiting to be matched with a mentor. BBBS, one of several non-profit organizations that work to provide young people with mentors, has a waiting list of more than 500 qualifying children under age 13 seeking mentors in Minneapolis. Some of those kids have been waiting for up to three years for a match. To join the effort to support our city's children, call BBBS at (651)789-2400 or visit <http://www.volunteermatch.org/orgs/org4931.html> to find out more about becoming a mentor. Please help spread the word to people you know who may be interested in mentoring.

**Resident Survey.** As part of Minneapolis' ongoing effort to improve services to its residents, the City is conducting a survey to get perspectives from residents about the quality of services the

City provides. This May and June, approximately 1,100 residents will complete a telephone survey, which will be conducted by an independent research firm. If you are contacted to participate in the survey, please take the time (approximately 20 minutes) necessary to provide honest opinions about services in Minneapolis. The results will guide City staff and elected officials to provide improved services to all Minneapolis residents, regardless of age, gender, income, ethnicity or location in Minneapolis. The City has conducted similar surveys in 2001, 2003 and 2005. For more information or to see the results from past surveys, visit <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/results-oriented-minneapolis/citizensurvey/index.asp>.

**Police Precinct Open Houses.** The three police precincts that serve the Second Ward will be holding open houses this month:

- 1st Precinct (Cedar Riverside) 19 4th St N, Tuesday, May 13, 11am–1pm
- 2nd Precinct (Prospect Park, Southeast Como, and University) 1911 Central Ave NE, Monday, May 12, 11am–2pm (Dedication of the Eastside Guardian statue at 12:30)
- 3rd Precinct (Seward and Cooper) 3000 Minnehaha Ave S, Wednesday, May 14, 11am–2pm.

**Great Streets.** The City's Great Streets program is investing \$40,000 in Cedar Riverside and \$25,000 in Seward, to support façade improvements for small businesses.

**Crumbling Sidewalks.** Some of the sidewalks that were installed in the Second Ward last year were defective, and have begun to crumble. Public Works is aware of this problem, and have required that the contractors involved do removal and replacement of the spalling sections of sidewalk as warranty work. Staff are also systematically inspecting the sidewalk repair work done in the last two years and the contractors are making repairs as they are identified. If you are aware of new sidewalk panels that are crumbling, please email the location to [dan.bauer@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:dan.bauer@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).

**West Bank Quarterly Safety Meeting.** I will be meeting with leadership of the First Police Precinct and Cedar Riverside residents and businesses for a Quarterly Safety Meeting on **May 14**, at 7pm at Augsburg College. Everyone is welcome to attend this meeting.

The **Cedar Riverside Small Area Plan** has unanimously passed the Council, after unanimous approval by the Planning Commission and Zoning and Planning Committee. This is an important step forward for the West Bank neighborhood, and will help produce better development in the years to come.

**Sergeant Preston's.** Responding to numerous noise complaints and a citation from the City, Sergeant Preston's bar has decided to downgrade their license from a Class B to a Class C.

**TOD Grant Requests.** The City has requested \$425,000 in Hennepin County Transit Oriented Development program funds for property acquisition for street realignment at the corner of Minnehaha, E Franklin and Cedar. This project is ranked second out of fourteen.

**U Garden.** The Council has granted Prospect Park area restaurant U Garden a Class A liquor license. This license is subject to a number of conditions that my staff helped the neighborhood and the business negotiate. I believe that this list of conditions, agreed to by the community and the restaurant, will go a long way towards ensuring that U Garden remains a family-friendly restaurant, not a bar, while exploring the business opportunities open to them with this new license.

**Globe Tool.** Congratulations to the Southeast Como Improvement Association for negotiating a Good Neighbor Agreement with local business Globe Tool, which calls for the business to implement measures to reduce Trichloroethylene (TCE) emissions.

**Affordable Housing Trust Fund.** The Council has approved loaning \$508,065 to the Van Cleve Court project in Southeast Como, and up to \$199,950 to Blue Goose Cooperative in Cedar Riverside.

**Obento-Ya.** The City has granted Obento-Ya Japanese Bistro in the Southeast Como neighborhood a Class E wine and strong beer license.

**Second Ward Appointees.** Congratulations and thanks to the following Second Ward residents who were appointed to City Boards and Commissions this past month: Pam Franklin from Seward and Lindsay Turner from Prospect Park, who will serve on the Civilian Review Authority and Ruth Fen from Prospect Park, who will serve on the Minneapolis Arts Commission.

**Openings on City Boards and Commissions.** There are openings on the Civil Rights Commission, Minneapolis Workforce Council (closes 5/9/2008) and Minneapolis Planning Commission. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).

Please feel free to contact me and my office anytime if you have any questions or concerns. We are here to serve.

Yours, in peace and cooperation,

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