

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the Prospect Park East River Road Neighborhood, 11-24-08

Cam's next Prospect Park Office Hours:
Pratt School, December 16, 9:30-11am

Items:

- 1) Good News on Election Day
- 2) National Night Out – Minneapolis #1 Again
- 3) New Noise Ordinance
- 4) Neighborhood Stabilization Fund
- 5) Working Capital Guaranty Program
- 6) Party Patrol Grant
- 7) December Budget Meetings
- 8) Bike Sharing
- 9) New Rental License Standards
- 10) Animal Care & Control Advisory Board
- 11) NRP Phase II Funding Increase
- 12) 17 New Police Officers
- 13) Planning Sector Teams
- 14) Emerald Ash Borer
- 15) 2030 Transportation Policy Plan
- 16) Proposed New Air Quality Ordinance
- 17) Waste Hauling Contract
- 18) Torture Resolution
- 19) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) I was pleased with many of election results earlier this month, including two local ballot initiatives that passed. Minneapolis voters chose to change the way that we elect school board members by passing the Accountable, Balanced, and Connected amendment. I actively supported this initiative throughout the year, and I'm thrilled that it passed. I believe that it will help us elect a school board that is more geographically, ethnically and politically diverse, and that will result in better policy. The **Strong Schools, Strong City** ballot initiative that also passed will provide a necessary funding increase to help us close the academic achievement gap, improve early reading skills, enhance math and science programs, provide up-to-date technology and textbooks, and keep class sizes small.
- 2) For the sixth time in the past eight years, Minneapolis had more people come together at National Night Out parties than any other large city. We continue to be a role model for how NNO events are planned and ways to increase community involvement, and it was great to see so many Prospect Park residents out visiting with their neighbors this August.
- 3) The new noise ordinance I've sponsored will come before the Public Safety and Regulatory Services committee on **December 3rd** at 1pm for a public hearing. As proposed, it will give us the capacity to regulate indoor noise (which we can't currently do), and use a "C weighting" that will enable us to much better regulate bass-heavy noise from bars.
- 4) The Council has approved using \$5.6 million in federal Neighborhood Stabilization funds to acquire and redevelop foreclosed properties in neighborhoods hardest hit by foreclosures. I am hopeful that this effort will help us weather the foreclosure crisis and stabilize the neighborhoods that have been hardest hit.
- 5) The City is also offering a new finance tool, the Working Capital Guaranty Program, designed to help assist businesses secure financing through private banking institutions by providing a guaranty on financing. For more information, contact Jessica Green at 673-5232, or Becky Shaw at 673-5066.
- 6) We have learned that due to the downturn in the investment market, the City will likely need to pay an additional \$38 million on pension obligations. Payment of these obligations must be balanced with the need to maintain essential city services, such as public safety, continued investment in small businesses and commercial corridors, and the need to maintain streets and infrastructure that will only be more expensive to repair as time passes. Please consider attending the following meetings:
 - December 1, 5:00pm, City Hall, 350 South 5th Street, Room 317 – Truth in Taxation hearing
 - December 5 (9am – 5pm) – Budget Mark-up
 - December 11 (5pm) – Budget Adoption

- 7) The City of is working to bring bike sharing to Minneapolis. The West Bank will be within the proposed area of the system. *Stationnement de Montreal* and *8D Technologies* have brought the Public Bicycle System that they recently launched in Montreal to Minneapolis. This system is based on European bike share programs with new solutions for northern climates. I am working with Public Works and the Mayor's Office to help this great initiative move forward.
- 8) Public Works staff have set up a meeting to get public input on their proposed layout of Hennepin Avenue as a two-way street, on **December 3rd**, 4-5pm in the Central Library's Doty Room. I am concerned about the impact that staff's proposed shared bike/bus lanes will have on cyclists, and encourage you to attend.
- 9) Using a grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety for \$5,000, the City conducted two major party patrols in the University area on October 24th and 31st.
- 10) I support a proposed ordinance strengthening the City's capacity to revoke or not renew rental licenses when landlords fail to take appropriate actions to ensure that their tenants do not commit crimes and disrupt their neighbors' lives.
- 11) I am also supportive of a proposed ordinance creating an Animal Care and Control Advisory Board, which will help advise and assist our Animal Care and Control department in developing animal-related policies and processes, and do public education and outreach on such issues.
- 12) Phase II of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program is in significantly better financial shape than we expected. Total 2007 income was more than \$2 million over last year's estimate, and the total Phase II funding is more than \$8 million above last year's estimate. This is a result of a small increase in 2007 tax increment collections, significant interest savings related to 2006 refinancing of Common Project general obligation debt, and unexpected one-time revenues from a number of projects located in the Common Project. This puts NRP on track to fund more than 90% of the amount approved for all neighborhood Phase II plans.
- 13) 17 police recruits have graduated from the Police Academy. With the addition of these new officers, the Minneapolis Police Department now has 893 sworn officers.
- 14) The Community Planning and Economic Development Department has created five new geographic sector teams to enhance project coordination and make it simpler to solve problems and deliver services. Your team is made up of Haila Maze in Planning (673-2098), Jerry LePage in Housing (673-5240) and Kevin Carroll in Economic Development (673-5181).
- 15) If you're planning to get some wood for your fireplace this winter, please be aware that there could be a destructive stowaway in your logs. The emerald ash borer is an invasive pest that attacks ash trees, has already killed more than 40 million ash trees nationwide, and has spread as far east as Wisconsin. You can help slow the spread by:
 - **Buying or harvesting your wood near the area where you are going to burn the wood.** Avoid moving firewood from its area of origination; especially avoid bringing wood into Minnesota from out of state.
 - **Watching your ash trees carefully.** Examine ash trees in your neighborhood for tree canopy thinning or small D-shaped exit holes left in the bark by the borer. If there is any suspicion that a tree is infested, residents can contact the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's "Arrest the Pest" hotline at (651) 201-6684.
- 16) Working with Council Members Lilligren and Glidden, I helped strengthen the City's comments on the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan. We incorporated many of the great comments from other transportation groups such as Transit for Livable Communities. In my role as the City's representative to the Red Rock transit corridor planning group, I successfully urged them to add several of these items to their comments to the Met Council's plan as well, helping to build a regional consensus for better transit options.
- 17) The Council voted to contract with Minneapolis Refuse, Inc, and Aspen Waste System for trash hauling. However, Aspen did not agree to sign the City's required Labor Peace agreement prior to the deadline so, MRI ended up getting the whole City contract again. I still support having gone out for open bids on this contract, and will push for the City to use the same open, transparent process in the future.
- 18) I am working with Council Member Glidden and the Center for Victims of Torture (which has been based in Minneapolis since 1985), on a resolution calling for a Declaration of Principles for an Executive Order clearly outlawing torture, inhumane treatment and cruelty towards prisoners of the United States.
- 19) There are openings on the Citizens' Environmental Advisory Committee (closes 11/28/08), Housing Board of Appeals (11/21/2008) Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission (12/05/2008), MTN Board (12/19/2008), Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (11/19/08), Public Health Advisory Committee (12/05/08) and Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee (11/21/08). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.