

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

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

**April roundtable discussion: Free speech during the Republican convention.** This summer from September 1–4 over 50,000 visitors will likely converge on the Twin Cities to protest and participate in the Republican National Convention. For the past year the Free Speech Work group created by the resolution I authored has been meeting to discuss how to protect free speech and normal life during the convention. In April the City Council will discuss and make decisions about the City's free speech policies. Currently, one option on the table is the creation of a new mandatory registration process that protesters would need to complete in order to legally assemble. I oppose any mandatory permit process. Come learn more, help strategize and share your ideas and concerns on **Monday, April 14 7–9PM, Augsburg College, Christensen Center, East Commons.**

**NRP.** Working with my colleague Scott Benson, I successfully convinced my colleagues to support a resolution calling for an extension of the pre-1979 tax increment financing districts in the Minneapolis Common Project that have been used to fund the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. It directs staff to work with the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners, the Minneapolis Legislative delegation, and other partners in neighborhood revitalization efforts to develop a bill to extend the pre-1979 tax districts to fund needs of a neighborhood revitalization program that includes support for neighborhood organizations and neighborhood-directed action plans after 2009 in the City of Minneapolis; as well as repayment of the Target Center bonds and the capital improvements necessary for Target Center to remain a first class facility as required by contract; and provide support for discretionary development investments by the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County. While these efforts have yet to result in a bill at the legislature progress has been made and I am hopeful that funding for NRP may yet be found this legislative year.

**Minneapolis Advantage Program.** I strongly supported a program to give downpayment assistance to homebuyers in the neighborhoods hit hardest by the foreclosure crisis, which passed the Council today. In addition to helping to address this increasing concern, I hope that this program will serve as a template for a similar homeownership program to stabilize the balance between rental and homesteaded properties in the University District.

**Bicycle Master Plan Open House.** Please come down to City Hall room 333 on April 16<sup>th</sup>, from 4-8pm, for an open house for the City's Bicycle Master Plan. Public Works staff and members of the Bicycle Advisory Committee will be on hand to answer your questions about the plan and get your input on what it should include.

**Solar Cities Grant.** Minneapolis and St. Paul will share a \$200,000 Federal Department of Energy Solar Cities grant this year, to help us integrate solar into energy planning, zoning and facilities; streamline our regulations and practices that affect solar adoption by residents and businesses; create programs to help residents and businesses defray the capital costs of solar panels; and promote solar technology among residents and local businesses through outreach, curriculum development, and incentive programs. I'm very excited about this tremendous opportunity, and will be working to make sure we make the most of it.

**Earth Hour.** Council Member Benson and I cosponsored a resolution committing the City to turn off all lights that are not absolutely necessary on Earth Hour, Saturday March 29 from 8-9pm. The lights of some major downtown buildings went dark, including Wells Fargo, IDS, Thrivent Financial, US Bancorp and the State, Orpheum and Pantages theaters, as well as the lights on the underside of the Stone Arch Bridge. The idea is to demonstrate how much impact just an hour of energy conservation can have on carbon emissions, to inspire others to conserve.

**Non-motorized Transportation.** Public Works staff will recommend several Second Ward projects to the Council this month, for inclusion in our 2008 application for Non-motorized Transportation grants. **1)** A proposal (submitted by my office, among others) to make 29th Ave S a “Bike Walk Street” from E Franklin to Minnehaha. This could include some modifications to the physical layout of the street, including “throating” and traffic circles, and would likely include extra signage, reduced speed limit, and could potentially include removal of stop signs. This has been discussed at the Seward Neighborhood Group Community Development Committee, and the response from neighbors was favorable. **2)** A proposal to improve the pedestrian experience at the intersection of Cedar and Riverside, Washington and 5<sup>th</sup> St S. This could include curb extensions, countdown signals, updated crosswalk materials, better intersection crossings, a better connection to the LRT, and, most excitingly, a new sidewalk connecting Cedar to 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Keep in mind that this is a grant request, so it’s definitely not a sure thing, but I find it extremely gratifying that City staff are now completely on board for building this sidewalk. **3)** An enhanced streetscape connection between Seven Corners and downtown on Washington Ave, bridging the I-35W chasm.

**Bicycles on Marquette and Second.** Working with allies in the bicycle community (including members of the City’s Bicycle Advisory Committee) and Council Members Lilligren and Schiff, I helped lead an effort to increase the width of Marquette and Second Avenues in downtown, to accommodate future bicycle lanes. The existing bicycle lanes are slated to be removed as part of the downtown transportation action plan, partly to make way for double-wide bus lanes which will triple bus volume on both streets. My hope is that in the near future, the City can approach the state for a waiver of their street standards, to narrow the two traffic lanes enough to put five-foot bike lanes on the right-hand side of the street. I will also continue to push for off-peak bicycle use of bus passing lanes.

**Ranked Choice Voting.** Council Member Glidden has introduced an ordinance establishing vote counting rules and procedures for Ranked Choice Voting elections. My office is very engaged on this issue, and I will fight for these elections rules to reflect best practices of other jurisdictions that use ranked choice voting. Earlier this month, I successfully pushed for a Request for Proposals for election equipment and/or services that will allow Minneapolis to implement Ranked Choice Voting in 2009. I will fight for this RFP to include the flexibility that the City needs to receive good responses from the voting machine vendor community.

**No-Heat/Low-Heat.** Council Member Remington has introduced an ordinance changing the regulations around no-heat and low-heat conditions for tenants, establishing a clearer, more enforceable code that will help the City better ensure that tenants have adequate heat, especially in the autumn and spring. My office has worked extensively on this ordinance with CM Remington’s office, and I am very supportive of it. This will come before the Public Safety and Regulatory Services committee on April 9.

**Housing Maintenance Code.** Today, the Council adopted an ordinance requiring adequate emergency escape and rescue windows in rental property bedrooms, placing responsibility on landlords for any infestation problem which is identified in rental units or shared spaces, and adopting the State’s requirements for carbon monoxide alarms. I strongly supported these changes, and view them as part of a larger effort on the Council’s part to better control rental property.

**Midtown Biomass Power Plant.** I am continuing to closely follow the proposed Midtown Eco Energy (MEE) biomass facility. If this plant comes back before the Council for action, I will very likely oppose it.

**Rock-Tenn Community Check-In.** A date and location has been set for a Minneapolis Community Check-in for the Rock-Tenn project: **Luxton Recreation Center on April 26th, at 10**

**am.** Bill Kahn will present the latest information from the energy study and the work of the Community Advisory Panel, followed by Q&A and a facilitated listening session.

**Public Water Collaborative.** My office is participating in collaboration with Eureka Recycling, the Ramsey County Water Authority and others, to educate the public about the benefits of drinking public water and the waste associated with bottled water.

**Appointments to Boards and Commissions.** My Aide Robin is participating in an effort to fix the broken system for appointing people to City Boards and Commissions, to make the interface between the City and applicants fairer and more transparent, and to ensure that we have effective and empowered citizen input boards. I strongly support thoughtful work on this project and am hopeful that it will greatly improve the good work of our many advisory boards and committee.

**Health Care Access Resolution.** Last month, the Council passed a resolution supporting health care access, with my strong support.

**911 Call Center Award.** The Council also passed a resolution last month honoring the Minneapolis 911 Call Center for receiving the 2008 "Outstanding Call Center" award.

**Rental Property Owner Workshop.** The City is holding a property management workshop to help landlords connect to information and resources on property management, **Thursday, April 10, 5-9pm.** To register, email [ccpsafe@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:ccpsafe@ci.minneapolis.mn.us) or call 673-2812.

**Transforming Transportation Policy event.** Please join me for Representative Oberstar's Transforming Transportation Policy discussion, **Monday April 7, 1:30-4:30pm** at the University Radisson, 615 Washington Ave SE.

**Tree Trust Deadline.** The deadline for ordering a tree from Tree Trust is **April 11.** The trees are \$25 each, are 6-10 feet tall with a 1 inch trunk. Place orders online at [www.treetrust.org](http://www.treetrust.org), or pick up an order form from the SECIA office or the library.

**Environmentally Preferable Purchasing.** With the leadership of our Citizens Environmental Advisory Committee and building on the success of the City's new Green Cleaning policy, I am helping to spearhead the development of a comprehensive set of Environmentally Preferable Purchasing policies.

**Human Rights Torch Relay Resolution.** I sponsored a resolution in support of the Human Rights Torch Relay campaign (<http://www.humanrightstorch.org>). Please join me at their human rights rally at Coffman Memorial Union on **April 16, 12-1pm.**

**Road Resurfacing.** Franklin Ave SE and 18<sup>th</sup> Ave SE have been removed from the list of roads to be resurfaced in 2008. The City has been informed by MnDOT that these streets may be eligible for state funding, due to their use as reliever routes for I-35W since last year's bridge collapse. Given this possibility, it makes no sense to assess property owners for this work this year. 20<sup>th</sup> Ave S has been added to the list of streets that will be resurfaced.

**Franklin Ave Great Streets Events.** Please join your neighbors in one of two "Walks on the Avenue." Small groups will walk down Franklin Ave, identifying and photographing aspects of the Avenue that work well or present a problem. Everyone who works, lives or owns property in Seward is invited. Walk #1 will take place **Thursday, April 17, 4:30-5:30**, meeting at Pizza Luce (2200 Franklin). Walk #2 will take place **Saturday, April 19, 10-11am**, meeting at Second Moon (2225 Franklin). A Community-wide Workshop will be held on **April 26<sup>th</sup>, 10:30-noon** at Matthews Center, 2318 29<sup>th</sup> Ave S, to review the results of the walks and identify areas and topics that will be the focus of work in the weeks ahead.

**U Garden.** My office is actively engaged in facilitating negotiations between U Garden restaurant and the Prospect Park neighborhood, to come up with a set of conditions for U Garden's requested liquor license.

**Van Cleve Court.** The City has received environmental remediation grants, including \$156,780 for the Van Cleve Court project.

**Fairview Riverside.** The Council has issued up to \$850 Million in tax-exempt revenue bonds for the Fairview expansion project on Riverside.

**Ralph Rapson.** Like many others, I was saddened to learn about the death of world-renowned architect Ralph Rapson on Saturday. His impact on the Second Ward, both as architect for the Riverside Plaza buildings and Rarig hall, and as a longtime Prospect Park resident, will be felt and appreciated for a long time to come.

**Openings on City Boards and Commissions.** There are openings on the Minneapolis Planning Commission (closes 4/4/08). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).

Yours, in peace and cooperation,

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