

**News from Cam Gordon**  
**Council Member, Second Ward**  
**March 2012**

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/council/ward2>

**Redistricting.** The Charter Commission has adopted a new ward map that you can view here: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-090097.pdf>. I commend the all the volunteer Charter Commissioners, the others who served on the Redistricting Advisory Group, the city staff who supported them and the many community members who got involved in the process. They demonstrated that redistricting could be done in a more public and transparent way. While I have many concerns about the impact that this map will have on neighborhoods and the makeup of Ward 2 after it goes into effect for the 2013 elections, I respect the commission's determination that the value of creating minority opportunity wards outweighed many other priorities, including maintaining stability with previous wards boundaries and keeping neighborhoods whole within single Wards. This map makes significant changes to the Second Ward: it divides both the Seward and Cedar Riverside neighborhoods between Wards 2 and 6, adds most of Longfellow and all of Cooper to Ward 2, and moves a few blocks of Como into Ward 1. It removes close to 14% of the Second Ward's African American population. I know that this was not the outcome that many Second Ward residents supported. I did not expect or support it either, but I respect that it was not, and should not have been, my decision. The voters of Minneapolis voted to empower the Charter Commission with this decision and they have determined that this configuration is best for the City as a whole. The current, old boundaries do not officially change until after the next City elections in 2013. For the past 6 years I have been honored to represent and serve the people of the entire ward. That will not change. I will continue to work to the best of my ability to support, serve and represent the all the people of Ward 2 as your City Council Member.

**Urban Agriculture Ordinance Amendments.** The Urban Agriculture Text Amendments I authored unanimously passed the City Council on March 30th. They are in very strong shape despite some compromise amendments to what the Planning Commission approved. On **hoop houses**: their height will be limited to 6.5' on parcels with 1-4 unit residential buildings. Everywhere else, they will be able to be 12' tall. This would allow properly-sized hoop houses not only on market gardens, community gardens and urban farms, but also as accessory uses to institutions (schools, churches, etc.) and large apartment buildings. On **market garden sale days**: market gardeners will be allowed to sell directly to the public 15 days per year. They will not be restricted to one sale day per week, as staff recommended, but will have to post contact info on their farm stand each day they're open and notify their neighbors at the beginning of the season. And on **raised bed materials**: an amendment clarifies that metal and ceramics can be used but tires and bathtubs can't, and clarifies that green-treated lumber is not required. Now, for the first time since 1963, people will be allowed to grow food commercially in the City of Minneapolis. Commercial growing will be allowed on a large scale at urban farms in industrial districts, and on a smaller scale at market gardens in low-density residential areas. People will even be allowed to grow food commercially in their own backyards. Aquaponics and aquaculture will be allowed at urban farms. Arbors, trellises, raised planting beds in front yards, cold frames and hoop houses will be allowed. This is a major step forward for the local food movement in Minneapolis.

**Composting Ordinance.** The composting ordinance I authored has passed the City Council unanimously. These changes increase the allowable size for compost areas, clarify the requirements on compost bin construction and the types of materials that can be composted, and authorize City staff to require people who violate the terms of the ordinance to take a course in composting. These changes will increase the amount of food we can grow in the city, and help deal with our organic waste in the best way possible.

**Vikings Stadium Public Hearings.** With my strong support, Council members Goodman and Schiff have taken a first step to getting the subject of using city sales taxes to support a new

Viking stadium to 3 Council Committees. Formal notice of the subject matter introduction was given at the last Council Meeting. This would finally and formally get the issue of the stadium before the council if it is approved by a majority of the Council at our next meeting, April 13. I am hopeful that there will be at least one formal public hearing on the proposed public funding for a new Vikings Stadium. I strongly believe that if the City is going to commit to hundreds of millions of dollars in subsidy to a private enterprise, we should hold at least one public hearing and consider and discuss the matter within our public committee process. I will share more information on this as it becomes available.

**New CLIC Appointee.** I thank those of you who applied to serve as the Ward 2 representative on the Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee (CLIC). It was a difficult decision, but I have appointed **Alex Tsatsoulis** as the Second Ward's second member of this important committee that makes spending recommendations for infrastructure improvements. Alex is a resident of the Cooper neighborhood, serves on the Longfellow Community Council Board of Directors and works for the Sierra Club's North Star Chapter. He will be joining Ann Jaede, from Prospect Park, who has been serving since before I was elected. I will be encouraging both of them to meet with neighborhood associations in the weeks ahead to share information about proposed projects that might be considered for funding over the next five years. Thanks for your willingness to serve, Alex!

**Seward Bike Center.** The Council has approved the Seward Bike Walk Center's fiscal agent agreement. This is a fantastic project initiated by the Seward Neighborhood Group and funded with a grant from the federal Non-motorized Transportation Pilot (NTP) funding program. It will provide up to \$380,000 for the community to open Minneapolis' 4<sup>th</sup> Bike/Walk Center near 24<sup>th</sup> Street and the Hiawatha LRT Bike Trail. It should open later this year thanks, in large part, to SNG Board Member **Sheldon Mains** for his great work on this project.

**Earth Hour.** The Council has again adopted a resolution supporting Earth Hour. On **March 31**, from 8:30pm-9:30pm, the City will participate in Earth Hour by turning off all uses of electricity in municipal buildings not required for life, safety or operations, and will turn off the decorative lighting on the Stone Arch Bridge for the entire night as a symbol of the City's commitment to being part of the solution to climate change.

**New Yard Waste Rules.** Starting this spring, Solid Waste and Recycling will no longer pick up yard waste in plastic bags. Residents may use compostable bags, paper lawn bags, or sturdy reusable containers. This will result in an improved collection program with lower yard waste processing costs and higher quality finished compost. From **April 9 to May 7** there will be a four-week transition period for folks who have plastic leaf bags from last season. Through collection day the week of April 30, you may set out plastic bags of leaves from last fall or early spring for collection. Your yard waste crews will debag and collect your yard waste placing the empty plastic bags in your garbage cart and information about the new rules will be left behind. After May 7, 2012, all yard waste in conventional plastic bags will not be picked up but will be left and tagged to be repackaged. For more information, see: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/solid-waste/yardwaste/index.htm>.

**Funding for Next Round of Participation Program Approved.** The City Council approved new guidelines and funding amounts for neighborhood on Friday, March 30. This includes up to \$5.7 million for the next 18 month cycle of neighborhood funding as part of the Community Participation Program. The Council action included an additional \$860,000 for those neighborhoods that lost the most money from the December 2010 Council action that recaptured NRP Phase 2 funds. Both the Cedar Riverside and Longfellow neighborhoods will receive additional funds because of this. The total amounts for the Ward 2 neighborhoods for the next 18 months, starting this June, are: Cedar Riverside- \$154,882; Longfellow-\$326,611; Prospect Park-\$92,940, Seward-\$98,740 and Southeast Como-\$78,240.

**Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC) elections.** Applications are being accepted starting April 2 for NCEC candidates for the June 28, 2012 elections. This year, neighborhood districts 2, 4, 6 and 8 are up for re-election. District 8 includes all of the Ward 2 neighborhoods. In addition, 1 Mayoral and 3 City Council positions are up for appointment through the City's open appointment process. For more visit:

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/boards/ncec/WCMS1P-089624>

**Heading Home Hennepin Report.** The Council recently received a 5-year update on Heading Home Hennepin, Minneapolis and Hennepin County's 10 year plan to end homelessness in Minneapolis by 2016. There is some good news: street homelessness has been decreased by **40%**. Better coordination between homelessness outreach workers and police is working. Together, we have developed **2,433** housing opportunities (new construction and tenant based rental assistance) between 2007 and 2011. We have opened two Opportunity Centers, co-locating over 25 agencies at each center. Still, homelessness continues to be a problem for too many in Minneapolis. The foreclosure crisis and recession have exacerbated the problem. We have had to open two new winter shelters the last two years and the need for permanent affordable housing options for low income families continues to outpace our ability to provide it. I am not confident that we will succeed in ending homeless by 2016.

**City Employee Survey.** The results of the City's Employee Survey have been released. Many of the results are good and trending in the right direction, but some send troubling signals. For example, only 41% of employees believe that "In my department, all employees have equal opportunity for promotion and/or advancement." I believe that this is an indicator of the broader problems we have in employment equity in the City as an employer and the community as a whole. For more information, see:

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-089769.pdf>.

**Lead Grant.** The City will receive a nearly \$2.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to reduce the amount of lead in rental and low-income homes around the city. The money will help to reduce the lead in the paint in more than two hundred homes built before 1940.

**Minneapolis Firefighter Accused of Selling Meth.** A Minneapolis firefighter is under investigation for selling methamphetamine to undercover police informants in Ward 2, while at work at Fire Station 19 in Prospect Park. This is troubling news and the first and only instance I have heard of involving firefighters being engaged in criminal activity while at work. I look forward to learning more.

**Winter with No Snow Emergency.** When the snow season officially ends April 1, this will become the first snow season in Minneapolis without a Snow Emergency declaration in 15 years, or since the winter of 1986-'87. While this is good for the City's short-term budget (snow emergencies are expensive, after all), it is a troubling reminder that climate change will likely have significant and unpredictable local impacts. Because there was so little precipitation this winter, we are now at high risk for drought.

**30 Days of Biking.** The Twin Cities biking community has kicked off the third annual 30 Days of Biking challenge, to inspire infrequent riders and non-cyclists to adopt more active lifestyles and enjoy the benefits of bicycling. The challenge asks folks to bike somewhere — whether around the block, running an errand or commuting to work — every day for 30 days and then share your biking thoughts online. The kickoff event is set for noon, Sunday, **April 1** at Gold Medal Park, Minneapolis. The communal ride through Minneapolis will be followed by social time at the park. If you'd like to sign up or just learn more, visit the group's website at <http://30daysofbiking.com/>.

**Nice Ride Resumes Service.** Thanks to our unusually mild winter, Nice Ride bikes will be returning to Minneapolis streets earlier than in past years. Crews are currently returning Nice

Ride bike-sharing kiosks to Downtown and neighborhood commercial areas, including in Seward. Once the kiosks are in place, the process of placing bikes at the kiosks will begin during the week of April 2. After Nice Ride staff have run a few system tests, folks can once again check out bikes. For more information, see <https://www.niceridemn.org/>.

**State of the City Address.** Mayor Rybak will deliver his annual State of the City address on **April 11** at 10am, at the Capri Theater, 2027 W Broadway. Each year, the mayor addresses the community to report on the City's accomplishments and challenges and outline an agenda for the coming year.

**Street Sweeping.** City-wide street sweeping begins **April 10**. From now through the week of April 30, sweepers will clean all 1,100 miles of city streets and parkways. Watch for temporary "No Parking" signs that should be posted at least 24 hours in advance to make sure streets and parkways are clear of parked vehicles. Residents need to follow street sweep parking rules or they may have their cars ticketed and towed to the Minneapolis Impound Lot. In addition to the "No Parking" signs the City will make about 3,500 automated phone calls each evening to let residents know their street will be swept the next day. People can visit <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/publicworks/streetsweeping/index.htm> to find out when the sweepers are coming through their neighborhoods. Click on "street sweeping schedule lookup," to find out which week a street is scheduled to be swept. The weekend before that week, they can revisit the Web site to find out which day of the week the street is scheduled to be swept.

**Public Health Awards.** As part of National Public Health, April 2-6, the City will hold an open house and awards ceremony on **April 4**, 11 am-1 pm in the City Hall Rotunda. Awards will be given to community partners who have contributed to health department goals and the public is invited to stop by to learn about City's Department of Health and Family Support programs and initiatives in action.

**Southwest LRT.** The City has adopted a formal position supporting the Southwest Corridor LRT bonding bill request made by the Met Council and supported by the Governor but so far it looks like the legislature to choosing to exclude it from the any bonding bill. We are urging all Hennepin County state legislators to support the bonding request for Southwest Light Rail Transit and to work to make sure that the State of Minnesota continues to provide resources for this crucial regional transportation project.

**Civilian Review Authority (CRA).** Earlier this month we learned that both the state legislature, and a city staff team made up of the Civil Rights Director, Police Chief and City Attorney, are considering ways to change the Civilian Review Authority in Minneapolis. The City Council is on record opposing a bill at the legislature, S.F. 1981, which would set certain restrictions on Minneapolis' Civilian Review Authority that passed the Senate in March. The bill, which had been postponed in the House, would prohibit the CRA from making "findings of fact" and would seriously diminish the effectiveness of the CRA board in Minneapolis. Another plan developed to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CRA that is promoted by staff leadership would essentially merge the CRA and the Police Internal Affairs Unit into a single "Police Conduct Oversight Commission" with both an appointed community board working with civilian and police investigators to follow up on police complaints and make recommendations about discipline. While I see room for improvement in the CRA I have serious concerns about both of these proposals and oppose them in their current forms.

**Higher Minority Workforce Goals Set.** On March 30<sup>th</sup> the City Council approved a new "minority" employment participation goal for companies awarded city contracts. This was made possible because of the Disparities study last year that revealed there was a greater availability of minority employees than previous thought and justifies setting a higher goal. Since 2006 the required minority hiring goal has been 11% for both skilled and unskilled trade workers and 6% for women. The new goal is 32% for all projects funded with City of Minneapolis dollars.

**Comments Sought on County Waste Plan.** The Hennepin County 2012 – 2030 Solid Waste Management Master Plan is available until April 3 for public review and comment. The plan details the waste management strategies the county will adopt in order to meet its new countywide recycling goals. I am glad to see the plan coming forward but I would like to see more aggressive goals, targets and strategies for increasing recycling and recovery of materials, especially food and yard waste (or organics) and for reducing, rather than increasing, the amount of materials burned at the waste recovery facility in downtown Minneapolis. For more information go to:

[http://www.hennepin.us/files/HennepinUS/Environmental%20Services/Solid%20waste%20planning%20and%20reports/Solid\\_Waste\\_version8.pdf](http://www.hennepin.us/files/HennepinUS/Environmental%20Services/Solid%20waste%20planning%20and%20reports/Solid_Waste_version8.pdf)

**We Are All Trayvon Rally.** On Sunday: On April 1 at 6:30 p.m. in Minneapolis, there will be Lights to Unite: We Are All Trayvon Rally sponsored by Protect Minnesota, MADDADS, Shiloh Temple International Ministries and From Death to Life/Two Mothers. This rally is about the gun violence that ravages lives every day, and it will be a call to unity and action. It will be held at the Masjid An-Nur mosque, 1726 N. Lyndale Ave, Minneapolis. Gather in the parking lot.

**Know the Road Videos.** In April the City will launch two new public education videos related to biking on Minneapolis 14 & 79, using social media, on our web site and via a PSA/promo that will be aired by Comcast. These videos offer excellent informative for both bicyclists and drivers and should help everyone use the new bike related street lanes, stripes and symbols more effectively. You can see the two public education videos, titled Minneapolis Know the Road: Bike Lanes and Minneapolis Know the Road: Shared Lanes here

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eeDDYfUP4BU&feature=youtu.be> and here  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c7imwANUHDw&feature=relmfu>

**Sound Wall Meeting in Prospect Park.** There is a follow up meeting about the new freeway sound walls with state Department of Transportation representatives planned for **April 10<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 pm** at St. Francis Cabrini Church (1721 Franklin Avenue SE). Based on comments I have been receiving, the wall appears to have reduced noise levels on one side of the freeway as expected, but, unfortunately, it has increased the noise for many households on the other side. I am hoping that the state engineers will have some good ideas about how to help.

**Parking Meter Conversion.** The City will be changing all of the existing parking meters on the West Bank to the pay-station style this year. Parking meters in Stadium Village have already been converted. Business owners and others can add bike parking to the converted meters for **\$50** per pole, or half the total cost. This is collaboration between the City and the Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition. If you would like to sponsor one or more bike parking meters or have questions, please contact Susan at [mplsbikeracks@yahoo.com](mailto:mpls-bikeracks@yahoo.com) or 612-568-6227.

**New Signal at 29<sup>th</sup> and University.** The new pedestrian signal that I pushed for – along with the Mayor's office, CPED, and Hennepin County – has been installed at 29<sup>th</sup> and University. It will be up during Central Corridor construction this year, and will be replaced by a permanent pedestrian signal as part of the Central Corridor project.

**Pam French.** The City's Human Resources Director Pam French is leaving the City. In 1978 she started working for the City as a mail clerk and has stayed with the City ever since. For the past 9 years she has been leading the Human resources department. In April she will begin a new position as the HR Director for Washington County, MN. I am grateful for the enormous contribution she made to the City and I wish her well in all of her future endeavors.

**June Mathiowetz.** The Coordinator of the Homegrown Minneapolis initiative, June Mathiowetz, is leaving on April 6<sup>th</sup>. I have had a chance to work closely with June over the past two years in this position – and in her previous position in the City's Sustainability office – and have found her to be hardworking, effective, and deeply committed to making Minneapolis a greener, healthier city. I will miss her.

**Openings on City Boards and Commissions.** There are openings on the Animal Care & Control Advisory Committee, Bicycle Advisory Committee, Capital Long Range Improvement Commission, Family Housing Fund (McKnight), Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Neighborhood Community and Engagement Committee, Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Planning Commission, Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC), Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee and Workforce Advisory Committee. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:cityclerk@minneapolismn.gov).

**Ward Office Hours.** Every Tuesday morning I hold "Office Hours" in the Ward from 9:30-11:00am. Please feel free to call for an appointment or just stop by.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesdays, Hard Times Café (West Bank/University);
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays, Muddsuckers Coffee, 1500 Como (SE Como);
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays, Pratt School (Prospect Park);
- 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays, the Birchwood Cafe (Seward/Longfellow).

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