



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the Prospect Park East River Road Neighborhood, 3-26-12

**Cam's next Prospect Park Office Hours:
Pratt School, March 26th, 9:30-11am**

Items:

- 1) I-94 Sound Wall Meeting
- 2) Solar Installation on Station 19
- 3) Urban Ag Text Amendments
- 4) Earth Hour
- 5) New Yard Waste Rules
- 6) Compost Ordinance
- 7) Redistricting
- 8) New Director of Employment Equity
- 9) Police Department to Rehire CSOs
- 10) FoodShare Month
- 11) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) There is a follow up meeting about the new freeway sound walls with state Department of Transportation representatives planned for **April 10th, 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.
- 2) In February, a new solar installation was put on Station 19 to provide electricity and hot water to the building. The station is one of six Minneapolis buildings that have new solar installations funded by a grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act through the Minnesota Department of Commerce, and using Xcel Energy rebates. The roof of Fire Station No. 19 features 58 new solar electric panels, which will provide 9.83 kilowatts of power, and three solar thermal panels, which will provide the fire station with 50-70% of its hot water needs.
- 3) The Urban Agriculture Text Amendments I have authored unanimously passed the Council's Zoning and Planning Committee on March 22 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. The amendments now move forward to the full City Council on March 30th, where I expect them to pass with strong support from the rest of my colleagues.
- 4) 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.

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.

- 5) 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. Using compostable plastic bags, Kraft paper lawn and leaf yard waste bags, or a reusable container, eliminates the need to debag yard waste before composting. This results 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>.
- 6) The ordinance amendments I have authored to the City's composting ordinance passed the 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, require that compost areas be covered with a layer of odor-reducing material like dry leaves or straw, and authorize City staff to require people who violate the terms of the ordinance to take a course in composting.
- 7) The Redistricting Group of the Charter Commission is poised to vote on a final set of ward maps tomorrow, March 27th. Prospect Park remains whole in the proposed Ward 2, though portions of the Seward and Cedar Riverside neighborhoods are moved into Ward 6. For more information, see <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/redistricting2012/index.htm>.
- 8) The Civil Rights Department has hired **Karen Francois** as Director of Employment Equity for the City of Minneapolis. She will join the One Minneapolis Equity in Employment project team in the ongoing efforts of the city to mitigate the racial disparity in employment. The One Minneapolis equity in employment program was one of the only new programs Mayor Rybak and the city council funded in 2012 with an initial investment of \$300,000. A key focus of the initiative will be on providing hard-to-employ workers with training and placement for good jobs in the green economy. I have been leading the Council's efforts on employment equity for years, and I'm excited to welcome Ms. Francois to the City. We certainly have quite a lot of room for improvement.
- 9) The Council has authorized the Police Department to use \$400,000 in one-time funds from their 2011 budget overage to recall the group of Community Service Officers who were previously laid off. This is good for MPD's overall diversity, as this CSO class was more diverse than the MPD as a whole.
- 10) March is Minnesota FoodShare Month, and the Minneapolis and Saint Paul fire departments are competing to see which city can collect the most food for area food shelves. It is estimated that 1 in 10 metro area households — many of them with children — are facing hunger. With the increased need, hunger relief programs are struggling to meet the demand. To help you can bring non-perishable food items to any of Minneapolis' 19 fire stations by **March 31**.
- 11) 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.