

News from Cam Gordon
Council Member, Second Ward
September 2012

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

Civilian Review Authority Dismantled. I voted against the proposal created by the Civil Rights Department to merge the current Civilian Review Authority (CRA) with the Police Department's Internal Affairs Unit. The proposal sharply divided the Council, finally passing 8-5. In my view, this new ordinance essentially dismantles civilian police oversight in Minneapolis, and I am very sorry that I could not stop it. On a 7-6 margin, the Council rejected an amendment I crafted – which had the support of staff – to increase the number of civilians on the Review Panels from 2 to 3, so that there will be more civilians than police officers on each panel. I am disappointed not only in this outcome, but in the process that led to it. The Civil Rights Department did not seek the input of the existing CRA Board, outside police accountability advocates, the Police Federation, or Council Members as they put the proposal together. The final plan was opposed by the Star Tribune, in addition to five Council Members, and drew sharp criticism from the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement. For more analysis, please see my blog.

Utility Franchise Work Group. The Council has voted to create a new Utility Franchise Work Group to assist the City in preparing for negotiations regarding its electric and natural gas franchise agreements with public utility companies. I am one of the four Council Members who have been appointed to this Work Group. Among its tasks, the work group will develop a set of policy principles that will guide the city in its franchise discussions; review and consider potential legislative and/or other regulatory changes and consider formal support for these changes on the City's state legislative agenda; and develop a community engagement program. I am very supportive of having this conversation, and exploring all of our options: renewing the franchise agreements, renegotiating them to include more green energy and energy efficiency, or starting the process to become a municipal power utility. For more, see:

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-098575.pdf>.

35W Transit and Access Project. The Council has voted to formally support the 35W Lake Transit Access Project. The centerpiece of this project, and the part of it that I most strongly support, is a proposed multi-modal transit station at 35W and Lake Street. This station will relieve the biggest barrier to Bus Rapid Transit on I-35W and allow other public investments, like the 46th Street BRT station, to be successful. The prior version of this project did not include the BRT station, widened the freeway, and would have cost more than \$500 million. In addition to the BRT station and better bus stops for the large number of buses on Lake, the station will include a bicycle and pedestrian connection to the Midtown Greenway, where we hope to have streetcars in the future. The part of this project I am the least excited about is the northbound exit onto 28th Street. If I was a member of the Transportation and Public Works committee, I would have voted for my colleague Robert Lilligren's motion to remove that off-ramp from the list of project items the City supports. However, the inclusion of this off-ramp was not enough of a negative for me to vote against the whole project.

In the Doghouse. On Saturday, September 29, I joined City Council members, community leaders and others to help raise awareness and money for the 4,000 animals that are cared for at the city's animal shelter each year. An Open House celebration at the shelter will feature dog agility demonstrations, building tours, food and children's activities, including face-painting, balloon art and an inflatable jumping area. More than 20 businesses and organizations will also have educational booths at the event. The event was held at Minneapolis Animal Care & Control, 212 17th Avenue North. If you would like to donate online, go to <http://givemn.razoo.com/story/Macc-S-I-M-In-The-Dog-House-Get-Cam-Out>. You can also send a donation via check to Jeanette Wiedemeier Bower,

Minneapolis Animal Care & Control, Program Development Coordinator, 212 17th Avenue N, Minneapolis, MN 55411.

More Electric Charging Stations Coming. The City of Minneapolis and the Minnesota Department of Transportation have been awarded a grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to install up to 25 more electric car charging stations at four parking ramps Downtown: Ramp A, Ramp B, the Leamington Parking Ramp and the Jerry Haaf Memorial Ramp. The Haaf ramp already has three charging stations. The grant is for up to \$220,000, with a \$55,000 match coming from the City's Parking Services and MnDOT. It is estimated that about \$80,000 of the grant and match will be spent at the two City ramps (Leamington and Haaf) and the rest will be spent at Ramp A and Ramp B, which are owned by MnDOT and operated by the City.

Solid Waste MRI Contract. The Transportation and Public Works Committee has set a public hearing to be held on October 9, 2012 to consider and formally announce the City's intent to potentially begin a 180-day process to evaluate options and discuss with the solid waste, garbage and recycling contract, the current contractor and other options for a future contract for collection of garbage, recycling, problem materials (metals and mattresses), and yard wastes for one-half of the City's dwelling units currently served by the private company, Minneapolis Refuse Inc.(MRI.) The contract is set to end in January of 2014 and this will keep us on track to maintain competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process for solid waste collection services on a 5-year cycle, as was started in 2007 and provides the opportunity for the city to obtain competitive market pricing.

One-Sort Recycling Processing and Marketing Contract. On September 25th Transportation and Public Works Committee recommended approving the selection of Waste Management, Inc. for the processing and marketing of Minneapolis one-sort recyclable materials and authorizing the negotiation and execution of a contract with them for a three-year term, with the option to extend annually for two years (2012-2017).

County Seat on City Bicycle Advisory Committee. The Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC), staff and a Council Committee have recommended that a Hennepin County staff person be added to the BAC. The BAC currently has twenty-seven members, including thirteen citizen ward representatives that are appointed by City Council Members, three citizen representatives that are appointed by Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board President John Erwin, and eleven public agency members that are appointed by various agencies and City departments. Many of the infrastructure projects that the BAC has discussed over the past eighteen months address roadways and bridges under the jurisdiction of Hennepin County. Hennepin County Public Works staff members have attended the BAC Engineering Subcommittee on a frequent basis, but have not had formal participation or a vote at the full BAC meetings. To increase the BAC effectiveness by including Hennepin County representation, it is recommended that the City Council amend the BAC enabling resolution to add a Hennepin County staff member.

Register to Vote. If you want to vote in the November 6 general election, but you're not yet registered, you can pre-register. Registered voters who changed their name or moved since they last voted should re-register. Voter registration applications can be picked up at the Minneapolis Elections Office in City Hall or at the Hennepin County Government Center or online: www.sos.state.mn.us/index.aspx?page=204. If you call my office, 673-2202, we can mail you the application. All eligible individuals whose registration applications are received by elections officials by 5 p.m. on October 16 will be pre-registered for the Nov. 6 election and will receive a postcard notifying them where to vote. Individuals are eligible in Minnesota to vote if they will be at least 18 years old by Election Day, are a U.S. citizen and have lived in Minnesota for at least 20 days prior to the election. For more information about registering and voting in Minneapolis, or to serve as an election judge, visit minneapolismn.gov/elections or call Minneapolis 311, or TTY/TTD 612-673-2157.

Sample Ballots Available. Sample ballots for the upcoming Nov. 6 Presidential General Election are now available for review at either of the following web tools: the Secretary of State's Voter Registration Lookup (mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us/VoterStatus.aspx), or the Poll-finder/Where do I Vote: pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us/. Both of these tools will allow a voter to view his or her Ward/Precinct information, a polling place location (address and building identification), a list of candidates that will be on your ballot, and an unofficial Sample Ballot that can be reviewed anytime through Election Day.

City Keeps Top Credit Rating. The three main credit rating services, Fitch Ratings, Moody's and Standard and Poor's have assigned the City of Minneapolis their highest, triple A, ratings again this year. As a result, the City was able to finalize \$91.42 million of bond sales and refunding in September, leading to an interest savings of \$13 million in the coming years. The City sells bonds periodically to finance capital projects, including sewer and water system improvements, street paving, lighting and traffic signal improvements. The refunding work is similar to the way a person might refinance a home, meaning the City refunds bonds it sold years ago by selling new bonds at lower interest rates. Moody's praised the City's "well-managed financial operations" while Fitch said that Minneapolis "benefits from conservative financial management resulting in stable financial performance," and noted that "management has prudently dealt with potential budgetary challenges."

Latino Heritage Month. In September the City Council passed a resolution celebrating September 15 - October 15, 2012 as National Hispanic Heritage Month. The resolution acknowledges that the cultural and economic vibrancy of Minneapolis is made possible by the generations of Latinos who have "sacrificed, shaped and strengthened our city. Roughly 40,000 Latino residents now live in Minneapolis." As the resolution states, "Latinos are leaders in all aspects of our city, they protect us as police officers, they guide students as teachers, and they revitalize our economic corridors as sharp entrepreneurs and business owners."

Free Energy Assessments. A pilot program to reduce pollution is looking for Minneapolis organizations (businesses, schools, nonprofits, etc.) to sign up for free energy efficiency assessments. The assessments put knowledge in consumers' hands to help them make decisions that will save them money. The Retiree Environmental Technical Assistance Program (RETAP) and the City - in a partnership called Green Business Benchmarking - will help businesses monitor their energy use from year to year and to learn how to reduce energy, water and waste. Organizations interested in signing up or finding out more can email MPLSefficiency@minneapolismn.gov.

Bulk Buy for Insulation and Solar Launches in Minneapolis. Cooperative Energy Futures (CEF) is a Minneapolis based community energy cooperative that is helping neighbors and businesses save money on insulation and solar panels with unique bulk buying programs. The programs CEF offers are Neighborhood Insulation, Grow Solar, Weatherization Work Parties and Make Mine Solar. Working together as a community and buying in bulk makes the process easier, cheaper, and fun. Would you like to find out more? Attend a free community workshop: **Tuesday, October 9**, 6-8 pm, at Powderhorn Park (3400 15th Ave S) or **Wed, October 17**, 6-8 pm, at the Midtown Global Market. If you are interested in saving money, reducing emissions, or building energy generation, then contact Cooperative Energy Futures to begin shoring up our communities' electrical futures. More Info: www.cooperativeenergyfutures.com

Kids Voting Needs Volunteers. Kids Voting is a program that provides an authentic voting experience - ballots, booth and all - to every K-12 kid in Minneapolis. To ensure success, Kids Voting is seeking volunteers to staff every precinct in Minneapolis! To volunteer, please contact Will Howell at will@kidsvotingminneapolis.org or 612-568-VOTE.

Tragic Hand Gun Shooting. Six people were killed on September 27 in a hand gun shooting in a Minneapolis business. Another four people were wounded in a separate shooting on the same

day when someone shot into their home. My thoughts and prayers go out to the victims, their families, co-workers and other community members devastated by these terrible crimes. These are all too common and should remind us that we need to work harder to prevent acts of violence and address this epidemic of gun violence head on. I believe that we need the best and the brightest minds to unite to look at how science, education, regulation and technology can help address this public health crisis. As Heather Martens, executive director of Protect Minnesota: Working to End Gun Violence said, "Public policy matters. It is time for our public officials to acknowledge that gun violence is a problem, that they can do something about it, and that they are morally obligated to work to solve the problem. Homicide is not an acceptable price to pay for political expediency, for blind ideology or for gun industry profits -- there is no excuse for failure to act." It is clear that this is a national, as well as local problem, according to David Hemenway from the Harvard School of Public Health, the United States has a rate of homicide 7 times that of other wealthy nations, driven by a 20-times higher rate of gun homicide. For more you may want to see this new investigation by Mother Jones has found a national trend of rising mass shootings since 1982. Mother Jones also reported a nationwide rollback in gun regulations since 2009 <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/09/mass-shootings-investigation>

WaHu Student Housing. The Council voted to deny in part and approve in part an appeal from by Hossein Azhakh, on behalf of the Caspian Bistro, to the WaHu Student Housing project. This action will allow the project to move forward subject, however, to a new condition on the project that requires WaHu to comply with all building code requirements, including snow loading provisions of the building code, and to work with the Caspian Bistro to evaluate the existing structural condition of the Caspian building and the measures that need to be taken to protect its structural integrity and address storm water drainage issues during and after construction.

Seward Café Rezoning. The Seward Café has applied to rezone their property from C1 to C2, to allow for nighttime hours and a beer/wine license with general entertainment. I understand that this will come before the Seward Neighborhood Group's Community Development Committee on October 9th.

Lake Street Museum in the Streets. Congratulations to the Lake Street Council, which has officially launched its long awaited Museum in the Streets! Take a walk along Lake Street and learn its history, as described in beautiful signature plaques with historic photos of life in years past on Lake Street. There are three walking tours available for the East, Midtown, and West (Uptown) portions of Lake Street. Thanks to the many volunteers and donors who contributed to this beautiful project that will help us all learn about Lake Street. For more information, go to <http://www.lakestreetcouncil.org/pro-mits.htm>.

Longfellow Grill. The Longfellow Grill's application for an additional 24 seats in its outdoor patios will come before the Regulatory Energy and Environment committee next Monday, September 24th. A well-attended public hearing was held at Brackett Park on Thursday, September 6th. Licensing staff and my office heard a number of concerns about illegal parking on the south side of Dorman Avenue (just to the north of the Longfellow Grill's building), litter, and the loss of green space. Licensing staff have negotiated three conditions with the Grill's owners: 1) to pay for a 'no parking' zone on the entire south side of Dorman, 2) find four off street parking places for Grill employees, and 3) install litter receptacles on the patio. The Grill has already found the four parking places. They are also voluntarily rebuilding the garbage enclosure behind the building to better address litter problems. Lastly, the Grill's owner is interested in planting additional trees either on their property or paying to have trees planted on the adjacent Park Board property, to address the loss of green space. It seems to me that the Grill's management and City staff have been very responsive to the legitimate concerns that we heard at the public hearing, and I plan on supporting this outdoor seating expansion.

Zombie Pub Crawl. The Zombie Pub Crawl is scheduled for Saturday, October 13th. They are applying to close Cedar Avenue and the I-94 Exit to Cedar that evening, due to the large number of people who are expected to attend the event. After hearing concerns from some Cedar

Avenue businesses, my office requested that they push the beginning of the street closure from 4pm to 6pm, and we are working to allow the closure to extend until midnight. The organizers have assured me they will provide good security, access through the area for residents and clean up following the event. The pub crawl has a very successful event for many West Bank bars and restaurants, and I hope they do well again this year. Please let me know if you have any concerns now, during the event or afterwards.

“Our Streets” Community Meeting. My office has scheduled a community meeting about 15th Ave and 4th and 6th Streets for **Monday, October 1st** at 6 pm at the Brian Coyle Center. My hope is that the meeting will help the neighborhood come to a consensus on the pedestrian, bicycle and parking improvements to be included in the reconstruction of 15th and 4th and pursued through separate funding sources on 6th.

Afro Deli Outdoor Area Meeting. My office has scheduled a meeting for Thursday, October 4th, at 7pm at the African Development Center, 1931 S 5th St, to discuss the proposed expansion of the outdoor seating area at the Afro Deli.

Rainbow Gallery Building. I learned recently that Fine Associates has offered to donate the building they own at 6th St. and 15th Avenue to the Minneapolis based nonprofit organization, Ka Joog. At their request I convened a meeting with both organizations, City staff and representatives from the West Bank Community Coalition to consider the possibility of moving the building to a location in the neighborhood. The city-owned “Dania lot” at 427 Cedar and the space just north of the Red Sea were both mentioned as possible new sites for the building. If funding for the move and a new site for the building is not found by March 2013, Fine Associates has indicated the building will be demolished. Since that meeting, the Heritage Preservation Commission has postponed their decision on whether to allow the building to be torn down until early November. This building is one of a handful of remaining Gluek’s Brewery “Tied Houses” in Minneapolis.

Riverside Plaza Project Re-Opening. The Riverside Plaza renovation project will have a Grand Re-Opening on **Wednesday, October 10th**. There will be a tour at 2pm, followed by a short ceremony and ribbon-cutting from 2:45 until 4:30.

Public Funding for Currie Park Lofts. The City is applying for \$390,000 in Hennepin County Transit Oriented Development funds for the Currie Park Lofts development.

Apply to Serve on a Boards or Commission. There are more than 186 open positions on 24 boards and commissions that the City Council and Mayor will appoint this fall. The City is seeking applicants with a diversity of backgrounds and experiences to strengthen the work of the City. Boards/Commissions with open positions include: Arts Commission, Citizen Environmental Advisory Committee, Civil Rights Commission, Civilian Police Review Authority Vacancy, Dinkytown Special Service District, Disabilities, Mpls Advisory Committee, East Lake Special Service District, Heritage Preservation Commission, Housing Board of Appeals Vacancy, Minneapolis Public Housing Authority, Planning Commission, Public Health Advisory Committee, Senior Advisory Committee Vacancy, Stadium Village Special Service District, Telecommunications Network, Minneapolis ThincGreen Advisory Committee, Youth Violence Prevention Committee and the Zoning Board of Adjustments. Applications will be reviewed beginning Friday, October 19, however the positions are open until filled. For a full list of appointment opportunities and position descriptions visit <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/index.htm> To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email 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.

1st Tuesdays, Hard Times Café (West Bank/University);
2nd Tuesdays, Muddsuckers Coffee, 1500 Como (SE Como);

3rd Tuesdays, Pratt School (Prospect Park);
4th Tuesdays, the Birchwood Cafe (Seward/Longfellow).

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