

Second Ward November 2012 E-newsletter

News from Cam Gordon
Council Member, Second Ward
November 2012

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

Election Day 2012. Thanks to everyone for voting on November 6. Your participation in our democracy is vital to health of our city, state and country. Gratitude is also due to the many election judges and elections professionals that worked hard throughout a long day to ensure the best election possible. Turnout of registered voters in the Second Ward was **81.11%**, citywide it was 80.84%, both higher than the statewide turnout of 76%. Over 200,000 Minneapolis residents voted in person and, of those, 50,668 registered on Election Day. I know that many people waited in long lines in the cold and rain. I am sorry for any inconveniences and I thank you for patience, diligence, and determination to make your voice heard, as some residents had waits of an hour or even longer. As Chair of the Elections Committee I am helping coordinate a full review of this election. This will include a report to the Council's Elections Committee on **December 3rd**, at 11am, that will outline the challenges we faced and a precinct-by-precinct analysis of all polling place issues including long wait times, numbers of election judges per precinct, and space concerns. I welcome your feedback your voting experience and on how well polling places worked in your area. Given the concerns I have already heard, I am already committed to recommending alternative polling places for at least two precincts: for Ward 6 precinct 2 (Seward Square Apartments where wait times were too long and the space was inadequate) and Ward 2, precinct 9, (Seward Towers East that is outside of the precinct and does not serve the residents of the building).

Election Results. I am very pleased that both of the constitutional amendments – to ban same-sex marriage and require voters to have a photo ID – failed on November 6th. I'm proud that the City Council took a strong, unanimous stand against both amendments, and that the Second Ward voted so conclusively against them. **84%** of Ward 2 residents voted against the marriage amendment, and **81%** voted against the voter ID amendment. These percentages mean that the Second Ward had the fourth-highest percentage of the vote against both of these two amendments of all thirteen Minneapolis wards.

Sexual Assault in Riverside Park. On Monday, November 19th, a woman was sexually assaulted in Riverside Park. The suspect was described as a black male, 5' 5" tall, and 35 to 40 years old with an unshaven scruffy beard. He had a medium to heavy build and was wearing a navy blue jacket with a zipper. The case number for this incident is 12-359509. The case has been assigned to Sergeant David Mattson of the Minneapolis Police Department's Sex Crimes Unit. Anybody with information is asked to call Sergeant Mattson at 612-673-2358. The case has also been referred to Crime Stoppers of Minnesota, which is offering a reward of up to \$1000 for information. To provide information to Crime Stoppers regarding this incident, or any other serious crime, call 1-800-222-8477(TIPS), text TIP674 plus your information to 274637(CRIMES) or go to the Crime Stoppers website at crimestoppersmn.org and click on "Give a Tip." All callers are given a unique identifier and no names are used. The Police Department has also immediately implemented a focused patrol in the Riverside Park area, particularly in the morning hours, along with a presence by beat officers on bikes. Officers have been instructed to be "highly visible". The Park Police will be deploying a camera to Riverside Park on Thursday, November 22nd.

Climate Change Action Plan Open Houses. The City is updating our Climate Action Plan. The public is invited to two open houses to give feedback on draft recommendations that are now before the Climate Action Plan Steering Committee: **Tuesday, November 27** from **5-7pm**, at Powderhorn Park Community Center, 3400 15th Ave S, and **Thursday, November 29** from **5:30-7:30pm**, at the U of M Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC), 2001

Plymouth Ave N. The draft recommendations and a short survey to collect feedback are available at www.minneapolismn.gov/sustainability/climate. The updated Plan will recommend new initiatives that could reduce pollution in transportation, land use, buildings and waste while furthering the City's goals for a healthy, growing and equitable community. While climate change is a global issue, local action can make a difference. Over the last 10 months, the City has worked with public, private and nonprofit partners and the community to update the Minneapolis Climate Action Plan. For more information on the Climate Action Plan update, future meeting dates and ways Minneapolis residents can get involved, go to www.minneapolismn.gov/sustainability/climate.

2013 Budget. Throughout October, the Ways and Means Committee has been reviewing the Mayor's proposed budget at hearings where city departments report on how the budget will effect there plans and operations. The Mayor has proposed a 1.7% property tax increase, adding firefighters and police officers, and recommending a reorganization of the Regulatory Services department. Starting Saturday, November 10, the City is rebroadcasting all of the budget hearings on Minneapolis 79 every weekend until the budget is approved Wednesday December 12. You can also watch any of the budget hearings online here:

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/tv/79schedule>. The City Council will have two public meetings before a final budget is approved: **Wednesday, Nov. 28, 6:05 p.m. and Wednesday, Dec. 12, 6:05 p.m.** Both will be held at City Hall, 350 South 5th Street, in room 317 Visit <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/finance/budget/WCMS1P-097420> for more information on the Mayor's recommended budget.

Airport. The Metropolitan Airport Commissions (MAC) has been considering a new navigation system that could expose some people to more noise. This system, called "Area Navigation" or "RNAV," puts planes on more precise routes and they fly the same routes continually. The hope is that by having planes take the most direct route possible there will be savings to fuel (and money) and reduced emissions. Concerns have arisen related to increased aircraft noise over certain areas and insufficient community engagement regarding the tracks, so the City provided comments calling for more time and a better community engagement process. Complying with the City's request, at its meeting on November 19th the MAC voted to not to proceed with new flights path plan proposed to go over Minneapolis. They did support making navigation changes that would go over the southern suburbs but agreed that more study was needed before any changes were made to those flight paths that go over south Minneapolis and parts of the western suburbs.

Open Streets. Open Streets events are temporary closures of major commercial corridors to automobile traffic on a Saturday or Sunday, to allow pedestrians, bicyclists and others to use the street. This August, along with the Mayor and Council Members Johnson and Lilligren, I signed onto an application for a \$50,000 grant from the Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA) to hold four Open Streets events in 2013. We won the grant, making Minneapolis one of only ten cities around the country to earn this opportunity. Minneapolis has held three Open Streets events so far in 2011 and 2012, on Lyndale Ave S and Lowry Ave N. Two more routes, one in Northeast and one in South Minneapolis (east of I-35W) will be added next year. The Council will consider formally accepting this grant on December 4th. At the same time, the Council will consider a resolution I have coauthored with Council Member Johnson, which will formally commit the City to cover the public costs of the four Open Streets events – costs like barricades, traffic direction, no parking signage and waste and recycling service. I am hopeful that this will pass with substantial support from my colleagues. This successful grant was coordinated by my policy aide, Robin Garwood, with help from City staff, other Council offices, and the Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition. It's a great accomplishment, and will help make Minneapolis Open Streets more geographically equitable, successful and sustainable for the long term.

Recreational Fires. The Citizens Environmental Advisory Committee and Public Health Advisory Committee have both drafted recommendations on recreational fires, and will present their comments to the Council's Public Safety, Civil Rights and Health committee on Wednesday,

November 28th at 1:30pm. Both groups advocate for the Council to amend the recreational fire ordinance to prohibit fires during air quality alert days, and for various departmental changes to better educate residents about the rules regarding fires and respond effectively to illegal or nuisance fires. After the PSCR&H meeting, I plan to initiate the process to make the recommended changes to the City's recreational fire ordinance early next year.

MPCA Composting Rules. The City Council has unanimously adopted comments on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's draft amendments to their composting rules. These comments were drafted by members of the Minneapolis Food Council, my office and City Sustainability and Solid Waste and Recycling staff. The City supports the general direction of these amendments, which will allow more large-scale compost sites in the state and will also make it easier to do neighborhood-level or small business composting in Minneapolis. In addition, the City called on the MPCA to:

- Finish the rulemaking process as soon as possible
- Allow more flexibility for municipalities to decide what sorts of materials (including non-recyclable paper and chicken litter from chicken permit holders) can be composted in small compost sites
- Use newly available experimental findings about the very limited impacts compost sites have on storm water when determining how far above the water table a compost site must be
- In general make it easier to build new composting capacity while still protecting the environment and nearby property owners.

Source Separated Organic Collection Study. Responding to a recommendation by the Citizens Environmental Advisory Committee, the Council has directed Solid Waste and Recycling staff to study City collection of Source Separated Organics and report the findings to the Council by April of next year. This study will answer the cost, co-collection, processing and hauling questions, and allow the Council to adopt a clear goal for when the City should begin to collect organic waste in addition to recycling, yard waste and garbage. I view this as a major step towards making our city more sustainable. It does not make sense to send our compostable organic waste to the garbage burner and lose all of the nutrients in it – including fixed nitrogen, phosphorous and more – when we could be turning it back into soil.

Public Hearing on Police Chief. The Mayor has formally nominated Janee Harteau to be the next Minneapolis Chief of Police. I know Ms. Harteau from her time as Inspector of the First Precinct (which includes Cedar Riverside) and have great respect for her. I will be interested to hear her plans for increasing police accountability and the diversity of the police force. The public hearing on this appointment will be held at the Public Safety, Civil Rights and Health committee on **November 28th** at 1:30pm.

Xcel Sherco Coal Plant. I testified at a Public Utilities Commission hearing in favor of requiring Xcel Energy study how clean energy options can replace the dirty Sherco coal plant. I am very pleased to say that the PUC has ruled in favor of my position. I view this as a major win for clean energy, and a possible phase-out of a coal plant that pollutes our air and water.

Minneapolis Food Council Open House. The Minneapolis Food Council is holding an Open House on **Wednesday, December 5**, from 5:30-9pm at East Phillips Park Cultural and Community Center, 2307 17th Ave S. Participants will hear an update on Minneapolis' progress with urban agriculture initiatives, hear from two urban farmers and weigh in on possible future policies and programs. The open house will include an information fair with organizations that support urban agriculture; lessons on composting, gardening and bee keeping; and a discussion on the future work of the Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council. Sisters Camelot will serve a light dinner from 6-7 p.m. The event is free and open to the public, but please RSVP to jane.shey@minneapolismn.gov.

Orchestra Labor Dispute. The Council has passed a resolution calling for the Minnesota Orchestra administration to end lock outs and re-open negotiations. I am very supportive and believe that the books should be opened and musicians should have a larger role in the management of this treasured regional asset.

Health Safety Fee. After some consideration of proposed new fees to health safety inspections, the request for the new fee has been withdrawn. Alternative funds have been found to fund the 7 new inspectors needed to keep up with the growing need for timely inspections of the many restaurants, hotels and other businesses that need regular health inspections.

Homelessness Increases. The homelessness rate in Hennepin County is at a five-year high. Despite the City approval of two winter overflow shelters for the homeless — one at First Covenant Church, 810 S 7th St, and another at the River of Life Church, 2200 N Fremont Ave — the need for shelters appears to be on the rise. To better understand the growing homelessness problem, the Council's Community Development Committee will hear a report and discuss the problem of homelessness on Tuesday, **November 27th** at 1:45pm.

Park Board Urban Agriculture Meetings. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has begun a process to develop a plan to support urban agriculture. This plan will guide the MPRB in defining and prioritizing community needs, recommending service delivery goals, and guiding allocation of funds to support urban agriculture within the park system. You can help shape the Plan through a variety of input opportunities:
<http://www.minneapolisparcs.org/default.asp?PageID=1399>.

Youth Violence Prevention Grant. The City has received a \$60,000 grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety to support our Youth Violence Prevention efforts. The award was recommended by the Minnesota Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee in support of the Broader Urban Involvement and Leadership Development Program (BUILD). The target population for BUILD is youth between the ages of 8-17 years old who are at various stages of gang involvement and affiliation, or those with a high risk of future involvement. The program engages youth in the school and community so they can realize their educational and career potential and contribute to the stability, safety, and wellbeing of their communities.

Cedar Ave Sidewalks. As you may know, the City and County have allocated funds to redo the sidewalks on Cedar Avenue between 7th Street S and the new Central Corridor light rail station. At a site visit on November 19th, it became clear that, to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, most or all of the curb and gutter on the west side of Cedar between 4th and 6th Streets will have to be replaced. This presents an opportunity to potentially widen the sidewalk as part of this project, if a) Hennepin County agrees to change Cedar between 4th and 6th from a four-lane to a three-lane roadway and b) additional funding is allocated to the project. In order to have a functional sidewalk on the east side of Cedar, it may be necessary to do the east side in 2013 and the west side in 2014 or later. I will be hosting a public meeting on the Cedar Avenue sidewalk project on **Tuesday, December 18th** from 6-8pm at the Brian Coyle Center.

Sabo Bridge. The Martin Olav Sabo bicycle and pedestrian bridge over Hiawatha Avenue is back in service. Structural repairs have been completed where support cables broke loose last winter. Temporary closures may be necessary in 2013, for painting, lighting and screen installation. The work included installing and retrofitting diaphragm plates on the bridge's pylon, including the plate that fractured and caused a pair of suspension cables to break loose. Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., an engineering firm hired to find the cause of the fracture, concluded in June that wind-induced cable vibrations caused fatigue cracking in the diaphragm plates resulting in two cable connections fracturing. The retrofitted and replaced plates are designed to withstand fatigue that caused the cracking. In addition to fixing the diaphragm plates, crews have replaced both cables that broke loose. They've also installed monitoring equipment to make sure the repairs are all working properly. For more information, go here:
<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/news/WCMS1P-100843>.

Peavey Plaza. The State Historic Preservation Board has recommended Peavey Plaza for historic registry – but the Minnesota Orchestra could still opt out. I was the only Council Member who voted against allowing the Plaza to be demolished, and for further historic study.

Como Neighborhood Homebuyer Loan Program. I am delighted to report that the Como Neighborhood in SE Mpls is now offering \$5,000 forgivable Homebuyer Incentive Loans towards down payment and closing costs. Up to 10 loans are available to anyone who buys a home in Como Neighborhood. The only eligibility requirement is that the buyer be an owner-occupant of the home purchased. The loans are forgivable in annual increments over 7 years. Details are at <http://secomo.comogreenvillage.info/home/programs/housing-programs>.

Birchwood Café. The City Planning Commission has unanimously voted to grant the variance requests tied to the Birchwood Café's proposed expansion and to recommend that the Council rezone the property to C1. I expect this rezoning application to come before the Zoning and Planning committee on November 8th. With the Seward Neighborhood Group, the Seward Civic and Commerce Association, City Planning staff and the Planning Commission all strongly recommending this rezoning, I intend to support it and expect it to pass. I will continue to listen to the concerns of the near neighbors and encourage the Birchwood, other nearby businesses, and the City to do what we can to address the issues that have been raised about traffic, parking, loading and more.

Seward Café. The City Planning Commission has unanimously granted the Seward Café's request to rezone their parcel to C2, to allow them to request a beer/wine license that can include general entertainment.

Plasma Center Rezoning Request. CPM Development has applied for a rezoning to allow a blood/plasma collection facility in the existing building at 315 27th Ave SE. If approved, the property would be rezoned from light industrial (I1) to the City's most intensive commercial land use zone (C4). This is scheduled to come before the City Planning Commission for a public hearing on **Monday, December 3, at 4:30pm** in Room 317 City Hall, 350 S 5th St. My understanding is that Planning staff will likely recommend against this rezoning request. If you have an opinion on this matter that you would like to have included in the public record, please email Kimberly Holien at Kimberly.Holien@minneapolismn.gov.

Surly Brewing. As you have likely heard, Surly Brewing Company is seriously exploring locating their brewery and taproom in the Second Ward, one block north of University Avenue and just east of Malcolm Ave SE. They will be applying for environmental remediation grants to deal with significant soil contamination of this land. I am very supportive of this idea, and have encouraged City Economic Development staff to help in any way we can. If Surly moves to the SEMI area, it will bring a large number of good paying jobs to the area, increase the vitality of the area, and represent one of the first major employers attracted by the Central Corridor LRT.

Tri-State Bearing Building. Hennepin County has decided to allow the Leifman Memorial Foundation's to repurchase the old Tri-State Bearing building on 25th St E. The sale is conditional on finishing the environmental review and selling the building to a new owner within 120 days. City Zoning staff have made clear that any future use of the building will require a change of nonconforming use certificate.

Currie Park Lofts/515 on the Park. While concerns about the historic building on the site could create delays to the project, the City has applied for \$390,000 in Hennepin County Transit Oriented Development funds for the Currie Park Lofts development that is now being called "515 On the Park". The City's Historic Preservation Commission has denied the developer's request to demolish the building, established interim protection and directed Planning staff to prepare a designation study. Such studies can take several months to complete. The developer can withdraw their demolition application and instead apply to move the building to a different

location, or they can appeal the Historic Preservation Commission's decision. The developer has committed to move the building to a nearby location already under their ownership. Additional concerns have come from the community on the location of the pedestrian route through the site, from Riverside Plaza to Currie Park and the Brian Coyle Center. The decision about where this route should be will impact decisions about where to place bump-outs as part of the City's reconstruction of 15th Ave S.

Red Sea Liquor License. The Red Sea Bar's application for a Class B license has been postponed until at least November 26th, due in large part to a violent incident in late October that may have had a connection to the establishment. Many neighborhood stakeholders – businesses, residents, property owners – attended the public hearing for the Red Sea's application to speak in favor. City Licensing staff have drafted a set of proposed conditions, and my office will be working to ensure that the license will move forward with conditions that are appropriate to the concerns that have been raised and that allow the Red Sea to continue to be successful for years to come.

Pedestrian Improvements to Seven Corners. The Council is poised to accept a \$765,000 grant from the Federal Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot to significantly improve pedestrian safety at the Seven Corners intersection through bump-outs and improvements to signalization. I expect this project to occur next year.

Livable Communities Local Housing Incentive Account. Seward Senior Apartments has received \$150,000 in Metropolitan Council grants, to be matched by funds from the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

U Garden License Amendment. The U Garden restaurant has received a class B liquor license, which includes a change to their operating conditions. The restaurant will no longer be required to serve food to every customer who orders an alcoholic beverage. The public hearing on this application was held in the neighborhood, and no one from the neighborhood attended to express any concerns.

Winter Street Reconstruction. The Council has voted to reconstruct Winter Street and nearby numbered streets north of East Hennepin Ave in Southeast Como. These streets are some of the last "oiled dirt" streets in Minneapolis, and were never actually constructed in the first place. There will be a public hearing on the proposed assessments for this project on **January 29th** of next year.

4th St S and 15th Ave S Reconstruction. A new idea has been presented by CPED staff: to transform the existing street on 16th Ave S south of 6th St to a pedestrian and bicycle mall. This would add to the developable parcels on the east and west, and could much better facilitate pedestrian access to the Cedar Riverside LRT station. Another key question will be how pedestrian access will be allowed from Riverside Plaza to the Brian Coyle Center, through some portion of the Fine development and across 15th Ave S.

New Parking Contract for West Bank Lots. The Council has voted to authorize CPED staff to negotiate & execute a contract with Interstate Parking to operate the three City-owned parking lots on the West Bank. Members of WBBA were involved on the review committee, and supported moving the contract from Impark to Interstate Parking.

New Bike Lanes on Johnson. Minneapolis Public Works staff have installed new bike lanes on Johnson Street Northeast, north of East Hennepin. I strongly supported this new connection between Southeast and Northeast, which the Bicycle Advisory Committee fought to include on the City's bike map as part of the Bicycle Plan that passed last year. The next step on these lanes will be to figure out how to connect them to the streets south of East Hennepin. There are two options for a northbound facility to connect the bike lanes on 10th Ave SE and Como Ave SE to the new northbound Johnson lanes: continue the lanes straight up via 11th Ave SE, or install

some sort of signed route or bicycle boulevard facility on 12th Ave SE, with a short connection on East Hennepin. I look forward to working on this

Apply to Serve on a Boards or Commission. There are openings on the Arts Commission, Charter Commission, Environmental Advisory Committee, Civil Rights Commission, Disabilities Advisory Committee, Heritage Preservation Commission, Housing Board of Appeals, Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Planning Commission, Police Conduct Oversight Commission, Police Conduct Review Panel, Public Health Advisory Committee, Senior Advisory Committee, MTN Board, ThincGreen Advisory Committee, Youth Violence Prevention Committee and Zoning Board of Adjustment. 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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