



**Minneapolis**  
City of Lakes

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Hmong - Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800;

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## Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Southeast Como, 11-13-13

Cam's next Southeast Como Office Hours:  
Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 9:30-11:00am  
Muddsuckers Coffee, 1500 Como Avenue SE

### Items:

- 1) Thank You
- 2) Municipal Election Results
- 3) Other Election Results
- 4) Plain Language Charter
- 5) Ranked Choice Voting
- 6) TCE Contamination in Como
- 7) 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bride Reconditioning – Public Meeting
- 8) Community Solar Comments
- 9) Target Center Renovation
- 10) Washington Team Name Letter
- 11) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) Last week, I was proud and humbled to be reelected to a third term as Second Ward Council Member. I want to thank all of the voters of Southeast Como who still live in Ward 2 for your continued confidence. As I have over the last eight years, I will do my best to represent you on the City Council, and work to make Minneapolis a more just, more democratic, more sustainable and more peaceful city. I consider it a great honor and a great joy to be able to continue to serve the residents of Southeast Como and all of Minneapolis as a City Council Member.
- 2) Here are the results of last week's municipal election. Betsy Hodges has been elected mayor. Seven new Council Members have been elected. In addition to me, the Council Members representing wards 1 (Kevin Reich), 4 (Barb Johnson), 7 (Lisa Goodman), 8 (Elizabeth Glidden), and 11 (John Quincy) have been reelected. Challengers have won races in wards 3 (Jacob Frey), 6 (Abdi Warsame) and 10 (Lisa Bender). New Council Members have been elected to open seats in wards 5 (Blong Yang), 9 (Alondra Cano) 12 (Andrew Johnson) and 13 (Linea Palmisano). The new Council will be more diverse, including the first Hmong, Somali, and Latina Council Members in Minneapolis history. The new Council also has a much lower average age. I am excited to work with these new policymakers for the next four years.
- 3) Other election results: Liz Wielinski was reelected as Park Commissioner from District 1. John Erwin and Annie Young were reelected as at-large Park Board members, and Meg Forney was elected as an at-large Park Commissioner for the first time. David Wheeler and Carol Becker were reelected to the Board of Estimate and Taxation.
- 4) Both Plain Language Charter amendments passed last week by wide margins. This is a good thing, in my view, as it will make our city's most fundamental document easier for the public to understand and use. It will not go into effect until January of 2015 so this will now give us an opportunity to continue to address concerns and pass ordinances where it might be appropriate to replace a provision removed from the charter.
- 5) From all reports, Ranked Choice Voting was a huge success last week. Turnout increased from both 2009 and 2005, the last municipal general election that used the old voting system. Turnout was 31% in 2005, and **34%** this year. More than **9,000** more people voted this year than in 2005. In the mayor's race, a huge supermajority of voters - **87.7%** - used their second ranking. From what I have heard, most voters entered their polling places with a firm grasp on how to use RCV. I want to thank Minneapolis Elections staff for a fantastic job educating the public about RCV and the election in general. I am especially thankful to them for the great Voter Education Guide that was mailed to every household in Minneapolis, and believe that this is a precedent we should follow for all elections. I also want to thank FairVote Minnesota for their work educating voters all through the year and on election day. Everyone's work certainly paid off.

- 6) As you have likely heard, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Health, and General Mills have begun public outreach on testing for and mitigating potential Trichloroethylene (TCE) vapor intrusion in Southeast Como. This problem was created by General Mills dumping TCE into the ground at their site near Talmage and 21<sup>st</sup> Ave SE. A plume of TCE groundwater contamination spreads beneath a portion of the neighborhood to the southwest of this site. The groundwater contamination leads to TCE vapor in the soil. Where TCE vapor levels exceed 20 micrograms per cubic meter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) near a building's foundation, the vapor can come through cracks in the foundation and accumulate in the home in concentrations above 2  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , the amount that the MPCA and MDH have identified as the safe level. General Mills has hired a contractor to test all homes within the area that has been identified as having TCE vapor levels above 20  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . This test involves drilling a hole through the slab and collecting a vapor sample from the area below the slab. If the test finds levels of TCE above 20  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , General Mills will pay for a mitigation system that vents sub-slab vapor outside the home, just like a radon mitigation system. If you have a home in the priority testing area, please contact Fred Campbell at the MPCA and sign an access agreement to get your home tested: [fred.campbell@state.mn.us](mailto:fred.campbell@state.mn.us), 651-757-2260, 800-657-3864. The project partners have met with City staff and policymakers, and the City will be helping in any way we can.
- 7) The City will be rehabilitating the 10th Avenue Bridge starting in 2014. Public Works has scheduled an Open House for **Wednesday, December 4**, from 6pm-8pm with a presentation at 6:30, at the University Lutheran Church, Fellowship Hall, 601 13th Ave SE. The 10th Avenue Bridge over the Mississippi River is in need of repairs. This historic bridge provides an important link across the Mississippi River for vehicles as well as bicyclists and pedestrians. A rehabilitation study is underway now to identify the work needed to preserve the bridge, with construction expected to start in 2014. Come find out more about the bridge, and give us your input on the study. Information regarding historic properties will also be presented, and the public will have the opportunity to comment on historic properties and the project's potential effects to them.
- 8) The City Council has approved comments expressing serious concerns to the Public Utilities Commission regarding Xcel's proposed rules for implementing the Community Solar legislation that passed earlier this year. These include concerns about the proposed bill rate compensation that is inadequate, the unjustifiable 10 megawatt annual cap and the 2.5 megawatt per quarter cap for the first 24 months of implementation will only constrain the market and should be completely removed. Additionally, the 5-7 different fees paid in advance – no matter the size of the system – is neither fair nor reasonable. The City Council does commend Xcel for stating in their filing that they plan to upgrade and provide adequate resources and staffing to manage the community solar garden program. This was not the case for their previous management of solar programs.
- 9) Without my vote, the Council has passed a new proposal that has been in the works for months to make significant improvements to the downtown sports and entertainment arena. The proposal will make extensive renovations and updating of the arena and fitness center that will cost a total \$97-99 million. The renovation costs will be divided 50/50 with Public/Private investment. All of the public investment of approximately \$48.5 million will come from the City of Minneapolis. The Timberwolves team owners will pay \$43M (44.3%) and the company (AEG) contracted to operate the facility will pay \$5.5M (5.7%). The deal also calls for extended lease agreements for the team and AEG from 2025 to 2032 and an additional commitment from the city to cover \$50 million in ongoing building improvements over that same time period. All of the City's debt for the proposed renovation and for the ongoing capital improvements is projected to be paid for through local sales taxes – the same source of revenue to be used to pay off our football stadium debt beginning in 2021. We will also have to continue using separate revenues from some tax increment financing districts, and other funds to pay off the existing debt we took on when we bought the arena and to cover ongoing capital and operating expenses. This totals roughly \$8-\$10 million a year and will likely be paid off in 2025.
- 10) I was proud to initiate and co-author an open letter from six Minneapolis City Council Members to National Football League Commissioner Roger Goodell and *Washington Redskins* team owner Dan Snyder expressing our disapproval of the team's racist name in advance of the November 7<sup>th</sup> game against the Minnesota Vikings in Minneapolis and the march and rally sponsored by the national Coalition on Racism in Sports and Media <http://www.aimovement.org/nrcsm/>. You can find the full text of the letter on the Second Ward blog.
- 11) There are openings on the Board of Appeal and Equalization, Ethical Practices Board and Mpls Telecommunications Network (MTN). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:cityclerk@minneapolismn.gov).