



**Minneapolis**  
City of Lakes

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# Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Prospect Park, 6-24-13

**Cam's next Prospect Park Office Hours:  
Pratt School, July 16<sup>th</sup>, 9:30-11am**

**Items:**

- 1) Storm Response
- 2) Minneapolis Energy Options
- 3) Sidewalk Repairs
- 4) Ambulatory Care Clinic
- 5) Ranked Choice Voting Ordinance
- 6) Street Lighting Policy
- 7) National Night Out
- 8) Climate Action Plan
- 9) New Initiative for Helping with Housing Violations
- 10) MN Food Charter
- 11) Openings on Boards and Commissions

1) On Friday night, Minneapolis was hit by a strong storm, and many of us are still recovering. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Forestry Department worked Saturday and Sunday to reopen streets blocked by fallen trees. Their top priority is now removing the many trees that have fallen on people's homes. They have set up several options for getting rid of tree debris, including a tree debris drop-off site for residents (at the Metro Wood Recycling Site at 33<sup>rd</sup> Ave N and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street N, open from 8am to 5pm, Monday through Friday, and 8am to Noon on Saturday, from June 24 through June 29), a special pickup for all tree debris left in the boulevard that will happen July 1-12, and the City's regular yard waste collections. The Minneapolis Office of Emergency Management (OEM) reported this morning that all but eight streets are clear of tree debris and that those eight involve power lines entangled with downed trees. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and Public Works are working with Excel to safely remove these obstructions. Debris clearance is being managed by the Park Board and Public Works and I commend them for all their efforts throughout the weekend. Xcel Energy reports making progress restoring power and City facilities are all up and running generally but Public Works, Police and Traffic Control continue to monitor and manage signaled intersections that still do not have power. OEM has reduced its response operations to the "monitoring" level today and will maintain that status until Xcel has substantially completed its power restoration work, when I expect it to return to the "Normal Operations" level. Robin, from the Ward 2 office, has been going out throughout the ward today to identify and help address ongoing problems and people should feel free to call us here with questions or concerns (**673-2202**) in addition to the numbers for Xcel (**1-800-895-4999** for downed power lines, **1-800-895-1999** for outages) and the Park Board (**612-313-7710**). If you have lost power for longer than four hours, please follow these food safety rules:

- For your freezer: A freezer that is half full will hold food safely for up to 24 hours. A full freezer will hold food safely for 48 hours. Do not open the freezer door if you can avoid it.
- For your refrigerator: Pack milk, other dairy products, meat, fish, eggs, gravy, and spoilable leftovers into a cooler surrounded by ice. Inexpensive styrofoam coolers are fine for this purpose.
- Use a food thermometer to check the temperature of your food right before you cook or eat it. Throw away any food that has a temperature of more than 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

I am very grateful for all the hard work of our park and city staff, as well as utility workers, and all the neighbors and community volunteers who have pitched in and cooperated to help with the recovery. If you can do anything to help your neighbors through this difficult time, please do so.

If you need this material in an alternative format please call Ahmed Muhumud at 612-673-2162 or email [Ahmed.Muhumud@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:Ahmed.Muhumud@ci.minneapolis.mn.us)

Deaf and hard-of-hearing persons may call 311 or 612-673-3000. TTY users may call 612-673-2157 or 612-673-2626.

Attention: If you want help translating this information in language other than Hmong, Spanish or Somali, call 311

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

Spanish - Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llama 612-673-2700;

Somali - Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500.

- 2) In the next few weeks, I will be working with my colleagues to begin the process to place a question on this fall's general election ballot regarding the City's energy future. If passed by the voters of Minneapolis, this question will authorize the City to form a municipal power utility. I view this as a necessary step to meeting the City's aggressive climate change mitigation goals. Approximately two-thirds of the greenhouse gas emissions in Minneapolis come through our existing electricity and natural gas utilities. A vote to authorize the creation of a municipal utility will not *require* the City to form one, but will give us that option – which I think will help in the ongoing electrical and natural gas franchise negotiations with Xcel and Centerpoint. Minneapolis will only form a municipal utility after we make certain that we can provide energy services as or more affordably and reliably as the incumbent utilities, and with a greater focus on renewable energy, energy efficiency and local generation. For more information, visit: <http://www.minneapolisenergyoptions.org/>.
- 3) This year's sidewalk work in Ward 2 has resulted in a great deal of discussion and some concerns about this city program. In the past weeks I have worked closely with individual property owners to address their concerns and sidewalk inspections staff to ensure that we are following a clear, fair process that is consistent with city policy. I greatly appreciate everyone's efforts make sure that this once-a-decade process is both reasonable and improves the pedestrian safety for years come. Improving the pedestrian experience for all types of users is especially important now as we work to maximize the use of local businesses and recent transit investments. It might also be helpful to remember that as you enjoy the safe and accessible sidewalks throughout the city, it is in part due to the past investments those property owners have made as part of our sidewalk maintenance program. Years ago we determined that the best way to maintain our sidewalks was to make it the responsibility of each property owner to cover the costs of keeping them open and maintained, and that the City would be charged with making sure sidewalks met certain standards and using our assessment process to pay for them. In the months ahead I will be reviewing this policy. I am concerned that it may burden those of us on limited or fixed incomes unfairly and that it might be worth exploring alternative funding options so that costs could be shared more widely.
- 4) The University of Minnesota, Fariview Health System and University of Minnesota Physicians is planning to build a new Ambulatory Care Clinic in the Motley area on the site of what is now a surface parking lot on the north side of Fulton Street, between Ontario and Erie Street. To provide information and gather input they are hosting a meeting **Tuesday, June 25, 2013, 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.** at the Argyle House meeting room, 920 Delaware Street SE (between Ontario and Erie Streets SE) Questions or comments are welcome to Jan Morlock at [jam@umn.edu](mailto:jam@umn.edu).
- 5) I have authored, and the Council has approved, an amendment to our Ranked Choice Voting ordinance. The changes clarify how we determine voter intent when there is a skipped ranking, undervote, overvote or repeat candidate ranking. It also clarifies how we can use election night machine totals to determine winners in cases where the winner can be determined from the first-ranked choices only, and requires write in candidates who want the write-in votes to be individually recorded to file a written request with the chief election official at least seven days before the election.
- 6) The Council has approved major changes to the City's Street Lighting Policy. Before the change, street lights on pedestrian corridors that are being reconstructed were 100% assessable, and could only be prevented by 70% or more of the affected property owners opting out. Under the new policy, the City will pay the whole cost for street lights on pedestrian corridor reconstruction projects. This is likely to add approximately \$1 million to the City's annual Capital Improvement budget. I supported this change, which I believe will make it likelier that we will have consistent street lighting on all pedestrian corridors after reconstructions.
- 7) The 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Minneapolis National Night Out will be Tuesday, August 6. National Night Out is an annual nationwide event that encourages residents to get out in the community, hold block parties and get to know their neighbors as a way to encourage crime prevention. You can register your event online or through 311 If you want to block your street, you can do so for free through July 23. Not all streets can be blocked, depending on traffic flow. From July 24 through August 1, there is a \$100 fee. After August 1 no applications for blocking off a street will be allowed. To register and for more information see <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/nno/>
- 8) On Monday, the Regulatory Energy and Environment committee unanimously passed the Minneapolis Climate Action Plan (<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/sustainability/climate/>). It is set to come to the full Council on Friday June 28. The Plan, subtitled "a roadmap to reducing citywide greenhouse gas emissions," offers goals and potential strategies to help achieve a 15 percent reduction in emissions by 2015 and a 30 percent reduction by 2025 from 2006 levels. The strategies are grouped into four categories: improving the energy efficiency; increasing our use of local, renewable energy; reducing vehicle miles traveled in Minneapolis and reducing waste. The Plan includes many intriguing recommendations for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including the use of property-assessed and on-bill financing to fund energy efficiency and renewable energy retrofits for residential and commercial building; encouraging net zero buildings; creating more walkable "complete neighborhoods;" constructing 30 miles of on street, protected bike facilities by 2020 and identifying products and packaging that are neither recyclable or compostable. This plan is a great step in the right direction and I look forward to helping implement many of its ideas and strategies in the years to come.

- 9) Two City departments have teamed up to help residents who are elderly, disabled, or low-income to address housing violations on their properties. The Housing Inspection Services division of Regulatory Services is dedicating a full-time employee to assist the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department in helping property owners navigate through the steps they are required to take when there are housing violations at their property. Housing Inspection Services plays an important role in making sure that housing in the city meets basic standards so everyone has a safe, quality place to live. Sometimes that involves taking enforcement action to require owners to bring their properties up to code. However, enforcement and fines can be a hardship for home owners when they are elderly, disabled, or low-income. The City wants to help folks avoid escalating fines and take care of serious problems so they don't lead to the condemnation of their property. That's why this position has been created within the Neighborhood and Community Relations department, effective June 17, 2013.
- 10) The Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council is working with food safety and health advocates and professionals to help draft a Minnesota Food Charter. For those interested in learning more and holding events of their own, please join Food Council members and others for a train the trainer event at Wednesday, June 26<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-7:00pm at Longfellow Recreation Center, 3435 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue S, (dinner will be served at 6:30pm by Birchwood Café). You'll be joined by other leaders in Minneapolis to learn how to host a Food Charter event in your organization or community and explore barriers and solutions that influence our healthy food future. Your feedback will be combined with the voices of many others across the state to create a Food Charter that describes what steps we need to take to improve access to a healthy food future. Please RSVP to Vish Vasani: [vish.vasani@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:vish.vasani@minneapolismn.gov), (612) 673-3861. To learn more about the Minnesota Food Charter visit <http://mnfoodcharter.com/about/>
- 11) Applications are now being accepted for open positions on the following City boards and commissions: Animal Care and Control Advisory Board, Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Minneapolis Workforce Council, Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Police Conduct Oversight Commission, Police Conduct Review Panel, Seniors Advisory Committee and Telecommunications Network. For a full list of appointment opportunities and position descriptions, go to [www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/openings](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/openings).