



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood 8-28-13

Cam's next Seward Office Hours:
Tuesday, September 24th, 9:30-11:00am
Birchwood Café, 3311 E 25th St

Items:

- 1) City Adopts Energy Framework
- 2) Clem Engen
- 3) True Thai License Revocation
- 4) Plain Language Charter
- 5) 2014 Budget
- 6) Youth Cabinet
- 7) Seward Square Apartment Bonding
- 8) West River Parkway Community Advisory Commission
- 9) Community Participation Grant Funding
- 10) Openings on Boards and Commissions

1) After helping lead the effort to hold a public hearing on putting a question on the ballot this fall that would ask for authorization for the city form a municipal utility, I offered an alternative resolution that the Council passed unanimously last week. It clarifies that we will not be putting the issue before the voter this call and commits the City to five important things:

- Developing a comprehensive energy vision through the Energy Pathways Study, which is to incorporate the Climate Action Plan goals and strategies and the recommendations of the Community Environmental Advisory Commission;
- Continuing to push at the Legislature for the flexibility we need to address our energy goals through our franchise agreements, or create a municipal utility;
- continuing to study all of our energy options through the Pathways Study;
- Reaching a framework for our new franchise agreements that we hope will meet our energy goals by June of next year, which will keep the pressure on the utilities to make sure they deliver on their commitments to be good partners; and,
- Directing our staff to start working on negotiating franchise agreements that will meet our energy goals.

If you need this material in an alternative format please call Ahmed Muhumud at 612-673-2162 or email

Ahmed.Muhumud@minneapolismn.gov

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 kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500.

I did this in large part because both utility companies made significant commitments to be better partners in helping us reach our Climate Action Plan goals. I believe the next few months offer us, as a community and a city, a unique opportunity to continue the conversation about the energy future we want for ourselves and our City. CenterPoint Energy signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Minneapolis Energy Options coalition that commits to help the City meet our goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2025 and to assist all of its customers in reducing their energy consumption and the associated greenhouse gas emissions, through on-bill financing for residential energy efficiency investments, a pilot comprehensive residential retrofit program, a comprehensive multifamily retrofit program and more. Xcel Energy has also committed to help the City reach our goals, and has committed to specifics including implementing a community solar program, creating a standard contract for renewable projects, and sharing more information with the City about reliability issues and planned infrastructure projects. Xcel has also offered to work with the City on a plan to invest in renewable energy and use it to power City infrastructure, like street lights. It's good to see the utilities coming to the table. Now it's the City's turn to hold them to their commitments to be good partners in meeting our energy goals. This is incredibly important work for the City to be doing. In order to stabilize carbon concentrations in the atmosphere, we need to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2050. Electricity and natural gas provided by Xcel and CenterPoint account for two-thirds of our carbon emissions. It's great that energy is finally becoming a priority issue for the City, because it needs that level of attention. I'm hopeful that the conversation that has begun – thanks in large part to the great work of the Minneapolis Energy Options campaign – will continue and will lead us to a cleaner, more affordable, more reliable energy future.

- 2) On Saturday, August 24th, Seward resident and neighborhood activist Clem Engen passed away. For years, Clem worked with quiet dedication to make Seward a better place to live. He was one of the key leaders and participants in the Seward Crime and Safety Committee and the Seward History Committee. He regularly volunteered with his good friend Dick Westby to clean graffiti from signs and other public infrastructure, and helped with the project to write a history of Seward. Clem's low-key, positive outlook and commitment of his own time and effort helped welcome people to Seward and set a great example for community service. He will be missed.
- 3) On Monday, September 9th, the Council's Regulatory Energy and Environment Committee (which I vice chair) will have to act on revoking the licenses for True Thai restaurant. This action is required by the State of Minnesota, due to significant amounts of unpaid taxes.
- 4) The Council has approved the ballot language for the Plain Language Charter amendment put forward by the Charter Commission that will appear on the ballot November 5th. If passed the new 63 page charter would replace the current 192 page charter with a more modern, common language version drafted for brevity and in plain language and reorganized into nine articles. While it makes no structural changes to how city government works and retains the current role and relationships of City boards and commissions, it does reorganize related provisions together and removes many provisions (many outdated) for possible enactment into ordinance. You can find a full report and read the new charter here;
<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-109178.pdf>
- 5) The Mayor has presented his 2014 proposed budget. It calls for a 1% reduction in the property tax levy, an increase in police and fire staffing to deal with expected aging and attrition in those departments, adding 311 services on Saturday, and increased infrastructure spending, among other things. I look forward to hearing and sharing more details and exploring ways to better align the city budget with my priorities and the needs and values of my second ward constituents. I welcome your thoughts and input. The Council will now consider the budget from now through December with final approval of the 2014 budget scheduled for Wednesday, December 11th. I expect there to be two public hearings on the proposed 2014 property tax levy and budget on **November 19th at 6:05pm and December 11th at 6:05pm** in room 317 of City Hall. Additional key dates in the 2014 budget process include Aug. 27, 1:30 p.m. for a Ways & Means Committee budget overview presentation, Aug. 28, 5:05 p.m. for the Board of Estimate and Taxation public hearing on maximum property tax levies, Sept. 11, 4 p.m. for the Board of Estimate and Taxation meeting to set the maximum property tax levies, Dec. 4 and 5, 1 – 4 p.m. – Ways and Means Committee budget "mark-up" where amendments can be considered and approved and Dec. 11, 6:05 p.m. where there will be a public hearing, more potential amendments and the City Council final vote on budget. You can read Mayor Rybak's 2014 budget speech here: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/mayor/news/speeches/WCMS1P-113009> and see the slides that accompanied his speech here:
<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@mayor/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-113013.pdf>.
- 6) In September I will be introducing a resolution that would formally create a Minneapolis Youth Cabinet. The cabinet would primarily be an internal workgroup charged with coordinating the City's role in implementing the Youth Coordinating Board Call to Action and Youth Compact, developing a framework for incorporating the needs of youth and families into more of the work of the City, supporting department efforts to incorporate youth and children in their goals, business planning and work, and fostering more opportunities for engaging neighborhood and community partners in supporting youth and families.
- 7) The Council has voted to approve issuing bonds for the renovation of Seward Square Apartments at 2121 9th St S.
- 8) The Park Board is about to begin planning for improvements to West River Parkway trails. Existing trails along the west bank of the Mississippi from Franklin Avenue to Plymouth Avenue will be reconstructed in 2014. An appointed Community Advisory Committee (CAC) will inform the planning occurring in September and October 2013. I have appointed Seward resident Eriks Dunen to this advisory committee.
- 9) The Council is poised to approve the Community Participation grants to neighborhood organizations for the years 2014-2016. Seward is slated to receive \$196,111.
- 10) 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.