



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Second Ward

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Longfellow, 2-20-14

Cam's next Cooper/Seward Office Hours:
Thursday, February 27th, 9:30-11:00am
Blue Moon Coffee Café, 3822 E Lake St

Items:

- 1) New Ward Office Meetings
- 2) Second Ward Community Workshop
- 3) Longfellow Market
- 4) Climate Action Plan Priorities
- 5) Energy Pathways Study
- 6) Compost Rule Comments
- 7) Department Heads
- 8) Conservation District Ordinance
- 9) County Withdraws Proposal to Increase Garbage Burning
- 10) Mesoamerica Resiste Event
- 11) Compost Bins and Rain Barrels Available
- 12) Urban Scholars
- 13) Triclosan Resolution
- 14) Community Connections Conference
- 15) Biochar
- 16) Trees for Sale
- 17) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) With new City Council Committee assignments, a new calendar and changed boundaries of the Second Ward I have decided to change my "offices hours in the ward". Starting in February I will hold office hours every Thursday, from 9:30-11am at the following locations: First Thursdays: Nabo Café in the Oren Gateway Center, 2211 Riverside Avenue on the West Bank; Second Thursdays: Muddsuckers Coffee at 1500 Como Ave SE; Third Thursdays: Pratt School, 66 Malcolm Ave SE; Fourth Thursdays: **Blue Moon Coffee Café**, 3822 E Lake St. If these times and locations don't work for you and you want to meet, please contact my office to set up a better time. If the times do work, I hope to see you at an office hour soon!
- 2) The new City Council and Mayor are drafting a new vision statement, goals, values and strategic directions to guide the City for the next 5 years. A first draft of these (<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/meetings/cow/WCMS1P-120778>) were be shared with the public at the Committee of the Whole meeting on February 19th. So far, the six key guiding values that have emerged are **Equity, Safety, Health, Vitality, Connectedness and Growth**. To learn more, you are invited to a Second Ward Community Workshop on Saturday **February 22 from 9:30am to 12 noon**, with a presentation at 10:00. This meeting will take place at Augsburg College in the Augsburg Room on the second floor of the Christensen Student Center. It will focus on the city's new 5 year goals, as well as our Second Ward office priorities with a look at priorities for each of the neighborhoods in Ward 2. Please come help guide my work for the future and join in an interesting exchange of ideas.
- 3) As you may have heard, the planned Longfellow Market development is having some difficulty. My office has met with the owner, Joel Ahlstrom, and has asked the City's Community Planning and Economic Development department to help in any way they can. I am optimistic that the store will be able to open and will be a success, helping to continue the revitalization of East Lake Street.

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

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

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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.

- 4) The City's Sustainability staff will be presenting the proposed short-term priorities from the Climate Action Plan at the Health, Environment and Community Engagement committee on **Monday, February 24th** at 1:30pm. These priorities were developed by the Community Environmental Advisory Commission (CEAC), in consultation with staff from various City departments. I'm looking forward to receiving these recommendations, and continuing the City's work to reduce our impact on climate change. To see the full Climate Action Plan, go here: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/sustainability/climate/>.
- 5) Related to the Climate Action Plan, the Health, Environment and Community Engagement committee will also receive the final report of the Energy Pathways Study on **Monday, February 24th** at 1:30pm. This study lays out four different pathways that the City of Minneapolis could follow to ensure that the services we are receiving from our electrical and natural gas utilities (Xcel and CenterPoint) are consistent with our adopted Climate Action Plan, workforce goals, and economic development goals. I am excited to see the final version of this report, which is already helping to drive the City's legislative agenda for this year. At the end of this year, our energy franchises expire. I will be advocating for the City to sign a much shorter franchise agreement than previous 20-year agreement, while we work on longer-term arrangements that will mean cleaner, more local, more equitable, more reliable and more affordable energy for Minneapolis residents and businesses.
- 6) The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is working on an update to their rules for composting facilities. This update is mostly a step in the right direction – it loosens up the rules for composting processors, which until now had been the same as those for solid waste facilities like landfills – but there are some pieces that need to change. My office worked with the City's Solid Waste and Recycling staff on comments from the City to the MPCA, which I expect the Health, Environment and Community Engagement committee to pass next Monday. I am also working on an amendment to these comments that will put the City on record supporting the Minnesota Composting Council's comments on the MPCA's rules for larger Source Separated Organic composting facilities.
- 7) Mayor Betsy Hodges has re-nominated all but the current City Coordinator, **Paul Aasen** and Community Planning and Economic Development Director, **Jeremy Hansen-Willis**, for reappointment. I will miss both these city leaders and thank them for their service. In February the Executive committee approved sending forward the names of the current Assessor, Commissioner of Health, Civil Rights Director, Fire Chief, City Engineer/Public Works Director and City Attorney for reappointment. I supported moving all nominations forward at the Executive Committee but one. I did not vote to re-nominate **Susan Segal** to the position of City Attorney. Despite her many strengths and some progress she has made in the department, I believe that her mishandling of the Viking Stadium issue demonstrates that she is not able to maintain the professional detachment from political pressure to provide sound, complete and fair legal guidance to the entire City Council and city of Minneapolis. Additionally I am concerned about her efforts to unnecessarily restrict public access to government data and to over-aggressively prosecute people engaged in political speech in ways that appear intended to stifle free speech. In the weeks ahead, public hearings for each position will be set at the appropriate committee. They are scheduled as follows: **March 3** at 1:30 pm at the Ways and Means Committee to consider the reappointments of Patrick Todd to the position of City Assessor and Susan Segal to the position of City Attorney; **March 17** at 1:30pm at the Health, Environment and Community Engagement Committee to consider the reappointment of **Gretchen Musicant** to the position of Commissioner of Health/Director of Department of Health; March 18, 9:30am at the to the Transportation & Public Works Committee to consider the reappointment of **Steve Kotke** to the position of City Engineer/Director of Public Works; **March 19** at 1:30pm at the Public Safety, Civil Rights & Emergency Preparedness Committee to consider the reappointments of **Velma Korb** to the position of Director of Civil Rights and **John Fruetel** to the position of Chief of Fire Department.
- 8) Unfortunately, much of the most recent discourse about the proposed Conservation District ordinance I am bringing forward has turned into a pro-density vs. anti-density debate. This doesn't reflect my intentions. I am an advocate of smart growth in the urban core especially where there are walkable communities, connections to amenities people want and when it is located near quality public transit service. It is, in large part, because I am convinced that having the Conservation District tool available will help ensure the harmonious, efficient and successful growth of greater density in our city that I am bringing it forward and have been working on it for over a year. For some thoughts and background material you can see some of my comments on my blog. My Policy Aide, Robin Garwood, also wrote an excellent piece you can find here: <http://www.tcdailyplanet.net/blog/anonymous/conservation-districts-can-be-tool-smart-growth>. I am working to build support prior to a public hearing I hope to be held sometime in the next few months. I will also be co-hosting a forum on this subject with the University District Alliance sometime in the next two months.

- 9) I testified before the Hennepin County Board in February in support of a resolution, authored by Commissioners McLaughlin, Higgins and Dorfman, that formally withdrew the county request to burn more garbage at the their downtown garbage burner, also known as the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC). It also called on the legislature to release more SCORE funds to support recycling and for the City of Minneapolis to implement a citywide curbside composting pickup program by January 2015. The full County Board approved the resolution on February 11th.
- 10) A coalition of groups including the MN Fair Trade Coalition, Ricardo Levins Morales, and Communications Workers of America is co-sponsoring a free event happening in the Longfellow neighborhood on **March 4**, from 6-8pm. The Beehive Design Collective creates beautifully intricate posters that illustrate stories of resistance in Latin America. They are coming to town to give a free presentation on their latest work, Mesoamerica Resiste. The event is being held at the CWA Local 7200 Hall on East Lake Street in Longfellow. For more information, go to <https://www.facebook.com/events/795515227143815/>.
- 11) People may order a \$55 compost bin or a \$69 rain barrel for your home. (These regularly cost \$106 and \$139.). By using a compost bin, you can keep more than a quarter of your household waste out of the garbage while making valuable compost for your garden. A rain barrel will help you save water and money by using rainwater rather than the faucet for your garden and trees. Rain barrels are also a way of trapping the stormwater that runs toward the storm drains – picking up pollutants along the way – and into our lakes, streams and rivers. Those who order a bin or barrel can pick them up in Minneapolis **Saturday, April 26**, from the Recycling Association of Minnesota. To pre-order now or to find more information, go to www.recycleminnesota.org/ram-store/ram-sale-events.
- 12) The City is once again offering its Urban Scholars leadership development summer internship for college students interested in public service careers. The City is now accepting applications for the 2014 Urban Scholars, which aims to help young people from diverse backgrounds build their professional and leadership skills for the future in the public service sector. Students interested in applying to the summer internship should apply online at www.minneapolismn.gov/urbanscholars by **Monday, March 3**.
- 13) I have authored a resolution that I expect to be approved by the Council this month, calling on the State Legislature and US Food and Drug Administration to limit or ban the antibacterial ingredient Triclosan from consumer products, and urging the residents and businesses of Minneapolis to stop buying products containing these chemicals. These compounds have never been proven to increase health or reduce disease, are suspected of causing endocrine problems, may contribute to antibiotic resistance in bacteria, and have been shown to break down into dioxins in our rivers, lakes and streams. City departments and staff are already prohibited, by our environmentally preferable purchasing policy, from using city funds to purchase products containing these chemicals. I am very grateful to State Representative Jean Wagenius for bringing this issue to my attention.
- 14) The City's 2nd Annual Community Connections Conference will be held on **Saturday, March 22nd** from 8:00am-4:30pm. The Community Connections Conference is organized by the Neighborhood and Community Relations (NCR) Department, members of Neighborhood Organizations and members of the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC). This year's theme is **Common Ground: A City That Works for All** and it will include workshops on organizational and communication skills, ways to work with and influence city government, and how to build broad-based diverse neighborhood coalitions. To register or get more information, visit <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/CommunityConnectionsConference>.
- 15) The Health Environment and Community Engagement, with my strong support, has approved moving forward with a formal agreement between the city and the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community to cooperate on developing biochar soil amendments. Biochar is stabilized carbon that when mixed with compost and used as a soil amendment can significantly increase crop yields. With our numerous public and non-profit partners we seek to reduce disparity in access to locally grown foods by working with different communities within Minneapolis. In addition to improving access to locally grown food the project has numerous environmental benefits including reducing local contribution to climate change, improving the urban forest, as well as reducing runoff and erosion. The agreement will allow us to establish demonstration plots in the Philips neighborhood, and potentially elsewhere where groups will plant three plots: one with no treatment; one with conventional compost; and one with compost and biochar. The results can then be measured and the program potentially expanded in the future, with, or without continued City involvement. This is an excited pilot and I thank city staff Jim Doten, Inspector Environmental Services and Mike Whitt, Natural Resources Manager, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Tribe for bringing this forward.

- 16)** Starting **March 17**, the City of Minneapolis is offering more than 1,000 five- to eight-foot trees for only \$25 each, provided they are planted in the city. Orders will be taken starting 8 a.m., March 17, at www.treetrust.org. Pick it up days will be May 15, 17, 18 or 19. Trees are available for Minneapolis property owners including residents, businesses and nonprofits. Several varieties and sizes are available, including fruit trees. There is a limit of one tree per property with a maximum five properties per person.
- 17)** Applications are now being accepted for a number of open board and commission positions that the City Council and mayor will appoint this spring. Board and commission members in the City of Minneapolis provide valuable insights, help shape key policy decisions and provide community-based input into administration of services. The City is seeking applicants with a diversity of backgrounds and experiences to strengthen the work of the City. There are more than 40 open positions on the following six City boards and commissions: [Civil Rights Commission](#); [Bicycle Advisory Committee](#); [Workforce Council](#); [Public Health Advisory Committee](#); [Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission](#); [Pedestrian Advisory Committee](#); Applications will be reviewed beginning April 25, but the positions are open until filled. Visit the City's website for a [full list of appointment opportunities](#) and position descriptions. Appointments to boards and commissions are made twice a year — in the spring and fall. This streamlined appointment process makes it easier for folks to learn about volunteer opportunities, ensures a more open and understandable process for residents and staff, and increases the diversity of the applicant pool.