

Second Ward January 2014 E-newsletter

News from Cam Gordon

Council Member, Second Ward

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

January is National Mentoring Month. Many of our Minneapolis youth are wanting and waiting for mentors. Beginning this January, Big Brothers Big Sisters is making new matches with children living in South Minneapolis, and in the Northside Achievement Zone in North Minneapolis. To learn more and to volunteer to be a mentor, visit http://www.bigstwcities.org/site/c.dmK0LjO2LsKcF/b.6543333/k.E07C/Volunteer_to_start_something.htm or call 651-789-2400.

New Ward Office Hours. 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; 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. I hope to see you at an office hour soon!

New Council Leadership Approved. On January 6th the new mayor and council members were formally sworn in. During the first Council meeting that morning we voted in new leadership. As I said in December, I supported Council Member Elizabeth Glidden for Council President, and five of my colleagues felt similarly. But when it became clear that she would not get 7 votes, the Council unanimously voted to name Barbara Johnson as Council President, with Elizabeth Glidden as Vice President. We also approved the standing committees and committee leadership including: Committee of the Whole, chaired by Elizabeth Glidden; Community Development & Regulatory Services Committee, chaired by Lisa Goodman; Elections & Rules Committee, chaired by Jacob Frey; Health, Environment & Community Engagement Committee, chaired by me; Intergovernmental Relations Committee, chaired by Elizabeth Glidden; Public Safety, Civil Rights & Emergency Management Committee, chaired by Blong Yang and vice chaired by me; Transportation & Public Works Committee, chaired by Kevin Reich; Ways & Means Budget Committee, chaired by John Quincy; and Zoning & Planning Committee, chaired by Lisa Bender. The major committees I will serve on are Executive (as Minority Leader), Health, Environment and Community Engagement; Transportation and Public Works; and Public Safety. I am very excited about chairing the new Health, Environment and Community Engagement committee that will also provide leadership for the city's energy issues and Animal Care and Control. Many of my priority issues, including Homegrown Minneapolis, Youth Violence Prevention, Early Childhood and Family Support as well as Sustainability and addressing Climate Change will be part of this committee's work. I am also excited to be serving on the Transportation and Public Works committee for the first time and hope to be able to do more to support alternative, clean forms of transportation and moving us toward being a zero waste city. More information about City Council committee meetings and the 2014 meeting schedule is at www.minneapolismn.gov/council.

Mayor and Council to Set New 5 Year Goals and Strategic Directions. Since before I was first elected to the Council at the beginning of each new four year term the City Council and Mayor have developed 5 years goals and priorities to help guide future work. Strategic planning sessions are planned for January and February. Unlike in the past, this time we are working to expand community engagement opportunities and plans are now being formed to pause after a first draft is developed to gather more feedback from the people of Minneapolis than in the past. In the meantime, I welcome you input about what you believe our goals should be for the next five years and will be sure to share more details in the future here, on my blog and elsewhere.

Conservation District Ordinance Public Meeting. A draft of the new conservation district ordinance I have been working on is now ready for comment. It is intended to safeguard notable visual character in a manner that offers more protections than the zoning code but is less stringent than historic district design guidelines. The City will host a public meeting to discuss the proposal on **Tuesday, January 28th** at 4:30pm in City Hall, Room 319, 350 S 5th St. The proposed conservation district ordinance is designed to ensure that development in notable areas respects

neighborhood character. Under the proposal, two-thirds of property owners in a contiguous area with notable visual character would have the opportunity to request conservation district status. If passed, the proposed ordinance would amend the City's existing Heritage Preservation Regulations. Comments on the draft of this ordinance will be accepted in person during the public meeting or by emailing City staff member John Smoley at john.smoley@minneapolismn.gov by 4:30 p.m., Feb. 4. Following the gathering of public input, the proposed ordinance will be revised and prepared for review by the State Historic Preservation Office, the Heritage Preservation Commission and the Minneapolis City Council. For more information visit www.minneapolismn.gov/hpc/conservation_district_ordinance.

Climate Action Plan Priorities. 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, 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/>.

Energy Pathways Study Final Report. 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.

Triclosan Resolution. My office is working on a resolution calling on the State Legislature and US Food and Drug Administration to limit or ban the antibacterial ingredients Triclosan and Triclocarban 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.

Healthy Bees, Healthy Lives. I attended the very exciting kickoff event for the *Healthy Bees, Healthy Lives* initiative, which seeks to make Minneapolis a safer, healthier environment for bees and other pollinators. At it, we learned how important bees are to food production, how endangered they are and how a recent legal use of pesticide resulted in a major kill of bees at three local hives. People are being asked to take a pledge not to use pesticides on their own yards, plant more bee-friendly plants, and advocate for a change in the state law that to remove the prohibition on any local regulation of pesticides. You can find out more at <http://healthybeeshealthylives.com/>.

Compost Rules. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has released a draft rule change on matters relating to composting in the state of Minnesota. These rules are mostly a step in the right direction, but in a number of ways I feel that they could go further to make it easier to create new composting facilities – both small ones in the city, and larger ones outside the city. I will be working with my colleagues on the Health, Environment and Community Engagement committee to draft comments from the City of Minneapolis to send to the MPCA. My intent is for these comments to be consistent with comments being drafted by Hennepin County, Carver County, the Shakopee Mdewankanton Sioux Community and others. To read the draft rule, go here: http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/public-notices/list.html?utm_source=Copy+of+rules+meeting&utm_campaign=MNCC+rules+posted&utm_medium=email

Alliance Parking Task Force. A University District Alliance parking task force, that I am a part of, has been studying the impact of current city parking requirements on recent residential developments in the University District, and is developing recommendations to adjust the requirements. On **Wednesday, January 29**, from 5:15 to 6:45 p.m. at University Lutheran Church of Hope, Heritage Hall (601 - 13th Avenue SE) we will be sharing the results of the analysis and the draft recommendations for feedback. Once final report from the task force, expected to be complete at the end of February, is complete I hope to bring them to the City Council for formal consideration later this winter or early spring.

Nicollet Mall. The City is redesigning Downtown's Nicollet Mall. People are invited to meet the design team, from James Corner Field Operations, see preliminary design concepts and share your thoughts on the redesign on Wednesday, February 19th, from 4:30-6:30pm, at the Central Library, 300 Nicollet Mall. People are also invited to take a brief survey about how you use Nicollet Mall and how you'd like to see it improved at www.nicolletmallproject.com.

2013 Crime Statistics. Overall crime rose less than 1 percent, making the last five years the years with the lowest number of crimes in the city since the 1960s. Violent crime, which includes homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault, unfortunately, rose 4.1 percent from 2012. Here are a few highlights from the 2013 crime results: burglary was down 3.5 percent from 2012 to 2013; crime committed by juveniles was down by 4.6 percent; violent crime increased 24% in the 4th Precinct in the Northern part of the city; and violent crime was down by 13% in the 3rd Precinct that includes the Seward, Longfellow and Cooper neighborhoods in south Minneapolis. Looking ahead to 2014, the Police will continue to pursue strategies that are getting results, and will also begin new initiatives in some areas. Specifically: neighborhood beats, where police spend more time on foot, talking with residents and businesses and building relationships, will continue and may be expanded; additional staff members have been assigned to the robbery and assault division; police will start a new program called Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) to help school resource officers better connect with youths and help them build the life skills they need to be successful; Chief Harteau will start a Chief's Youth Citizen Advisory Council, which will create new opportunities for youths to be involved in the work the MPD does to prevent youth violence; and the department will move forward with implementing the use of body cameras for officers in 2014, starting with a pilot program.

Community Connections Conference. The 2nd Annual Community Connections Conference that will be held on **Saturday, March 22nd** from 8:00am-4:30pm. The conference is free to all attendees and participants. 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—**Common Ground: A City That Works for All**—aims to explore how to hone organizational and communication skills, ways to work with and influence city government, and opportunities to build broad-based efforts that involve all segments of our increasingly diverse neighborhoods and community-at-large. Registration will open mid-February. More information can be found on the Conference Webpage: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/CommunityConnectionsConference>.

STEP-UP 2014 Youth Applications. The STEP-UP Application for youth is now available here: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/cped/metp/STEP-UPIntern>. The STEP-UP program trains and matches Minneapolis youth ages 14-21 in summer internships at local businesses. STEP-UP is focused on serving youth from low-income families or youth that have risk factors making it challenging to find employment on their own. Internships are generally 20-40 hours per week for 6-10 weeks from mid-June to August. Depending on the age and skill level of the intern, interns may work in subsidized jobs at a non-profit organizations or employer paid positions in the business community. All youth must apply online. If a youth requires assistance completing an application, please contact Tammy Dickinson at 612-673-5041. The deadline to apply is **February 21, 2014**. All applicants must live in Minneapolis, be 14-21 years old by June 1, 2014, not be currently enrolled in college (PSEO is ok), be eligible to work in the US by June 1, 2014 and have proper documentation. In addition, applicants' families must meet guideline incomes: \$45,500 for 1 person, \$52,000 for 2 persons, \$58,500 for 3 persons, \$65,000 for four persons, \$70,200 for 5 persons, \$75,400 for 6 persons, \$80,600 for 7 persons or \$85,800 for 8 persons.

Urban Scholars. The City is once again offering its Urban Scholars leadership development summer internship for college students interested in public service careers. Beginning January 15, the City will accept applications for 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. Students must have completed their first year of post-secondary education prior to the beginning of the internship and be enrolled and in good standing at a two- or four-year college or university, graduate, or law school. The 12-week program is a full-time paid internship experience that runs from May 27 – Aug. 15. Urban Scholars will work in City of Minneapolis departments and participate in events focused on building networks, skills, and opportunities. The Urban Scholars leadership development summer internship is one component of the Employment Equity Division of Minneapolis Civil Rights.

Digital Divide Survey. The City is once again surveying residents for perspectives about how they use computers, mobile devices and the internet to better their daily lives. About 12,400 households should have already received the survey in the mail from National Research Center, Inc., an independent research firm that will conduct the survey. The survey will be used to see how the state of the digital divide in Minneapolis has changed each year since 2012 when the City conducted the first survey. The digital divide is the gap that exists between those who have access to – and knowledge of – information and communication technologies and those who do not. Results from the 2013 survey showed that overall 84 percent of city households have computers with Internet access, yet differences in access at home and comfort level varied, sometimes considerably, across Minneapolis neighborhoods and different socio-demographic characteristics. If you received a survey, please complete and mail it back in the envelope provided. We will use the results to better understand technology use in the city and to help guide the City's efforts in closing the digital divide. More information including the reports from the 2012 and 2013 surveys are at www.minneapolismn.gov/it/inclusion.

Mattress Recycling Program Wins Award. In 2013 the City's mattress recycling program won a Local Government Innovation Award from the Humphrey Institute for Public Affairs, the Association of Minnesota Counties, the League of Minnesota Cities and the Minnesota School Boards Association. Since the City's mattress recycling program began in July 2012, more than 36,000 mattresses have been collected. About 80 percent of each mattress can be recycled. Mattress recycling in Minneapolis will divert nearly 1,000 tons of recyclable materials from the incinerator each year. Minneapolis is the only city in the nation to regularly collect mattresses for recycling. In a partnership with Hennepin County Environmental Services and Project for Pride in Living, Minneapolis picks up mattresses for recycling from all Minneapolis Solid Waste and Recycling customers at the resident's recycling collection point (at the curb or alley) at no additional charge. Mattresses and box springs are to be placed out on recycling week only, and mattresses that become waterlogged from rain or snow are not recyclable. The program supports 15 year-round, full-time positions through Project for Pride in Living's Self Sufficiency program, which provides job training to immigrants, men and women leaving prisons, and other people living with economic disadvantages.

DEED Redevelopment Grants. The City is applying for Department of Employment and Economic Development grants for two projects with ties to Ward 2. The first is for Brickhouse Lofts, an adaptive reuse of two existing buildings in the Prospect Park neighborhood located at 150 26th Avenue SE. The City is applying for \$865,000 in DEED grants for the project. The developer, Maxwell Partners, LLC, intends to redevelop/convert two separate industrial buildings (a 1912 brick building and 1967 steel structure) into 400 market-rate housing units on a 2.5 acre site, with indoor parking (ground floor and possibly second floor of the steel building) and access to public transportation to the University of Minnesota and to downtown. DEED funding is being sought for the abatement of asbestos/hazardous materials, interior and exterior demolition, well closure, storm sewer and sanitary sewer improvements, removal/demo of abandoned railroad tracks, roadway work, and new sidewalks, streetlights and streetscape improvements. The projected total development cost is approximately \$25,000,000. Developing housing on this site is possible with the existing zoning (I2 plus ILOD), but will likely require upzoning to reach the suggested density – a change supportable by policy. The site is within the Stadium Village LRT Transit Station Area, and is adjacent to the Stadium Village Activity Center. The second project is a request for \$1,009,255 for the Seward Coop expansion "Friendship Store" on 38th St E in the Eighth Ward.

Construction Projects in 2013. The City of Minneapolis set a new record for construction building permits in 2013. There were 12,100 building permits issued last year, with a total valuation of \$1.21 billion: the highest annual dollar amount ever recorded by the City. It's also the second year in a row that Minneapolis had more than \$1 billion in construction approved since 2000. The record \$1.21 billion is double the amount from just three years ago. The construction boom continues to be fueled primarily by rapid growth in rental housing. A total of 3,552 dwelling units (single family homes, new rental apartments and apartment conversions, and new condominiums) were issued permits in 2013. This is an increase of 249 units from 2012 and nearly 10 times the number of units permitted in 2008.

School Choice Fair Saturday. The annual School Choice Fair of district and charter school choices will be held this **Saturday, January 25** at the Minneapolis Convention Center from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Families will have the opportunity to meet with representatives of district and charter public schools located in Minneapolis, learn about school choices for their area, and gain information about pre-kindergarten to high school programs.

Stay Warm, Save Energy Video. It's winter, and that means everyone is using more energy to keep their homes warm. Reducing the amount of energy your house uses helps curb climate change and can save money on your utility bills. To help people learn more about low-cost and no-cost ways to stay warm while using less energy saving energy money the city has produced a short video "Save Energy, Save Money" as part of the Minneapolis "Did you know..." video series. The City of Minneapolis has videos in English, Spanish, Somali and Hmong. Find all of the videos at <http://www.youtube.com/user/cityofminneapolis>.

Air Quality Testing in Minneapolis. The Minneapolis Health Department is embarking on a citywide air quality testing initiative, specifically targeting volatile organic compounds (VOCs). My house will be one of the test sites in the Second Ward, and Prospect Park resident Bill Kahn will also be a test site. I'm thrilled that the Health Department is taking this proactive step to find out where we can focus resources to improve air quality in Minneapolis, and I'm glad to be able to participate.

Fix-It Clinics. People can get free, guided assistance on taking apart, troubleshooting and fixing broken household items at an upcoming Hennepin County Fix-It or Mend-It Clinic from Noon-4pm, **Saturday, March 8** at Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church in north Minneapolis.

Mend-It Clinic. Help repairing or altering clothing and other soft goods from volunteers with sewing skills will be offered at the county's at the Mend-It Clinic noon-3pm **Saturday, January 25**, at the Northeast Library, 2200 Central Ave. NE. Volunteers will be available to work on hems, seams, buttons, belt loops, rips, patches, stuffed toys, help with zippers and more. Bring items including clothes, bags, linens, curtains or your own sewing project. For more information, visit www.hennepin.us/fixitclinic.

Southeast Como TCE Meeting. Council member Kevin Reich and I are convening a community meeting, in cooperation with the Southeast Como Improvement Association, to provide a forum for the community to discuss the trichloroethylene (TCE) contamination. Health, legal, housing and property assessment staff will be available to share information and help answer questions. The discussion will be facilitated with the goal of helping community members share concerns, and begin to identify what we can do as a community and city to more effectively respond to this issue. The meeting will be held **Thursday, January 23rd, from 7-9pm at Van Cleve Recreation Center** 901 15th Ave SE, Minneapolis.

TCE Open Houses. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Health, Barr Engineering, and General Mills will be hosting community office hours in **January 28**, 4-6pm at Van Cleve Park. They are working to test all homes in a designated area and provide mitigation to homes that test at high enough levels. To see the updated sampling results map, as well as additional information on the project, visit <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/ax83hxx>.

U Area Safety. On January 7, Mayor Betsy Hodges spent the noon hour at the University of Minnesota as part of her Public Safety tour. She met with members of the City's Police Department, leaders from the Minnesota Student Association (MSA), the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA), University President Eric Kaler, Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Danita Brown Young; Vice President for University Services Pam Wheelock; and University Police Chief Greg Hestness. I was pleased to see that the Mayor chose to focus on safety in and around campus as part of her tour. I also commend the U of M police and the second precinct for recent increased patrols and investigations in response to a series of concerning crimes last fall. Targeted efforts by UMPD – including more than 300 hours of overtime patrols and concurrent work with municipal partners – have resulted in six recent arrests and dozens more legal stops, citations and gun seizures. I am also pleased that when Minneapolis Police Chief Harteau recently approved hiring 20 new officers from our last class of recruits, six of those officers are being permanently assigned to the 2nd Precinct. Two additional officers are also being transferred to this precinct as well. Assigning 30% of this recruit class, and increasing the 2nd Precinct staffing by 9%, is a significant step towards improving public safety around the University, in Southeast Como and in Prospect Park.

Cedar Avenue Fire. As most of you know, on Wednesday, January 1st, there was a tragic fire and report of an explosion at 516 Cedar Ave S. The Fire Department reported heavy smoke and fire coming from the second and third floors of the three story building that included 10 apartments and a first floor grocery store. They found several victims outside with injuries, rescued other victims from the building and fought the fire mostly from the exterior. There were more than 50 firefighters on scene. Fourteen victims were transported to area hospitals and three are still hospitalized. Two additional people were later found dead in the building and one of the hospitalized victims has since died. As far as we know, all people thought to be missing have now been accounted for. In the days that followed the fire, the building was demolished and the mosque and Islamic Center next door was forced to temporarily relocate its programs because of damage to its building. My heart goes out to all the victims and their families. I commend the community for stepping forward to help. There will be a benefit fundraiser for the victims of the fire on **January 24th** at the Cedar Cultural Center. The Confederation of Somali Community in Minnesota has set up a disaster fund at Wells Fargo. Donations can be made to any Wells Fargo bank. 100% will go to families to support their recovery. Online donations can also be made at <http://www.puc-mn.org/donate>. Note "Cedar-Riverside Fire Disaster Relief" on all donations. The cause of the fire is still under investigation and we have asked the Fire Department to look into fire risks at other similar older buildings in the neighborhood. If you are ever concerned about possible fire risks or safety concerns in any building please feel free to call 311, or if it is a gas leak, call 911.

Riverside Extension Project. The Council's Transportation and Public Works committee has approved a layout for the reconstruction of 15th Ave S, 4th St S, and a small portion of 6th St S. This project also includes the transformation of 16th Ave S from a standard street to a pedestrian and bicycle mall, with new redevelopment opportunities to the north and south. I am very supportive of this project, especially because it now includes significant improvements to the pedestrian crossings at the intersections of 15th Ave S and both 6th and 4th Streets. The Council will hold a public hearing on **March 18** at 9:30am in Council Chambers to consider the reconstruction project and the abandonment and removal of areaways in conflict with the project.

Cedar Avenue Sidewalks. The City and County continue to work together on a plan for improving the sidewalks on Cedar Avenue. The Cedar Avenue Sidewalk Reconstruction Project will be coming before the Pedestrian Advisory Committee's Infrastructure & Engineering subcommittee meeting tomorrow. The current layout shows a conversion from four traffic lanes to three lanes (one lane in each direction with a center turn lane) significant widening of the sidewalks on the west side of the street and the addition of parking lanes on the west side of the street. Due to the widening of the sidewalk, the project will require the removal and replacement of some trees on the west side sidewalk. For more information, go to the project website: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/cped/projects/cedarave>.

Second Ward Community Workshops. New this year, my office will be coordinating a series of Second Ward Community Workshops to help us share the work we are involved in, and get help and ideas from the broader community to make that work better. The first community workshop will be **February 22 from 9:30am, to 12 noon**

with a presentation at 10:00. This first meeting (location still to be determined) will focus on the city's new 5 year goals, our Second Ward office goals and specific ward priorities for 2014 and beyond. We would benefit greatly from help planning and organizing this and future workshops. If you are interested in helping out, or have ideas for future workshops, please contact me, Robin or Nancy.

Apply to Serve on a Board or Commission. There are openings on the Board of Appeal and Equalization, Ethical Practices Board and Minneapolis Telecommunications Network. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@minneapolismn.gov.

Happy New to you all. I hope you have a happy, healthy and prosperous 2014.

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"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"
— Martin Luther King Jr.