

## Second Ward February 2014 E-newsletter

### News from Cam Gordon

#### Council Member, Second Ward

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

**Second Ward Community Workshop - New 5 Year Goals and Strategic Directions** 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 19<sup>th</sup>. 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.

**Department Head Nominations.** 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 Korbel** to the position of Director of Civil Rights and **John Fruetel** to the position of Chief of Fire Department.

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator.** The City's first Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, **Shaun Murphy**, has announced that he will be leaving the City. I appreciate Shaun's incredible work, first to run our very successful Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot program, and more recently in this Coordinator position. He leaves Minneapolis a much more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly city than we were before he joined us. Shaun was one of the first people in Minneapolis talking about protected bike lanes, a concept now embraced by many Council Members, the Mayor, City staff and a broad range of outside advocates. He and his staff oversaw many projects that have had a real impact on active transportation: miles of new bike lanes, trails, and bike boulevards; data collection and analysis like the bicycle crash report; much more functional and active Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees; and much more. I appreciate how closely he worked with my office, both on projects in Ward 2 and on citywide biking and pedestrian policy. It's fitting that Shaun leaves the City with the highest bicycle mode share ever recorded, 4.5% of trips made by bike. But there have been problems as well. Due to where the Bicycle and Pedestrian section was placed in the Public Works enterprise, Shaun was not always able to influence projects in all of the Transportation divisions. The chairs of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees and the Executive Director of the Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition have written the Council to urge that the next Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator be placed more appropriately within Public Works, and I fully support that idea.

**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 24<sup>th</sup>** 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. As part of the action to receive these recommendations, I plan to move a staff direction for Sustainability staff and CEAC to recommend to the Council a new, higher long-term goal for carbon emissions reduction to supplement our aggressive short- and mid-term goals. 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 24<sup>th</sup>** 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.

**Compost Rule Comments.** 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. We are asking the MPCA to be clearer that "small composting sites" will not be subject to MPCA regulation where there are municipal ordinances that control them; for the MPCA to use a threshold of 100 cubic yards to define small composting sites; for the threshold not to include materials like wood chips that create no off-site issues; for backyard and community garden composting to still be separated out in the rules; and for somewhat less stringent standards for small composting sites on issues like turning and materials that can be composted. 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.

**Unisys IT Contract.** I am delighted to report that the Information Technology (IT) Department is finally pursuing issuance of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for outsourcing services and replacing the current Unisys contract which is set to expire at the end of 2015. The plan is to offer companies a chance to bid on parts or all of the RFP. This will help us open up potential contracts to smaller and more local companies and understand if more of the work can be brought in house.

**IT Exploring More Open Accessible Approach.** As you can read here <http://www.startribune.com/local/243124251.html>, there is a growing interest City Hall in making more city information more easily accessible to the general public. I am very supportive of this effort. I believe that the more we can easily share what is already public data the more we can empower people to help hold government accountable and help bring their creative ideas and grassroots efforts forward to improve our city.

**Conservation District Ordinance Debated.** 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.

**County Withdraws Proposal to Increase Garbage Burning Downtown.** 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 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Amendments to State Legislative Agenda.** The Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) Committee has approved adding an item, in response to the County's recent solid waste resolution to the Municipal Waste and Recycling section of our State Legislative Agenda call for increased state funding for the state solid waste block grant program (SCORE) You can learn more here <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-120470.pdf>. The City is also considering adding language to our Legislative Agenda to support legislation that will protect pollinators from pesticides.

**City Supports Increase to State Minimum Wage.** The IGR committee also passed a resolution calling on the Minnesota Legislature to raise the minimum wage to at least \$9.50 by 2015 and index it to inflation. I expect this to pass the Council on Friday and to then be a formal part of our State Legislative Agenda. I am very supportive of this action. It is a question of basic justice and fairness, but I am convinced that it will also be good for all Minnesotans. Making sure that the poorest workers in our economy have enough resources to meet their needs will be good for businesses and reduce strain on government, especially local government. But most of all, raising the wage is just the right thing to do.

**Mesoamerica Resiste Event.** 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/>.

**Fix-It Clinics.** People can get free, guided assistance on taking apart 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.

**Community Engagement Public Listening Sessions.** As Chair of the Health Environment and Community Engagement Committee I am working with the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission to convene two Committee/Commission meetings in the community to hear people's views on the future of Community Engagement in Minneapolis. If this is something you care about you may want to save the dates and join us for one or both of our meetings to be held on March 18, 7 – 9:30 pm (at Walker Church, 3104 16th Av S) and April 14 7 – 9:30pm (at the Capri Theater, 2027 W Broadway Ave) to come and share your thoughts with Council Members, Commissions and the community.

**Community Connections Conference.** The City's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Community Connections Conference will be held on **Saturday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>** 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>.

**Nicollet Mall.** The City is redesigning Downtown's Nicollet Mall. People are 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](http://www.nicolletmallproject.com).

**Triclosan Resolution.** 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.

**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 to remove the prohibition on any local regulation of pesticides. You can find out more at <http://healthybeeshealthylives.com/>. In response to this issue the city's Intergovernmental Relation Committee is recommending we add to our legislative agenda support for legislation that provides cities of the first class authority to impose reasonable restrictions on the use of pesticides and require non-agricultural pesticides sold in Minnesota to indicate if they are pollinator friendly.

**Narrow Streets.** I have gotten several complaints about narrow streets and city public works staff are working to respond. Please watch for temporary "No Parking" signs as crews work to remove snow on narrow streets. Because of snow and ice buildup along curbs, some streets are getting too narrow for fire trucks, ambulances and transit buses to get around. In some cases, crews will work to remove some of the accumulated snow and ice, as resources allow. Look for and follow the "No Parking" signs, and please help remind your neighbors to do the same. If you park in a spot posted for "No Parking" you may receive a parking ticket, and your car may be towed to the impound lot. If we get more snowfall in the coming weeks, it may be necessary to impose Winter Parking Restrictions (a city-wide, one-side parking ban on non-Snow Emergency Routes) to help ensure that firefighters, medics and other emergency workers can reach homes and businesses on every street.

**Urban Scholars.** 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](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/urbanscholars) by **Monday, March 3**.

**Compost Bins and Rain Barrels.** 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](http://www.recycleminnesota.org/ram-store/ram-sale-events).

**Biochar.** 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.

**Creative City Challenge.** The winner of the Creative City Challenge competition will create and install a temporary, destination artwork at the Minneapolis Convention Center Plaza. The convention center plaza is a green roof that is located directly across from the convention center at 1301 Second Ave. S. Three finalists and their projects have been selected, and from now through **February 28** you'll be able to vote for your favorite one online at [www.minneapolis.org/minneapolis-convention-center/cc/vote](http://www.minneapolis.org/minneapolis-convention-center/cc/vote). The winning project will be announced in late March and will receive a \$75,000 commission to create the project and debut at the Minneapolis Convention Center Plaza June 14 as part of Northern Spark, an annual dusk-to-dawn festival with tens of thousands of participants, taking place in Minneapolis this year. A jury selected three projects for this voting phase of the competition from among the entries received in the fall of 2013. The finalists and their corresponding projects include: Balancing Ground by Amanda Lovelee, Christopher Field, Kyle Waites and Sarah West; Chrysalis by Wil Natzel and Jerry Natzel; and SPark by Will Peterson, Bill Ferenc, Melissa Gagner and Trygve Nordberg. For more information about the competition, finalists' projects and last year's winning project, MIMMI, visit <http://www.minneapolis.org/minneapolis-convention-center/cc>

**Trees For Sale.** 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](http://www.treetrust.org). Pick 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.

**Healthier Communities Grants.** The City of Minneapolis Health Department will provide grants to three community-based groups to fund their work to improve the health of our community. The City is accepting proposals now through March 10 from groups that will implement projects to make it easier for residents to eat healthfully, be physically active, and/or live tobacco-free. This "Community-Driven Healthy Living" effort will provide up to \$30,000 in funding for each of the three groups selected. The request for proposals is available on the Health Department website at [www.minneapolismn.gov/health/grants](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/health/grants).

**Grant For Sewer Line Work.** Property owners who need to repair or replace their sanitary sewer lines may be able to get some help paying for that construction. The Metropolitan Council has made grant money available to cover a third of the cost, up to \$2,000. Work eligible for the funding includes rehabilitation or replacement of sewer service lines from the main sewer line to the house or building (not internal sewer plumbing) and disconnection of foundation drains. The grants are available to any Minneapolis property owner. For more information, go to [www.minneapolismn.gov/publicworks/sewers](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/publicworks/sewers) and click on the link for "MCES I&I Grant Program."

**Tenant Notification of TCE Testing.** The language has been completed for the ordinance amendment I am proposing that would require landlords to share information with tenants about testing results related to environmental contamination and associated activities. The ordinance change, that I believe will come up for public hearing on **March 18**, concerns amending provisions related to tenant notification of environmental contamination and associated activities.

**Temporary Expansion of Licenses.** I have formally introduced an ordinance amendment that would increase the maximum number of temporary expansion licenses a licensee is eligible to receive each year. If approved this would allow stadium village businesses to expand operations outdoors during the college as well as the professional football games that are anticipated to be played the University Football stadium for the next two years.

**Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council Report.** The Minneapolis Food Council submitted its annual report to the Council in February. Go to <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/hece/WCMS1P-120166> or [http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/homegrown/dhfs\\_homegrown-home](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/homegrown/dhfs_homegrown-home) to learn more about this exciting work to bring more local, healthy food to Minneapolis.

**Irrigate Extends to Minneapolis.** The public art initiative that has been operating in St. Paul for several months called “Irrigate” is now expanding to include the remainder of the newly constructed Green Line route in Minneapolis, in partnership with the City of Minneapolis' Arts, Culture and Creative Economy program and supported by the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative. Artists, of all disciplines and career stages, who live or work in the Cedar-Riverside, University and Prospect Park neighborhoods, are invited to attend a placemaking training workshop and access support for a collaborative project along the line. Workshops are scheduled for **Saturdays, March 8 and 22**, 9:30am-5pm and will be held at sites in Cedar-Riverside and Prospect Park. Artists of any level, experience or discipline - who live or work in the new Green Line LRT neighborhoods in Minneapolis\* - are invited to a complimentary training on placemaking and cross-sector collaboration. For more information visits <http://springboardforthearts.org/community-development/irrigate/>.

**Energy Use in Public Building Disclosed.** Minneapolis has released the first annual report (<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/%40citycoordinator/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-117371.pdf>) on energy use in public buildings. The City will use this information to prioritize investments in its buildings to save energy and money. The City sought voluntary agreements with Hennepin County, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and Minneapolis Public Schools to include selected buildings from those entities in the report. The report includes benchmarking information from 102 public buildings, including over 21 million square feet. It is wonderful to see this kind of information available to the public and I look forward to next year's report when information about larger privately owned buildings will also be available.

**Need for Shelter Housing Growing.** The emergency shelters in Hennepin County continue to see rising demand. Comparing the count done last February, to our most recent January numbers shows the number of children in shelter has risen by 24 percent and the number of adults is up 11 percent. Children now make up 38% of those in shelters in the county. The trend has been moving upward for more than seven years. In 2006, there were 1,307 families served over the course of the year in Hennepin County. In 2013, there were 1,946, an increase of 49 percent. A recent report from the Office to End Homelessness says “Developing affordable housing is the longest-lasting solution,” but in the second quarter of 2013,” the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Minneapolis was \$1323. The vacancy rate was 2.3 percent. Someone working full-time at \$10/hour would find this unaffordable, paying 83% of her income in rent.”

**Rocco Forte.** I was very disturbed this month by the news about the internal City investigation conducted in 2011 into a complaint relating to Rocco Forte, the former director of Regulatory Services. The investigation that started prior to Mr. Forte's resignation revealed a pattern of favoritism, retribution, retaliation, and an inappropriate relationship with a subordinate. I commend the employees who came forward to report this and I regret that I could not do more in my position to prevent this from happening. I agree with the new Mayor who wrote, of the issues, “We hold our City leaders to the highest standards. It is clear from the investigation that our expectations for a department head were not met here. ... Moreover, all employees must feel safe that they can come forward with concerns and issues without fear of retaliation. That is the policy of this City and that policy will be enforced As set out in the City's Anti-Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation policy, City leaders are to be held to the very highest standards of conduct.” For more about the policy visit: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/policies/anti-discrim-harass-retaliate>.

**New Washington Avenue Design.** The Transportation and Public Works Committee, with my support, has approved the layout to the Hennepin County design for a segment of Washinton Avenue downtown. I had mixed feelings about this because the street did not narrow as much as I had hoped. I believe that it could be converted from a 7-lane roadway to a 5-lane, but is only being converted to a 6-lane. The westbound right turn lanes are *not needed for the current traffic volumes* on Washington. As a result, the crossing distances were not shortened as much as they could have and should have been. The design was not supported by our Pedestrian Advisory Committee in part because of this. The County is continuing to assume that motor vehicle traffic will increase by .05% per year for the next 20 years. This is not in keeping with the City's adopted Climate Action Plan, which has as its top transportation goal: “Reduce automobile vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in Minneapolis while improving accessibility, increasing transportation choices and promoting and accommodating equitable opportunity and growth.” The continuing emphasis on cars in this plan shows that Hennepin County continues having trouble truly implementing its Complete Streets policy. Nevertheless, the design includes Hennepin County's first protected bikeway and I was very supportive

of this. While the pedestrian crossing distances are not as short as they should be, they are generally shorter than the existing condition. Additionally the layout barely passed the Hennepin County board (it passed 4-3), largely due to suburban Commissioners believing that it went *too far* in support of biking and walking, and took *too much* away from cars. So, in the end it earned my favorable vote.

**Franklin Avenue Bridge Design.** The T&PW Committee also approved the layout for the rehabilitation of the historic Cappelen Memorial Bridge on Franklin Avenue over the Mississippi River and full bridge closure for up to 4 months. When it did so, we also approved a staff direction I made directing Public Works staff directed to work with Hennepin County staff and the Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee to develop a safe and convenient connection for eastbound bicyclists on Franklin Ave to the bike lanes on northbound 27th Ave SE.

**Environmental Remediation Grant Awards.** The Community Development Committee has approved accepting grant funds from the MN Department of Employment & Economic Development (DEED) grants for the Downtown East Ryan project for \$787,107 and Ward 2 projects at Seward Commons Phase III for \$388,400; the WaHu Student Housing project in Stadium Village for \$222,280 and **Factory Lumber (Ward 2) - \$19,237** 445 Malcolm Ave. SE; as well as from the Metropolitan Tax Base Revitalization Account (TBRA) grants for WaHu Student Housing, for \$136,700; and from the Hennepin County Environmental Response Fund (ERF) for Seward Commons Phase III for \$110,000. The grants are intended to be spent on cleanup of contaminated soils to allow for housing development. The **Boeser Site in Prospect Park North at 2901 4<sup>th</sup> St. SE, also in Ward 2 will receive \$260,000** directly for the county as part of this major grant cycle as well. For more information about the grants and these projects visit <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-120229.pdf> I am glad that these state and county funds are available to help these neighborhood supported projects and I expect the full Council to approve these without controversy this month.

**Welcome Chef Shack and Little Szechuan to Ward 2.** Two new restaurants have opened in the Ward, Chef Shack at 31st and E Franklin and Little Szechuan at 304 Oak Street SE, which is located near the southwest corner of the intersection of Washington Ave SE and Oak Street SE. It is great to see new businesses opening in the area. For more information visit their websites at [www.littleszechuan.com](http://www.littleszechuan.com) and <http://www.chefshackranch.com/>

**3216 30th Avenue South.** The city is set to approve the sale of 3216 30th Avenue South to Accent Homes, Inc. for \$31,000. The developer is proposing the construction of a new 1,900 square foot single family home with three bedrooms, two baths, full basement and a detached two-car garage. The home will be marketed for owner-occupancy for an estimated sales price of \$300,000. On April 19, 2013, the city acquired this vacant land parcel from Hennepin County under the Vacant Housing Recycling Program.

**University Safety Plan.** In February the University of Minnesota Vice President for University Services Pam Wheelock and UMPD Chief Greg Hestness reported to the Board of Regents about **campus safety and security** and made significant recommendations for improving safety in and around campus.

**7 West Apartments.** The newly constructed apartment building at 1800 Washington Ave S received LEED Gold Certification from the US Green Building Council in January. When the City sold the adjacent parking ramp several years ago to a private developer the terms included a requirement for LEED certification for any future building built on the site. I am delighted that the developer has followed through and that the first residential LEED Gold certification in the Twin Cities is in the Second Ward. The 213-unit apartment building spans the parking ramp site and former Grandma's Saloon site. The building has many environmentally sustainable features that contributed to its high level of LEED certification including recycling and organic composting on every floor, green roofs/terraces, a passive solar design, LED lighting, high-efficiency appliances, dual flush toilets, rain barrel irrigation system, and bike storage. For more see <https://liveat7west.com/green/>.

**1068 18<sup>th</sup> Ave SE.** Last August city housing inspections gave notice to the rental license holder that a recommendation to revoke the rental licenses for the properties of 1068 and 1072 – 18th Avenue SE would be sent to the City Council. This was appealed and hearing was held before Administrative Hearing Officer who found that 1068 -18th Avenue SE has failed to meet the licensing standards under Minneapolis Code of Ordinance 244.1910 subd. 7, 11, 19 & 23. The

Hearing Officer also found that 1072 – 18th Avenue SE did not meet the necessary requirements to revoke the rental license. This month the City Council Community Development, Regulatory Services committee approved revocation of the license held for 1068. I expect this to be approved by the Council on February 21<sup>st</sup>.

**2600 Minnehaha for Sale.** The City of Minneapolis is once again activity soliciting development proposals for a City-owned development property located at 2600 Minnehaha Avenue South. At least two entities have expressed some interest and a recent deadline for proposals has been extended. The approximately 1.51-acre (65,734 square foot) undeveloped property is zoned I1, Light Industrial District. The property is centrally located in the Seward Place Industrial Business Park with convenient access to the regional highway system and downtown Minneapolis. The submission deadline for proposals has been extended to Thursday, March 20, 2014, 4:00 pm. The revised RFP and related documents can be found at: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/rfp/index.htm>

**Openings on City Boards and Commissions.** 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.