



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood 2-26-14

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

Items:

- 1) New City Goals
- 2) Odd side Parking Only
- 3) Funding for Seward Redevelopment Projects
- 4) Franklin Avenue Bridge
- 5) Minneapolis Supports Raising Minimum Wage
- 6) Downtown Garbage Burner
- 7) Conservation District Ordinance
- 8) Energy Pathways Study
- 9) Compost Rules
- 10) City Department Heads
- 11) Triclosan Resolution
- 12) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) 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>) was 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. There will be a public hearing on the goals on March 5th and people are welcome to send comments to me and to citygoals@minneapolismn.gov
- 2) The City has instituted Winter Parking Restrictions, which means that folks cannot park on the even side of residential streets (non-Snow Emergency routes) until further notice. The decision to declare Winter Parking Restrictions is based on safety concerns related to fire trucks and other emergency vehicles not being able to navigate a street to reach someone in an emergency. Be sure that you follow Winter Parking Restrictions to avoid a ticket and tow. Also, you can help spread the word on the job and in your personal and professional networks. For more information call 311 or visit www.minneapolismn.gov/snow/snow_winter-parking-restrictions.
- 3) The Community Development Committee has approved accepting grant funds from the MN Department of Employment & Economic Development (DEED) grants for the Seward Commons Phase III for \$388,400. We're also receiving funds 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. For more information about the grants and these projects visit <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-120229.pdf>.
- 4) The Council has approved the layout for the rehabilitation of the historic Cappelen Memorial Bridge on Franklin Avenue that will be reconstructed in 2015 or 16 over the Mississippi River and full bridge closure for up to 4 months. In the approval process, Public Works staff was 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.
- 5) The City has 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 am very supportive of this action. 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.

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

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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.

- 6) 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.
- 7) 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.
- 8) On Monday the Health, Environment and Community Engagement committee also received the final report of the Energy Pathways Study. 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.
- 9) 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. The comments essentially ask the MPCA to make it easier for people to do more composting at small sites within our city, and to make it easier for large composting businesses to start up in our region.
- 10) 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 peaceful protest 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.
- 11) The Council has passed a resolution I authored 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.

12) 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.