



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

Cam Gordon
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Second Ward

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood 9-24-14

Cam's next Seward Office Hours:
Thursday, September 25th, 9:30-11:00am
Blue Moon Coffee Café, 3822 E Lake St

Items:

- 1) Minnehaha Reconstruction
- 2) Signage Approved for Cooperage
- 3) Alcohol Establishment Ordinance
- 4) Utility Franchise Agreements and Clean Energy Partnership
- 5) 2015 Budget
- 6) Farmstand Ordinance
- 7) Conservation District Ordinance
- 8) Bird-Safe Stadium Protest
- 9) Absentee Voting has Begun
- 10) Ferguson's Lessons for Minneapolis
- 11) E-Cigarettes
- 12) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) Minnehaha Avenue between 24th and 26th Streets East is proposed to be fully reconstructed next year. There is a continuing question about whether to retain approximately 28 parking spots on the east side of the street, or whether to repurpose that right-of-way to wider buffered bike lanes and a possible boulevard on the west side of the street (as the City's Bicycle Advisory Committee has formally recommended). I have asked that Public Works staff bring this project to the SNG Community Development Committee on October 14th, and will welcome SNG's input.
- 2) The Zoning Board of Adjustment has approved a variance for the Cooperage (2304 Snelling Ave) to install a new projecting sign located on a non-primary building wall. This sign faces the Hiawatha LRT Trail. I am working on a zoning code change that would allow these sorts of signs, without variances, facing non-motorized trails when the building has a door that faces the trail.
- 3) The Council has approved changes to how we regulate bars and restaurants to do away with the requirements that businesses maintain specific ratios of sales of food to alcohol. The intent, created in the City Charter over 30 years ago, was to make sure the businesses operated as restaurants rather than bars or nightclubs, therefore requiring businesses to closely monitor food and alcohol sale receipts. However, as costs of many types of craft beer and wine have increased the logic of using sales revenue support these ratios has disappeared. In place of these ratios, the Council has developed a new set of tools, including: a clearer definition of what a restaurant must do, including, for example, a fully equipped and functioning kitchen and staff for both the kitchen and service to customers; defining the bar area, thus limiting the amount of space restaurants can devote to entertainment and the primary consumption of alcohol; clarification of management responsibilities related to noise and negative secondary effects to the neighboring area; the city now has the authority to reduce hours, entertainment, and/or bar area when establishments are in violation in the code; we have increased the public hearing notice requirements; strengthening the necessary aspects of a business plan to reduce negative secondary effects; requiring alcohol server training. I supported these changes when they came through the Council, because I feel they will better address livability concerns about establishments that serve alcohol while giving small businesses more flexibility.
- 4) Progress is being made negotiating terms of new franchise agreements with both the electric and natural gas utility companies in the city. Renewal of the agreements will depend on the formation of a new, first in the nation, Clean Energy Partnership. In order to provide enough time before the end of the year to have the agreements reviewed and approved by all the necessary agencies, this month I will formally introduce the subject matter of our utility ordinances. This will be referred to the Health, Environment and Community Engagement Committee where I expect a Public Hearing to be set for **October 6th**.

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

Attention: If you want help translating this information in language other than Hmong, Spanish or Somali, call 311

Hmong - Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800;

Spanish - Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llama 612-673-2700;

Somali - Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500.

- 5) Mayor Hodges has submitted her 2015 proposed budget to the City Council. The total proposed budget for all City funds is \$1.2 billion. This represents a \$54.7 million, or 4.8%, increase from the 2014 Council Adopted Budget of \$1.1 billion. The Mayor is recommending an overall increase of 2.38% in the property tax levy for the City and its independent boards, raising the total amount of property taxes collected by \$6.7 million. Given the growth in both our tax base and the demand on city services and infrastructure to support this growth, I feel that a modest levy increase is appropriate. The City has scheduled two public comment hearings on the proposed 2015 property tax levy and budget: **Nov. 18** at 6:05 p.m. and **Dec. 10** at 6:05 p.m. both in Room 317 of City Hall.
- 6) The ordinance amendment I authored to allow farmstands to operate more often and without a permit at community gardens, market gardens and urban farms, was approved by the full Council on September 19th. Farmstands will now be considered an “accessory use” at these locations. Only food grown at the garden or farm, or another garden or farm operated by the same producer may be sold at the farmstand between 7 am and sunset up to 75 days a year. At the Zoning and Planning Committee the proposal was amended to extend the hours from 7 pm to sunset and to no longer allow farmstands at community gardens. I supported the first amendment but opposed the second and was glad to see it amended again at the Council so that we will now also allow farmstands at community gardens. Allowing these small quantities of fresh, locally grown produce to be available for sale more often in more areas is one step we can take to support our hometown growers and help make this a more vital and healthier city for us all.
- 7) I expect the conservation district ordinance I have been working on with staff for more than a year to come before the Zoning and Planning committee on **October 9th**. I am working with my colleagues on amendments to the ordinance that will address some of the concerns I’ve heard that this ordinance could be misused to block development where it should really occur.
- 8) On **Saturday, September 27th** at 1pm at the 4th Street and Chicago Avenue, near the new Vikings Stadium, a group of concerned citizens will be protesting the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority’s decision not to install bird-safe glass on the new stadium. The new stadium will have over 200,000 square feet of glass, and it will be located very close to the Mississippi River, a major migratory flyway. I plan to attend this protest, and I hope many Ward 2 residents join me.
- 9) Absentee voting has begun. All voters now have the option to vote absentee either by mail or in person prior to Election Day. Voters can request ballots online. Applications are also available on the City’s website and may be printed out and sent in anytime leading up to Election Day to have a ballot mailed out. All completed mail ballots must be received by the Elections & Voter Services Division by Election Day. Voters who wish to cast their absentee ballots in-person can do that at City Hall, 350 5th Street South. The regular hours are **Monday - Friday, from 8am-4:30pm**. The hours in the two weeks leading up to the Nov. 4 election will be **7am-6pm, Monday-Friday; 9am-4pm on Saturdays;** and **Noon-5pm on Sundays**.
- 10) As people continue to reflect on the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, I am reminded of the many times I have seen the kinds of police behaviors evidenced in Ferguson before. Abuses of police power, the shooting of unarmed black teenagers by police officers, threats against reporters and displays of force that turn peaceful protests into violent confrontations are familiar to many of us. To see how I think we should turn the anger and frustration so many of us are feeling into determination and real reforms see my blog.
- 11) On September 19 I began the process of amending Minneapolis’ ordinances to strengthen city regulations around so called “e-cigarettes.” My intent is to extend the State Clean Indoor Air Act to e-cigarettes. I hope to have a public hearing in October and passage this fall. There is an informative video about this issue here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-LAsTQ4wdc&list=UUket7tI3m0r1ScDTuUSREuw>.
- 12) Visit the City’s website for a [full list of appointment opportunities](#) and position descriptions for City boards and commissions. 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.