



# Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Prospect Park, 10-24-15

Cam's next Prospect Park Office Hours:  
Overflow Café, 2929 University Ave SE  
Thursday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 9:30-11am

## Cam Gordon

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Second Ward

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### Items:

- 1) University Avenue Innovation District Resolution
- 2) Glendale
- 3) Prospect Park Trail
- 4) Fair Scheduling Ordinance Scrapped by Council Majority
- 5) Earned Sick and Safe Time Ordinance
- 6) Sign Up for Home Energy Squad
- 7) Grain Elevator Task Force
- 8) Animal Ordinance Amendments
- 9) Aeon Project
- 10) 117 27<sup>th</sup> Ave SE
- 11) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) The City Council unanimously passed the resolution I authored declaring the University Avenue Innovation District. This is the first use of the Innovation District tool, which the Council created (by another resolution I authored) a few months ago. This resolution is very important to the Prospect North area, and for the city as a whole, because Prospect North is one of the greatest opportunities we have in our city for transformative, innovative development. The area includes 370 acres, much of which is very underdeveloped old railroad land, abandoned grain elevators, and industrial uses. But it's located between the downtowns of Minneapolis and St. Paul, near the largest campus of one of the nation's top research universities, the U of M, and is now served by three light rail stations. Some new developments have already occurred in the area since the light rail line was completed or are underway – the new Surly Brewery, planning for a new Green Fourth Street to be constructed next year, a new grocery store with more than a hundred residential units above it, and more. Some are being planned – a new signature greenspace, affordable housing - some specifically for youth experiencing homelessness, some for seniors, a study of the area's traffic needs and more. This resolution is a small step towards realizing that vision. It establishes the area as a priority for work by the City, and opens us up to thinking in new, creative ways about how we will build infrastructure and support redevelopment efforts – through flexibility in our regulations and possibly new sources of funding.
- 2) I want to be clear about one thing the Innovation District resolution **doesn't** do: it doesn't presuppose any redevelopment in any area and especially those with established residential development like 4th Street near Bedford or the Glendale Townhomes area. It is especially important to stress this about Glendale because of recent ideas floated about major redevelopment there by the Public Housing Authority. Any redevelopment or improvement plan for that area will follow a separate, open, transparent public process that will include participation of the neighborhood association and Glendale residents. Because I heard some concerns from Prospect Park and Glendale residents about the possibility that this resolution could have some impact on the ongoing Glendale conversations, I moved an amendment to make this explicit.
- 3) Soo Line Railroad has replied to the City's request to preserve their right-of-way for trail use, saying that they are willing to negotiate for the portion of their corridor east of 27<sup>th</sup> Ave SE. I view this as a great first step to getting a trail built. City staff are beginning negotiations with the railroad, and I hope that we will reach an agreement in the next few months that will allow us to start planning a bicycle and pedestrian connection from Franklin Ave SE to 27<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, along the abandoned rail line. City Planning staff are also working to ensure that the corridor to the east of 27<sup>th</sup> will be substantially preserved during the construction of a proposed housing development on that site.

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- 4) I was very disappointed last week when the Council, on a vote of 10-3, voted to kill the proposed ordinance on fair scheduling for workers, and having the City enforce state rules on violations like wage theft. I was also disappointed in Mayor Hodges' decision to withdraw her support from this ordinance. I continue to believe that scheduling is a major problem for low-wage Minneapolis workers. I have heard from people in my ward and throughout the City that they face abusive scheduling practices that make it difficult for them to support their families, including having to be "on call" for shifts that may not occur, having no advance notice of their schedules, having shifts canceled at the last minute without any compensation, being forced to "clopen" (or close late at night and open early in the morning) and more. I will continue to work on this issue. I believed, and continue to believe, that we can find a consensus that works for the small, struggling businesses in Minneapolis while offering most employees the sorts of protections that most middle-class workers take for granted. I want to thank my colleagues Lisa Bender and Elizabeth Glidden for their continuing support for this important work, and their courageous votes to keep this ordinance alive.
- 5) At the same time it voted to kill the fair scheduling ordinance, the Council voted to create a "partnership group" to study the earned sick and safe time ordinance, the only remaining portion of the Working Families Agenda being actively worked on by the City. This "partnership group" will include representatives of employees, including specifically low-wage employees, representatives of organized labor, representatives of employers, including large and small employers, and immigrant-owned businesses, and representatives of business groups and associations. The group will be formed in November, and is directed to present its findings back to the Council next February. I continue to support adopting an earned sick and safe time ordinance to protect low-income Minneapolis workers, and to protect public health. I hope that what comes out of this process is strong enough to win my support.
- 6) The City is offering free Home Energy Squad visits to income-qualified Minneapolis households while funds last. Qualified households have incomes less than \$35,310 for one person plus \$12,480 for each additional person. That's \$47,790 for two people, \$60,270 for three people, or up to \$122,670 for eight people. Homeowners can call 612-335-5874 to confirm eligibility and schedule a visit. Minneapolis households over the income limit can still receive the visit for \$70 – which includes a consultation, materials and labor. The Home Energy Squad visits bring energy efficiency experts to participants' homes to install energy-saving materials and make recommendations on energy-saving upgrades. To schedule a Home Energy Squad visit, call 612-335-5874 or visit [mncee.org/hes-mpls](http://mncee.org/hes-mpls). For a limited time, the City of Minneapolis also offers no-interest financing to participants making insulation and air sealing upgrades recommended by the Home Energy Squad. For more information about no-interest financing on recommended insulation and air sealing upgrades, call 612-335-5884.
- 7) The Grain Elevator Task Force I organized has met once. In the upcoming months, we will be completing an inventory of grain elevators in Minneapolis (both vacant and in use), their owners, and historic status. The next step in the process will be to invite grain elevator owners to a meeting to discuss potential solutions.
- 8) Working closely with the Animal Care and Control director, my colleague Andrew Johnson is moving forward with a full rewriting of the City's Animal Care and Control Ordinance. To present potential changes and gather feedback on this work, the City is hosting a community meeting on **November 2**, 6:30-8:30 at Fuller Park, 4800 Grand Ave S. The purpose of the changes are to ensure that our values and vision for being leaders in animal protection laws are mirrored in our code and respond to the changing world of animal welfare and the needs/demands of our community. Highlights of the proposed changes include:
  - Better defines the City's role and expands protections to all animals, not just domestic or companion
  - Increases transparency and accountability through enhanced record keeping
  - Includes expanded definitions and clarifies the City's scope of authority
  - Simplifies application process and streamlines notification requirements
  - Introduces expected standards of care for all animal owners, shelters and partner rescue organizations
  - Adds specific protocols to be considered in case of euthanasia, including creation and use of a rescue partner registry
- 9) Aeon plans to construct a five-story residential apartment building, with one level of underground parking, on the former Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity site. The building will include 73 living units, with several communal spaces (i.e. community room and fitness room) on the first floor. They are seeking grant funds (\$102,000 apiece from the Met Council and Hennepin County) which, if awarded, will be used primarily for soil remediation and the installation of a vapor barrier in the new building.
- 10) Elsey Partners plans to construct a five-story, 215-unit market rate rental apartment building with structured underground parking at 117 27<sup>th</sup> Ave SE. They are seeking grant funds (\$469,012 from DEED, \$81,295 from the Met Council, and \$81,295 from Hennepin County) which, if awarded, will be used primarily for soil remediation.
- 11) 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.