



Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Longfellow, 9-17-15

Cam's Next Longfellow/Cooper Office Hours:
Thursday, September 24th, 9:30-11:00am
Blue Moon Coffee Café, 3822 E Lake St

Cam Gordon

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Items:

- 1) 2015 Budget
- 2) Minneapolis Energy Fair
- 3) Pollinator Resolution
- 4) Paint the Pavement Project
- 5) Bring Your Own Bag Ordinance
- 6) Emergency Shelters
- 7) Working Family Agenda
- 8) Percent for Public Art
- 9) Tree Failure Follow-Up
- 10) Blueprint for Equitable Engagement
- 11) Xcel Resource Plan
- 12) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) Mayor Hodges has presented her proposed 2016 budget, and outlined initiatives and priorities for next year's spending. I was glad to see the Mayor continue to emphasize equity throughout the budget and to identify climate change, racial and economic injustice, transportation alternatives and preparing for a new kind of economic future as priorities. I am generally supportive of her proposed levy and overall budget increase. The Mayor and finance staff project that nearly two-thirds of property owners in the city will see a *reduction* in city property taxes next year. I am also generally supportive of the Mayor's proposed spending priorities, which include the environment (through investments in LED streetlights, the Clean Energy Partnership, Zero Waste programs, a Green Business matching fund, and a Green Zone pilot program), justice (funding for police body cameras, ADA compliance staff, restorative justice, and the Working Families agenda), affordable housing, making it easier for businesses to work with the City, and more.
- 2) There will be a family-friendly Energy Fair focused on making your home energy efficient and learning more about solar options. The event features free LED light bulbs, free Home Energy Squad visits, a grand prize give-away and a complimentary continental breakfast. It will be held **October 10** from 9:30 –12:30 at the Minneapolis Convention Center.
- 3) The Council has unanimously passed the Pollinator Friendly Community resolution I coauthored with CM Linea Palmisano. The resolution commits Minneapolis to increase bee-friendly plants and decrease and ultimately eliminate pesticide use on city-owned and managed property. The resolution also encourages residents and businesses to adopt pollinator-friendly practices such as planting habitat for bees and avoiding pesticides. I see this as a great step towards reducing pesticide use in our city, supporting our local food economy and making Minneapolis not only a safe refuge for pollinators, but a healthier place for all of us.
- 4) Neighbors on the 2800 block of 39th Avenue, including my Policy Aide, Robin Garwood, have successfully implemented a Paint the Pavement project at 28th Street and 39th Avenue. I want to thank the Longfellow Community Council for your tremendous support for this project, including by covering the insurance. Having seen how difficult the City makes these kinds of projects, my office is now highly motivated to improve these processes for future projects.

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- 5) In August, Council Member Warsame and I formally introduced the subject matter of a new ordinance that would regulate carry-out bags in retail establishments. The ordinance would prohibit the use of the standard carry-out, handled plastic bags and require retailers to charge a fee (that the retailer would keep) for paper bags. The aim of the ordinance is to motivate shoppers to bring their own environmentally-friendly reusable bags.
- 6) Council Member Bender and I are concluding the research and stakeholder engagement phase of our ordinance amendment regulating Overnight Shelters. We are preparing a more specific proposal to address the need to allow shelters that are not an accessory use of a church, mosque, synagogue, temple or other place of religious assembly. Among other details, the proposal would create a new category of small shelter, called an Emergency Shelter, that would be required to be licensed and would be allowed in more areas of the city. We will be sharing the details at a community meeting on **Monday, September 28th** at 6 pm in the Doty Meeting Room at the downtown central Library, 300 Nicollet Mall.
- 7) On September 11, Council Members Glidden and Bender gave notice of intent to introduce a new ordinance that would require employees in Minneapolis to have earned sick time and fair scheduling. I am glad to see the Council taking this next step towards having the City being more active in assuring better working conditions for people who work in our city. The Council has also created a workgroup focused on the minimum wage issue. For more information see <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/WorkingFamiliesAgenda> . For questions or comments, please contact workingfamilies@minneapolismn.gov. Comments submitted before October 16, will be carefully considered in the drafting of the new ordinances.
- 8) Council Members Reich and Glidden's ordinance amendment to establish dedicated funding source for public art will be coming forward for a Public Hearing on **September 17**, at 9:30 am at the Zoning & Planning Committee. The proposal, I support, would dedicate an annual allocation of 1.5% percent of the equivalent of the annual net debt bond (or the property tax supported bonds issued to finance general infrastructure improvements) to the commissioning, siting, placement, maintenance, and conservation of public art. If approved, this would guarantee a predictable funding stream for public art projects, while at the same time allowing for fluctuations based on the City's annual budget. For further information on the proposal see <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-148646.pdf>
- 9) Back in February, when the Council received a tree study conducted by the U of M that clearly indicated that sidewalk repair and construction put trees at risk I moved, and the Council approved, a motion that directed our staff to work with the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board Forestry Division, the Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission, and the Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee on recommendations for changes to City policy and practice that will limit the impacts to trees from City sidewalk repair work. Staff reported back in late July with an update but no recommendations and without having met with the advisory committees. So I moved, and the Council unanimously approved, an additional direction in August for staff to "return no later than January 15, 2016 with a recommended policy to replace the 2004 Urban Forestry Policy, and to work with our advisory boards on trees, pedestrians, and people with disabilities.
- 10) All the comments that were offered during the 45 day review period of the first draft of Blueprint for Equitable Engagement are being reviewed by Neighborhood and Community Relations staff and the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC). They will be used to redraft the blueprint and another public comment period will be opened later this fall for additional input on the redrafted document. I am grateful to everyone who participated in an information sessions or provided input. This plan has the potential to significantly improve how the city supports and benefits from neighborhood organizations for decades to come. To learn more visit: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/initiatives/EquitableEngagement>.
- 11) Two Council committees will consider making formal comments to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's request for comments on Xcel Energy's proposed 2016-2030 Resource Plan on September 17 and 21. The Resource Plan is a 15-year planning document that Xcel Energy is required to submit to the Public Utilities Commission. It forecasts anticipated electricity usage and the type and amount of necessary generating sources – such as wind, solar, nuclear and coal. The plan ultimately adopted by the Commission will significantly impact Minneapolis' ability to meet our Climate Action goals, including overall greenhouse gas reductions, renewable energy targets and energy efficiency goals. While I commend Xcel for making significant reductions in the planned use of coal in its generating mix, I do not believe the plan goes far enough or fast enough in phasing out coal. I am hoping the city's comments will call for the closing of Xcel's Sherburne County Generating Station (Sherco) coal-fired power plant Units 1 and 2 – the largest soot and carbon polluter in Minnesota and for significant increases the use of clean energy from wind and solar.
- 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.