



Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the Seward Neighborhood Group September 23, 2015

Cam's Upcoming Office Hours Near Seward:

Thursday, September 24th, 9:30-11:00am, Blue Moon Coffee Café, 3822 E Lake St

Thursday, October 1, 9:30 – 11:00am, Nabo Cafe, 2211 Riverside Ave

Cam Gordon

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Second Ward

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Items:

- 1) Housing Inspections Meeting
- 2) 2016 Budget
- 3) Energy Fair
- 4) Fall Street Cleaning
- 5) I-94 Long Range Planning.
- 6) Bring Your Own Bag Ordinance
- 7) Emergency Shelters
- 8) Fair Working Practices Ordinance
- 9) Public Art Funding
- 10) Street Trees
- 11) Blueprint for Equitable Engagement
- 12) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) Following a number of concerns being raised about housing inspections in the neighborhood, I am working with Council member Warsame and our Inspections staff to convene a community about this as part of the November SNG CDC Committee meeting on November 10.
- 2) 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), and more.
- 3) 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.
- 4) Heads up. Mark your calendars. Don't get ticketed or towed. The city will be posting the first streets on Monday October 19, for sweeping (and enforcement) to begin on Tuesday, October 20. It will take the usual 4 weeks to complete.
- 5) I met recently with staff from The MN Department of Transportation to discuss a planning effort they are starting, that would ultimately lead to a reconstruction of I-94 through Minneapolis and St. Paul. According to information shared at the meeting, "While there is some project funding in 2020 and 2021, and there are some locations that will need rehabilitation in the short term, the goal of this project is to truly engage a wide variety of people regarding the needs associated with this corridor. Then using that grassroots information, we can develop an approach to address the corridor issues in a more comprehensive, long term and community based way." This is an opportunity to improve, and hopefully mitigate the harms from, this major piece of national

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infrastructure that cuts through the Second Ward. I see potential for us to recover lost land, secure dedicated and state of the art transit Bus Rapid Transit in the corridor and deck over some of the freeway trench to reconnect communities with added amenities. I commend the department for reaching out to local residents and groups early and am hopeful that this will not result in simply maintaining the status quo or worse yet adding more lanes. For more visit www.mndot.gov or contact brian.isaacson@state.mn.us ..

- 6) In August, Council Member Warsame and I formally introduced a new “Bring Your Own Bag” ordinance. Modeled after ordinances in Seattle WA and Cambridge MA, it would regulate carry-out bags in retail establishments and 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. We plan to take several months to gather community feedback and draft specific language before a public hearing and vote later this year, or early next.
- 7) Council Member Bender and I are concluding the research 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.
- 8) 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.
- 9) Council Members Reich and Glidden’s ordinance amendment to establish dedicated funding source for public art will be coming forward for Council consideration on September 25th. 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>
- 10) 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.
- 11) 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>.
- 12) Applications are now being accepted for a number of open boards and commissions positions that the City Council and mayor will appoint this fall. 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. Visit <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/openings/index.htm> for a list of appointment opportunities, position descriptions and the applications.