

## Second Ward May/June 2016 E-newsletter

News from Cam Gordon

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**Paid Sick and Safe Time Ordinance.** The Council has taken a major step for social justice by unanimously passing a strong earned sick and safe time ordinance. With this ordinance, all Minneapolis businesses with more than six employees will be required to give their employees access to paid sick time off, at (at least) a minimum accrual rate of 1 hour for every 30 hours worked with a maximum required accrual of 48 hours of paid sick time in a calendar year. This is one of four reforms that low wage workers and worker advocates have been urging the City to adopt. Not yet done: ensuring that all employees have fair and predictable schedules, getting the City to prevent wage theft and adopting a true minimum living wage for our city. I think that in crafting and passing this ordinance we have proved that the Council, and the larger city-community, can work together and find compromise solutions, even to large, complex issues on which the City has not historically acted. We were able to do this because, as time passed, more and more businesses (small and not so small) stepped forward to lock arms with low wage workers, labor leaders and other advocates for economic justice to find a way to make our economic system in Minneapolis work for all of us. Special thanks goes to everyone who participated in the Workplace Partnership group whose near consensus recommendations formed the basis for what the Council approved.

**Workplace Partnership Group.** The Committee of the Whole has voted to recommend the creation of a permanent Workplace Regulations Partnership Group. It would serve as a forum to engage the broader community of workers and businesses and provide advice and recommendations regarding workplace regulations and initiatives. I expect more specific details to come forward soon in the form of a resolution that will be offered for Council approval. I am excited to see this coming forward and am hopeful it will result in a forum that can better support both the businesses and workers that are so highly valued and critical to making Minneapolis a great city. You find more about this here:

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/legislation/WCMSP-175563>

**Complete Streets.** The Council has unanimously adopted a nation-leading Complete Streets policy. This policy clearly sets our priorities for our streets: people walking first, followed by people biking and taking transit, and finally people driving. And this policy will impact all aspects of all transportation-related projects, from planning to design to construction and maintenance. I want to thank Public Works staff, especially project coordinator Nathan Koster, for their great work bringing this forward. You can read the policy here:

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcmsp-179778.pdf>.

**Intentional Communities.** We held our first committee meeting to discuss my proposed Intentional Community ordinance on Tuesday, May 31, at the Central Library and will be hosting another one at Van Cleve Park **on June 30, 7-9pm** in the multipurpose room. The meeting will include a presentation and plenty of time for questions. If it would be helpful for me to hold or attend a meeting in your neighborhood about this ordinance proposal, I am happy to do so. Please email Nancy in my office at [nancy.olsen@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:nancy.olsen@minneapolismn.gov) with a date, time and location, or call my office at 673-2202. The proposal has been written about in the press here <http://www.startribune.com/minneapolis-may-open->

[door-to-more-communal-living/381263841/](http://door-to-more-communal-living/381263841/) and here <https://www.minnpost.com/cityscape/2016/05/changes-unrelated-adult-housing-rules-could-bring-intentional-communities-out-shad.>

**Equitable Engagement Plan.** In May the Council adopted the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement. The Blueprint is the result of two years of work by the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department and the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission. It provides a guide for how we can foster more equitable, inclusive and effective civic participation. It focuses on city departments and staff, community organizations, neighborhood associations and on the city's boards and commissions. It adopts the spectrum of public participation developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) and emphasizes the importance of identifying the purpose of participation along the 5 point continuum: inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower. The bulk of the plan falls under five broad strategies and identifies data to monitor progress. The five strategies are, 1) Expand Community Engagement Strategies; 2) Support Strong, Vibrant and Functional Neighborhood Organizations; 3) Increase the Capacity of NCR's Community Engagement Efforts by Working with Community Partners; 4) Ensure that City Departments are Well Equipped to Conduct Effective Public Participation; and, 5) Evaluate and Celebrate Progress. You can read the full adopted plan here <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcmssp-180151.pdf>.

**External Evaluation of NCR.** The external evaluation of the Neighborhood and Community Relations (NCR) Department, initiated as part of last year's budget, is now complete and will come before the Health Environment and Community Engagement Committee on July 11. Biko Associates, Inc. completed the evaluation of progress made toward meeting expectations established in the City's Framework for the Future. It highlights areas where NCR has experienced success, identifies areas where opportunity still exists and recommends improvements. You can review the evaluation here <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@citycoordinator/documents/webcontent/wcmsp-180513.pdf>

**Clean Energy Partnership First Annual Report.** On June 3<sup>rd</sup> the Clean Energy Partnership adopted and approved publishing its first annual report, and a full presentation was made to the Health Environment and Community Engagement Committee on June 6<sup>th</sup>. The report not only reviews the first year of work of the Partnership that was mostly focused on establishing the advisory committee, metrics of success and work plan, but the report also compiles an unprecedented amount of information about energy use and the program offerings of the utilities down to the census tract. To see the report, go here: [https://cleanenergypartnership.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/cepannualreport2016\\_full\\_20160525\\_finalsecure.pdf](https://cleanenergypartnership.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/cepannualreport2016_full_20160525_finalsecure.pdf).

**Community Solar RFP.** The Council is poised to approve an amended motion that will likely result in two new, separate requests for proposals (RFPs) for community solar facilities over the course of the next several months. The first RFP will be for community solar garden services to provide up to 1 megawatt of capacity to the City that includes workforce participation from Minneapolis residents and compliance with the Small and Underutilized Business Program (SUBP) goals. This was an important element that is missing from the Metropolitan Council solar garden RFP we are already a part of. Additionally, we will include in this request operators who can offer potential cost savings to the City of Minneapolis; potential ownership by the City of Minneapolis of the Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) and so-called "stacked" green infrastructure, including pollinator forage, storm water management, or local food growing. After this process is complete, staff will report back to the Health Energy and Community Engagement Committee Chair on the development of another request for proposals that incorporates

potential subscriptions for Minneapolis residents and businesses, especially low-income people, that could be located within the City of Minneapolis, potentially on a City-owned site with potential ownership of the garden by Minneapolis residents, businesses, and property owners. I am very glad to see this work moving forward.

**2015 Minneapolis Creative Index Report.** On June 15 the Council received a report on the creative economy in Minneapolis. Again this year the Twin Cities ranked the sixth most “creatively vital” among the 35 most populous metropolitan regions nationally. The report also found that Minneapolis is the core of a regional network of creativity, revenue, and creative services flowing in and out of the area. With a Creative Vitality Index nearly four times that of the national average, 26% of all creative jobs in the metropolitan area are located in the city. The metropolitan area is home to the largest portion of creative jobs in the state; 75% of Minnesota’s creative occupations are found here. Within Minneapolis, we see high concentrations of creative jobs in the Southeast (Marcy Holmes, Southeast Como, and Prospect Park) and the Southwest (Kenny, Windom, and Tangletown) neighborhoods. Creative industries experienced over \$4.5 billion in sales in 2014, about the same as in 2011. Sales from creative industries account for 5.5% of all industry sales in Minneapolis. As a comparison, creative industry sales are roughly eight times the size of Minneapolis’ sports sector revenue. The top performing creative industry in Minneapolis in 2014 was publishing, with over \$1 billion in sales. While the findings reveal a healthy creative sector with strong economic activity it also revealed that there is disturbing income and employment disparities based on race and, to a lesser degree, gender. You can find the detailed and well-crafted report here <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/legislation/WCMSP-178409>.

**Police Body Camera Update and Hearing.** On June 8, the Public Safety, Civil Rights and Emergency Management Committee received an update on a new draft of the Police Body Camera Policy, available here <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/legislation/WCMSP-180127>. I was glad to see that the department incorporated some of the feedback from the community meetings into the latest draft and took into account the State Legislature’s recently passed law that the Governor subsequently signed. This has delayed the first phase of implementation, which I expect to begin later this summer when all First Precinct patrol officers will begin using the cameras.

**Public Recording of Police.** I commend the police department for making it explicitly clear and releasing a new policy that definitively acknowledges the constitutional and legal rights of people to photograph and make audio and video recordings of Police Department personnel. The new policy was shared in early June at our Public Safety, Civil Rights and Emergency Management Committee meeting when we were discussing the body camera policy. It states that “The Minneapolis Police Department recognizes that members of the general public have an unambiguous First Amendment right to record police officers while they are conducting official business or while acting in an official capacity in any public space, unless such recordings interfere with police activity. Officers should assume that a member of the public is likely to be observing and possibly recording their activities at all times. Officers shall be aware that recording of people, places, buildings, structures and events is a common and normally lawful activity. If a person is taking photographs or recording from a place where he or she has a right to be, this activity by itself does not constitute suspicious activity. In areas open to the public, members of the general public have the same right to photograph and record as a member of the media. No person is required to have or display “press” credentials in order to exercise the right to record events, including police activity.” And, that “officers **shall not** tell people that recording police activity is not allowed, requires a permit, or requires an officer’s consent. Employees **shall not** erase or delete, or request any person to erase or delete any files, media or recorded images or sounds from any camera or other recording device that is in possession of any person, or that has been seized or voluntarily turned over.”

**Ten New Police Officers.** On June 1 the police department held a graduation ceremony for 10 new officers who have now completed the Police Academy and will be joining the department. I was happy to learn that this class includes two women and four people of color. This gives the department 866 sworn officers. I congratulate these graduates and welcome them to the city. The police provide an enormous and valued service to the people of Minneapolis. Their job is difficult, dangerous and I am deeply grateful to these young men and women for choosing to serve the people of Minneapolis in this way and I wish them a long, safe and rewarding career ahead.

**School Resource Officers.** The Minneapolis Public Schools and City are likely to agree to a contract extension for the city to continue providing school resource officers in Minneapolis selected high schools and middle schools for the next school year. This contract, and the presence of officers in schools, has raised concerns in the past, but has also been viewed by many as a good partnership that has helped build better relationships between youth and police and prevent violence both in and out of school. In the months ahead I will be seeking a more formal review of this program to be completed sometime next year so we can better understand how effective it is and how it might be improved.

**Northern Metals Action by MPCA.** On May 20, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) formally gave notice to revoke and not reissue the air emissions permit of Northern Metals Inc. that is operating in Minneapolis at 2800 Pacific Street North. This opened a 30-day public comment period that will end on June 20. On June 9, a judge heard testimony and is now considering if the facility should be closed immediately or allowed to remain open as comments are taken, the “contested case” hearing is conducted, and a likely appeals process is initiated. The MPCA found that the “existing permit does not accurately reflect the facility’s operations, equipment and emissions and compliance with the permit cannot be said to be protective of human health and the environment.” The preliminary determination to revoke this air emissions permit is tentative. At the Health, Environment and Community Engagement Committee meeting on June 6 the Council committee I made a motion and the committee supported directing staff to submit formal City comments in support of the MPCA’s decisions. I enthusiastically support the MPCA’s decisions and commend them for this action which has the potential to greatly enhance air quality in this area, where some of the state’s most severe and widespread incidents of lead poisoning and asthma can be found.

**Minneapolis 2040, Draft Civic Engagement Plan.** Staff have developed a plan to involve residents and others in the redrafting of our citywide comprehensive plan that will occur over the next 12 to 18 months. It is scheduled to come before the Zoning and Planning Committee later this month on June 23. Your feedback on it would be appreciated. But engagement efforts are already well underway. Planners, for example, will be at the Juneteenth Festival at North Mississippi Regional Park from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM to gather input and there is a complete list of upcoming engagement opportunities that can be found at <http://minneapolis2040.com/events>. You can find the engagement plan here <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/legislation/WCMSP-180086> and much more at the Minneapolis 2040 website here <http://minneapolis2040.com/>

**Artists Wanted for Comp Plan Civic Engagement.** The City is looking for community engaged artists to apply to integrate artistic strategies into the engagement process for Minneapolis 2040, the city’s 10-year comprehensive plan. The aim is to get help engaging with audiences that are traditionally underrepresented in the civic life of our city. Selected artists will work on mobile engagement tools, and two large events. There will be an optional Artist Informational Meeting for Local Artists on Thursday, June 23, 3:30 -4:30 p.m. at the Crown Roller Mill Innovation Center, 105 5th Avenue South. The **application deadline is Monday, July 11.** For more details contact [beth.elliott@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:beth.elliott@minneapolismn.gov).

**First Quarter Contract Compliance Report.** In June the Civil Rights Department issued its first quarter report on contract compliance with minority and female contracting and hiring goals. The City Council adopted goals for female and minority inclusion on all City construction and development projects over \$50,000 of 6% of total project hours to be performed by females and 32% of total project hours to be performed by minorities. In 1st quarter, 16 construction and development projects with workforce inclusion goals were closed by the Division. The 16 projects' combined construction contract amount was \$62,421,322. Total workforce hours for these projects were 305,163 hours, of which female hours were 13,848 hours (5%) and minority hours were 68,363 hours (22%). While these numbers fall short of our goals, they do represent an increase from last year and show that we are moving in the right direction. The full report can be found here:

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcmsp-180968.pdf>

**City Government Downtown Facilities Proposal.** Starting as far back as 1999, the city has been accessing future options for our many downtown facilities and offices. Now, the group called the Facilities, Space and Asset Management Committee, comprised of a number of department leaders, has a formal proposal (called the Strategic Real Estate Plan for the Downtown Campus) for the Council to review and possibly approve this summer that will make significant and lasting changes to the city's downtown facilities. The plan includes consolidating services and employees now working out of 6 different buildings into what would be a newly constructed service building, owned by the city located where a municipal parking ramp now stands just ½ blocks from city hall at South 5<sup>th</sup> Street and South 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. The plan would consolidate the downtown Fire Station (#1), Police Station (First Precinct) and other police functions like property and evidence services with Health, Regulatory Services, Community Planning and Economic Development and other staff now at Police and Fire stations, the City of Lakes Building, Public Service Center that the city owns as well as leased space at the Crown Roller Mill, Flour Exchange and Towle buildings. Much, if not all, of the costs could potentially be covered through the sale of the city owned parcels and from savings in rental costs. There will also be significant savings from not having to repair and update some of the older buildings we currently own. While I was at one point hopeful that we could purchase and renovate the historic Grain Exchange building, that was ruled out several weeks ago when the owner decided that they did not want to sell. Now, I am very supportive of the potential this plan has for improving the operations and believe it offers great path to creating a modern, universally accessible, highly energy efficient and sustainable facility that will serve our employees and, more importantly, the public in much more efficient, accessible and collaborative ways than is possible now.

**Emergency Shelter Ordinance Passes.** The Council has unanimously adopted the ordinance I authored establishing a permit process for Emergency Shelters. This is the last piece of the major reform to the way the city regulates emergency and overnight shelters in Minneapolis. They will now be allowed without having to be accessory to a place of religious assembly and can open in more areas of the city. A new kind of shelter, called an Emergency Shelter, where residents can stay for up to 30 days can open in residential areas if they meet the requirements of the new ordinance and get a permit from the city.

**Gun Violence.** . Last month the tragic handgun shooting death of Birdell Beeks, who was sitting in her parked van with her granddaughter at her side, served as a particularly shocking wakeup call to many of us. Prior to Birdell's killing we had had 9 homicides reported this year. All were shot and killed with handguns. Additionally, so far this year there have been 126 people injured this gunshot wounds. All these deaths and injuries were preventable. Other countries throughout the world, some states and other cities in the United States regulate firearms in different ways and some have yielded significant reductions in gun related suicides, homicides and injuries. Unfortunately, as I have written about in the

past, the U.S. congress won't even allow the national Center for Disease Control to even study gun violence as a public health problem, which it obviously is. This month, June is national Gun Violence Awareness month and in May the Council passed and the Mayor signed a resolution declaring June 2 National Gun Violence Awareness Day. June 2, 2016, would have been the 19th birthday of Hadiya Pendleton, a young person who was shot and killed just weeks after marching in President Obama's second inaugural parade. In the resolution the Council passed (that you can find here <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcmsp-178895.pdf>) we renewed our commitment to work reduce gun violence in Minneapolis. Unfortunately, our efforts so far have not yielded the results we all want and regrettably state law has tied out hands as elected officials so that there is little we can do in terms of drafting local regulations. In my time on the Council, Council Members and Police Chiefs have suggested ideas and proposed possible regulations that they believed could make a real difference here in Minneapolis. Unfortunately, even if the entire City Council, Mayor and a majority of Minneapolis residents supported enacting these or other gun legislation in Minneapolis we would be unable to do so because in 1985 the state legislature took away Minneapolis' authority to regulate hand guns, except regulations specifically related to their "discharge." While I know to end gun violence take education and cultural changes as well as state and federal legislation, I also believe it is time for the state legislature to restore the city's authority regulate guns and to give us more flexibility in determining how best to register and regulate hand guns in our city.

**The Rule of 3.** The Council is considering a proposed Charter amendment, that could be passed on a 13-0 vote, that would amend the section of City Charter relating to "Officers and Other Employees: Classified Service," by removing the requirement that only the first three applicants (or the three applicants scoring highest on a hiring "test") can be certified to be eligible to be hired. This would be replaced with a provision allowing the Council to establish hiring procedures by ordinance. We have set a public hearing for the July 20 at the Committee of the Whole meeting to take comments on this. I am generally supportive of taking this out of the charter and believe that allowing hiring managers to select from a broader list of qualified candidates could help improve and diversify the city's workforce, and is that the rule of 3 may no longer be needed for its intended purpose because of additional anti-nepotism and anti-discrimination laws that have been put in place since the adoption of this provision in the charter.

**2016 Green Business Awards.** The 2016 Minneapolis Green Business Awards for pollution were presented in early June. Congratulations to **Smyth Printing** who installed an innovative LED curing technology that is expected to reduce 14,000lbs of VOC emissions annually; to **Central Auto Body** who retrofitted their paint booth to convert to waterborne paint and eliminate harmful pollutants both inside and outside the business; and to **Unison Comfort Technologies** who changed out an existing paint booth and created a completely enclosed work environment, updated personal protection for employees and eliminated 3,340lbs of harmful chemical pollutants and 518lbs of fine particulate pollution annually.

**Transgender Equity Resolution.** In light of the recent discriminatory and seemingly hateful reports related to how transgender people are being treated by some units of government, it was particularly moving and significant that our local City Council passed a resolution this month, that I was proud to co-author and support, that commits us to hosting community events aimed at increasing awareness and supporting issues critical to the safety and vitality of the transgender community; ensuring the City's laws, policies and services are inclusive of our transgender community and staff; and, creating a permanent transgender issues advisory group. My thanks to Council Member Glidden, Phillippe Cunningham, Andrea Jenkins, the 8th Ward office and our entire transgender issues work group for their

leadership in this. You can find the full text of the resolution at <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/legislation/WCMSP-180247>

**Steve Kotke Retires.** Our longtime Public Works director, Steve Kotke, is leaving the City of Minneapolis. I thank Steve for all of his work to stabilize the department, and for the significant progress we've made on issues that are important to me and the people of Ward 2 during his tenure. Those accomplishments include major new transit resources, a dramatic expansion of our bicycle infrastructure, single-sort recycling and organics collection, and passage of a budget solution that will put millions of additional dollars into repairing and maintaining our streets. Steve leaves a department that is poised for even more growth, and I am hopeful that Mayor Hodges will nominate a successor who combines Steve's management abilities with the vision that we need to make our city even greener.

**Minneapolis selected 100 Resilient Cities Network,** In May, 100 Resilient Cities (or 100RC) – pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation – selected Minneapolis to join the 100RC Network to build urban resilience. As a member of 100RC, Minneapolis will gain access to tools, funding, technical expertise, and other resources as part of an international group of cities preparing to face future challenges. Minneapolis was chosen from more than 325 applicants. 100RC helps cities around the world become more resilient to social, economic, and physical challenges and provides funding for a “Chief Resilience Officer” who will lead the resilience efforts.

**Lot Sizes for Duplexes.** Council Members Bender and Reich are working on a zoning code change that will reduce the minimum lot area requirements for two-family dwellings in the R2 and R2B districts. There was a public hearing on this ordinance before the Planning Commission on Monday, June 13 where the commission recommended approval of the proposal. Currently, the minimum lot area to establish a two-family dwelling is 12,000 square feet in the R2 Two-Family District and 10,000 square feet in the R2B Two-Family District. From 1963 to 1994, two-family dwellings in the R2B District required a minimum lot area of 5,000 square feet and 12,000 square feet in the R2 District. In 1994, a zoning code text amendment increased the minimum lot area to allow a duplex in the R2B District to 10,000 square feet; the lot area requirement to allow for a duplex in the R2 District remained the same (12,000 square feet). The intent of the amendment was to “maintain the low density character of single-family neighborhoods and to promote home ownership, and maintenance and investment in residential property.” When this passed the Council also voted to allow applicants to vary the minimum lot area requirement up to 55 percent for newly constructed two-family dwellings located in the R2B District. The proposed amendment would reestablish the lot area requirements that were in place from 1963 to 1995 for the R2B Two-Family District. The amendment would reduce the minimum lot area for two-family dwelling units to 6,000 square feet in the R2 District and 5,000 square feet in the R2B District. These are the same lot area requirements necessary to establish a single-family home within the two respective zoning districts. The authorized minimum lot area variance of up to 55 percent in the R2B District would be eliminated. This will now be moving forward to the Zoning and Planning committee and full Council for approval in the weeks ahead.

**Waste Tires as Ground Cover.** I have been hearing concerns and conducting research on the harms of using old ground up tires as ground cover on children's play areas in our city and have decided that on July 11 we will take public comment on this issue at the Health Environment and Community Engagement committee. I have invited members of Healthy Legacy and Play it Safe Minneapolis to present information to our committee and anyone wishing to address the committee on this issue will be afforded that opportunity on the 11th. You can learn more here <http://healthy-legacy.squarespace.com/waste-tire-mulch/> and [http://www.ehhi.org/turf/rubber\\_mulch\\_facts08.shtml](http://www.ehhi.org/turf/rubber_mulch_facts08.shtml)

**Youth Violence Prevention Grant Applications.** In May the City Council approved applying for 2 significant federal grants to help us continue and strengthen our efforts to reduce and prevent youth violence. The first, for up to \$412,000 annually over 5 years would be to implement strategies to prevent intimate partner violence among adolescents and the second, for up to \$500,000 over 2 years would support continued implementation of our Youth Violence Prevention plan more generally.

**Talking is Teaching.** The official launch of the Talking is Teaching campaign will take place on June 21<sup>st</sup> at 10:15 at People Serving People located at 624 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street downtown. Let's all make a special effort to talk, sign, read and interact with the 0 – 3 year olds in our lives this summer and beyond. It is not only fun and guaranteed to enhance a grown-ups emotional well-being and quality of life but it is critical to the healthy brain development of infants and toddlers. For more information on Talking is Teaching see <http://talkingisteaching.org/>.

**Summertime Downtown Collaboration.** On June 2, the City and others announced the SafeZone Joint Beats initiative. This includes collaboration between the Minneapolis Police Department, County Sheriff's Office, and Metro Transit Police who will provide more visibility and enhanced safety throughout downtown. Additionally, Downtown Improvement District Ambassadors, Probation Officers, youth outreach workers and homeless street outreach teams, including staff from St. Stephen's Street Outreach, the Youth Coordinating Board and YouthLINK, will provide additional staff and resources for those in need throughout our downtown area. The initiative will continue through Labor Day weekend.

**Needle and Sharp Drop-off.** Hennepin County's drop-off facilities in Brooklyn Park and Bloomington now accept needles and sharps at no charge to residential consumers. It is important to manage and dispose of needles, lancets and syringes safely to prevent injury and disease transmission. Find a drop-off site here: <http://www.hennepin.us/residents/recycling-hazardous-waste/drop-off-facilities>.

**Pianos Downtown.** Throughout June 25 pianos are being placed in outside downtown free for anyone to play. Everyone is invited to play the Pianos on Parade and showcase the musical talent that fills Minneapolis. Find out where the pianos are and more information at [www.downtownmpls.com/pianos/](http://www.downtownmpls.com/pianos/)

**Join the Promise Zone Team.** Minneapolis is recruiting applicants to serve as Americorps VISTA members for the Promise Zone initiative to help build capacity to transform distressed communities in north Minneapolis by increasing racial equity, access to safe, affordable housing, economic development and employment; improving educational outcomes; and improving community health and safety. Americorps VISTA is the "domestic peace corps" and is a one-year opportunity to be a part of transformation in north Minneapolis. Members receive a monthly stipend and educational award at the end of the year of service. The application **deadline is July 13**. To find out more contact Julianne Leerssen at 673-3094 or [julianne.leerssen@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:julianne.leerssen@minneapolismn.gov) or visit [www.minneapolismn.gov/promisezone/news](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/promisezone/news).

**Recreational Fires.** While many people enjoy having recreational fires in their yards during the spring, summer and fall, other people are irritated by the smoke. Every spring I am reminded that many people in our neighborhoods, especially those with asthma or other respiratory ailments, find the fires to be particularly problematic. Fires release fine particles that contribute to air pollution and can be a factor in a number of health problems including strokes, heart attacks and asthma. For those whose breathing is not hindered by the smoke and who find it enjoyable, this is easy to forget. Small (less than 3 feet in diameter and 2 feet high) outdoor fires are permitted between 9 a.m. and 10 p.m. They are **not allowed** in Minneapolis when the wind exceeds 10 mph and **when the city is under an air pollution advisory**,



which seems to be happening more and more every year. You can sign up for air quality alerts at <http://mn.enviroflash.info>. It is also illegal to burn treated, painted, or wet wood as well as cardboard boxes, trash or debris, because the smoke can be toxic. Fire must also be at least 25 feet away from a structure or combustible material and in a fire ring or pit with edges more than six inches high. [www.minneapolismn.gov/environment/air/airquality](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/environment/air/airquality) Any illegal burning can result in a \$200 fine.

**Home Buyer Assistance Program.** On Friday I expect the Council to approve the 2016 Homeownership Opportunity Minneapolis (HOM) program to provide down payment and closing cost assistance to Minneapolis homebuyers as part of a comprehensive effort to reduce the racial disparity in homeownership rates. The program is funded with \$400,000 from the City of Minneapolis General Fund and will provide zero percent interest loans that are 100% repayable at the end of the life of the first mortgage or when the homeowner ceases to occupy the home as a primary residence. Potential buyers who complete homebuyer and financial education and counseling and have identified a home to purchase in Minneapolis will be eligible to apply for HOM Down Payment and Closing Cost Assistance.

**Proposed Rules Governing Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area.** The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is soliciting public comments on new rules for the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) that includes land within roughly 1,000 feet of the Mississippi River on both banks throughout the city. The City will be submitting comments. More information, including the draft rules, is available on the MRCCA website: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/input/rules/mrcca/index.html>. The DNR held a public hearing on this in Minneapolis on Thursday, June 16. People can submit comments for the five working days following the hearing to Administrative Law Judge Eric L. Lipman at the Office of Administrative Hearings, 600 North Robert Street, P.O. Box 64620, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55164-0620, telephone 651-361-7875, and fax 651-539-0310. The proposed rules will provide for management of the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) as a multipurpose resource in a manner that “conserves scenic, environmental recreational, mineral, economic, cultural, and historic resources and functions; maintains the river channel for transportation, including barging and fleeting areas; provides for continuation, development and redevelopment of a variety of urban uses; uses the river for water supply and as a receiving water for properly treated effluents; and protects the biological and ecological functions of the corridor. All comments or responses received are public and will be available for review <https://minnesotaoah.granicusideas.com>. The agency contact person Department contact person is Dan Petrik, Land Use Specialist, at Department of Natural Resources, 500 Lafayette Road, Saint Paul, MN 55155-4025, telephone 651-259-5714.

**Big Picture Project Report.** On June 6, The Big Picture Project (BPP), a public-private partnership I co-chair with St. Paul Council Member Russ Stark released a progress report showing it has exceeded the half-way mark for its 10-year goals for preserving and increasing affordable housing along the Green Line light rail line. Since 2011, when the partnership began, 3,573 units of affordable housing have been built or preserved—80% of Big Picture Project's 10-year goal, 968 lower income families have benefited from resources that help them stay in their homes—61% of the 10-year goal, Of the 6,388 new housing units built along the Green Line, 1,269 (20%) are designated affordable, More than \$4.2 billion has been invested in residential and commercial development (not including the new stadiums) along the existing Green Line—more than half-way to the projected goal of \$7 billion worth of development over 30 years. The group's work will continue with a focus on highlighting successful examples of mixed-income housing. As the market potential of the Central Corridor increases, the collaboration wants to ensure that the most vulnerable members of the community don't get pushed aside. As the report says, “With rising rental rates throughout the corridor, the threat of families losing their homes is very real, especially those with fixed or marginal incomes.” Starting this July, the Big Picture Project will host a series of meetings (<http://www.tclisc.org/images/Gayle/BPPConvenings.pdf>) focusing on strategies to

preserve and increase affordable housing along our regional transit corridors. The report is here <http://tclisc.org/images/Gayle/BigPictureProgressReport2015Finalsingles.pdf>.

**All Together Now.** The Department of Regulatory Services' annual initiative that partners with community associations and businesses to help people maintain and improve their properties started June 13. The neighborhoods this year include Central, Folwell, Howe, Jordan, Kingfield, Powderhorn Park, Willard-Hay, Southeast Como, Lind-Bohanon, and McKinley. Some businesses have agreed to provide residents with a 10-15% discount on home improvement supplies if a resident brings in their "All Together Now!" mailing advising them of the upcoming inspections or an order requesting improvements be made on a particular property. Participating business in or near the Second Ward include Welna Ace Hardware II at 2201 E Franklin Ave and Oaks Hardware at 1519 Como Ave SE.

**Vacation of 4<sup>th</sup> Street and other areas near TCF Stadium.** The University of Minnesota has applied to have the City relinquish (or vacate) the City easement rights to several public right-of-ways. This includes the City's right-of-way on 4<sup>th</sup> St SE, west of 25<sup>th</sup> Ave SE. This is part of the development the U is working on with United Properties for the blocks north and south of 4<sup>th</sup> Street, directly east of the stadium. Additionally they have applied for the city to vacate a portion of 23rd Ave SE, lying between University Ave SE and 4th St SE, part of Pleasant St SE lying between the north right of way line of Arlington St SE and the south line of University Ave SE; two parcels in the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Project. These applications were considered at the Planning Commission on **June 13**, where some were moved forward to the Council with recommendation for approval, but the vacations of 4<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> are being recommended to be denied. I am supportive of the Commission's recommendations.

**Green 4<sup>th</sup> Street SE.** The Transportation and Public Works Committee has recommend approval of the layout design for reconstruction of 4th Street Southeast (between 25th Ave SE and 29th Ave SE) and authorized staff to negotiate with private property owners to acquire easements and additional right of way, if necessary. The project includes the reconstruction a new street with new pavement, curb, gutter, sidewalks, ADA compliant pedestrian ramps, storm drain inlets, signing, striping, and related items and work, schedule to be started and completed in the summer of 2017. The reconstructed 4th St SE will continue to carry two-way traffic and will add a bike lane in each direction, parking areas and curb extensions.

**Aeon Prospect Park Apartment.** The Community and Regulatory Services Committee is recommending that the Council approve making a loan of up to \$900,000 from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund for the Aeon Prospect Park project located at 3001 4<sup>th</sup> Street SE. The proposed newly constructed apartment building would contain 70 total units with 45 being considered affordable for people making 50% area medium income or lower. It would include mixed income family units along with long term homeless units and have 53 two and three bedroom units to serve larger families, of which 7 units will be geared towards long term homelessness as well as 7 two bedroom market rate units with the remaining 10 units are one bedroom.

**600 Washington Redevelopment.** The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on **Monday, June 27, 2016** at 4:30 p.m., in Room 317 City Hall, 350 S. 5th St., and make recommendations regarding land use applications for the proposed new building planned to be located at 600 Washington Ave SE, 612 Washington Ave SE and 311 Harvard St SE. This includes a petition to rezone the properties from the R6 Multiple-family District, C1 Neighborhood Commercial District and C2 General Commercial District to the C3A Commercial Activity Center District and to add the PO Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District to the entire site; conditional use permit to increase the maximum height and variances to increase the maximum floor area ratio, reduce the minimum gross floor area of the efficiency units within the

building, reduce the minimum parking requirement, reduce the front yard and side yard setbacks, allow the building to be located more than eight feet from the front property lines along Washington Ave SE and Harvard St SE in the PO Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District and to increase the height of a fence. If approved, along with a site plan, this would allow the developer to construct a new mixed-use building including 438 dwelling units and 10,500 square feet of commercial space. You can find more information about the Environmental Assessment the project at

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/legislation/WCMSP-180087> and visit [www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/planning](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/planning) for the agenda with staff reports that will be updated by the end of the day Wednesday prior to meeting on June 27th. If can submit written or verbal comments about this project at the meeting or to Hilary Dvorak, Principal Planner - 250 South 4th St Room 300, Minneapolis, MN 55415, 673-2639, [Hilary.Dvorak@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:Hilary.Dvorak@minneapolismn.gov).

**Minnehaha-Franklin-Cedar Intersection delayed.** Unfortunately, the bids for constructing the improvements to the intersection of Minnehaha, Franklin and Cedar avenues have come in higher than the amount the County and City have available for this project. The project has been delayed until the 2017 construction season.

**1721 University Ave SE.** The Heritage Preservation Commission has approved the certificate of appropriateness for the application submitted for the Students Co-Op, for the property located at 1721 University Avenue SE in the University of Minnesota Greek Letter Chapter House Historic District to allow them to make stucco repairs to the front and sides of the building, repair window sills, repair the existing front porch and add a new metal railing on their historic building.

**1904 Franklin Avenue Southeast.** Dick and Darla Wexler have formally requested that the city allow them to construct a parking space/driveway in front of their house on Franklin Ave. They have no alley access to their home and no off street parking currently on their property, and will be losing the street parking on which they have been relying on Franklin Avenue when it is resurfaced and dedicated bike lanes are installed. To do this they need to be granted variances to the standards for the minimum size of a front yard and side yards, no parking allowed between a principal residential structure and a street and the University Area Overlay District standard prohibiting surface parking outside of the rear 25 feet of the property. The Minneapolis Board of Adjustment will meet on **Thursday, June 23**, at 4:30pm, in Room 317 of City Hall, 350 S 5th St, to hold a public hearing and make a determination based on required legal findings of fact. Comments can be made verbally at the meeting, or submitted in writing, to Janelle Widmeier, Senior Planner 250 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street Room 300, Minneapolis, MN 55415, Fax (612) 673-2526, E-mail: [Janelle.Widmeier@Minneapolismn.gov](mailto:Janelle.Widmeier@Minneapolismn.gov).

**Open Streets East Lake.** Please join me on Sunday, July 24, 2016 - 11:00am to 5:00pm on East Lake Street, Between Elliot Avenue South and 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South to celebrate our wonderful community and support local businesses during this festival that brings together community groups and local businesses while the street is closed to car traffic and open for people walking, biking, skating, and playing. Open Streets East Lake is one of 8 events that are hosted during the 2016 season. For more information or to participate in the event, please visit <http://www.openstreetsmpls.org/>

**Open Office Hours in the Ward.** I usually hold open "Office Hours" in the ward every Thursday morning from 9:30 to 11:00 am. Please feel free to call the office at 673-2202 to confirm that I am holding office hours on the day you want to stop by or reserve some time when I will be there.  
First Thursdays at the Oren Gateway Center, Nabo Café, 2211 Riverside Avenue;  
Second Thursdays at Black: Coffee and Waffles, 1500 Como Ave SE;  
Third Thursdays at Espresso Expose, 600 Washington Ave SE;

Fourth Thursdays at Blue Moon Coffee Café, 3822 E Lake St.

Cam Gordon  
Minneapolis City Council Member, Second Ward  
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