

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Longfellow, 1-21-16

Cam's Next Longfellow/Cooper Office Hours:
Thursday, January 28th, 9:30-11:00am
Blue Moon Coffee Café, 3822 E Lake St

Items:

- 1) 2016 Budget
- 2) Production and Processing Ordinance Passes
- 3) Hi-Lo Diner
- 4) Juba Cafe
- 5) Minneapolis Projects in Bonding Bill
- 6) Neighborhood Revitalization Funds
- 7) Emergency Shelters
- 8) Homicides Up this Year
- 9) Green Zones
- 10) Openings on Boards and Commissions

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- 1) In December the Council unanimously passed a \$1.24 billion 2016 budget with only a few amendments to the one proposed by the mayor in August. Some amendments I supported. This includes one that reallocates \$50,000 of existing funds to support senior initiatives as part of the Minneapolis for a Lifetime. These funds could potentially support groups like Southeast Seniors and Seward Longfellow Seniors. I also supported amendments that added \$305,000 for implicit bias, procedural justice, and crisis-intervention training for Minneapolis Police officers; that added \$1.5 million for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to provide for a total of \$10 million for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund in 2016; and a motion that will create a racial equity website aimed at both external and internal stakeholders. I did not support the amendment that passed that took \$50,000, proposed by the Mayor, from a new Green Zones initiative or a motion that would have moved \$605,000 to the Police Department for repair/improvement to the 4th Police Precinct that received most of public comment but was ultimately not even moved. If we need to repair damage to the Precinct, there is a City contingency fund that exists for those kinds of unforeseen expenses. If we need to upgrade security for the building, there is an existing capital process for those kinds of investments. Given the recent protests and the raw feelings of grief and anger large parts of our community feel towards the City and especially the police department since the shooting of Jamar Clark, I felt that this was the wrong time to try to put a lot of money towards securing the 4th Precinct without clear and unanimous community support. While it was a long and emotional public hearing, it was also powerful and inspiring. I am glad that the community came out, that so many people spoke so forcefully and eloquently, and that ultimately the Council respected the community's will. In the end I voted, along with my 12 colleagues, for what is really a strong budget, which helps us maintain or improve our current services and focus resources to address some of most pressing needs: closing economic disparities, racial equity, clean energy, biking and walking, job training programs, quality affordable housing, addressing climate change, improving our environment, preventing violence and improving police practices and our criminal justice practices, and investing in the roads and bridges we depend on, including \$10 for the 10th Avenue Bridge.
- 2) The Council has approved the ordinance I authored that opens up more areas for people to operated limited production and processing and simplifies regulations about the size of commercial uses in general. In recent years, entrepreneurs have opened small-scale establishments throughout the city that create cured meats, chocolate, beer, spirits, honey and other food and beverage products. This has helped fill commercial storefronts and provided uniqueness to Minneapolis. With the adopted changes, these types of businesses could now be established administratively, without a public hearing before the City Planning Commission.

- 3) Hi-Lo Diner, 4020 E. Lake St. (at the old Taco Bell location) has submitted an application for a new On-Sale Liquor license with a Class E Entertainment license. I understand that they intend to open in early March. The City will hold a public hearing on this at Brackett Park on **February 3rd** from 6-7pm. If approved, they intend to serve a full range of alcoholic beverages as part of a full service restaurant with 70 seats inside and 44 seats on a private outdoor patio. A Class "E" license allows the business to only have radio, TV, juke box, or taped music, and karaoke. Their business plan states that they will have no live entertainment, or outside amplified sound.
- 4) Juba Coffee Restaurant at 2927 East Lake Street is seeking approval to extend their operating hours for restaurant license to 1:00 a.m. Sunday through Thursday and 2:00 a.m. Friday and Saturday. They are currently open Sunday through Thursday, 6:00 am until 10:00p.m. Friday and Saturday until 11:00 pm. Their request for an extension has been recommended by staff and approved a committee, so, I expect the full Council to approve it later this month
- 5) I was glad to see that the Governor's 2016 state bonding proposal of \$1.4 billion in state funding includes the city's top priority for state funding: \$31.875 million in funding for 10th Ave Bridge rehabilitation. The city has already set aside \$10 million to help preserve and maintain this critical link between Marcy Holmes and the West Bank.
- 6) After a year-long process of review by staff and neighborhood organizations, the Council has approved a policy change related to unexpended Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) funds. Among other provisions, the new policy will require the city Neighborhood and Community Relations staff to prepare a status report of each neighborhood's Phase I and Phase II Plans in chronological order based on the date of Phase II plan approval. If the neighborhood has not expended at least 85% and contracted at least 95% of the original plan allocation plus program income (for both Phase I and Phase II) by the seven-year anniversary of the Phase II plan's approval by the City Council, the neighborhood must submit a plan for achieving thresholds within one year; or complete a robust neighborhood review process to affirm or revise current strategies; or request a waiver. The full policy is available here <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/legislation/WCMS1P-150504>.
- 7) The City Council has unanimously approved the Shelter ordinance amendments I coauthored with my colleague Lisa Bender. This mean the city will now allow small *emergency shelters* in many more places in the city and allow larger *overnight shelters* as a primary use in only the C2, C4, Downtown and Industrial Living districts. It will allow emergency shelters in most zoning districts, but with the number of beds defined by the zoning density, and will never be greater than 32. In addition, I am authoring an ordinance that will require emergency shelters to be licensed by the City's Health Department (which is already responsible for hotels, motels, boarding houses and etc. through the Food, Lodging and Pools division). I look forward to seeing these ordinances pass the Council early next year. I am hopeful that this easing of regulations will result in additional high quality, new shelters being open in the city.
- 8) I join and commend the Mayor and Police Chief for taking the rise in gun violence and homicides this year in the city very seriously. While this appears to reflect a disturbing national trend and while there has not necessarily been a spike in the second ward, it is something we should all be concerned about. The total number of homicides so far this year is now over 40. This is approaching the highest it has been since 2006 when there were 57 homicides for the whole year. I am especially concerned about the rise in youth homicides. So far this year, of the all homicides, 19 have been people under age 25 and 5 have been 17 or under. These are also at 5 year highs. It is also notable that 15 of those youth died from being shot with a handgun. This makes the investments in Youth Violence Prevention in this year's budget especially important. It also reminds me about how unfortunate it is that the state legislature prohibits the city for passing any gun regulations other than those dictated to it by the state.
- 9) The Health, Environment and Community Engagement committee has passed a resolution I co-authored with Council members Cano and A. Johnson that directs staff to develop a Green Zone Policy that the City Council could adopt in late 2016 and creates a Green Zone Policy Task Force comprised of community leaders (e.g., residents, businesses, environmental justice advocates, etc.) and City staff to lead this initiative. The Task Force will help facilitate a community-driven process to (1) define Green Zones and identify the Vision and Goals of a city-wide Green Zone Policy, (2) establish screening criteria for identifying areas that will be designated as Green Zones in the city, and (3) enumerate the programs, resources, and activities that will be targeted to designated Green Zones. This is an initiative approved as part of our Climate Action Plan. It is intended to not only address sustainability and greenhouse gas emission reductions, but also to address equity. More details can be found here <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/legislation/WCMS1P-151461>.



10) 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.

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2015 Accomplishments

It has become a tradition in the Ward 2 Office to look back at the end of each year and review our accomplishments. There is little doubt that 2015 was a challenging year for the City of Minneapolis. With the death of Jamar Clark in late November and through the protests that followed, we have had to face ongoing impacts of historical and present-day racism and injustice and our City government is struggling to find a way to respond with meaningful changes.

But 2015 also saw the success of many initiatives the Second Ward office has championed. Here is our list for this year:

For Justice:

- I coauthored (with Council Member Blong Yang) the successful repeal of the City’s antiquated and unjust ordinances that criminalized “lurking” and spitting
- I coauthored (with Council member Lisa Bender) an ordinance that allows more flexibility for siting emergency shelters for people experiencing homelessness
- I stood with the community and actively supported the people’s right to peaceably assemble in response to the police shooting of Jamar Clark and the protests at the 4th Precinct
- I authored a staff direction that required the Police Department and Attorney’s Office to provide a detailed multi-year report to the Council, for the first time, on low-level offenses with data on who has been arrested, where and what the consequences of those arrests have been.
- I opposed a last-minute amendment to devote more than \$600,000 to security investments at the 4th Precinct
- I fought for the City to adopt a fair scheduling ordinance, but was ultimately unsuccessful
- The City hired our first Racial Equity staff in the Coordinator’s office, something I have advocated for years, and supported in last year’s budget

For the Environment:

- I authored (with Council Member Linea Palmisano) a **resolution** declaring Minneapolis a **pollinator-friendly city**, pledging to not use synthetic pesticides, planting more forage for pollinators, and urging others to follow our example
- I coauthored (with Council Member Alondra Cano) a **resolution divesting from fossil fuels** and urging other entities to divest
- The **Clean Energy Partnership**, which I worked to create and on which I serve, appointed a strong Energy Vision Advisory Committee, adopted its first **2-year work plan and metrics**, and funded free Energy Squad visits for low-income homeowners and zero-percent financing for energy efficiency improvements
- The Council voted to subscribe to **community solar**, and directed staff to start a process to put out a City-led request for proposals for community

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solar

- I submitted formal comments on the draft **Xcel Energy resource plan**, and the later draft of that plan includes significantly more reductions in fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions
- I directed public works staff to overhaul the City's **Urban Forest Policy** in light of the clear evidence from a Tree Failure Report that our sidewalk repair practices have damaged tree roots, leaving trees vulnerable to wind storms

For Smart and Equitable Development:

- I authored a **resolution** that creates a new City designation for **Innovation Districts**, and authored a **second resolution** designating the **University Avenue Innovation District** to support Prospect North
- I took a firm position against a tax giveaway for a privately-owned **soccer stadium**

For Local Food:

- I authored an **ordinance changes** that allow more flexibility for "**limited production and processing**" in commercial areas, to support small local food processors
- I shepherded a policy through the Council, with leadership provided by Council Member Frey, that opens up more **City-owned land for food growing**, for longer lease terms, and for the first time allows market gardeners to access that land
- I authored an **resolution** supporting **seed sharing libraries**, which the legislature subsequently legalized in Minnesota

For Active Transportation:

- The Council passed the City's first **protected bikeway plan**, something I have advocated for years, and has fully funded its implementation
- One of the first protected bikeways in the City opened this year on **Oak Street Southeast**, with the strong support and active participation of my office
- Ward 2's first-ever **Open Streets** events were held in the University area and on Lake Street
- With leadership from my office, the Public Works department has begun a **winter maintenance evaluation** for bikeways and sidewalks
- I coauthored a letter of support for Minneapolis to host the **2016 Winter Cycling Congress**, and we were chosen as host city

For Youth:

- Building on the strong advocacy of the Youth Congress, I coauthored (with Council Member Yang) an **ordinance prohibiting flavored tobacco** except at tobacco-only retailers, and set a **minimum price** for cigars and cigarillos
- As Chair of the Youth Coordinating Board, I helped oversee development of the Afterschool Network citywide program finder: **What's Up 612! www.whatsup612.com** that launched in June.

For Zero Waste:

- The City, led by my office, sought and received funding from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to conduct a study on **commercial recycling** and waste diversion, and that study is underway
- I coauthored a resolution establishing an aggressive recycling and waste diversion goal for the City and supporting the adoption of a **Zero Waste Plan**, which is underway
- My office crafted an amendment that significantly increases the amount of **composting** that can occur at community gardens, market gardens and urban farms, while simplifying these regulations

For Democracy and Community Engagement:

- The Neighborhood and Community Relations (NCR) department is finalizing a **Blueprint for Equitable Engagement**, to ensure that City-supported community engagement activities truly serve all members of our communities
- I supported an **external evaluation** of the NCR department and neighborhood organizations
- The Council has passed a major update to the City's **language access plan** for better serving people with limited English proficiency

Local Issues:

My office also works on many issues of local importance for Second Ward neighborhoods. A few of the local issues we worked on this year include:

- Staffing the **University Avenue Innovation District** and **Prospect North Partnership**
- Ensuring that no development would occur in the **Glendale Townhomes** area without the support of Glendale residents and the broader community
- Testing a closure at **29th Ave S** and the Midtown Greenway, as part of a planned bike boulevard
- Welcoming a host of new **small businesses** to our neighborhoods
- Tracking major **developments** including 22 on the River, multiple new hotels, the Kemps/Overflow site and much more
- Starting a **Grain Elevator Task Force** to respond to the dangers and opportunities created by the mostly vacant elevators in our city
- Pushing the City to begin the process to purchase right-of-way for the **Prospect Park Trail**

Work led by my colleagues:

And, as always, my colleagues have been working on good policies that I have been happy to support, including:

- A **rail safety resolution** coauthored by Council Members Reich and Palmisano
- Council Member Bender's significant reforms to the City's **off-street parking** rules
- Many equity-related activities led by Mayor Hodges including the **National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice**
- A **2016 Budget** that invests more in racial equity, police accountability, biking and clean energy than any the City has ever adopted
- An ordinance establishing a clear **1% for public art** requirement for City projects, authored by Council Members Glidden and Reich

In addition, there are many initiatives that my office has worked on in 2015 that are not yet finished, but that I expect to pass in 2016.

For 2016:

- An ordinance requiring Minneapolis employers to offer **earned sick and safe time** to all employees
- A strong, visionary **complete streets** policy that will establish a clear, meaningful priority for walking, biking and transit
- A "**Bring Your Own Bag**" ordinance prohibiting retailers from providing plastic bags at the point of sale, and establishing a fee for single-use paper bags
- An ordinance to allow people to form **intentional communities** that are exempt from our maximum occupancy code
- A **Green Zones** policy that will help address historical environmental injustices, help drive City environmental investments to where they are most needed, and support green jobs
- Ending the requirement for **food trucks at farmers markets** to have more than one license