

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Longfellow, 8-17-17

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

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*Working for a Minneapolis
where each of us has the
freedom and opportunity to
reach our individual
potentials while caring for
one another, improving our
environment and promoting
social well-being.*

*Focused not only on our
immediate needs, but also on
the future we want for
ourselves, our children and
for generations to come.*

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Items:

- 1) Minnehaha Academy Explosion
- 2) Police Officer Killing and New Police Chief
- 3) Police Reform
- 4) Menthol tobacco ordinance passes
- 5) Bring Your Own Bag Ordinance Update
- 6) Hiawatha Academies
- 7) Audit of Police Body Worn Video Equipment Program
- 8) Animal Care and Control 2016 End of Year Report
- 9) City Climate Data
- 10) Co-op Mall at 2600 Minnehaha
- 11) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) Earlier this month, there was an explosion at Minnehaha Academy in Ward 2. Two of the school's staff, Ruth Berg and John Carlson, were killed. My heart goes out to Ruth and John's families and friends, the Minnehaha Academy community, and everyone else directly impacted by this tragedy. I can only imagine the shock and pain that these families have suffered. I think I speak for everyone in Ward 2 when I say that they are in our thoughts. I also want to acknowledge that this event has been frightening and traumatic for the surrounding neighborhood, and that people have been impacted by smoke, closed streets, and noise. I want to thank the Minneapolis Police and Fire Departments for their quick, professional, and in some cases heroic response to this tragedy. From what I have heard, at least one victim of this event owes his life to the courageous actions of our first responders, alongside a few community members who also rushed in to help. I also want to thank the many other state, University, county and federal agencies who helped with our response. And I appreciate the hours of personal attention that mayor Betsy Hodges and Council Member Andrew Johnson gave to this event yesterday. I look forward to learning more as the investigation goes forward, with an eye to preventing this sort of thing from happening again. And the process to help Minnehaha Academy find a space for their next school year has already begun, thanks to a good suggestion by Council Member Johnson, and the mayor's willingness to connect Minnehaha Academy with the leadership of the Minneapolis Public Schools.
- 2) As you have likely heard, in the wake of the tragic killing of Justine Damond by the Minneapolis Police, Chief Janee Harteau has resigned, and the mayor has put forward the name of Medaria Arradondo to be the next Police Chief. I voted to move his nomination forward at the Executive Committee, and plan to support it at the full Council. This most recent shooting reopens pain and distrust in our community in a police force that just two years ago saw one of its officers shoot and killed Jamar Clark. Justine should not have been killed, just as Jamar Clark, Terrance Franklin, Philando Castile and so many others should not have been killed. I believe that change in leadership for the Minneapolis Police Department is a first step. As she transitions away from her role as Police Chief, I thank Janee Harteau for her years of service to the people of Minneapolis, and the real and important progress that has been made towards transforming our police department on her watch. Her accomplishments and partnership, including on de-escalation and implicit bias training for all officers and on the co-responder program and changes to the use of force policy aimed at reducing police violence, are real, valuable, and notable.

- 3) I believe that the current events and conversation about policing underscores the fact that we need deeper transformation that goes well beyond a change in leadership. It requires broad-based, systemic change. Three priority reforms we should move forward on now are: Rebuilding an independent civilian oversight board, including changing state law and city policy so the board has subpoena power for investigations and can discipline police misconduct.
- a) A city budget that prioritizes community violence prevention and reform above adding sworn police personnel.
 - b) Amending the Minneapolis City Charter to ensure that accountability for the police department is shared by the City Council to put the police chief on equal footing with other department heads and ensure every elected official in Minneapolis is engaged in and accountable for reform.
 - c) Establishing a city Community Task Force on Comprehensive Criminal Justice Reform, loosely modeled off of the President's Task Force for 21st Century Policing, covering Policy & Oversight, Procedural Justice & Transparency, Training & Education, and Technology with a primary focus on eliminating the racial disparities within the criminal justice system, minimizing collateral consequences for those charged or convicted of a crime, and reforming policies disproportionately affecting poor people of color.

Our work on police practices must be grounded in a critical understanding of race and racism in Minneapolis, and the present day consequences of our history. Minneapolis Police Department policies must be evaluated using a race equity lens.

- 4) The menthol tobacco ordinance amendment I coauthored with CM Lisa Bender passed the Council last month on a vote of 10-2. I am very thankful to the advocates for their diligent work on this issue, and to my colleagues for supporting this ordinance, which will help protect the health of our youth and future generations.
- 5) The proposed update to the Bring Your Own Bag ordinance that I am coauthoring with my colleague Abdi Warsame is coming to the Council for a final vote tomorrow, August 18th. This ordinance amendment was required by the State Legislature's action to preempt local communities from having any prohibitions on types of bags. The proposed solution is to extend the fee that is already in place on paper bags to all types of bags. There will still be an exemption for people using SNAP/EBT, WIC, or other forms of food assistance.
- 6) I continue to meet with the nearest neighbors of the proposed Hiawatha Academies high school and Hiawatha Academies staff to work out solutions to some of the concerns that neighbors have raised.
- 7) With my strong support, The Public Safety, Civil rights and Emergency Management Committee is recommending that the Department of Civil Rights and Internal Audit Department conduct an independent internal audit of the Police Department's mobile and body worn video recording equipment programs. The audit will evaluate compliance with applicable Minnesota Statutes, review training and equipment use and evaluate compliance with Minneapolis Police Department's policies and procedures.
- 8) The 2016 Animal Care and Control report is now available. In 2016, compared to 2015, there was a 40% increase in the number of animal adoptions. The shelter housed 4,196 animals with an 82% live release rate of all animals species including wildlife. The 18% remainder consisted of animals that could not be rehomed or returned to owner because they were deemed dangerous to public safety or had a severe untreatable medical condition. Still, 163 dogs and 221 cats were euthanized, but no animal was euthanized due to space, time or breed in 2016. You can find more details at <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/legislation/WCMSP-201977>
- 9) I am happy to report that the City has now been able to post the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's deleted climate data on the City of Minneapolis website. The webpage contains information on the basic science behind climate change, the ways weather is impacted from increased greenhouse gas emissions and actions the federal government has taken to reduce the impact. Major cities including Atlanta, Boston, Houston, San Francisco and Seattle have also posted the information. The website address is <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/sustainability/climate-action-goals/epaclimate>
- 10) I am working with Council member Warsame to explore new uses for the city owned vacant commercial lot at 2600 Minnehaha Ave in Seward. The property has been for sale for over 10 years and the City has cleaned up the pollution to make it ready for development. In the weeks ahead we will be asking staff to do explore feasibility of marketing the site as a cooperatively owned retail mall with smaller commercial businesses that could also include some light manufacturing like a bakery. Based on the feasibility study staff may then be directed to issue a request for proposals for potential development later this summer or in early autumn. We will be very interested in sharing the study results and engaging the neighborhood in the development of the RFP and future discussion about this idea.
- 11) Visit the City's website, <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/openings/index.htm> for a full list of appointment opportunities and position descriptions for City boards and commissions.