

Second Ward January 2018 E-newsletter

News from Cam Gordon

Council Member, Second Ward

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ward2>

<http://secondward.blogspot.com>

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Council Sworn In. The newly elected City Council Members and Mayor were sworn into office for the next term in a small ceremony in the Council Chambers and January 2nd and again a week later in a large ceremony in the City Hall Rotunda that included music, poetry, prayers, dancers and the new mayor's inaugural address. The new members who took office are Steve Fletcher (Ward 3), Phillipe Cunningham (Ward 4), Jeremiah Ellison (Ward 5), Andrea Jenkins (Ward 8) and Jeremy Schroeder (Ward 11). They will be joining me and the other returning members: Kevin Reich (Ward 1), Abdi Warsame (Ward 6), Lisa Goodman (Ward 7), Alondra Cano (Ward 9), Lisa Bender (Ward 10), Andrew Johnson (Ward 12) and Linea Palmisano (Ward 13). I look forward to working with this group in the years ahead and am deeply honored to have this opportunity to represent the people of Ward 2 and serve all the people of Minneapolis for another 4 years.

New Council Organization. As part of our first meeting on January 8th the new City Council approved a new organizational structure that includes new leadership, new committee assignments and new appointments of Council Members to various other boards and commissions. Council Member Lisa Bender was elected Council President, Council Member Andrea Jenkins Vice President, Council Member Andrew Johnson Majority Leader and I Minority Leader. I will chair the new Housing Committee, vice chair the Health, Environment, Civil Rights and Engagement committee, and serve on the Transportation and Public Works, Economic Development and Regulatory Services, Zoning and Planning, and Executive committees. I will also serve as the Council representative to the Clean Energy Partnership, the Minneapolis/St. Paul Family Housing Finance Board, the Minneapolis/St. Paul Housing Fund, the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board, the Stadium Area Advisory Group, the University District Alliance, the Youth Coordinating Board, the Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee and the Zero Waste Policy Steering Committee. I am excited about this new leadership and Council structure and believe that it will help broaden power and decision-making, and help the Council better reflect and represent the will of the people of Minneapolis. You can find all the approved details about the new organization at

<https://lims.minneapolismn.gov/MarkedAgenda/Council/352>

Office Hours. Given the changes to the Council meeting cycle, I have changed my community office hours in the ward to Mondays. I have also changed two locations that may be more assessable and convenient for many of you. I will no longer hold regular hours at the Nabo and Blue Moon Cafés but am very grateful for the kindness of their staff and my time spent there over the last 4 years or more. I am sure that I will still be stopping in and meeting there from time to time. My community office hours are now **Mondays from 9:30-11am** following this pattern: **first Mondays at the Birchwood Café, 3311 E 25th St; Second Mondays at Black:**

Coffee and Waffles, 1500 Como Ave SE; **Third Mondays at T-Rex Cookie Café**, 3338 University Ave SE; and **Fourth Mondays at the East Lake Library**, 2727 E Lake St.

New Housing Policy and Development Committee. The new set of Council Committees includes a new Housing Policy and Development committee which I will chair. This committee will oversee of all policy related to the health, safety and affordability of housing and all matters related to homelessness prevention, fair housing, housing opportunities, housing finance, as well as residential real estate development, redevelopment and land sales. As homelessness, a lack affordable housing, displacement due to the rising cost of housing and fears about the future of public housing continue to be among our most pressing problems, it is critically important for the City to focus on housing and will take a concerted effort from the City and community members. I hope that I can use my position as chair of this committee to bring new ideas, energy, creativity and resources together to meet the need and ensure that everyone in our city has access to the kind of safe, quality and affordable housing they need.

Community Meetings on Housing. Please join me for two upcoming community meetings which will be focused on housing in Minneapolis. The first, convened by the Mayor's office, will be on **February 15, from 5:30 – 7:30pm** at the University Research and Outreach Center at 2001 Plymouth Ave N. The second with a focus particularly on Wards 2 and 6 and convened by Council Member Warsame and me, will be held at Matthews Park in the Multipurpose Room on **Thursday March 8th from 7 – 9 pm**. There we will discuss housing concerns, goals and strategies for improvement.

Community Advisory Committee on Housing. I will be proposing the establishment of a new ongoing Housing Community Advisory Committee to help guide the work of the Council and City staff working on housing issues. If approved, it would follow our open appointments process so that any Minneapolis resident can apply to serve on it. I hope to present a detailed proposal to the Housing Committee in February, or early March.

Goals and Strategic Directions. The newly elected Council and Mayor are planning on updating and approving a new set of formal Goals and Strategic Directions to guide us over the next 4 years. To help us get started you are invited to join me, the Mayor and other members of the City Council in a facilitated dialogue about community priorities at the Community Connection Conference in February. The feedback will help inform me as I participate in City strategic planning and goal setting meetings later this year. This session will be held from 2:45 - 3:45pm, **Saturday, February 10**, at the Minneapolis Convention Center - 1301 Second Ave S. Minneapolis.

Council and Mayor Salaries. In an unusual and unexpected move, on December 15 at the last meeting of 2017, the City Council voted to increase the salaries of the Mayor and Council by \$10,000 in a one-time adjustment for 2018 and then based on average annual collective bargaining agreements each year for the rest of the term. This was one of the more disconcerting votes I took in 2017. While I ended up voting for it, I was very concerned that it did not follow a healthy, open or transparent process. As a result, I will be proposing and pushing for a new ordinance that will require future Council and Mayoral salary increases to go

through a formal and public committee process that may include the establishment of an appointed commission, similar to that set up for the state legislature, to make recommendations. I am grateful for the opportunity to do this work and have always felt that my compensation for working as a Council Member has been fair and generous. For a longer explanation of this including the rationale for the raise and my reluctant decision to support it see

<http://secondward.blogspot.com/2018/01/unexpected-mayor-and-council-salary.html>

Disparity Study. The Minnesota Department of Administration has released a draft of the 2017 Joint Disparity Study that the City is participating in in order to understand the racial and gender disparities in our contracting and procurement practices. You can find the report at <https://mn.gov/admin/disparity-study/resources/>. Two presentations of the study will be made on February 12, first to the Health, Environment, Civil Rights and Engagement Committee at 1:30pm and later at a public forum from 5-7pm at the Minneapolis Urban League, 2100 Plymouth Ave. No. The presentations will be led by Keen Independent Research with staff support from the Department of Civil Rights. The study did find racial and gender disparities in both contracting and purchasing and offer several recommendations to continue some programs and possible add others. One idea it highlights that I am particularly interested in would be start a program similar to one offered by the State that would allow, or require, us to do business with certain populations in order to address the historic inequities and correct present disparities as long as the cost was within 6% of the lowest bid.

New Police Department Consultant. With my full support, the Council has approved a contracting with a new entity, Aspen Psychological Consulting, LLC, for pre-placement and fitness-for-duty evaluation services for the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) for the next 4 years. Doing this in an unbiased, thoughtful and extremely professional way is critically important to ensuring that we have a healthy, psychologically stable as well as more diverse police department. I am hoping that this change will address two recently noted concerns: that we have not been following nationally accepted best practices and that too many minority candidates have been improperly screened out of employment with the City.

Public Health Advisory Committee Appointments. The Council has approved several re-appointments for two-year terms, to the Public Health Advisory Committee ending December 31, 2019. KJ Starr will continue as our Ward 2 representative along with Sarah Jane Keaveny, Ward 9; Margaret (Peggy) Reinhardt, Ward 10; Cindy Hillyer, representative member for Minneapolis Public Schools; and Craig Hedberg, representative member for the University of Minnesota-School of Public Health.

2018 State Legislative Agenda. The Council has amended our State Legislative Agenda to support ending the practice of suspending or revoking the driver's licenses of individuals for non-public safety related offenses and nonpayment of fines and fees. While these may have been put in place with good intentions, it is clear they do not enhance public safety and too often lead to unjustifiable cycles of debt, become barriers to employment and education, and appear to be especially unfair to low income residents and perpetuate institutionalized racism in our criminal justice system. <https://lims.minneapolismn.gov/File/2017-01467>

Emergency Repair Funds. The Council has appropriated \$160,000 for emergency repairs to rental properties related to the Tenant Remedies Act. Our Code of ordinances requires us to maintain a revolving fund for repairs, including approved administrative expenses and fees, in the case of a Tenant Remedies Act. The Family Housing Fund seeded the program with \$200,000 in 2006. Since then, the program has operated as a revolving fund where funding received from various sources, such as rents, landlord collections and special assessments can be used to continue to provide services.

Annie Young. On January 22 Annie Young passed away. Annie was a good friend, a dedicated public servant and well known community activist and organizer. She served on the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board for over 28 years and helped make our city a more sustainable, just and equitable place. In May the City passed a resolution honoring her service to the City and the Park Board dedicate some time at its February 7th meeting remembering her. I am hopeful that a park will be named after her in the near future. She will be missed. You can read the full resolution honoring her at <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcmstp-198832.pdf>

No More Perc. In January Minneapolis became the first city in the US to go completely perc free when Osman Cleaners, the last dry cleaner using perchloroethylene, transitioned to a safer, greener cleaning technology. Perchloroethylene (or perc for short) is a toxic chemical and likely carcinogen that has historically been used in dry cleaning. A 2015 Minneapolis Health Department study detected 99 occasions of perchloroethylene above levels that are considered health risks over a long period of time in outdoor, ambient air in Minneapolis. Workers can be exposed to up to ten thousand times this health risk limit. To address this problem, the Minneapolis Health Department created the Green Business Cost Share program. Over the past six years, that program has helped all nine of the dry cleaners that were still using perc to make the transition to a cleaner system. The Health Department's Director of Environmental Programs, Patrick Hanlon, deserves much of the credit for putting this program in place and ensuring its continuing and dramatic success. I also want to thank Health Commissioner Gretchen Musicant for creating the space within her department for great, proactive programs like this to thrive. Today's success highlights just how remarkably effective our Health Department is. And thanks to the ordinance authored by Council Member Andrew Johnson, this achievement will be permanent: new dry cleaners are now prohibited from using perc in the first place. In addition to the City's cost-share program dollars, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and two neighborhood associations - the East Isles Resident Association and Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association - also gave matching grants to help Osman Cleaners make this transition. I hope other communities will follow our lead, and that we will have as much success using the same approach to deal with other public health and environmental issues.

Bde Maka Ska. On January 29th I was happy to join other elected officials, Syd Beane, Kate Beane, Carly Bad Heart Bull and other community leaders in the name change ceremony and celebration of Bde Maka Ska. It was held on the shores of the lake at the site of what was likely the City's first year round settlement in what is now known as Minneapolis, Heyate Otunew

(the village to the side) founded by Mahpiya Wicasta (or Cloud Man) and other Dakota in 1829. This is an important step towards reconciliation and honoring our buried history. For more see <http://www.citypages.com/news/its-final-lake-calhoun-is-now-bde-maka-ska-named-in-honor-of-original-minnesotans/471685794>, and <http://historyapolis.com/blog/2015/06/27/names-matter-the-story-of-bde-maka-ska/>

The Super Bowl. The super bowl will be occurring in Minneapolis this weekend and the influx of thousands of people into the city will continue to create major disruptions to normal activities. The list of official events includes Game Day at the downtown football stadium, and several events on the University of MN campus including the NFL Honors event at Northrop Auditorium. The Super Bowl has a Department of Homeland Security Level One Special Event Assessment Rating as a preplanned special local event. It is below the level of a National Special Security Event, but still will have significant involvement of federal government agencies as well as the state National Guard. Under this arrangement, security authority purportedly stays with local law enforcement but Federal resources and assistance are provided at no cost to the local agencies. To help you plan your activities during this time there is a "KNOW BEFORE YOU GO" section at <https://www.mnsuperbowl.com/plan-your-visit/transportation>

Sex Trafficking. I appreciate that the having the super bowl in town has reenergized attention on the serious and long standing problem of sex trafficking in Minneapolis. It is my hope that the efforts to increase public awareness, add shelter beds to help exploited teens and adults, increase street outreach and train bus drivers, hotel workers to be able to identify victims will have an impact both during the super bowl and long afterwards. I thank the Women's Foundation of Minnesota, Men as Peacemakers, as well as our County, State and other governmental partners for their leadership in this. You can learn more at <https://www.wfmn.org/mn-girls-are-not-for-sale/> and <https://www.dontbuyitproject.org/>

Health Grant for School Clinics. At its next meeting the Council will likely approve accepting a grant from the Minnesota Department of Health, in the amount of \$156,000, to help the School Based Clinics that we operate in the Minneapolis Public High Schools provide services for pregnant and parenting women under 21 and other health education for 15-19 year olds.

First Safe and Sick Time Worker Retaliation Case Settled. In January the City settled its first case of retaliation under the sick and safe time ordinance, resulting in an \$11,000 settlement for the employee. The case was, unfortunately, against an independently owned and otherwise generally valued Ward 2 gas station in the Prospect Park area that apparently strongly discouraged its employees from using sick leave. About 3 months after the worker filed a complaint the Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights reached a settlement agreement for \$11,000 in lost wages for him and will monitor compliance going forward with the gas station. Civil Rights staff will also conduct in-person trainings there separately for employees and management. The supervisor who denied him the sick time is no longer with the company.

City's Minimum Wage Ordinance. On January 1, the City's new municipal minimum wage ordinance went into effect with the first stage of its tiered rollout. For this first phase, large

businesses with more than 100 employees are required to pay workers at least \$10 an hour. More information about the ordinance is at minimumwage.minneapolismn.gov.

MPHA Annual Plan Comments. In January I submitted written comments to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development expressing concerns I have regarding the Minneapolis Public Housing Authorities Moving to Work 2018 Annual Plan which is now being considered by HUD for approval. While generally a good plan, I was particularly troubled by the part that requests HUD to waive the Declaration of Trust requirements from 2 unidentified properties. In my opinion, replacing any Declaration of Trusts with Land Use Restrictive Agreements should only be done on a case by case basis with full community engagement as well as HUD and City Council approval and oversight. You can read my letter at <https://tinyurl.com/CM-Gordon-Ltr-HUD-12-11-17>

Minneapolis Garden Lease Program. The City of Minneapolis provides opportunities for residents to lease vacant City-owned lots for community gardens and market gardens. Now is a good time to start applying for a garden in order to complete the process by spring. For more information visit <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/homegrown/WCMSP-170166>

Great Streets Façade Improvement Grants. The Economic Development and Regulatory Services Committee is recommending spending \$340,000 to provide matching grants to support building improvements in commercial areas of the City. The Second Ward organizations recommended for funding are the Lake Street Council, in the amount of \$50,000; Seward Redesign, Inc. in the amount of \$50,000; and the West Bank Business Association, in the amount of \$50,000. The Lake Street Council serves the longest commercial corridor in the City with six miles of nearly continuous commercial properties. Seward Redesign works with neighborhood groups, the Seward Civic and Commerce Association, the Longfellow Business Association, the Lake Street Council, and West of the Rail Business Association (WRBA) to coordinate marketing and business outreach. The West Bank Business Association has participated in the Great Streets façade improvement program over the past eight years. They have identified seven businesses who are interested in applying for the program. For more details see <https://lims.minneapolismn.gov/RCA/1804>

Bunge, Riverton & PPL. I am excited to see that Project for Pride in Living's (PPL) plans to partner with the Riverton Community Housing cooperative and redevelop the site of the old Bunge grain elevators near Van Cleve Park in Southeast Como is moving forward. The project will include 2 apartment buildings with a shared and renovated head house tower connecting them. One, owned by Riverton, will be an 85 unit student housing cooperative and the other, called Maya Commons and owned by PPL, will provide 50 units of affordable housing. The head house will be shared between the two new buildings, with shared bicycle parking in the basement, a common lobby, community space, fitness rooms and a meeting room. The Planning Commission will consider approval of the project on February 5, with construction on the first phase planned to begin in May. In addition to a rezoning of some of the property, eventually the City Council will need to approve a bond issuance for Riverton, conditional use permits to allow more than 4 stories on both apartments, some variances related to parking and a replat to create two parcels for separate ownership. You can find the staff report

with more details here

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/wcmssp-208184.pdf>

4th Street Lofts. Formal land use applications for the 4th Street Lofts project, at 2813 4th Street SE have been submitted by Harlem Irving Companies. The proposed 4th Street Lofts project would be a 6-story, 169-unit apartment building with 42 enclosed parking stalls, a pocket park and substantial green, open and landscaped areas located in Towerside near the Prospect Park Station. The applications include a rezoning from Industrial to High Density Residential (R6), a variance to allow the building to be located greater than 15' feet from front lot line (4th) for the entry and greater than 18' from corner side lot line (29th), and a minimum parking variance from 68 to 42 stalls. The project will be heard by the City Planning Commission on February 20, 2018. The Zoning & Planning Committee will make a recommendation on the rezoning petition (and any appeals) on March 15, 2018, and the Council will make the final action on March 23, 2018.

Green on Fourth. A project located at 2901 4th St. SE within the Towerside Innovation District in the Prospect Park neighborhood near Prospect Park LRT station formally "closed" in January. It is called Green on 4th and the owners, Prospect Park Properties and Timberland Partners, plan on constructing 243 new housing units, including 49 affordable to households with incomes at or below 50% of the area medium income (AMI) and 17 units affordable to households with incomes at or below 60% AMI. This will be built on the formerly contaminated and blighted site of the Boeser Sheet Metal Company. Part of the site contains the City's first district storm water system to collectively treat storm water from several surrounding developments and another portion will be dedicated park land.

Prime Place. Prime Place, which appears to be operating under a new name as The Arrow, has requested an extension of their temporary Certificate of Occupancy (CO). The CO allows them to have people living in the completed section and they are seeking an extension until April 15. The expected completion date for the entire building is around the end of March. Staff have recommended we approve the request based on the fact that there are currently no outstanding building code issues in the occupied portion. They also have informed me that they appear to be working in good faith towards completion of the project and that the current superintendent at the job has been cooperative and resolves field inspection concerns promptly. Denying the extension would displace about 250 students which does not appear to be justified if the living conditions are safe. While this seems reasonable I have been in communication with tenants of the building and nearby neighbors and remain concerned about the health and safety of this project. I will continue to monitor it carefully and am exploring ways to prevent this kind of thing from happening again.

Graduate Hotel Arrest. A standoff between police and a man in the Graduate hotel near the University of Minnesota East Bank campus occurred near the end of the month. I am grateful that a woman who was in the room with him is safe, and that the suspect is alive. All of the public statements by the police involved stressed that they wanted to resolve the situation peacefully, and I'm thankful for that approach, and that it seems to have worked. I was very

heartened by UMPD Police Chief Matt Clark's statement: "Our goal is to have a peaceful resolution. Time is important, yes, but more important is safety. I thank the officers who dealt with this situation with restraint and the U of M community for their patience over the two days it took to resolve the situation. You can read more about it here:

<http://www.startribune.com/standoff-between-police-and-suspect-intensifies-at-hotel-near-u-of-m/471786933/>

Openings on Boards and Commissions. A number of board and commission positions are open for City Council and mayor appointments this fall. Visit

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/openings/index.htm> for more information and to apply.

Open Office Hours in the Ward. I usually hold open Community "Office Hours" in the ward every Monday morning from 9:30 to 11:00 am. Please feel free to call the office at 673-2202 to reserve some time when I will be there or just stop by.

First Mondays at the Birchwood Café, 3311 E 25th St;

Second Mondays at Black: Coffee and Waffles, 1500 Como Ave SE;

Third Mondays at T-Rex Cookie Café, 3338 University Ave SE; and

Fourth Mondays at the East Lake Library, 2727 E Lake St.

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