



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

Cam Gordon

City Council Member
Second Ward

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood 1-25-12

Cam's next Seward Office Hours:
Tuesday, February 28th, 9:30-11:00am
Birchwood Café, 3311 E 25th St

Items:

- 1) Death Near the River
- 2) Hiawatha Transmission Line
- 3) New Ward 2 Intern – Farhio Khalif
- 4) Remittances Resolution
- 5) 2012 Budget
- 6) Community Organizing in Public Housing
- 7) STEP-UP
- 8) Taxis Forced to Take Credit Cards
- 9) New Fire Chief
- 10) Crime Statistics
- 11) Utility Fees
- 12) New Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator
- 13) Housing Services Office Closes
- 14) New Solid Waste and Recycling Director
- 15) New Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator
- 16) 2011 Bicycling Account
- 17) Bicycle Plan Passes
- 18) Minneapolis Food Council
- 19) \$1 Million Settlement Approved
- 20) An Ending to NRP
- 21) New NRP Ordinance and Policy Board
- 22) Single-Stream and Dual-Stream Recycling
- 23) Funds for Touchstone
- 24) Search Begins for New CPED Director
- 25) Reduced Pet License Fee.
- 26) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

If you need this material in an alternative format please call Ahmed Muhumud at 612-673-2162 or email Ahmed.Muhumud@minneapolismn.gov

Deaf and hard-of-hearing persons may call 311 or 612-673-3000. TTY users may call 612-673-2157 or 612-673-2626.

Attention: If you want help translating this information in language other than Hmong, Spanish or Somali, call 311

Hmong - Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800;

Spanish - Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llama 612-673-2700;

Somali - Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500.

- 1) As you may have heard, a man was found dead near Riverside Park last Friday. It appears that he may have been homeless, and though I have not yet heard from the Police Department about a likely cause of death, it has been very cold over the last several days. If you notice persons who seem to be homeless and in need of help, please call Street Outreach, a joint project of Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis and Saint Stephens church, at 612-879-7624.
- 2) The Public Utilities Commission has ruled that Xcel's proposed Hiawatha Transmission Line should be buried beneath 28th St E, as the City and Midtown Greenway Coalition had advocated. The PUC has yet to decide whether the costs of burying the line will be borne by Minneapolis ratepayers or Xcel's entire Minnesota rate base, but the City and Xcel are both advocating for the broader option.
- 3) In December we welcomed a new intern to the Ward 2 office, Farhio Khalif. Farhio will work on community outreach and neighborhood relations, with a focus on supporting neighborhood organizations in their community building efforts. I think she is a good addition to our team. To contact Farhio call the office or her directly at 612-702-4913 or Farhio@aol.com.
- 4) The Council's Committee of the Whole has unanimously passed a resolution calling on all those who have played a role in the stoppage of money transfers through Hawalas from Minneapolis residents to relatives in Somalia to find a way to reopen this absolutely critical financial link.

- 5) On December 14, the City Council unanimously passed the 2012 budget. The Mayor and Council were forced to make a number of difficult choices because of cuts at the state and federal levels, and in order to avoid property tax increases. Some positive results include:
- The property tax levy was not increased.
 - The capital budget includes \$150 million for street repairs over the next five years, 60% more than expected.
 - The Mayor's proposed cut of \$240,000 to the Minneapolis Telecommunication Network was trimmed back to a \$90,000 cut.
 - There will be no layoffs of Community Crime Prevention Specialists, firefighters or police officers.
 - The Council approved \$50,000 (from the \$125,000 cut in the Mayor's proposed budget) to support the It's All About the Kids Collaborative that helps provide stable housing for families identified as homeless who have children at participating Minneapolis Public School.
- More disappointing outcomes include:
- Layoffs of roughly 25 city employees with another 50 (or so) from the Convention Center being changed from permanent, full time staff to temporary, as needed employees.
 - A cut of \$ 200,000 to the Neighborhood Health Care Network that helps community clinics, like the People's Center, the Community University Health Center, Neighborhood Health Source, Indian Health Board and Southside Community Services provide affordable health care services to uninsured Minneapolis residents.
- 6) The Mayor's proposed budget cut \$68,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars from community organizing in public housing communities. These funds pay for organizing resident councils, the crime prevention program Project Lookout, and helps fund the monthly *Highrise Lowdown* newsletter. These are essential services for the more than five thousand residents of public housing in Minneapolis. The City has devoted CDBG dollars to this essential work for the last 24 years. I worked with CPED and finance staff to find approximately \$67,000 in unspent CDBG community engagement funds from 2010 that we could dedicate to public housing organizing next year. This motion was tabled and will be taken up at the Community Development committee in January or February. I am hopeful that funding can still be found to support this work.
- 7) The City of Minneapolis Employment and Training Program (METP) has announced that applications are now being accepted for summer youth employment STEP-UP opportunities. The application deadline is February 3, 2012. STEP-UP serves youth ages 14-21 who live in the City of Minneapolis, are not enrolled and actively attending college and come from lower-income households (for example, the annual maximum income for a family of 4 is \$64,000). Applications are available at <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/news/WCMS1P-085161>. For more information or if you are a Minneapolis business interested in employing a STEP-UP intern contact Tammy Dickinson at (612) 673-5041.
- 8) Over my strong objections, the Council has forced taxis in Minneapolis to take credit cards. I opposed this action because it became clear that the credit card fees (amounting to 5-7% of each fare) will almost universally come out of the income of drivers. Taxi drivers tend to be some of the poorest members of our communities, and many are recent immigrants. I do not believe it is fair to place the convenience of taxi passengers and profits for Wall Street above the well being of taxi drivers. You can read more on the Second Ward blog.
- 9) I was very sorry to learn that our Fire Chief, **Alex Jackson**, is retiring. I was looking forward to supporting his renomination and voting to approve his appointment again this year. Chief Jackson has served as Minneapolis Fire Chief since 2008 and has been working for the City and as part of the Fire Department for 27 years. He was one of very few people of color among City Department Heads. His last day as chief will be February 29. The Mayor has nominated **John Fruetel** as the next chief, and this nomination was moved forward unanimously this afternoon by the Council's Public Safety, Civil Rights and Health committee.
- 10) On December 23 the Police Chief reported that Minneapolis will continue to see flat or decreased violent crime numbers for the sixth year in a row. So far in 2011 Minneapolis has a 5% decrease in violent crime over 2010 and a 46% decrease over 2006. At the same time there are increases in property crimes. Violent crimes include homicide, rape, robbery (of a person) and assault. Nonviolent crimes include burglary, theft and arson. So far this year there have been 35 homicides, compared to 39 for last year. In the Third Precinct, which includes Seward violent crime is down 11.86%, but property crime is up 0.81%.

- 11) In previous years the City Council has increased rates charged for sewer and water services based on the amount, or volume, of water used during a month. This year the Council added a new fixed fee or rate and did not increase the rate based on volume. Most homes will see a change that adds about \$5 in fixed rates per month starting in January. This new fee will help cover the costs of maintaining the water distribution system and sewer lines that service all homes and businesses at all times. Recently during times when citywide water use is low, there has been less money available to maintain and operate these critical systems. These services require fixed maintenance, and adding fixed rate fees will allow the City to manage them more effectively.
- 12) **Alyssa Banks** has been hired to replace Bass Zanjani as the City's new Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator. Prior to accepting this position she worked in the city Department of Health and Family Support and was the interim coordinator. I look forward to working with her to continue this critically important work.
- 13) For decades the City has maintained a housing services office but in recent years it has been harder and harder to find funding for this program. For the past two years the city was able to fund the office with grants, but now those sources are depleted and, without additional funding provided in the budget, the housing services offices will be closing at the end of the year. I am sorry to see them go.
- 14) The Public Works Director has appointed **David Herberholz** as the City's new Director of Solid Waste and Recycling. He is currently employed by the city of Tampa, Florida, as the Residential Services Manager for their solid waste department. He has also had fifteen years of experience in solid waste in the private sector. He is originally from Michigan, so he is familiar with Midwestern winters. I want to thank Interim Director **Jeff Jenks** for his great work over the last few months.
- 15) The Public Works Director has appointed **Shaun Murphy** as the City's first Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator. You may be familiar with that name, as Shaun has coordinated the incredibly successful Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot since 2007, and has been one of the public faces of the City's bicycle program. I'm very excited to welcome Shaun into this new role.
- 16) The City's Public Works department has put together a 2011 Bicycling Account, an in-depth report on our bicycling activities and accomplishments in 2011. You can read it here: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@publicworks/documents/images/wcms1p-085029.pdf>. It's exciting to read such a clear and compelling account of the progress we made over the last year. Kudos to Public Works for putting this together - I hope that they will continue to report out this effectively every year. Read more on the Second Ward blog.
- 17) The Implementation Plan for the Minneapolis Bicycle Master Plan has unanimously passed the Council. This document was developed by the Bicycle Advisory Committee, in conjunction with Public Works staff, and represents a major step forward for bicycle policy in Minneapolis. The Plan includes recommendations for a Complete Streets Policy, new Municipal State Aid (MSA) standards that allow Minneapolis to design streets that safely meet Minneapolis needs allowing more space for bike lanes, and a study on the economic impact of bicycling.
- 18) The City Council has voted to create the first-ever Minneapolis Food Council, an advisory group to the City on issues regarding food and food policy, especially regarding local food. This group will continue the work of the Homegrown Minneapolis initiative. There is real excitement in the community for this work – ninety-eight people applied for fifteen seats! Four Second Ward residents have been chosen to be on the Food Council: Seward residents **Tracy Singleton**, owner of the *Birchwood Café*; **Rhys Williams**, Buyer for Coop Partners Warehouse, a fruit and vegetable distributor; and **Sarah Nelson-Pallmeyer**, Director of FoodShare for the Greater Metropolitan Council of Churches, and **Kurt Schreck**, Chief Operating Officer of *At Last! Gourmet Foods*. I thank these folks for their willingness to serve, and thank all of the many other Second Ward residents who applied for seats on this commission.
- 19) In December the Council approved, with my support, the third largest settlement for a police incident that we have approved since I took office in 2006. It involved a police raid conducted in February 2010. In this case the police appear to have executed a search warrant incorrectly and the use of a "flash grenade" diversionary device in the process resulted in very severe burns to one individual. I am hopeful that design changes to the device, better training and new protocols in place can prevent this from occurring again.

- 20) On December 31 the Joint Powers Agreement governing NRP expires and in January the offices in the Crown Roller Mill building will close and the remaining funds and contract oversight will be transferred to the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department.
- 21) In December the Council approved revisions to the City's Neighborhood Revitalization (NRP) Ordinance and passed a resolution establishing a new NRP Policy Board and amended the resolution that established the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC).. The Policy Board and ordinances changes were needed in order to legally spend the recaptured NRP Phase II dollars for future neighborhood efforts in 2012 and 13. I successfully amended the NRP Ordinance to preserve the 20% limitation on central office administration expenses and voted for the ordinance as amended. However, the new Policy Board resolution does not provide seats for neighborhood representatives that are elected by neighborhood organizations. I attempted to amend this in committee, to include elected neighborhood representatives, but was unsuccessful. Only Council Members Schiff, Hofstede and Reich joined me in voting to make certain that people elected by neighborhoods serve on this new board. Instead, the neighborhood representatives will be appointed by and from the NCEC. In the end I voted against the enabling resolution because it failed to include elected neighborhood representatives and unwisely centralizes decision-making authority in City Hall.
- 22) The Council has received a very interesting report on single-stream and dual-stream recycling systems. You can see the powerpoint here:
<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@council/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-081211.pdf> . The committee directed Public Works staff to return with a recommendation on a new recycling program that best balances the values of cost effectiveness, convenience for customers, and reducing total environmental impact. I look forward to this important discussion, which I hope will lead to an increase in the diversion of recyclable materials from the waste stream.
- 23) The City Council has voted to dedicate \$733,587 in Low Income Housing Tax Credits for next year to the Touchstone project at 2304 Snelling Ave S, part of the larger Seward Commons (or Bystrom Brothers) redevelopment and the Council's Community Development committee has authorized staff to apply for a number of outside grant funds for the second phase of the Seward Commons redevelopment site, including \$200,000 from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, \$102,542 from the Metropolitan Council's Tax Base Revitalization Account, and \$112,500 in Hennepin County Environmental Remediation Funds.
- 24) The Mayor has begun the formal process for finding a new Executive Director of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED). The City has hired of Lyman Doran Executive Search to conduct the search. Feedback is being solicited from stakeholders to identify the key challenges facing the department, and the key leadership characteristics that will be needed to meet these challenges. The mayor expects the process to take approximately three month and to make his nomination of a new Director by March. The Mayor will be appointing Chuck Lutz, CPED Deputy Director, as Interim Director.
- 25) Beginning January 2012, the annual license fee for a spayed/neutered pet will drop from \$30 to \$25. In December, with my strong support, the City Council also approved a \$15 discount was also created for those individuals with limited incomes or those receiving public assistance. This new license type mirrors the existing discount for seniors age 65 or older. Licensed pets that stray away from home are three times more likely than unlicensed pets to be returned safely to their owners. If a licensed stray pet is picked up by Minneapolis Animal Care & Control or brought to the Animal Shelter, the animal gets a free ride home. Pet license fees also help pay for basic veterinary and emergency care for all stray animals, animal cruelty and dangerous animal investigations and enforcement and efforts to find homes for stray and abandoned animals. You can apply through the City by going online, calling 311, or visiting Minneapolis Animal Care & Control or the Minneapolis Development Review. Pet Licenses can also be purchased at two veterinary clinics – Westgate Pet Clinic and Minneapolis Veterinary Hospital – as well as with Chuck & Don's Pet Food Outlet. For more information visit
<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/animals/index.htm>
- 26) There are openings on the Animal Care & Control Advisory Committee, Capital Long Range Improvement Commission, Family Housing Fund (McKnight), Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Public Health Advisory Committee, Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners and Senior Citizens Advisory Committee. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email
cityclerk@minneapolismn.gov.