

News from Cam Gordon
Council Member, Second Ward
July 2012

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

Voter ID: It's Worse Than You Think. The Council has received an informative and disturbing report from our City Clerk and Elections Department on the potential impacts of the proposed "Voter ID" Constitutional Amendment. You can read the report here: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/elections/WCMS1P-094785>. I have also written some analysis of this topic on the Second Ward blog. The bottom line is that this amendment will make it much harder for many Minnesotans to vote, and create significant difficulty and cost for the Minneapolis Elections Department. It is possible that the court will keep this question off the ballot this fall. If not, I urge you to **vote no**.

Proposed Changes to the CRA. The Civil Rights Department, in conjunction with the Police and City Attorney's Office, have proposed a major change to the Civilian Police Review Authority (CRA). If passed, the CRA would essentially cease to exist, and be replaced by an advisory board to the Police Department. Internal Affairs and the Civilian Review investigatory functions would basically be merged. The current CRA board is not supportive of this proposal, and has recommended its own improvements to the civilian review process. Though I understand the problems this proposal is attempting to solve – including the Legislature's recent terrible decision to prohibit our CRA from making findings of fact, and the fact that the CRA cannot communicate its disposition of complaints – I have serious concerns about merging the police department's internal affairs with the civilian review authority and making the citizen/civilian component advisory only. It also removes the residency requirement and focuses more power with the chief. When this was presented to the Council's Public Safety, Civil Rights and Health committee on July 25th, I successfully moved to have staff provide an analysis of how this compares to a reform proposed by the current Civilian Review Authority board and conduct two community meetings on the changes. They will be held. **August 1, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. in City Hall**, 350 South 5th Street Room 319 and **August 16, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. at Shiloh Temple International Ministries**, 1201 West Broadway Avenue 55411. The proposal is set to return to the committee on September 12 for a public hearing. You can find more information here (under item 9) on the committee agenda <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/psch/WCMS1P-094889>. I will be following this very closely, and strongly encourage anyone who cares about police accountability to do the same.

311 for Smartphones. People in Minneapolis can now request City services any time of day through a free application on their smartphone and similar devices. So far ten common service requests are available, including those related to folks will be able to report issues to Minneapolis 311 related to abandoned vehicles, graffiti, parking meters, parking violations, potholes, traffic signals and broken street lights. More will be added soon. The Global Positioning System (GPS) will provide the location of the service request and people will also be able to submit a photo to add more detail to their request. For more visit <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/news/WCMS1Q-071581>

Recycling at Major Events. The City Council voted to require all large block events and all parades and races on Minneapolis streets to recycle. The changes are designed to reduce the amount of trash being generated at these events. Beginning Jan. 1, 2013, organizers of any block event with more than 2,500 people in attendance and any parade or race that uses City streets will need to provide recycling of all paper, cardboard, plastic, glass and metal containers.

Solicitors Ordinance. The City Council approved new rules for door-to-door salespeople intended to protect consumers, better comply with First Amendment requirements consistent with recent court rulings and make it more difficult for out-of-state companies to exploit youth workers. Under the new rules, salespeople and transient merchants will be required to wear a City-issued photo identification card. To make things easier for schools and youth groups doing fundraising,

the City will approve group identification cards at no cost. The photo identification rule does not apply to canvassers, including people who advocate for religious, social, or political causes.

Fire Department Evaluation. Emergency Services Consulting International, a firm hired by the City to evaluate the Minneapolis Fire Department, presented its final report to a joint meeting of the Public Safety, Civil Rights and Health Committee and the Ways and Means Budget Committee on July 30th. This independent, comprehensive evaluation of the Fire Department will help us see how the department compares to similar departments and consider recommendations to improve effectiveness, increase efficiency and potentially raise additional revenue through cost recovery strategies. The report includes recommendations about facilities, equipment and staffing. It does not recommend adding any new stations but identifies 13 stations in need of renovation or replacement. It also cautions about aging trucks and engines and recommends that the City allocate \$1,046,667 annually to fund vehicle replacement. Related to staffing the report indicates that our levels are slightly lower than regional and national averages, but that many of the other departments also provide ambulance service and Minneapolis does not. It also notes some concern with overtime costs and sick leave and recommends a minimum staffing of 94 firefighters per shift on duty to respond to emergencies and fight fires. Staffing is currently based on having 92 fire fighters on duty per shift. You can find all 3 sections of the report and the presentation slides here <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/psch/WCMS1P-096367>.

Coal Tar-Based Sealants. The Council has passed an ordinance, supported by the Citizens Environmental Advisory Committee, which bans coal tar-based sealants from being sold or used on any driveway or parking lot in Minneapolis. The purpose of this ban is to keep Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons – toxic chemicals present in coal tar sealants but not alternative sealant products – out of our lakes, streams and river. I enthusiastically supported this ordinance, and commend Council Member Colvin Roy for taking the lead on it.

Equity Resolution. A resolution *Supporting Equity in Employment in Minneapolis and the Region* that I am authoring will be coming for approval to the Public Safety, Civil Rights and Health Committee on August 22 at 1:30pm. Time for a staff presentation, public comment and committee discussion will be provided. The resolution declares that institutional racism, discrimination and racial employment disparities in Minneapolis are serious problems that must be solved. It commits the City government to lead by example and better incorporate racial equity into all City policies and, if approved, it would direct the City Coordinator, CPED Director and Civil Rights Director to engage with other department heads and staff to develop and implement an Equity Assessment Toolkit to inform City decisions, including those related to the budget, hiring, promotion, contracting and purchasing. It also directs staff to assess and implement, where appropriate, the recommendations of the Equity in Employment Task Force, and recommend fair hiring provisions to be added to the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances. Additionally it would authorize the City to formally join the Ramsey County Blue Ribbon Commission's *Everybody In* regional collaboration to reduce racial employment disparities throughout the metropolitan area.

Rental Housing Regulations Modified. I supported, with some hesitation, moving ahead with a set of amendments to the City's rental licensing rules proposed by Council Member Glidden at the last Regulatory Energy and Environment Committee. The change that concerned me most was the removal of the mandated "2 strikes and you're out" provision that dictates that anyone who loses 2 rental licenses in Minneapolis (regardless of how long ago) will automatically have all their other rental licenses revoked. Under the new proposal some offenses, including those related to unpaid financial obligations owed to the City or County or the failure of the landlord to submit a complete application, could result in a license revocation action for that property but would not necessarily result in the owner losing all their licenses, even if two licenses were revoked on this basis. Failure to address violations related to the health and safety of the property would most likely result in an owner losing his or her licenses. Additionally, once an owner has one revocation they cannot add to their rental portfolio for three years. One aspect of the proposal that I believe offers great potential authorizes the City Council to approve conditions in order for

someone to hold a rental license if there are concerns about that license or license holder. That means in some cases, the City could pursue signed agreements with license holders that address the specific conditions at, or concerns about, their properties much as we have been doing for years with other types of business licenses. If the terms of the agreement are violated, the City then would have the flexibility to impose even more significant penalties including license revocations. Additionally, the proposed changes provide protection for tenants who are required to move out if their landlord loses the rental license for their property. Under the proposal the City will increase from 30 to 60 minimum days before people are required to move out unless there are immediate health and safety concerns but landlords would be prohibited from collecting rent once the license has been revoked. In addition to fines and license revocation, if an inspector deems a property to be substandard, the property owner may be required to take a healthy housing training course and any owner who has more than two properties and has a rental license revoked will be required to attend a training on the fundamentals of property management. In the months ahead I will be watching the impacts of these changes carefully. I believe that we should be proud of the track record we have had since I took office in holding unsafe and negligent landlords accountable and I am hopeful that these changes will allow us to continue those efforts while maintaining and improving safe, healthy housing options for people throughout Minneapolis.

Single-Sort Recycling. The City will be releasing a Request for Proposals for processing and marketing recyclable materials from the single-sort system we will be rolling out citywide next year. This is an important next step to creating our citywide single-sort recycling program, which is projected to dramatically increase the amount of material we recycle, rather than burn downtown in the garbage burner.

2013 Neighborhoods USA Conference. Neighborhoods, USA's (NUSA) Program Development Committee is now accepting proposals for 90 minute workshops for NUSA's 38th Annual Conference on Neighborhood Concerns. The conference will be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota from May 22 - 25, 2013. Proposals should pertain to the workshop tracks that are delivered from the lenses of cultural diversity/inclusion, social justice and equity which create opportunities for generational leadership growth. All proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m. (East Coast Time), November 2, 2012 in order to be considered and must follow the "Proposal Outline". Visit the website for the workshop tracks, proposal outline, terms and conditions and additional details: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/CallforPresentations>.

Improvements to Traffic Light Timing. The City is working on an upgrade to our traffic light system. We have 800 traffic lights in Minneapolis. For the first time since 1974, we will be installing new traffic equipment to better coordinate the system and comprehensively re-time light patterns. These improvements will cost around \$16 million, mostly paid for with federal grants. City Traffic staff are projecting between a 10% and 20% improvement in the whole system's efficiency.

Solar Rewards. Xcel Energy has released a Conservation Improvement Program plan that would do away with their Solar Rewards program. The City, along with several environmental advocacy organizations and solar manufacturers and installers, has submitted comments to the Minnesota Department of Commerce **opposing** this idea. Solar Rewards has been a successful program. It's been fully subscribed (oversubscribed in some years). It has helped, along with other State and Federal rebates, to incentivize people in Minneapolis to install solar. As we try to build a robust, self-sustaining solar industry, these rebates are very helpful. Unfortunately, the rebates at the State and Federal level have been extremely inconsistent, and Xcel's decision to scrap Solar Rewards would add to that inconsistency. Lastly, this move shows Xcel's lack of commitment to solar, and to renewable energy generally, and gives one more reason for residents of Minneapolis to keep our energy options open by exploring a municipal utility.

CPED Director. The Council has approved Jeremy Hanson Willis as the permanent Director of the Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) department. Mr. Hanson Willis had been interim Director.

Planning Director Search Reopened. In July the new Director of CPED informed the Council that he has decided to re-open the search for a new director of planning. "Our search to date," he wrote "has not yielded a candidate who meets our expectations. Given the importance of the work ahead to sustainably grow this city with a better integrated and more innovative CPED, I believe that we need to continue and expand our search for the right person to fill this role." I support this decision.

Green Homes North. The City Council has approved a program that would lead to the construction of 100 new "green" homes on City-owned vacant lots in North Minneapolis in the next five years. The new housing program, called Green Homes North, will build sustainable homes to green standards using local minority and women contractors and workers, and locally-sourced green products. Funding from the City, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency and the Family Housing Fund will provide \$1 million in grants and up to \$2 million in loans to assist developers cover costs. The City of Minneapolis Employment and Training Program (METP) will provide free training and job placement services through its RENEW Minneapolis- Green Homes North program that focuses on green construction skills. Visit the City's website for [information on Green Homes North and the City's foreclosure recovery plan](#).

New Local Foods Newspaper. This spring a new local newspaper, Growing Pathways, focused on urban agricultural and local foods started in Minneapolis. It offers both print and online news and opinions about local foods. You can see the first two issues and learn more here: <http://www.growingpathways.com/>.

Bridge Collapse Anniversary Event and Exhibit. To Mark the 5th anniversary of the tragic 35W bridge collapse local artists and community leaders will hold a public gathering at 5:45 p.m. August 1 in the Ruins Courtyard of the Mill City Museum. Following the event an exhibition called Bridge, which features photographs by Vance Gellert, will be open and will be on view at the museum through December. The August 1 event is free and open to the public, but reservations must be made to secure a ticket by sending an email to bridge.agathering@gmail.com or by calling 612 673-2032.

Mayor's Budget Address. The Mayor will give a budget address and, likely, present his proposed budget for next year to the Council on August 15 at 12 noon in the City Hall Councils Chambers. This is the first major step in determining the 2013 budget that includes the amount of tax revenue we will collect, staffing levels for the various department and the total proposed expenses for next year. The final budget will be approved in December. Stay tuned.

U of M Nursing Affiliation. The Council has authorized the Department of Health and Family Support to enter into a five-year agreement with the U of M's Nursing School that will allow nursing students to get clinical experiences.

Community Service Officers. The Council has approved a request from the Police Department to transition a number of non-sworn, part-time Community Service Officers into full time police officers this September. One of the key goals of this move is to increase the diversity of the police force, something I strongly support.

Live Near Your Work. As part of the ongoing University District Alliance's effort to increase the number of people who work and also live in the area, there will be a table on Northrop Mall, Wednesday, August 22, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Celebrate U University of Minnesota employee appreciation event. Current and retired U of M and U of M Medical Center/ Fairview employees who live in the University District will be ambassadors at the Live Near Your Work table. This event draws up to 6,000 University employees each summer.

Healthy Housing Indicators and the University District Neighborhoods. On Thursday, August 30, 4:30 to 6:00 p.m., in the Multi-Purpose Room, at Van Cleve Park there will be a discussion hosted by the Alliance's Livability Committee, with Tom Streitz, Director of Housing Policy and Development, Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development. The discussion will focus on a recent city report (www.minneapolismn.gov/.../cped_docs_healthy_housing_indicators_analysis) that showed that the University area communities have very strong indicators in housing value and a low rate of foreclosures and vacant properties, but, in Southeast Como in particular, had some of the higher rates of conversion of single family homes to rentals during the period 2000 to 2010.

New Seven Corners Apartment at Grandma's Site. With support letters from both West Bank community and business groups before them, the Community Development Committee is recommending that the City Council reassign development obligations with respect to the Seven Corners Parking Ramp site to a new single purpose entity, Grandma's Associates LCC, of which the former developer, Alatus, will be a 36.5% owning member. This moves the plans forward for a new LEED certified, 5-story, mixed use building with 214 rental housing units and approximately 3,000 sq. ft. of ground floor retail. A 76 space parking garage will be included on the ground level. The development would span the Grandma's restaurant site and a portion of the parking ramp site and calls for demolishing the easterly half of the parking ramp to accommodate the new development, retaining 329 of the 762 ramp stalls. The City Planning Commission approved the final project plans on June 25, 2012 and construction is expected to start by September 30, this year and completion by December 31, 2013.

Stadium Village Plan. At the July 30, 2012, the Minneapolis Planning Commission, voted to recommend that the City Council approve the Stadium Village Small Area Plan. This followed a two week postponement that allowed planning staff to work with Public Works staff to make some modifications to the Implementation chapter, where the timeframes were made more flexible; clearer language regarding the level of commitment of implementing partners was added, and two key projects, namely the 4th St SE reconstruction, and bicycle connectivity improvements in Stadium Village core were addressed more directly. My congratulations to our city planner, Haila Maze, for all her leadership and to the entire Steering Committee with special thanks to Ted Tucker president of the University District Alliance and to Dick Gilyard and Dick Poppele from Prospect Park.

Indigenous Music & Movies. An Indigenous Music & Movies Series at Father Hennepin Bluffs Park starts next week Tuesday, August 1 and will run all four Tuesdays in August. This will include Dream of Wild Health (native food vendor), and Jim Rock sharing Dakota star/astronomy knowledge. The Mankato Orchestra and Maza Kute Drum group will play on the 21st. See www.minneapolisparks.org/imm for more information.

Community Garden Day. The City Council is expected to pass a resolution in August recognizing the contributions of community gardens and honoring Community Garden Day, Saturday, August 11, 2012. On this day, many gardens in Minneapolis will host open "houses." You can get more information and view a map of participating gardens online at www.gardeningsmatters.org

Youth Violence Prevention Effort to be Reviewed. The Mayor has asked Minneapolis attorney Andy Luger of the firm Greene Espel to conduct a pro-bono, review of Minneapolis' Youth Violence Prevention work and the Blueprint for Action, five years after this comprehensive, multifaceted effort began to reduce youth violence in Minneapolis. Luger will work in partnership with the Police Executive Research Forum of Washington, D.C. to examine the strengths and weakness of Minneapolis' efforts, work with national experts in criminal justice and public health to determine best practices for addressing youth violence in urban areas, and will provide Minneapolis' law-enforcement and public-health communities with recommendations for future work. He is expected to complete the review by October 1, 2012.

Cedar Riverside NRP Phase II Plan. There will be a community meeting to discuss the Cedar Riverside NRP Phase II Plan on Thursday, August 30, 2012 at 6:00 PM at the Brian Coyle Community Center, 420 15th Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55454. The NRP Phase II Plan defines goals and strategies for the use of roughly \$700,000 in funds for community projects. It was developed by collecting the comments of over 500 residents. Contact gaardere@puc-mn.org or call 612-876-9357 if you would like a copy of the Plan.

Seward Market / KAAH Coffee Shop. The Zoning Board of Adjustment has unanimously voted to approve the side yard setback variance and parking variance for the Seward Market and Kaah Coffee Shop at 25th Ave S and E Franklin Ave.

Planning Approvals Recommended. Planning division staff is recommending that the City Planning Commission approve the application for an expansion of a legal nonconforming dormer and the variance needed to complete the planned renovations at 3128 E 25th St. They are also recommending approving the Jefferson bus line request to amend the conditional use permit to allow for an expansion of their bus garage/ maintenance facility at 2100 and 2200 E 26th St and 2528 Snelling Ave, to allow their parking and operations area to be reconfigured onto excess property acquired from the City of Minneapolis.

Washington and Walnut Flats. The Council has voted to rezone the properties at 616-630 Washington Ave SE and 308 Walnut St from C1 to C3A, to allow for a new six-story, mixed use building with 98 new dwelling units and commercial on the first floor.

Currie Park Lofts. The Council's Community Development committee has supported applications to the Department of Employment and Economic Development for \$350,000 and to the Metropolitan Council for \$993,229 for the Currie Park Lofts project on the West Bank. This project will include 260 mixed-income rental units in a new six-story building, along with 25,000 square feet of first-floor commercial space on a 2.4 acre site.

Advertising for Central Corridor Businesses. The Central Corridor project is beginning a \$1.2 million advertising campaign to promote businesses along the LRT route during construction. Several Second Ward businesses, including **Acadia Café, Arts & Architecture, Big 10 Restaurant, Bun Mi Sandwiches, the Cupcake and Theater in the Round** will appear on bus ads and billboards paid for by the Central Corridor. The project is also building a website called onthegreenline.com that will feature Central Corridor area business listings, profiles and coupons.

West River Parkway Sewer Work. The Metropolitan Council's sewer repair work along West River Parkway on the West Bank has been extended until September. The work was begun in February, and the Met Council believed it would be finished by June. However, the project was more difficult than they expected, resulting in this extension. If you have any questions, you can call or email John Hemming at 651-602-4517 or john.hemming@metc.state.mn.us, or Tim O'Donnell at 651-602-1269 or tim.odonnell@metc.state.mn.us.

McDonald's on Lake. The McDonald's at 3110 E Lake St. has applied for an Extended Hours License to operate a 24-hour drive through service 7 days a week. I would welcome your thoughts on this and am hopeful that when this comes before the committee on July 23rd we will vote to limit any extension to 1:00 am on Sunday-Wednesday and 2:00 am on Thursday-Saturday.

Public Works Bike Treatment Evaluation. During the weeks of July 30 and August 6, Public Works will be conducting user surveys about the green bike lanes on 15th Avenue Southeast. City staff will be handing out survey cards to passing bicyclists that include a link to an online survey. Paper copies of the survey with stamped return envelopes will be provided for individuals with limited Internet access. They will also install temporary 311 comment signs at this location to encourage motorist feedback about the facility. This survey is part of a larger evaluation of 14

innovative bicycle and pedestrian treatments installed in 2011. City staff is also recording before and after video, observing user behavior, and analyzing crash data. A full report will be available in 2013.

Openings on City Boards and Commissions. There are openings on the Civilian Police Review Authority, East Lake Special Service District, Housing Board of Appeals, Senior Advisory Committee, and Stadium Village Special Service District. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@minneapolismn.gov.

Ward Office Hours. Every Tuesday morning I hold "Office Hours" in the Ward from 9:30-11:00am. Please feel free to call for an appointment or just stop by.

- 1st Tuesdays, Hard Times Café (West Bank/University);
- 2nd Tuesdays, Muddsuckers Coffee, 1500 Como (SE Como);
- 3rd Tuesdays, Pratt School (Prospect Park);
- 4th Tuesdays, the Birchwood Cafe (Seward/Longfellow).

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