

Second Ward February 2017 E-newsletter

News from Cam Gordon

Council Member, Second Ward

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

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State Preemption of Local Employee Protections. The Minnesota House has voted for a bill that will, if passed by the Senate and signed by the Governor, remove all local control over workplace protections. That includes the earned sick and safe time that the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul have already adopted. This bill would remove earned sick and safe time from about 140,000 workers. It would also remove all possibility for local action on a minimum wage, fair scheduling, and other locally-adopted workplace protections. The bill is opposed not only by the City of Minneapolis, but also Metro Cities, the League of MN Cities, and countless labor unions and progressive organizations. This is an attack on both economic justice and grassroots democracy, both on working people and on local governments' right and obligation to protect and represent the people that elect them. People should not have to choose between taking care of themselves and their families or keeping their jobs. People working full time should not live in poverty. If the state won't solve these problems – and it's very clear that they won't, they shouldn't stop local governments from doing what we can to solve them.

State Preemption of Bring Your Own Bag Ordinance. Some state legislators are also trying to take away our ability to regulate single use carry out bags. Despite my testimony in opposition, bills are moving forward (one in the House, HF1504, and one in the Senate, SF 1196) out of committee that would prohibit local governments from banning or taxing paper or plastic bags. If signed into law, this would completely negate all the work we did, in the face of fierce industry lobbying, to pass our popular Bring Your Own Bag ordinance that is set to go into effect on June 1 this year. If you support this ordinance, or just the principal of allowing local jurisdictions to have the authority to regulate and manage such things, please let your legislators and governor know. The House committee sent the bill forward and the Senate committee re-referred it to the Environment and Natural Resources Finance committee (http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/committees/committee_bio.php?cmte_id=3093&ls=90) I am grateful that there is coalition of organizations forming (including so far: Eureka Recycling, Linden Hills Power & Light, Sierra Club – North Star Chapter, Minnesota Environmental Partnership, Nothing Left to Waste, Alliance for Sustainability, and ISAIAH) opposing this legislation. In a letter the coalition sent out late last week they offered several action steps including: 1) Call the Governor saying you're opposed to this legislation: (651) 201-3400; 2) Call members of the Senate Environment and Natural Resource Finance Committee and urge them to oppose SF 1195 which will be voted on TUESDAY!; 3) SHOW UP to the Senate Environment and Natural Resource Finance Committee on Tuesday, March 7 at 10:30am, Room 1150 of the Senate Office Building (sign up to testify if you want! dallas.fischer@senate.mn); 4) Call your representatives to let them know you oppose these bills. For more information on why cities

should have the right to ban plastic bags – see Eureka’s fact sheet at http://media.wix.com/ugd/8468e6_45687b4963974591933c7f0b084f412e.pdf

Preemption of Local Action. Yes, this year many state legislators seem to have declared war against local control generally. From workplace protections to bag ordinances, they are pushing bills to take away the authority municipalities have to act in our communities’ interest. They are also pushing to wrest more power over the Vikings Stadium to the state, despite the fact that local taxes are, unfortunately, its biggest source of capital. It has been good to see people pointing this out. One legislator, Representative Michael V. Nelson (D-Brooklyn Park), went so far as to move a symbolic “modest proposal” that would strip all authority from municipalities and put the state in complete control of every decision at the local level, to make the point that that is the logical conclusion of the state’s recent actions. Except in cases when basic civil rights or public health would be clearly harmed by local laws, I believe that the state should preempt *fewer* actions on the local level. There are unique problems in Minneapolis on issues that have already been preempted, such as guns, campaign finance and pesticides to which state level road blocks have been preventing us from making progress for years. We should be undoing those kinds of preemptions that are unnecessary and detrimental, not adding more. Cities and counties should be able to craft our own solutions, to meet the needs and concerns of our communities. I am hoping that more legislators, like Representative Randy Jessup (R) District: 42A, who voted against preempting cities on regulated carryout out bags, will realize the value of letting local government do their job and will vote down these bills and that, for those that do get passed, Governor Dayton will stand firm and veto *all* of them that reach his desk.

Waste Tires on Playgrounds and Fields. The Council’s Health, Environment and Community Engagement committee unanimously voted for a resolution I authored to curb the use of waste tires on playgrounds and athletic fields. Thank you to Play it Safe Minneapolis for bringing this issue forward, to our Community Environmental Advisory Commission and Public Health Advisory Committee for looking into it and making recommendations, and to our partners at the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and Minneapolis Public Schools for their willingness to engage in this discussion. The resolution that will be considered by the full Council on March 10 prohibits the use of City funds for the installation or replacement of any facilities using waste tire and encourages others to discontinue the use of waste tire materials in Minneapolis. You can find the resolution and more information here <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/legislation/WCMSP-194284>

Collective Bargaining Agreement with Police. On March 1 the Executive Committee, with my support, voted to recommend approval of a new police contract that has already been ratified by the police union and has the support of the Police Chief and Director of Human Resources. The police have been working without a contract since 2015 and the last potential agreement was not ratified by the union. This is a one of our largest and most significant labor agreements and represents a payroll (in 2014) of \$60,224,000. The agreement actually represents two contracts, one for 2015-2016 and one for 2017-2019. When the 1 to 4% annual salary increase per year is added up, it amounts to a 14.5% increase over the 5 years. This will get our officers in the top 1/3 of other metropolitan area police department salaries, but not at the top. Some of the more interesting changes to the contract include: giving the Chief more authority over

administrative leaves during investigations and to make transfers due to performance related issues. Other noteworthy changes will allow officers more frequent opportunities to initiate transfers; modify “compensatory time” rules to reduce overtime; and change health club memberships to a strictly reimbursement program. It also sets in motion the creation of a Critical/Traumatic Incident work group to review best care for officers who experience a critical or traumatic incident. Currently the focus is on short term recovery to determine when officers can return to work, but research indicates that trauma can have long term impacts on officer well-being and job performance, so looking forward we will focus on long term, as well as short term care, with ongoing evaluations and consideration of ongoing impacts from traumatic incidents.

Energy Benchmarking Report. A new report was presented at the February 27 Health Environment and Community Engagement Committee that examined the electric, natural gas and water use of 264 commercial and 153 public properties in Minneapolis. This includes 107 million square feet of floor space and accounts for more than 8.1 million British Thermal Units of total energy use per year, which is the equivalent use of roughly 60 percent of the households in the city and represents 15 % of the city’s total greenhouse gas emissions. The report estimates potential savings of more than 108,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions annually and \$27 million per year on energy costs if there was a 15 percent reduction in energy consumption. Hospitals, places of worship and offices show the potential for the most savings.

Third Community Solar Garden. In March the City will likely issue its third solar garden request for proposals. This third garden, one built, will include options for middle and low income residents to participate. To make this possible 20% of the subscriptions will be set aside for lower income residents and the City will guarantee to take on any of those the subscriptions if a participant cancels it.

Sex Trafficking Grant. In February, the Council took another step to fight sex trafficking in our city and region by accepting a grant of \$117,033 from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety that will allow us to hire an administrator for our recently developed secure sex trafficking web portal program. The portal provides Minnesota law enforcement agencies the ability to share information and resources for investigating sex trafficking. The administrator will approve access, maintain information and provide support to the Police Department on investigations. At the committee we heard from Sergeant Grant Snyder, who has been leading this effort at the City, about how interagency coordination can be critical to breaking cases and rescuing the victims, who are often young, immigrant and/or runaways.

Section 8 Anti-discrimination Ordinance. Council Members Warsame and Glidden are moving forward with their ordinance proposal to prohibit discrimination against Section 8 voucher holders. Their proposal includes an incentive fund for landlords serving Section 8 voucher holders, and support for many changes recommended to the Section 8 program. I am supportive of this proposal because affordable housing choices are limited in our rental market and too many landlords refuse to accept Section 8 voucher holders. There will be a public hearing on the proposal on Wednesday, March 22, 10:15 am in City Hall, Room 317, 350 S 5th

Street at a joint meeting of the Community Development & Regulatory Services Committee and the Public Safety, Civil Rights, and Emergency Management Committee.

City Trees. This year, the city will use a lottery in our City Trees program. Any Minneapolis property owner can register to order a tree to plant this spring. Registration will go from March 13 to 20. Lottery entrants will hear back by March 22. About 1,000 property owners, selected by lottery will be able to order a \$25 five- to eight-foot tree to plant on private property in the city. Fifteen varieties available this year include large species, flowering trees and several kinds of fruit trees. Comparable trees cost about \$125 at a nursery. Trees must be picked up May 20, 21 or 22. Enter the lottery at www.treetrust.org. In the past 11 years, the City Trees program has provided more than 12,000 trees for planting on private property to help build the city's tree canopy.

Clean Energy Partnership Work Plan Approved. The Clean Energy Partnership has approved a work plan for 2017. I thank the Energy Vision Advisory Committee and our staff for helping develop the plan and was glad to see the city taking the lead on so many initiatives aimed at reaching our Climate Action goals. In the future I hope we can see more balance among who the lead organization is for action items. I also hope to see more focus on creating ways to get more energy from clean, renewable sources. You can find the work plan here <https://mplscleanenergypartnership.org/>

Sherco Plant "Becker" Bill. I was very disappointed to learn that Governor Dayton (despite the City Council's formal opposition) signed the Xcel "Becker" bill that ignored the Public Utilities Commission's (PUC) role and invest millions of dollars in new fossil fuels. When Xcel decided - with the strong and vocal support of the City and environmental advocates - to close the Sherco coal plants it was a big a win for the environment. But, when they approached the PUC to get permission to build a new natural gas plant in Becker, the City, environmental advocates and advocates for low-income people fought this idea. The PUC agreed with us, and ordered Xcel to go through the normal process in which they study alternatives, including renewable sources like solar and wind. Unfortunately Xcel decided to try to circumvent that process to go around the normal PUC process. This is a loss for the environment. It's also bad for ratepayers, because we will bear the costs of this plant - which has not been proven, through the normal process, to be the most cost-effective option in the long term. It's bad for the PUC process, because it's now clear that elected leaders will undermine it even when it provides an effective voice for ratepayers and the environment. It is also, in my opinion, a failure by Xcel to meet its commitments to help the City of Minneapolis reach our climate action goals. If the people of Minneapolis had a democratically controlled electric utility, I'm pretty sure it would not act this way. For more on this, see: <http://cubminnesota.org/provisions-to-protect-ratepayers/>.

Workers Day at City Hall. March 8 will mark what I hope will be our first annual Worker's Day at City Hall. Modeled, partially, after what has been an annual event for years, Business Day at City Hall, this event will give council members, city staff and the Mayor the opportunity to meet with and have focused discussed on worker issues and needs. I thank Council Member Bender's office for taking the lead on this and look forward to a participating in a productive series of meetings on the 8th.

Minimum Wage and a Tip Penalty. In February I joined a meeting with Saru Jayaraman, from the Food and Labor Research Center at the University of California, Berkeley (<http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/topic/food-labor-research-center/>), and author of “Forked: A New Standard for American Dining.” She made a powerful case for why tipping should not be considered in any minimum wage law, just like it is currently excluded in 7 states that have minimum wage laws, including Minnesota where we have a healthy and thriving restaurant industry. Studies have shown that tipping creates an environment in which people of color, young people, old people, women, and foreigners tend to get worse service than white males, and where nonwhite servers make less than their white peers for equal work. She also encourages us to consider the power imbalance between tippers, who are typically male, and servers, 70 percent of whom are female, and the fact that the restaurant industry generates five times the average number of sexual harassment claims per worker. It has made me only more convinced that I cannot support a tip penalty as any part of a City minimum wage ordinance. I do, however, support a gradual phase in, with technical and other supports for smaller businesses. I am committed to finding a solution that will support and lift up all low wage workers while also protecting our independent and small businesses from undue hardship. For more, see:

http://www.slate.com/articles/business/moneybox/2013/07/abolish_tipping_it_s_bad_for_servers_customers_and_restaurants.html

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/02/18/i-dare-you-to-read-this-and-still-feel-ok-about-tipping-in-the-united-states/?utm_term=.8598aa083547.

Homes Hummel & Pay as You Save. I worked with advocates from Community Power and the Clean Energy Partnership’s Energy Vision Advisory Committee to bring Dr. Holmes Hummel to Minneapolis to talk about inclusive financing for energy efficiency and renewable energy. The way that these kinds of projects – from insulation and furnaces to small rooftop solar installations – are currently financed makes it impossible for many people to participate. If someone rents, has poor credit, or can’t or won’t take out debt, they are effectively turned away by the current model. This is a problem because it limits our capacity to make energy efficiency upgrades everywhere, and because it means that only relatively wealthy homeowners can take advantage of most efficiency programs. The “Pay As You Save” model solves many of these problems by paying for the energy upgrades as part of the energy utility bill. Customers pay no more than 80% of the savings generated by the upgrade – meaning that they start saving money immediately. I am very interested in this model, and will be pushing both Xcel and CenterPoint to implement some version of it as part of the Clean Energy Partnership. For more information, go here: <http://cleanenergyworks.org/blog/pays-financing/>.

Transgender Equity Council. The Council, with my strong support, has approved the establishment of a permanent Transgender Equity Council to serve as an advisory board to the City Council and Mayor on matters of importance to the Transgender community. You can find the details at <http://www.minneapolis.gov/meetings/legislation/WCMSP-193269>

Protecting Protest Rights. In response to proposed state legislature that would fine protesters in order to recover costs and the chilling effect this could have on free speech, the city strengthened its legislative agenda to include a provision that states “The city of Minneapolis supports the rights of all people to engage in protected first amendment speech, assembly and protest without the burden of risk of civil liability for public safety response costs.”

2016 Resident Survey. The results of the 2016 Resident Survey are now available at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/coordinator/rm/Monitoring/ResidentSurvey/index.htm>. While generally positive it was interesting to see how some rankings varied depending on the area of the city respondents lived in, and also the demographic make-up, especially the race/ethnicity and income of the respondent. For example, African Americans were much more likely to report being victims of housing discrimination compared to respondents overall and people with household incomes are less than \$35,000 a year were somewhat more likely to report that they had been discriminated against in housing.

Final Neighborhood Revitalization Plans Approved. In February the City Council approved the last 2 Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) NRP Phase II Action Neighborhood Action Plans, from the Nicollet Island-East Bank and West Calhoun neighborhoods. Since NRP began in 1991, all Minneapolis neighborhoods and thousands of residents have participated in planning processes to help meet their neighborhood's housing, safety, economic development, recreation, health, education, social service, environment and transportation needs. A report and presentation at the Health Environment and Community Engagement Committee provided a high level look at the impacts of this 26 year long program. Please check it out at: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/legislation/WCMSP-192726>

Restored Neighborhood Organization Funding. On February 10 the Council unanimously approved a motion that I have been working on for months to restore \$9,141,951 to Phase II Neighborhood Revitalization (NRP) plans over the next four years. This represents the \$10 million frozen by the City Council in 2010 less the \$858,049 returned to neighborhoods in 2012-2013. This is possible, in part, because the revenue from the specially approved “Common Project” Tax Increment Financing District has been higher than expected, and is expected to be higher than projected for the next few years, before it expires in 2020. In 2016 it yielded over \$10 million more than projected or needed. Over the next four years the Second Ward neighborhoods organizations can expect to get the following additional amounts to support their NRP Phase II plans: Southeast Como - \$122,372, Cedar Riverside - \$211,372; Prospect Park - \$91,225; Seward - \$44,639 and Longfellow Community (including Cooper, Howe and Hiawatha)-\$ 691,943. You can find the full staff report and payment schedules for all neighborhoods here <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/legislation/WCMSP-193147>.

Re-elected to Chair Youth Coordinating Board. I was honored to be re-elected as chair of the Youth Coordinating Board in January. This group works to coordinate the efforts of the four largest Minneapolis Public Jurisdictions - the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minneapolis Parks and Recreation and the Minneapolis Public Schools - to champion the well-being and healthy development of Minneapolis children and youth. For more information about the work of the coordinating board see <http://www.ycb.org/>

Youth Coordinating Board and Youth Congress Response to Anti-Immigrant Actions. I will be joining members of the Youth Congress, and the Youth Coordinating Board to release joint Statement of Welcoming on Thursday March 9 at the Minneapolis Youth Congress meeting at approximately 5:30pm in the Doty Room of Minneapolis Central Library. The statement says, in part, “We find the new Executive Order about immigrants and refugees to be paralyzing. Even though the Executive Order has been delayed through judicial action, the effects of these policies are still damaging. They are tearing families apart, instilling fear in children, adults, schools, businesses and communities. The ripple effect of these policies has a significant impact on our children, leaving them afraid and isolated.”

Youth Violence Prevention Report. The 2016 Youth Violence Prevention Results Report was presented to a Council Committee in February. The report tracks 26 indicators over 10 years related to youth violence. Youth homicides went down to 17 in 2016, from the disturbing spike of 24 in 2015. There were 11 in 2014. There were several disturbing results. The total number of violent crime victims went up, and the number of youth involved in violent crime was up to 2,342 in 2016, including 243 children under the age of 10. The number of assault injuries and firearm-related assault injuries among residents went down but the total number of people under age 25 who were victims of gunshots injuries that occurred in Minneapolis went up from 104 in 2014 and 130 in 2015 to 170 in 2016. Clearly youth gun violence is a growing, significant problem in our city and am glad that we put additional resources into its prevention in this year’s budget. You can find the report and presentation here <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/legislation/WCMSP-194315>

Step Up 2016 Report. This Month the city published our 2016 Step Up Final Report. Last year STEP-UP prepared over 2,000 Minneapolis youth – over 88% youth of color – with the skills needed to be successful in a job. Of those, 1,660 were matched with internships for the summer at one of 225 partner employers. The interns earned a combined \$2.7 million in wages, \$1.3 of which was paid directly by the private sector. You can find the full report at http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/wcms_1p-138705.pdf?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term= STEP-UP is accepting applications from businesses, public agencies, and nonprofits that want to employ STEP-UP interns in summer 2017. To find more information and complete an application visit <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/metp/WCMS1P-151075>

Support of Lawsuit Challenge U.S. Deportation Practices. With my strong support, the Council has voted to join the local government amicus brief in the Supreme Court case of *Jennings v. Rodriguez*. The case is a class action lawsuit challenging the United States government’s practice of detaining immigrants facing deportation proceedings without providing individualized due process hearings. The County of Santa Clara, California, has drafted an amicus brief on behalf of local governments which are home to large immigrant populations, arguing that such mandatory detentions without individualized hearings violate constitutional norms, harm immigrant families and communities, and impose unnecessary costs on local governments.

Amicus Brief Supporting Transgender Rights. In February the Council voted to join the local governments' amicus brief in Gloucester County School Board VS G.G. pending before the United States Supreme Courts in support of the argument that Title IX requires that transgender students be treated consistent with their gender identity for purposes of access to facilities like school bathrooms.

No Ban No Wall. To respond to the disturbing Presidential orders related to immigration and refugee resettlement, the Council took comments and action in February and passed a resolution condemning the January 2017 Presidential Executive Orders. We also approved establishing a Sanctuary City Task Force that will make recommendations by March 31, to strengthen city-level policies, programs, and resources to better protect and defend the rights of refugees, immigrant families, Muslim residents and others from unfair deportation, acts of bigotry and hate, and persecution. We will also begin work to create a local immigration legal defense fund, and review the President's orders for potential litigation and defense strategies to protect the City and our residents. I support these actions and will continue the fight against what I see as this administration's cruel and likely illegal behavior towards some of the most vulnerable people in our communities and our world. For a more of my thoughts on this see: <https://www.facebook.com/camgordonward2/posts/722858671209828>.

Immigration Ordinance. I am grateful to Council Member Cano for introducing amendments to the city ordinances relating to Administration: Employee Authority in Immigration matters to clarify policy intent and adding further provisions to strengthen this important ordinance, sometimes called our "separation ordinance" which makes it clear that our staff, including our police, may not act to support federal customs, immigration or homeland security enforcement. You can find the current law here https://www.municode.com/library/mn/minneapolis/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_TIT2AD_CH19EMAUIIMMA

Community Connections Conference. Registration is now open for the sixth annual Community Connections Conference – Your Voice, Your City: CommUnity – at the Minneapolis Convention Center Saturday, April 1. The conference features three tracks: one -- your city – focused on the writing of the new 20 year Comprehensive Plan for the city, another -- your neighborhood --- focused on the future the future of neighborhood organizations and their roles in communities beyond 2020, and the third --- your voice --- focused on ways residents can connect with City leaders, find out how to serve on City boards and commissions, and engage Minneapolis' diverse communities. To learn more and register for this free event visit <http://minneapolismn.gov/ncr/communityconnectionsconference>

Northern Metals. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and Northern Metals have reached a court approved settlement agreement that includes all operations at the Minneapolis facility being shut down and moved out by August 2019, fines totaling \$2.5 million dollars that includes a payment of \$600,000 to the city over three years to mitigate health problems in the area. The city funds will go to projects that identify and educate at-risk residents on asthma triggers; enroll families with children suffering from poorly controlled asthma in a new asthma

trigger mitigation program; implement community blood lead level screening events and follow-up as needed to help reduce environmental exposure to lead. While I would have preferred to see all operations moved out of the city sooner, I consider this a big victory for the city and commend the MPCA for their diligence and persistence.

2017 One Minneapolis Fund Request for Proposals. The Council has approved issuing a request for proposals for the \$182,000 2017 One Minneapolis Fund for organization to provide leadership and civic participation services. For 2017, \$157,000 is available for programs that prepare leaders to serve on neighborhood and City boards and commissions and \$25,000 of the funds will be designated for City-initiated projects where organizations are asked to assist with outreach on departmental project where extra outreach seems needed. The Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission and Neighborhood and Community Relations staff will review proposals and determine the projects to be recommended for funding.

Black History Month. On February 10 the Council honored Black History Month with a resolution that highlighted Future History Makers (<https://civilrightsmnneapolis.wordpress.com/>) a City profile series featuring emerging and mid-career leaders from the Twin Cities African American community who share the Civil Rights Department's ideals of advancing civil rights and removing barriers to equity. Find the complete resolution http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms_p-193895.pdf

Minneapolis Arts Commission Appointments Congratulations to Second Ward resident Vincent Moniz, who has been appointed to the Minneapolis Arts Commission for a three-year ending December 31, 2019.

Getting City Data. The City is hosting a session requesting public data from the City on National Freedom of Information Day, Thursday, March 16, from 4:30-6pm in Room 319, City Hall 350 S. Fifth St. There, staff will explain how to make data requests and hear from the people who make data requests about how the data requesting process works for them.

Short Term Food Permits. Council Member Palmisano and I have given notice of our intent to introduce an ordinance amendment that would streamline the permitting process for short term and seasonal food sales at public and farmers markets.

Technology Fix-it Clinics. If you have a computer or laptop that is running properly you can bring it in for free tech support to the upcoming [Fix-It Tech events](#) Friday, March 10 from 1-5 pm at the Takoda Institute – American Indian OIC, 1845 E. Franklin Ave. or Wednesday, April 5 from 10am-4 pm at the University of Minnesota Coffman Memorial Union, 300 Washington Ave. SE.

Historic Designation for the Armory. In March the Council will consider approving the designation of the Minneapolis Armory located at 500 6th St S, as a local historic landmark with the condition that the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties will

be used to evaluate alterations to the property. I support this, especially as it is being renovated to serve a new purpose as an event center, which I am also glad to see.

Nicollet Mall Art. Between now and next December, eight artworks will be installed on the Mall, including three new works and five returning works. The statue of the late Mary Tyler Moore will be returned to its original home at Nicollet Mall and 7th Street S. With seven additional works coming in 2018, there will be 15 total artworks installed. Some works, like the 90 sewer covers, are a series, so there will actually be 111 total individual pieces in all on the Mall.

Cedar Riverside Opportunity Center Grand Opening. There will be a grand opening celebration for the Cedar Riverside Opportunity Center, at 515 15th Avenue South on Sunday, March 12, at 2 p.m. The Cedar Riverside Opportunity Center will serve as a pipeline to public and private sector job opportunities. Resources will focus on the neighborhood's East African community, reducing the neighborhood's unemployment rate and increasing access to educational programs.

WBCDC Riverside Homes Preservation Project. I learned in early March that the West Bank Community Development Corporation is working to secure funds to renovate and preserve 191 units, in 74 different buildings, in its Riverside Homes project on the West Bank. The homes are in a variety of locations in the neighborhood, in Ward 6 and Ward 2, including several near Riverside Park and all of the Riverbluff Townhomes that are near the Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge on the northeast corner of the neighborhood. They are requesting a \$20 million tax exempt bond allocation, which would allow funders to use the investment to reduce their tax obligation. According to the proposal, work would be done on both the interiors and exteriors of the buildings and no residents would be displaced.

Glendale Weatherization. I have heard from the MPHA that they are working diligently to make the weatherization project happen. There were apparently many issues that needed to be resolved with the Department of Commerce, and contractual agreements to go through between MPHA and SRC. I have been assured that there will be signatures in coming days, and commencement of work to follow shortly.

Malcolm Yards. Wall Development Company has submitted an application to amend the Comprehensive Plan for the Malcolm Yards development. The application requests that the Comprehensive Plan be amended to remove a 9.44 acre site bounded roughly by Malcolm, the University Transitway, the 29th Ave SE corridor and the 5th St SE corridor from the SEMI Industrial Employment District, and change the guidance of the Site on the Future Land Use Map from Industrial to Transitional Industrial. I have received a formal letter of support from the Prospect Park Association. I look forward to seeing the staff recommendation soon, and having a final City position within the next few months.

Green 4th Grant. The City is poised to accept a grant, at our next Council Meeting, from Hennepin County Transit Oriented Development Program for the 4th St SE (29th Ave SE to Malcolm Ave SE) Reconstruction Project. This \$485,000 grant will allow us to incorporate some

of the “above standard” improvements into the project. This grant was originally applied for and received by the Prospect North Partnership.

Afro Deli. I was happy to participate at the grand opening of Afro Deli at their new location in Stadium Village at 720 Washington Ave SE. I am glad they are still in Ward 2 and that the City has been able to help with a \$75,000 low interest loan to help make this possible.

Openings on Boards and Commissions. A number of board and commission positions are open for City Council and mayor appointments this spring. The City is seeking applicants with a diversity of backgrounds and experiences to strengthen the work of the City. Translation and interpreting services are available upon request to ensure all residents have the ability to participate. Applications will be reviewed beginning April 14 unless otherwise marked. There are 89 open positions on 15 City boards and commissions: Advisory Committee on Aging, Advisory Committee on People With Disabilities, Animal Care and Control Advisory Board, Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee, Commission on Civil Rights, Community Environmental Advisory Committee, Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission, Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Public Housing Authority (MPHA), Telecommunications Network (MTN), Transgender Equity Council – application reviews will begin Thursday, March 9, Workforce Council, Workplace Advisory Committee, Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee, 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 “Office Hours” in the ward every Thursday 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 Thursdays at the Oren Gateway Center, Nabo Café, 2211 Riverside Avenue;

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

Third Thursdays at T Rex Cookie Café, 3338 University Ave SE;

Fourth Thursdays at Blue Moon Coffee Café, 3822 E Lake St.

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