

# Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the Prospect Park East River Road Neighborhood, 7-28-08

Cam's next Prospect Park Office Hours:  
Pratt School, August 19, 9:30-11am

## Items:

- 1) Historic Preservation in Prospect Park
- 2) University District Rezoning Study
- 3) Oak Street Cinema
- 4) NRP
- 5) Police Policies for Public Assemblies
- 6) Public Art Water Fountains
- 7) Council Associates
- 8) Youth Violence Prevention
- 9) New Fire Chief Alex Jackson
- 10) Central Corridor
- 11) Pedicabs
- 12) Taxicab Fare Increase
- 13) Sydney Hall / Dinkydome
- 14) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) The City's Historic Preservation staff have responded to PPERRIA's June 23 letter, commenting that to their knowledge, the neighborhood has not been formally nominated for local historic designation, the step that triggers interim historic protections. As this matter moves forward, I will work to be as helpful as possible.
- 2) I am working to utilize the University District Partnership Alliance to help move forward on planning and zoning issues that have been raised in the University of MN Neighborhood Impact Report and elsewhere. I have gotten support from Planning staff and fellow Council members for the idea of doing a zoning study in the University District. My hope is that this study will help address several land use and development concerns including parking, housing and zoning code inspections and enforcement, density, and residential design standards. Haila Maze, Principal Planner with the CPED Planning Division and the East Sector Planner, will be leading the effort for the City. I am considering moving for a moratorium on new residential construction to help give us the time and space to complete this important work.
- 3) Planning staff are recommending approval of demolishing the Oak St Cinema tomorrow, July 29, at 4:30pm in the Council Chambers in City Hall. You can see the agenda here: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/agendas/hpc/2008/20080729hpc.asp>, and the staff report is here: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/agendas/hpc/2008/docs/OakStCinemaStaffReport.pdf>. I am saddened by this and hope that some measures can be taken to mitigate the loss of this historic cultural resource, even if it cannot be saved.
- 4) The NRP Framework for the Future work group gave its final report to the Committee of the Whole last week. The Council will hold a special meeting on August 21, at 5pm, to take public comment on the report's recommendations for the future of NRP. You can read the full report here: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2008-meetings/20080725/Docs/RCA-ProgramProposal.pdf>.
- 5) At last week's Council meeting, I succeeded in significantly strengthening the resolution laying out police policies for public assemblies. It is now clear that the City's policy is never to use conventional rubber bullets, that officers may not tamper with or destroy people's cameras, that officers will not target law-abiding protest observers, and that they won't subject protest organizers to disparate treatment. The vote to add these protections was unanimous. I am hopeful that by going on record laying out our expectations for the MPD, we will avoid the sort of escalating confrontations that have occurred in the past.

- 6) I am very supportive of the surprisingly controversial decision to install 10 artist-designed water fountains throughout the City. I believe that we must do more as a City to resist the commodification of water and defend its status as a “commons” – a right and responsibility we all share. I see these fountains as a fun, aesthetic part of this broader work, and a way to get just a little more public art into our City.
- 7) I voted against a proposal at Council last week to change Council Associates from civil service to appointed positions. I disagree with this proposal for a number of reasons, including concerns about completely politicizing this position, and the impact of this decision on the City employees currently doing this work. Most importantly, I simply do not believe that the Council can honestly make the findings that we are required to make in order to create new appointed positions. Only CM Colvin Roy joined me in voting against this.
- 8) The Council has passed a resolution I authored creating a Youth Violence Prevention Plan Executive Committee and a Youth Violence Prevention Citizen Advisory Committee for oversight of the implementation stage of the Youth Violence Prevention Blueprint for Action. I continue to be very involved in this critically important work.
- 9) I was thrilled to support Alex Jackson, Mayor Rybak’s nominee to lead the Minneapolis Fire Department, now our first African American Fire Chief.
- 10) The City Council approved a resolution June 20 that grants approval of the Metropolitan Council’s proposed layout for the Central Corridor Light Rail line, with an understanding that the Met Council will satisfactorily resolve several issues outlined in the resolution related to the preliminary design plan. The layout includes LRT at-grade on Washington Ave through the University East Bank campus and creation of a transit mall between Walnut and East River Road. The City is also continuing to work on a Memorandum of Understanding with the University, County and Met Council on traffic and other necessary mitigations to make sure that negative impacts to the surrounding communities are minimized. There will be an open house and public hearing on this project on **August 7, 5pm** at the Brian Coyle Center on the West Bank.
- 11) I am excited to work with Council Member Schiff on reforming our outdated regulations regarding pedicabs, which are so stringent as to basically regulate them out of existence in our City. I hope to create an environment in which pedicabs are common, as they are in other large cities, and in which pedicab operators can earn a decent living.
- 12) I am supportive of a move to increase the fare rate that taxicab operators can charge in Minneapolis. I believe that rising fuel costs make this necessary, given the fact that most drivers are independent contractors who pay for fuel out of their own wages.
- 13) The Sydney Hall/Dinkydome project’s appeal passed the Council unanimously last Friday. I believe that we reached a suitable compromise with the developers on the height, given that they will be making such important improvements to both the Dinkydome and the pedestrian atmosphere on 15<sup>th</sup> Ave SE. I also continue to believe that this is exactly the sort of location we’d like to see for high density student housing.
- 14) There are openings on the Minneapolis Commission on Civil Rights (closes 07/31/08), Civilian Police Review Authority and Minneapolis Ethical Practices Board (closes 08/01/08). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).