



**Minneapolis**  
City of Lakes

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## Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the Prospect Park East River Road Neighborhood, 2-28-11

**Cam's next Prospect Park Office Hours:  
Pratt School, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 9:30-11am**

**Items:**

- 1) Neighborhood Funding Work Group
- 2) Central Corridor Lawsuit
- 3) Central Corridor Betterments
- 4) Guns and the Legislative Agenda
- 5) Tiered Rental Inspections
- 6) Solar Energy Systems
- 7) CDBG Funds for Southeast Block Nurse Programs
- 8) Liquor Store Spacing
- 9) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) The Council has formed a neighborhood funding work group to facilitate decision making relating to the actions the Council will need to take on neighborhood funding this year. This work group includes the Council President and Vice President, the chairs of the Ways and Means/Budget Committee and the Intergovernmental Relations Committee, as well as a Mayoral representative, the City Coordinator, the Neighborhood and Community Relations Director, the Finance Director, the Communications Director and the Intergovernmental Relations Director. The Work Group's charge is to frame options and proposed actions for consideration by the Committee of the Whole and Ways & Means Committee relative to the 2011 Budget action that froze Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) spending. I would have preferred that the meetings of this group be open to the public and included representation from the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission and the NRP Policy Board.
- 2) On January 26<sup>th</sup>, Judge Donovan ruled on a federal civil rights complaint filed by a group led by the NAACP's St. Paul branch, several other groups, neighborhood activists, and small businesses accusing the Met Council and the federal government of ignoring the history of previous adverse impacts on the African-American Rondo neighborhood and the adverse impacts the project's construction would have on area businesses. The Judge found that the Environmental Impact Statement inadequately addressed the loss of business revenues as an adverse impact of the construction of the CCLRT, but denied plaintiffs' request for an order to stop the CCLRT Project. For more see news articles at [http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2011/01/27/central-corridor-rondo-lawsuit/http://www.twincities.com/ci\\_17218499?nclick\\_check=1](http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2011/01/27/central-corridor-rondo-lawsuit/http://www.twincities.com/ci_17218499?nclick_check=1)
- 3) The Central Corridor Project Office is looking for guidance from the City on which "betterments" should be included in the project, should the contingency funds not all be needed for construction overruns. This discussion does not include large-scale, standalone projects such as the work that has taken place at Franklin, East River Pkwy and 27<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, or Granary Road. Rather, betterments could include upgrades to the streetscape on the route. It is important to note that Public Works and CPED staff have already been very successful in convincing the project office that many improvements to the streetscape should be included in the base budget. A number of betterments have also been agreed to by project partners. The City is currently weighing the prioritization of betterments, which could include squaring off the intersection of Bedford and University and undergrounding Xcel power lines along University. The Transportation and Public Works committee will discuss this tomorrow morning. I will be doing everything I can to ensure that the City's prioritization of betterments puts the right emphasis on serving the neighborhoods through which the line is going to be built.

If you need this material in an alternative format, please contact Matt Bower at (612) 673-2188 or [Matthew.Bower@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:Matthew.Bower@ci.minneapolis.mn.us)

If you want help translating this call – Hmong– Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2188;

Spanish – Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llama 612-673-2188;

Somali – Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' an wac 612-673-2188.

- 4) At my urging, the Council has unanimously approved an amendment to our state legislative agenda opposing the pro-gun, pro-violence agenda of the Republicans in the state legislature: "Minneapolis opposes efforts to weaken Minnesota's gun laws and regulations such as legislation undermining local background checks, shoot-first legislation, legislation prohibiting State Colleges and Universities from banning guns on campus, and a constitutional amendment on the right to keep, bear and use arms." I thank my colleagues for joining me in getting the City on record formally opposing these terrible ideas.
- 5) Regulatory Services Housing Inspection Services staff have come forward with a new "tiered" inspections plan for rental license inspection schedules based on the conditions and maintenance of rental properties. Rental properties/license will be divided into 3 tiers based on criteria developed with input from stakeholders including rental property owners, tenants, neighborhood associations, City Council, Police, and the city attorney's office. The criteria includes: excessive nuisance conditions; excessive housing code violations; a history of non-compliance; and excessive police calls. The program is expected to be launched this April.
- 6) The Council has adopted new definitions and protections for solar energy systems. The new ordinance provides much greater clarity for dealing with solar energy. It defines and sets standards for building mounted and freestanding solar systems and makes clear that solar access easements may be purchased by property owners. For the first time, it provides specific guidance to the Planning Commission that existing solar energy systems should be given special consideration if and when a proposed development would shadow them. Some amendments from the Council improved the proposal by raising the percentage of a residential lot that could be covered by a freestanding system from 3% to 5%. This means that for a standard 5,000 square foot city lot, the maximum allowable freestanding system went from 150 s.f. to 250 s.f. The committee also chose to completely do away with lot coverage maximums for commercial and industrial parcels. I believe that both of these amendments were steps in the right direction. My staff worked with solar advocates and City staff on an amendment that would clarify that "passive" solar systems would be included in the protections we're giving to other types of solar systems. These include systems that are specifically intended to capture and store direct solar heat, but are not broad enough to allow any window to be considered a "passive solar" system.
- 7) The Council has awarded a \$75,000 Community Development Block Grant to Living at Home/Block Nurse programs in Southeast, Longfellow/Seward, and Nokomis.
- 8) The Council voted on a very close, 7-6 margin to approve Council Member Meg Tuthill's proposed ordinance changing the spacing requirements for liquor stores from schools and religious places of assembly. The old rule was that new liquor stores couldn't go in within 300 feet of a school or church, as measured from the front door of the liquor store to the front door of the school or church. What passed changes the way that the 300 feet is measured to be lot-line to lot-line. I found this vote problematic for three main reasons. First, the proposal changed between the Regulatory Energy and Environment (REE) meeting and the Council meeting and did not include information I needed to make a good decision. The original Tuthill amendment would have changed the measurement from the front door of the liquor store to the lot line of the school or church. The Council received no information from staff about the amendment's potential limitations on locations for new liquor stores. At the very least, we should have seen a map that would indicate which sites will become ineligible for new liquor stores due to this change. With the large number of mosques, synagogues, temples and churches as well as school in and commercial zones the new law could conceivably eliminate all of the roughly 8 remaining areas where a liquor store could be located in the city. Second, I was disturbed that this ordinance appeared to be aimed at one particular proposed liquor store. Third, I wanted to see some evidence to show that proximity to a liquor store and a place of religious assembly and school created real problems that would make it in the public interest to regulate further. While I have heard anecdotal evidence that liquor stores do lead to complaints and concerns about inebriants I was also generally supportive changing the measurement away from using the doors, which can easily be changed, to property lines and appreciated that the Minneapolis Public School district was supportive of the changes. So, for these reasons I voted to send the proposal back to committee for more work but, when that failed, voted against it. Both votes were on a 7-6 margin.
- 9) There are openings on the Animal Care & Control Advisory Board, Charter Commission, Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee (CLIC), Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Latino Advisory Committee, Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission, Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Planning Commission, Public Health Advisory Committee, Advisory Group for Redistricting 2011-2012 of the Charter Commission, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, Thinc.GreenMSP Steering Committee, Workforce Council and Zoning Board of Adjustment. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).