

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the Prospect Park, East River Road Neighborhood, 1-22-07

Cam's next Prospect Park Office Hours:
Pratt School, Tuesday February 20, 9:30-11am

Items:

- 1) Condo Conversion ordinance
- 2) Republican National Committee
- 3) Somali Youth Report
- 4) Community Engagement Report – final input session
- 5) Youth Violence Steering Committee
- 6) Roundtable Recap
- 7) Maximum Occupancy
- 8) “Lurking” ordinance
- 9) Items at Planning Commission
- 10) E River Parkway/Mews Sound Wall
- 11) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) The Condo Conversion ordinance I am sponsoring will be coming for a public hearing on Wednesday, January 31, at 1pm at the Public Safety & Regulatory Services committee. The goal is to prevent the loss of affordable rental housing due to condo conversions and to protect condo buyers. Please attend, if you can, and advocate for affordable housing preservation in Minneapolis.
- 2) The Mayor has signed the contract to bring the Republican convention to Minneapolis in 2008. I have been concerned about whether free speech rights of residents and visitors will be violated, as they have in past conventions, so I created an internal work group to create a model for how the City can preserve the right to political speech and civic debate without disrupting community life during the Convention. The group includes the Mayor, up to two Council Members, the relevant department heads, and two representatives of civil liberties groups such as the ACLU and National Lawyers Guild. I also attempted to change the contract to ensure that the Minneapolis Police Department would have a say in approving the Convention Security Plan, but my colleagues ultimately voted this proposal down. Still, it is important that free speech concerns have been voiced so early in this planning process – my hope is that Minneapolis can provide an example of how a city can host a major party convention without taking on huge financial burdens and violating its residents' First Amendment rights.
- 3) The Civil Rights Department has released a report on Somali Youth Issues, and presented it to the Health, Energy and Environment Committee. You can read the full report here <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/civil-rights/docs/somali-report.pdf>. If you would like a copy of the report sent to you or have additional questions you can contact me or Kelly Brewer of the Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights at 612-673-2091. Recommendations include:
 - 1) Address concerns through the City/County Youth Coordinating Board,
 - 2) Reduce Somali youth crime by collaborating with philanthropic agencies to create a “drop in” center in the Cedar Riverside area.
 - 3) Develop and implement a community outreach plan to identify individuals who can advise the City on community needs, to inform people of existing services and to build trust and lasting relationships.

- 4) The City has completed a Community Engagement Report and is soliciting public comments. The official comment period ends February 8th. This report, and the comments we receive, will serve as a foundation for important City Council policy discussions and decisions in February, March and April. You can read the report online at http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/news/docs/CE_Report_final.pdf, and send comments to clara.perrin@ci.minneapolis.mn.us. There will also be public meetings throughout the City. For Cedar Riverside, the meeting is **Monday, February 5, 7–8:30pm, Mill City Museum, 704 S 2nd St.** For Cooper and Seward, the meeting is **Tuesday, January 30, 7–8:30pm, Plaza Verde, 1516 E Lake St.** For Southeast Como and Prospect Park, the meeting is **Wednesday, January 31, 7–8:30 pm, Marcy Open School, 415 4th Avenue SE.** For the full list of public meeting times and locations, go here: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/news/20061121CE_Report.asp. To complete a community engagement survey, go here: <http://www.nrp.org/R2/News/NewsArch/2007/20070118.html>.
- 5) The Youth Violence Prevention Steering Committee will be created this coming Friday. I will serve on it, along with the Mayor, Chief Dolan, Health Commissioner Musicant, Youth Coordinating Board Chair Judith Kahn, Shukri Adan and many other committed, deeply involved people. I believe this is an incredibly important step towards keeping our youth from becoming victims and perpetrators of violence, one of our City's main goals.
- 6) Last week, I held a roundtable discussion at Saint Martin's Table on ending homelessness and decriminalizing poverty. Thirty-three people attended, including several West Bank neighbors, and they shared their hopes and ideas for how to transition people out of homelessness constructively and effectively. I believe the plan that the Council passed in December offers us a clear path to follow.
- 7) I am planning to introduce subject matter in February to make Minneapolis' two contradictory maximum occupancy ordinances consistent, understandable and fair. The two ordinances are the Housing Maintenance code 244.810, which is primarily concerned with health and safety of tenants, and the Zoning code 546.50, which is primarily concerned with density. I am planning to create a work group to help craft a solution – please contact my office if you are interested in participating.
- 8) I am moving forward with an effort to repeal the Minneapolis “lurking” ordinance. Minneapolis is one of only four cities in the US with “lurking” ordinances. Approximately 90% of arrests for lurking end in dismissal of charges, and approximately 90% of those arrested are people of color. The ordinance is very often used on people experiencing homelessness. It is expensive to enforce and produces little to no constructive effects. I am currently working with the Council on Crime and Justice to build a broad community coalition to push for this unnecessary law to be repealed, and I invite you to join us.
- 9) My office has been paying close attention to two Prospect Park items coming before the Planning Commission today: Prospect Park Citgo (which was denied by the PC) and M Flats.
- 10) My office has been involved with an effort to convince MNDOT to build a freeway sound wall to protect residents of East River Terrace and East River Mews from the noise generated by I94. We helped Mews residents connect to a U of M professor whose class will conduct sound level measurements this Spring. It would be helpful to have the sound level data collected in the mid-late 1990s to refer to as a “baseline.” This will be a difficult fight, but I'm hopeful that if we're persistent enough we can finally get a sound wall built.
- 11) There are openings on the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority, the **new** Pedestrian Advisory Committee, the Minneapolis Empowerment Zone Governance Board, the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee, the Minneapolis Private Industry/Workforce Council, the Latino Advisory Committee, the Minneapolis Telecommunications Network board, the Minneapolis Charter Commission and the Public Health Advisory Committee. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.