

# Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood, 11-28-07

Cam's next Seward Office Hours:  
Tuesday, January 29, 9:30-11:00am  
Birchwood Café, 3311 E 25th St

## Items:

- 1) Seward Coop Groundbreaking December 4
- 2) MDH Arsenic Biomonitoring project and meeting
- 3) New CLIC Appointee – Becca Vargo Daggett
- 4) Entertainment license change
- 5) Ex-Offender Reentry
- 6) Streetcars
- 7) Contract Compliance
- 8) School Board Elections
- 9) Immigration Issues
- 10) Hybrid Buses
- 11) Step-Up
- 12) Building Blocks Awards
- 13) Ruhland Youth Award
- 14) Snow Emergency Alerts
- 15) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) Please join me, Mayor Rybak Seward Coop staff and others for the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Seward Coop on **Tuesday, December 4, at 1pm** at the new store site on the corner of Franklin and Riverside avenues.
- 2) The Minnesota Department of Health is proposing a "biomonitoring" pilot project in the South Minneapolis Arsenic Contamination Site, which includes west Seward. Biomonitoring basically means measuring the amount of a chemical in people's bodies to determine how much exposure to that chemical they have had. 100 Children will be tested for arsenic, probably in 2008. They are still in the development stages of the project, and are planning to present their preliminary proposal for the project at a community meeting on **Thursday, December 6, at 7pm at the Midtown YWCA at 2121 E Lake St.**
- 3) I will be appointing Seward resident and past SNG Board Member Becca Vargo Daggett to the Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee (CLIC). CLIC makes recommendations to the City Council and Mayor on capital improvement program development and annual capital improvement budgets. Becca has lived in Minneapolis since 1996. She has an MS in Science, Technology and Environmental Policy from the Humphrey Institute, and got to know city government while working on the New Rules Project of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance.
- 4) The Public Safety and Regulatory Services committee has voted to eliminate the requirement that small restaurants and coffee shops have a "Place of Entertainment" license for storytelling, readings, and music performed by 3 or fewer non-amplified musicians. I think this is a step in the right direction for supporting small businesses and local artists. I am also interested in allowing more musicians to play at once and changing our regulatory scheme from prohibiting amplified musicians (no matter how quiet) and allowing acoustic musicians (no matter how loud) to focusing on the actual sound levels being generated.
  - 5) As ex-offenders are released from prison with limited education and work history, employers are increasingly reluctant to hire them and landlords are increasingly refusing to rent to them. The City has approved Empowerment Zone grants to The Network, Emerge Community Development Collaborative and 180 Degrees, Inc for offender re-entry programming. The goal is to serve over 1,000 Minneapolis residents, helping them find decent work and housing and reducing the chance that they will return to criminal activity. For more information, go here:  
[http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2007-meetings/20071019/Docs/OffenderReentry\\_RCA.pdf](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2007-meetings/20071019/Docs/OffenderReentry_RCA.pdf).
  - 6) The Council has authorized staff to release an RFP for technical engineering assistance to address street design issues and develop street design guidelines to accommodate the potential future construction of streetcar lines along existing streets that are being reconstructed or rehabilitated.

- 7) Responding to a report by the Humphrey Institute, the Civil Rights Director has reported back with further analysis recommendations about how to improve the City's Contract Compliance processes. The recommendations for improvements include: staffing changes to better handle the work; moving forward with a long overdue "Disparity Study" to help determine the extent of current disparities; better coordination with other City Departments and prime contractors; and capacity building activities with small and underutilized businesses. The report also presented clearer processes for holding accountable companies who fail to meet goals.
- 8) I encourage residents to consider supporting a school board election reform proposal (known as the "Davnie Bill") that will be coming to the School Board next month and possibly, if they do not approve it, to the voters in 2008. I think the proposal offers us a way to improve representation, help hold elected officials accountable and make them more responsive, simplify our government structure, improve possible collaboration between jurisdictions and open up the system to political diversity. If enacted, it would change the School Board from the current 7 at large seats to 9 seats voted in by 3 at large seats and 6 district seats. The six districts would mirror the Park Board districts (although district lines could be redrawn after 2010). The enabling legislation states that the School Board can implement this law or let it go to on the 2008 election ballot. The School Board is scheduled to vote on this issue during their **December 11** meeting.
- 9) The Council has passed a resolution limiting the participation of MPD officers to working with Immigration and Customs Enforcement only on matters relating to human trafficking and narcotics. I am working with civil rights advocates to bring the issue of human trafficking to the Public Safety & Regulatory Services committee.
- 10) Responding to the Council's urging and in support of our Downtown Transportation Action Plan, the Met Council has recently added 19 new hybrid electric buses to its system. The new buses, along with 150 more to follow over the next four years, deliver 22 percent better fuel mileage and produce 90 percent fewer emissions than the buses they replace. When the new 19 buses are placed in service Monday better than one-third of all local bus trips on the Nicollet Mall will be operated with hybrid electric models.
- 11) Students who would like to participate in the STEP-UP summer jobs program can submit an application **now through January 11**. STEP-UP is a paid summer jobs program for Mpls youth ages 14 to 15, and ages 16 to 21. STEP-UP for students ages 14 to 15 is a program operated by the [Minneapolis Employment and Training Program](#), which teaches youth good work habits and provides them with wages and an opportunity to contribute to a local community-based organization. STEP-UP for youth ages 16 to 21, is operated by [Achieve!Minneapolis](#) and provides the youth with paid positions with local employers and teaches them skills they need to succeed on the job. More information and applications are available on the Web at: [http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/metp/stepup\\_home.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/metp/stepup_home.asp)
- 12) Nominations are now being accepted for the annual Building Blocks Awards. All block clubs that did not win this award in 2006 are eligible to apply. To nominate a block club (your own or a neighbor's), answer these questions: How has life on the block improved through the block club's efforts? How does the block club build connections between people? In what ways does the block club work with the Minneapolis Police Department? Describe the events, activities and meetings of the block club. When did the block club start? What are the boundaries of the block club? Be sure to include the name, address, phone number, and e-mail address of each block club leader for the club you are nominating, as well as your own (the nominator's) name, address, phone number, and email address. Nominations must be received by Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2008 one of the following ways: you can **e-mail** them to [ccpsafe@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:ccpsafe@ci.minneapolis.mn.us); you can **fax** them to (612) 673-2512, or you can **mail** them to: Community Crime Prevention/SAFE, c/o Building Blocks Awards, 4119 Dupont Ave N, Minneapolis, MN 55412.
- 13) The MPD is also seeking nominations for its 2007 Teresa S. Ruhland Youth Award, which is given annually to a Minneapolis resident volunteer who does an outstanding job of getting youths involved in the community. Self-nominations are welcome. To submit a nomination for this award, write a brief essay about how the nominee's involvement has improved the quality of life for adults and youths in the block club. Consider how the nominee has helped youths build community, involved youths in safety education and crime prevention, and worked with youths to resolve community problems. Be sure to include the same information as for the Building Blocks Awards, and send it to one of the same places.
- 14) To receive Snow Emergency alerts, go to [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/snow](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/snow), and to get more info you can call the Snow Emergency hotline at any time to find out if one is in effect. The number is 348-SNOW.
- 15) There are openings on the Civilian Police Review Authority (closes 12/7/2007), Heritage Preservation Commission (12/14/2007), Latino Advisory Committee to the Mayor and City Council (11/30/2007), Public Health Advisory Committee (11/30/2007), Minneapolis Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners (11/30/2007), Rental Dwelling License Board of Appeals (11/30/2007), Senior Citizen Advisory Committee (11/30/2007) and Zoning Board of Adjustment (11/30/2007). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).