



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood 3-23-11

Cam's next Seward Office Hours:
Tuesday, April 26th, 9:30-11:00am
Birchwood Café, 3311 E 25th St

Items:

- 1) City "Unfreezing" some NRP funds
- 2) Trucks on Residential Streets
- 3) Please Donate to Food Shelves
- 4) Minneapolis CleanSweep
- 5) Local food Resource Hubs
- 6) Trees for Sale
- 7) Dynamic Signs
- 8) Tiered Inspections
- 9) Green and Healthy Housing
- 10) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) The Council has moved to "unfreeze" \$2.68 million of the allocated Neighborhood Revitalization Program Phase II money held back from neighborhoods in December. This is a result of freezing more than the originally estimated \$10 million. Instead, it turned out that \$12.68 million in Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) funding was frozen. The NRP Policy Board will likely be asked to determine how the funds will be distributed.
- 2) My office has heard complaints about trucks on residential streets in Seward, and will be writing letters to businesses that seem not to be using the appropriate truck routes. If you're aware of any Seward business that may not be directing their trucks to use truck routes, please ask them to do so, and please let me know about it. It's good to hear that a general request for more traffic enforcement in the neighborhood is now part of the Seward Community Policing Plan.
- 3) From 2008 to 2009, there was a 25% increase in food shelf visits in Minnesota — the largest recorded increase in 28 years. If you can, please consider making a food shelf donation this month. To help restock the Salvation Army's food shelves and help Minneapolis firefighters win a food drive competition against St. Paul, you can bring food donations to City Hall or any Minneapolis Fire Station anytime this month. Food donations can be dropped off at Room 233 of City Hall or at any fire station from 10am to 8pm. You can also contribute to food shelves in the Ward at the Glendale Food Shelf, at 92 St. Mary's Ave. S.E. (<http://www.esns.org/GlendaleFoodShelf>) or at the Brian Coyle Food Shelf at 420 15th Ave. S. For more info see <http://mnfoodshare.gmcc.org/index.php>.
- 4) Minneapolis CleanSweep is a program offered through our Solid Waste and Recycling department that partners with communities to help keep our City clean. People can clean out garages, sheds, attics, basements, yards, alleyways and boulevards. Local, neighborhood-level, organizers can decide what items will be the focus of your clean-up (tires, construction waste, appliances, electronics, furniture, etc). Local organizers provide the volunteers and the City provides the garbage trucks, disposal and driver(s) for a flat fee of \$96 per truck per hour, all-inclusive. There is no additional fee for disposal for any of the materials collected. To participate, fill out an application (at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/police/first/docs/2011csp.pdf) and return it as soon as possible. Possible dates begin on April 23rd and run through October 15th (excluding May 28th, June 4th, July 2nd, July 9th, September 3rd or September 10th.)

If you need this material in an alternative format please call Ahmed Muhumud at 612-673-2162 or email Ahmed.Muhumud@ci.minneapolis.mn.us

Deaf and hard-of-hearing persons may call 311 or 612-673-3000. TTY users may call 612-673-2157 or 612-673-2626.

Attention: If you want help translating this information in language other than Hmong, Spanish or Somali, call 311

Hmong - Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800;

Spanish - Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llama 612-673-2700;

Somali - Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500.

- 5) The City, as part of the larger Homegrown Minneapolis effort and through a contract with Gardening Matters has formed three new Local Food Resource Hubs, one on the Northside and two on the Southside of Minneapolis. The Hubs are intended to help residents to grow their own fresh produce, to ensure greater food security and healthy food access. In this first year, Local Food Resource Hubs will have 5 main focus areas: 1) serve as local points of distribution for physical resources; 2) provide physical space for education classes; 3) focus on building leadership capacity at the community level and, 4) develop a community network of gardeners and urban farmers that are able to support one another. Spring class and membership information is will be available soon. See <http://www.gardeningmatters.org/hubs> for more information.
- 6) The City is offering good-sized trees for sale this spring. Trees being offered for sale are between 6 to 10 feet tall. As of March 14, residents and, for the first time, business owners and nonprofit organizations, can order one tree for their property at a cost of \$25 each on a first come first served basis. Trees must be picked up on May 21-23 at the City of Minneapolis Impound Lot, 51 Colfax Avenue North. To place an order: <http://treetrust.org/order/>.
- 7) The Council has adopted new regulations regarding "dynamic signs," signage that incorporates large LCD TV-style screens. For the most part, I support these new standards. However, the Council also undid some good work from the Zoning and Planning committee. The committee, acting on a motion I made, voted to restrict these new signs from Pedestrian Oriented (or PO) Overlay Districts. Unfortunately, the Council majority voted to strip out those protections on an 8-5 vote. I believe that dynamic signs are not in keeping with the intent of PO districts. They are clearly aimed at drivers. Tellingly, the only types of businesses that have approached the City looking to install these signs are gas stations. This restriction was also in keeping with the existing signage regulations in PO districts. We already prohibit "pole signs, backlit awning and canopy signs and backlit insertable panel projecting signs" in PO districts, because these signs are aimed primarily at drivers, just like dynamic signs. Ignoring all of this, the Council majority voted to eliminate these protections for PO districts. They even rejected a compromise that would have allowed new dynamic signs in PO districts at sites that currently have manually changeable electronic signs.
- 8) 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.
- 9) The Council has adopted an ordinance that will improve our ability to make rental property safer, healthier, more economical and more environmentally sustainable. All landlords would be required to do a furnace/boiler safety test by a licensed mechanical or gas contractor within two years of their regularly scheduled inspection. Owners of single family rentals with code violations related to lack of weather stripping, loose-fitting windows, water damaged surfaces that appear to be caused by loose-fitting windows or doors or holes in the foundation or roof, or lack of or loose-fitting storm windows or storm doors would be required to get an energy audit with a blower test and thermal scan by a certified auditor. If the property fails the initial blower door standard, air sealing must occur resulting in at least a 20% improvement on the initial blower door test or attic bypasses and major air leaks discovered by the thermal scan must be sealed. Also, all owners of 1-3 unit rental properties built before 1978 where the City has found chipping or peeling paint would be required to get a lead safe clearance test by a third party lead certified technician. All of these changes are within the City's appropriate role of protecting tenants, and all will increase the livability, safety and health of our housing stock. As an added benefit, they may also reduce utility costs for renters – which renters often pay but can seldom control – and represent one of the City's only ways to get serious about the problem of climate change. Unfortunately, what ended up passing the Council was an extremely watered-down version of the original proposal, and will do much less to protect renters or the environment than it could have, if the Council had shown more leadership.
- 10) There are openings on the Charter Commission, Animal Care & Control Advisory Board, Minneapolis Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee (CLIC), Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Latino Advisory Committee, Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission, Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Minneapolis Planning Commission, Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC), Advisory Group for Minneapolis Redistricting 2011-2012 of the Minneapolis Charter Commission, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, Thinc.GreenMSP Steering Committee, Minneapolis Workforce Council, Minneapolis Zoning Board of Adjustment, To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.