

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood, 9-26-07

Cam's next Seward Office Hours:
Tuesday, October 23, 9:30-11:00am
Birchwood Café, 3311 E 25th St

Items:

- 1) October Roundtable: Community Engagement
- 2) EPA Adds Mpls Arsenic Site to Superfund List
- 3) Transportation Plan Public Meetings
- 4) Seward Coop Expansion Project
- 5) 10th Ave Bridge
- 6) 2008 Budget
- 7) August 31 Critical Mass incident
- 8) Street Lighting Policy Final Public Meeting
- 9) Bait Bicycle program
- 10) Local Produce Markets
- 11) Requiring Produce in Grocery Stores
- 12) Unpaid Judgments ordinance
- 13) Animal Protection Ordinance
- 14) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) Please join me for the October Roundtable Discussion on **Community Engagement: 10/15, 7-9pm Augsburg College Christensen Center Minneapolis Room, 2nd Floor, 22nd Ave S & 7 ½ Street**. After three months of work, the Community Engagement Task Force that I worked to form has approved a preliminary report that will go to the City Council for possible action later this fall. Now we need your input and ideas. The draft includes principles, recommendations, and characteristics of organizations that are eligible to receive city resources for activities related to engaging the public. Call or email my office to get a copy of the report IF you cannot attend this Second ward meeting, or want to attend more than one on this important topic, there will be additional meetings throughout the city as follows:
 - Tuesday, Oct. 9, 6:30-8:30pm, Windom Park Recreation Center, 2251 Hayes St NE
 - Wednesday, Oct. 10, 6-8pm at North Commons Park, 1801 James Ave N
 - Tuesday, Oct. 16, 11am-1pm at Central Library board room, 300 Nicollet Mall
 - Wednesday, Oct. 17, 5:30-7:30pm at Nokomis Park, 2401 E Minnehaha Pkwy
 - Thursday, Oct. 18, 5:30-7:30pm at MLK Park Recreation Center, 4055 Nicollet Ave S
- 2) In September the Environmental Protection Agency added the arsenic cleanup site in south Minneapolis to the Superfund National Priorities List. This designation will release more funds, and now more properties can be cleaned up to eliminate arsenic contamination. Superfund money will be made available for cleanup of residential properties that are below an arsenic concentration of 95 parts per million, but the final level of cleanup remains undetermined. Community input will be sought throughout the process.
- 3) The City is also hosting public meetings to discuss the City's draft Ten-Year Transportation Plan and its Streetcar Feasibility Study. The public will have an opportunity to provide feedback on plan recommendations and to discuss key transportation issues facing Minneapolis. The meetings closest to the Seward Neighborhood will be on October 16 from 6:30 – 8:30 pm at Nokomis Park Recreation Center, 2401 E. Minnehaha Parkway and October 24, 6:30-8:30 pm, at the Van Cleve Recreation Center.
- 4) The Seward Coop expansion project's rezoning, alley vacation and variances were approved at the Planning Commission in August 27. They will come before the Zoning and Planning Committee tomorrow morning and then to the full Council on October 5th. I am optimistic that they will easily pass both bodies.
 - 5) The 10th Avenue Bridge over the Mississippi River reopened Friday, August 31. City workers have added a walkway and new pedestrian viewing area on the upstream side. The bridge also carries one lane of mixed use traffic in each direction, a bike lane in each direction and the preexisting sidewalk. I have heard concerns from some residents about the configuration, and would appreciate your input on how well you believe it is working.

- 6) On Sept. 24, Mayor R.T. Rybak presented his proposed 2008 budget to the Council. The budget includes a tax levy increase of 8% and sets department staffing levels for next year. It calls for funding 18 additional police officers and spending more on public safety technology, community prosecutors, Restorative Justice programs, ex-offender re-entry support, gang graffiti prevention, a Juvenile Curfew-Truancy Resource Center in City Hall, the new "You(th) Are Here" circulator buses and 4 more 911 operators. The budget also supports targeted funding to help implement the (soon to finished) youth violence prevention plan, promote renewable energy, and promote improved commercial corridors, more stable housing, job training, bridge repair and rehab, improved water and the implementation of several transportation initiatives. The budget presentation begins a 12 week process that end with a truth in taxation hearing December 11th and the final budget adoption on December 12th. For more details visit: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/city-budget/2008recommended/>
- 7) As you may have heard, there was a significant incident at the August 31 Critical Mass, a monthly group bicycle ride. Nineteen people were arrested, many more were pepper sprayed. The arrestees included one of the Second Ward Interns. I had serious concerns about the police's response, and organized a meeting between MPD Administration officials and Critical Mass participants to discuss ways to prevent similar confrontations in the future. I am hopeful that this Friday's ride will be more peaceful.
- 8) The City of Minneapolis is Public Works staff has drafted a proposed Street Lighting Policy and Program that includes standards as well as a proposal for a new lighting fee that would be charged to residents. Public Works has sponsored several meetings. The last community meeting for this is scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 27, 2007—Kenwood Park, 2101 Franklin Ave. W. For more information, visit: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/streetlighting/index.asp>.
- 9) I'm happy to report that the MPD has begun working with Abbott Northwestern hospital's security staff on a pilot "bait bicycle" program.
- 10) Responding to a staff directive I championed, City staff have come up with a new, cheaper and easier permitting process for small Local Produce Markets like the one that the City and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy helped establish at Brian Coyle Center. These Local Produce Markets must have five vendors or fewer, all of whom grow their own produce. Their permitting fees will go from over \$400 to \$154, and the application will go from a large packet to one double-sided piece of paper. I consider this a major step forward on supporting local, sustainable agriculture and increasing access in poor communities to high-quality, nutritious foods.
- 11) Regulatory Services staff came back to the PS&RS committee today with a recommendation that still did not require fresh produce in grocery stores, the committee's earlier direction notwithstanding. At my urging, the PS&RS committee voted to send this back to Reg. Services staff and ask them to work with staff from Health and Family Support and outside food policy experts like the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, to ensure that all licensed grocery stores have an adequate stock of fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods.
- 12) The ordinance I introduced giving the City the authority to revoke or not renew rental licenses to landlords who have unpaid legal judgments against them has unanimously passed the Council. I believe this ordinance is a significant win for tenants' rights.
- 13) As you've likely heard, the Animal Protection ordinance I co-sponsored with Ralph Remington was defeated 7-6 in favor of an ill-conceived "regulation" ordinance that I believe will have little impact on the welfare of circus animals or the public safety risks animal circuses pose. This ordinance was referred back to committee for more work, to reduce the expense to City staff and increase its effectiveness, and has been postponed for two months for staff to make it workable.
- 14) There are openings on the Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People With Disabilities (closes 9/28/07), Minneapolis Ethical Practices Board (closes 10/19/2007), Latino Advisory Committee to the Mayor and City Council (closes 11/16/2007), Public Health Advisory Committee (closes 9/28/2007), Senior Citizen Advisory Committee (closes 9/28/2007), Zoning Board of Adjustment (closes 9/28/2007) To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.