

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Southeast Como, 12-4-07

Cam's next Southeast Como Office Hours:
Tuesday, December 11, 9:30-11:00am
SECIA Office, 837 15th Ave SE

Items:

- 1) NRP
- 2) Grand Rounds
- 3) Youth Violence Prevention
- 4) Domestic Violence Pledge
- 5) Library Merger
- 6) Administrative Review Reform
- 7) Lurking Repeal
- 8) Internal Affairs Audit
- 9) Street Furniture
- 10) Employee Non-Discrimination Act Resolution
- 11) Ex-Offender Reentry
- 12) Investigative Staffing
- 13) Contract Compliance
- 14) Streetcars
- 15) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) The Council has taken two small but significant steps forward in our effort to make decisions about the present and future of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program and public support for neighborhood organizations. The first step we took was to help assure the promised 70% level of funding for the remainder of NRP Phase II. The second step was to create a task force consisting of Council President Johnson, Vice President Lilligren, CMs Hodges and Ostrow, a Mayoral representative and the NRP Director, to frame options and proposed actions by December, establishing a City position on:
 - A proposed administrative structure to support community engagement activities;
 - Expectations of services community or neighborhood organizations would provide through citizen participation contracts; and
 - Extending or not a formal program of using discretionary funds for community-initiated projects.

I am very hopeful that these efforts, although small steps in and of themselves, will help us grapple with the challenging issues involved in the future of NRP and supporting our neighborhood organizations. I continue to support giving City (and hopefully other jurisdictions') funds to neighborhoods for both administrative support and discretionary investment. http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/communications/CETrack3_home.asp

- 2) I'm pleased that the Community Advisory Committee has voted not to pursue the 18th and 19th routes through Southeast Como for the Missing Link, and is concentrating instead on the east options. I continue to oppose any route for the Grand Rounds Missing Link that would take out housing in Southeast Como.
 - 3) The work that started with the Resolution recognizing youth violence as a public health problem that I introduced last November is approaching completion. Last week, a draft of the City's plan to reduce youth violence came before the Health Energy and Environment Committee. This has been one of my top priorities throughout the year and it is exciting to be a part of this effort to help reduce the tenacious and tragic problems of youth violence. For more information see http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/communications/YouthViolencePrevention_home.asp
 - 4) The Public Safety & Regulatory Services committee signed on to a pledge to reduce domestic violence in Minneapolis. I am very interested in working on this critical problem, which I view as inseparable from my ongoing work on youth violence prevention.

- 5) The Council has transferred remaining funds from the construction of the new Central Library to Hennepin County as part of the library system merger, along with all other financial rights related to the project. The Council has also approved over \$16 million in bonds that the City had committed towards community libraries, which will be used to reopen the three libraries that closed in late 2006, including Southeast.
- 6) I am starting work on an amendment to the Administrative Review process for new housing under four units. There are three main options I am exploring: **1)** using the same 24 design standards, but increasing the number of points necessary for approval; **2)** reviewing, expanding and raising the standards, with community input, to help limit construction of some of the most objectionable houses from being built, **3)** adding a new design standard for formal community review and/or support, and increasing the points required for approval by the same amount that this design standard would be worth. I will be working with staff and my colleagues to find an option that seems workable, with the goal of introducing this item by early next year.
- 7) I am working with the Coalition for Lurking Ordinance Repeal to introduce a package that will repeal this ineffective and discriminatory ordinance by the end of this year. This package will, unfortunately, have to include expansions of the Loitering ordinance, in order to get the repeal passed. I view this as a very incremental step towards a fairer criminal justice system.
- 8) The Minneapolis Police Department has received approval from the Public Safety & Regulatory Services committee to enter into a contract with the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF). This is a different contractor than MPD was poised to hire in April, before the Council directed them to issue an open Request for Proposals. I consider this a very positive development, given PERF's national stature and track record and clear independence from MPD.
- 9) The City is seeking public input into improving public amenities along city sidewalks. This is part of the City's Coordinated Street Furniture Program that seeks to coordinate the design of selected street furniture elements for improved appearance and quality and enhance pedestrian circulation and safety. A request for proposals (RFP) to prospective vendors is planned for release in November 2007. The RFP will result in a long-term contract between a vendor and the City, in which the City will receive street furniture, maintenance, and revenue in exchange for advertising space on the street furniture. For more information, visit www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/street-furniture/.
- 10) I coauthored a resolution with Council Member Glidden calling on Congress to restore the gender identity protections that have been stripped out of the current ENDA bill. Minneapolis has a long and distinguished history of supporting transgender persons, as the first city in the country to include gender identity in our laws against employment discrimination. The resolution passed the Council unanimously last cycle.
- 11) 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.
- 12) Prompted by the recent City Pages article, the Public Safety and Regulatory Services committee has received a report from the Police Department on staffing levels of our investigative units, especially the Sex Crimes Unit. The committee directed the MPD to come back in December with a report on the 3-year clearance rates (a case is 'cleared' when someone is charged with the crime) and annual staffing history and clarification on the increase in reported rapes (especially the difference in increase between acquaintance and stranger rapes). I continue to believe that we must make investigations a higher priority. For more of my thoughts on this, please see my blog.
- 13) 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.
- 14) 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.
- 15) There are openings on the Latino Advisory Committee to the Mayor and City Council (closes 11/16/2007), Minneapolis Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners (11/30/2007), Rental Dwelling License Board of Appeals (11/16/2007), and Zoning Board of Adjustment (11/30/2007). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.