

**News from Cam Gordon  
Council Member, Second Ward  
December, 2006**

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/ward2/>

**A good year.** This past year on the City Council has been an invigorating, challenging and very rewarding experience for me. I am pleased with the progress we made in 2006 and I look forward to more engaging, hard work in 2007. I wish you and your families a happy and healthy year ahead and I thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Council Member. It is an honor.

**January Roundtable. *Ending Homelessness and Decriminalizing Poverty, January 16, 7-9 pm at Saint Martin's Table, 2001 Riverside Ave.*** Please join me, Cathy ten Broeke, Coordinator on Homelessness for Minneapolis and Hennepin County, Guy Gambill from the Council on Crime and Justice, Mark Anderson from the Barbara Schneider Foundation and Margaret Hastings from the Decriminalization of Homelessness Task Force for the next in my ongoing series of roundtable discussions. The City Council and County Board have adopted a ten-year plan to end homelessness in Minneapolis. The criminal justice system alone cannot provide the solution. Come learn about new approaches, share your ideas and help us develop better tools for responding to poverty and homelessness.

**2007 Budget.** On December 11, the City Council adopted the 2007 budget. The City Council voted 13-0 in favor of the \$1.3 billion budget that, among many other things, will fund 43 new police officers and invest \$1 million for new public safety technology. Some other highlights that I find encouraging:

\$125,000 for Youth Violence Prevention, to reduce violence among young people  
\$100,000 for Homeless Outreach Workers, to more constructively respond to people experiencing homelessness, and therefore reduce public safety expenses  
\$125,000 for improving our energy policy and fighting global climate change  
\$530,000 for dealing more effectively with vacant and boarded buildings and improving our housing stock.

**Libraries.** During the final budget proceedings, I was proud to make the motion that reallocated \$105,000 to libraries in one time funding. These funds came from three sources: \$35,000 from the "City Hall Meet and Greet" program, \$35,000 from street renovation and \$35,000 from public safety fuel costs. I also supported the \$1.1 million that the Ways and Means committee had already identified in additional funding for the libraries. I was one of the six Council Member minority who voted to make \$250,000 "of that ongoing" rather than "one-time" dollars. I had hoped that the Library Board would use this \$1,205,000 in new funding to keep all of our libraries open next year while long term solutions could be developed well before the 2008 budget.

Now that three libraries have been closed, I remain hopeful that we can find the resources necessary to reopen Southeast, Webber Park and Roosevelt, and use the remaining capital dollars from the referendum to renovate them. The upcoming discussions between the Council, the Library Board, Hennepin County, the Library Advisory Committee and the Legislature will be important to this and to identifying concrete proposals for long-term solutions for funding libraries

**Community Engagement Report Input Opportunities.** 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 on line at [http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/news/docs/CE\\_Report\\_final.pdf](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/news/docs/CE_Report_final.pdf), and send comments to [clara.perrin@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto: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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/news/20061121CE_Report.asp).

**African Development Center.** Understanding that traditional forms of financing involving interest are not allowed according to Islamic law (or Sharia), the City is partnering with the African Development Center (ADC) to establish an Alternative Financing Loan Program. The City will be allocating \$487,656 to this program, allowing Muslim entrepreneurs (and others) to raise capital without taking out interest. I am optimistic that this will help the formation of new immigrant small businesses.

**Report on Somali Youth Issues.** Shukri Adan will be presenting a report exploring some of the challenges facing Somali youth and recommendations for positive steps the City can take to help at the Health, Energy and Environment Committee sometime in January or February.

Recommendations include:

1. Addressing 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.

You can read the full report here <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/civil-rights/docs/somali-report.pdf>

**Condo Conversion Ordinance.** The Condo Conversion ordinance I am sponsoring will be coming for a public hearing on January 31, 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.

**Civil Rights Director Selection Committee.** I have accepted a position on the mayor’s Civil Rights Director Search Advisory Committee to help find a new Civil Rights Director. The Civil Rights Director post became vacant when former Director Jayne Khalifa was appointed as Minneapolis’ Deputy City Coordinator earlier this year. The Director of Enforcement and Community Outreach for the Civil Rights Department, Michael Browne, was named Interim Director until a permanent Director could be confirmed. The search is expected to be over in February or March. For details about the makeup and work of this committee see: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/mayor/news/20061218newsmayor2007civilrightsdirectionsearch.asp>

**Youth Roundtable.** In December I convened, with the Youth Coordinating Board, a meeting of area Youth Service providers in Ward 2 about the youth opportunities in the Cedar Riverside, Seward, Southeast Como, Prospect Park and Cooper neighborhoods. The meeting was attended by over 25 people. We discussed the Youth Coordinating Board’s Minneapolis Children and Youth Agenda 2020, reviewed data about youth in the ward, discussed what is available and started setting priorities for what is needed in the future.

**University Neighborhood Impact Report.** The report will come before the City Council Intergovernmental Relations Committee on January 9 and the full Council on January 12. The report will then go forward for University and Neighborhood approvals before being presented to the state legislature and governor in February. The current report focuses on housing and development issued and calls for the creation of a special University Planning District and an endowment to fund ongoing initiatives.

**SEMI.** The Council has adopted a resolution allowing “pooling” of Tax Increment Financing dollars in SEMI for infrastructure improvements to the Bioscience Subzone. These improvements include completing construction of Kasota Road, and Granary Road and stormwater management

facilities to the extent that funds are available. This will allow us to reduce a combined sewer overflow source and provide additional bicycle lanes and paths.

**29<sup>th</sup> and University.** The Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association (PPERRIA) has done very good work developing development objectives and design guidelines for the 29<sup>th</sup>/University Area, and these guidelines are about to be put in the Minneapolis Plan. The Planning Commission hearing that will consider these will be on January 8. This will then go before the City Council Zoning and Planning Committee meeting on February 1. To see the plan and read more, go here: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/planning/university-29th.asp>. At the same time, there is a Rezoning Study preparing for adoption of a Pedestrian Overlay District for SEMI and the 29<sup>th</sup>/University Area. There will be a public open house on **January 9, at 2221 University Ave SE, Room 116, 5:00 – 7:00 pm**. The Planning Commission and Council will act on the proposed Overlay District in March and April. To see these plans and read more, go here: [http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/planning/semi\\_29th\\_rezoning.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/planning/semi_29th_rezoning.asp)

**Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF).** The AHTF has allocated \$400,000 to the Currie Park Lofts project in Cedar Riverside and \$30,000 to the Van Cleve Court project in Southeast Como.

**Chief Bleskachek.** The Council has voted to remove Bonnie Bleskachek as Fire Chief. The terms of the settlement between the City and Bleskachek are the following: she is demoted to a non-supervisory position, and will never supervise personnel again; she will not contest the demotion; she is not paid severance; her pay is reduced by \$40,000/year; she was required to write a letter of remorse, which she did. I voted in favor of this settlement. I understand that some would have preferred that the City fire Bleskachek, but I believed the settlement was a much better option. Under the City's labor rules, a termination can be contested. Many times in the past, terminated employees have been reinstated by an arbitrator. I could not in good conscience take the risk that Bleskachek could be reinstated as a Battalion Chief, directly supervising Fire personnel. This settlement allows us to control the outcome of Bleskachek's removal as Chief. More importantly, it provides needed closure that will allow the Department to move on. The City Coordinator, and Human Resource director, with help from the City Attorney, will review our ordinances and policies to determine what additional requirements and policies are necessary to ensure that this sort of failure of leadership does not happen again.

**Meeting with Globe Tool.** In response to pressure from the South East Como neighborhood organization and others, as well as a letter from my office, Greatbatch Globe Tool met with community members last month. It sounds like the meeting was constructive, and may help set the stage for a positive relationship between the neighborhood and the company, with the overall goal of reducing and finally eliminating their trichloroethylene emissions. Additionally, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has informed me that they have requested that Globe conduct an Air Emissions Risk Analysis (AERA), which will determine whether or not the facility qualifies for the sort of permit they have gotten in the past, or if the MPCA will put site-specific conditions on their permit.

**Cedar Riverside Small Area Plan.** The Small Area Planning process is well underway – the first public meeting took place on December 12. For more information on the meeting, to take a survey about what you'd like to see on the West Bank, and for all other information about this important planning process, please go here: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/planning/cedar-riverside.asp>.

**Paint-A-Thon.** Elderly and disabled homeowners with homes in need of a fresh coat of paint are encouraged to apply now for the 2007 Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches Metro Paint-A-Thon. Each year, Paint-A-Thon rallies volunteers from corporations, congregations, and civic groups to paint homes for low-income elderly and disabled homeowners. The program is designed to help them remain in their homes and to keep neighborhoods looking upbeat. This year's paint weekend will take place **August 4-5**. Last year, 124 homes were painted. Homeowners must meet income guidelines, and homes are inspected and ranked in terms of

need. The application deadline is **May 11, 2007**. Homeowners interested in receiving an application should call the Metro Paint-A-Thon at 612-721-8687, ext. 321 and leave a message, including your address and phone number. The application also is available online at [www.gmcc.org/paint-a-thon](http://www.gmcc.org/paint-a-thon).

To qualify, the following conditions must be met:

- The prospective house must be located in Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott or Washington counties.
- The prospective house must be owned by persons 60 years old or older or by persons with a permanent physical disability.
- The house must be a single-family home and occupied by the owner.
- The house must be structurally sound.
- The house must be in need of paint.
- The exterior of the house cannot be in need of major repairs.
- The monthly household income cannot exceed \$1,633 for one person, \$2,200 for two people, \$2,766 for three people and \$3,333 for four people.

**Take the Minneapolis Energy Challenge!** <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/energychallenge>.

**New Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC).** The Council passed a resolution on the 22<sup>nd</sup> creating the PAC “to advise the Mayor and City Council on policies, programs, and actions for improving pedestrian safety, mobility, accessibility, and comfort; for promoting walking for transportation, recreation, and health purposes; and for strengthening the linkage between the pedestrian environment and public transportation.” The PAC will be a good partner to the existing Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC), and together they will be even more effective at making Minneapolis a friendly city in which to walk and bike.

**Openings on City Boards and Commissions.** There are openings on the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee, the Minneapolis Private Industry/Workforce Council (PIWC), the Latino Advisory Committee to the Mayor and City Council, the Minneapolis Arts Commission, the Minneapolis Telecommunications Network (MTN), the Dinkytown Special Service District Advisory Board, the Franklin Ave East Special Service District Advisory Board, the Hennepin Theatre Special Services District Advisory Board, the Stadium Village Special Service District Advisory Board, the Minneapolis Empowerment Zone Governance Board, the Youth Violence Prevention Steering Committee and the Pedestrian Advisory Committee. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).

Yours, in peace and cooperation,

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