

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood, 10-24-07

Cam's next Seward Office Hours:
Tuesday, November 27, 9:30-11:00am
Birchwood Café, 3311 E 25th St

Items:

- 1) Seward Coop City Financing
- 2) Library Merger meeting
- 3) Morningstar Coffee
- 4) NRP
- 5) Domestic Violence Pledge
- 6) Organic Composting pilot project
- 7) Non-Motorized Transportation Grant
- 8) Bike and Pedestrian Counts
- 9) Internal Affairs Audit
- 10) Street Furniture Policy
- 11) Street Lighting Policy
- 12) New City Logo
- 13) Facsimile Firearms
- 14) Employee Non-Discrimination Act Resolution
- 15) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) CPED staff are recommending \$536,000 in City financing for the Seward Coop expansion project, in the form of restructuring their Community Economic Development Fund loan for their 1997 expansion (giving the Coop access to more of the proceeds of the sale of their existing building), \$150,000 in a new Great Streets loan, \$150,000 in 2% loans and \$75,000 in a Business Development Fund loan. The existing 2% loan of \$18,119 and NRP loan of \$85,000 for the Coop's current building will be paid off when it is sold. This recommendation will come before the City's Community Development committee on Tuesday, November 6, 1:30pm, in the Council Chambers. I am supportive of it.
- 2) The Council and Library Board will meet jointly on **November 7, 6pm** at the **Central Library**, 300 Nicollet Mall, to for a public hearing on the proposed merger of the Minneapolis Public Library and the Hennepin County Library systems.
- 3) Morningstar Coffee claims to be nearing completion of installation of their afterburner. The City has given the company fines nearing \$4,000 for odor and noncompliance violations, and are poised to give an additional \$2,000 fine if necessary. Morningstar has appealed two of these fines, totaling \$1,200. Interested neighbors may attend the company's appeal hearing (but will be given no opportunity to speak), on Tuesday, November 6th, 10am in room 321 of City Hall.
- 4) Last week, the Council took 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:
 1. A proposed administrative structure to support community engagement activities;
 2. Expectations of services community or neighborhood organizations would provide through citizen participation contracts; and
 3. 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 dedicating City (and hopefully other jurisdictions') funds to neighborhoods for both administrative support and discretionary investment.

- 5) Today, 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.
- 6) The Council has authorized the Solid Waste & Recycling department to develop a pilot program to collect source-separated organic materials from Linden Hills residents and, hopefully, schools. The City will be applying for Hennepin County grants to support this pilot program. The goal is to learn lessons that could help the City build a citywide organics composting program, to divert a large portion of our waste away from the garbage burner and into reuse.
- 7) The City has received a grant for more than \$5.7 Million to work on pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements, and a \$900,000 grant to fund three years of a bicycle and pedestrian Ambassador program, to help connect more experienced riders and walkers with people who are not currently walking or biking but want to start. The City has also hired a consultant to complete the Citywide Pedestrian Master Plan.
- 8) Public Works and Transit for Livable Communities conducted a new round of bike and pedestrian counts in September, which show some dramatic increases over the 2003 counts in many locations. For example, bicycle traffic on the Third Avenue Bridge increased 96% between the two counts, and the numbers increased 76% on the Hennepin Avenue Bridge. Bicycle traffic was up 62% on Hennepin Avenue between 6th and 7th streets, and up 35% on Marquette Avenue between 6th and 7th streets. The opening of new phases of the Midtown Greenway has also dramatically increased bicycling through those parts of southwest and south Minneapolis.
- 9) 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.
- 10) 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/.
- 11) The meetings about the new proposed City street lighting policy are over, but I would still like input from residents about the proposal, especially about the proposed fee. I am committed to fighting for Dark Sky Compliant lighting fixtures, which will help save energy and reduce glare and light pollution.
- 12) The Council has approved a process to research and develop a new brand identity for the City, including a new logo. This plan must come back to Council for approval, will require no additional money, and should be finished to coincide with the Minneapolis Sesquicentennial.
- 13) With my support, the Council has passed an ordinance defining, and regulating the carrying and possession of "facsimile firearms." This will help improve public safety by taking the restrictions that already exist on real guns and placing those same restrictions on gun replicas that closely match the real thing. According to the new ordinance, carrying or having a facsimile firearm in a public place is prohibited. Facsimile firearms must be transported in the same way as real firearms, secured in a closed container and locked in the trunk of a vehicle.
- 14) I am sponsoring a resolution calling on Congress to follow Minneapolis' lead by including transgender persons in the Employee Non-Discrimination Act (or ENDA).
- 15) There are openings on the Minneapolis Arts Commission (closes 11/9/2007), Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People With Disabilities (11/9/07), Housing Board of Appeals (closes 10/26/2007), Latino Advisory Committee to the Mayor and City Council (11/16/2007), Public Health Advisory Committee (11/9/2007), Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (10/26/2007), Rental Dwelling License Board of Appeals (11/16/2007), Senior Citizen Advisory Committee (11/9/2007), and Zoning Board of Adjustment (10/19/2007). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.