



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood 1-27-10

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

Items:

- 1) New Council Committees
- 2) Violence Continues to Plague Minneapolis
- 3) Recycling in Multifamily Buildings
- 4) Bike Sharing Coming Soon
- 5) 15 Police Officers Hired Back
- 6) Indoors Farmers Markets
- 7) Internal Audits
- 8) Changing the Redistricting Process
- 9) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) The new Council was sworn in on January 4, and the President, Vice President, committee chairs and committee assignments have been chosen. Council Member Johnson was again elected President and Council Member Lilligren Vice President. For the first time, I will be chairing a Council committee: Elections. This is not a "standing" committee that meets once every cycle, but only as needed. This will enable me to continue to lead on issues such as ranked choice voting - especially pursuing RCV-capable voting equipment - changing the redistricting process, as well as voting rights, turnout and registration. I will be vice chair of the Regulatory Services Energy and Environment and Public Safety and Health committees. I will also serve on the following committees: Executive (as Minority Leader), Community Development, Zoning and Planning, Rules, Taxes and Claims. I continue to serve as City Council representative on the following outside, multi-jurisdictional boards: Joint City County Lead Task Force, Minneapolis/St. Paul Family Housing Finance Board, Red Rock Corridor Commission, Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee, and, at my request, I will now also serve on the Youth Coordinating Board.
- 2) Despite another year in 2009 of significant reductions in violent crime, the first week of 2010 was marked by five homicides, several involving youth and a shocking increase in violence in Minneapolis. The worst of these occurred in Seward, where three men were shot and killed in the Seward Market at the corner of 24th and Franklin. Two 17 years olds have been arrested and charged with this crime. I thank Seward Neighborhood Group, the Seward Civic and Commerce Association and Seward Redesign for your efforts to bring the community together in the aftermath of this tragedy. The events of this month demonstrate how far we still have to go to prevent violence in our city and I will be calling us to move more quickly on an effort I initiated last year calling for a formal "morbidity review" process for every instance when a homicide (or other violent crime) involves a youth. This will allow us to deconstruct the circumstances and possible causes behind these events and identify where we went wrong and what we can do better to prevent these in the future.

If you need this material in an alternative format, please contact Matt Bower at (612) 673-2188 or Matthew.Bower@ci.minneapolis.mn.us

If you want help translating this call - Hmong- Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2188;

Spanish - Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llama 612-673-2188;

Somali - Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' an wac 612-673-2188.

- 3) I have introduced subject matter of an ordinance that will strengthen an existing law requiring that apartment buildings provide recycling service to their tenants. City staff have found that the current law is basically unenforceable, due to a lack of any consequences spelled out in ordinance, and that this significantly reduces compliance. I am open to multiple approaches, including providing a fine schedule for violations of the existing ordinance, or making compliance with it a rental licensing standard.
- 4) The expected Non-Motorized Transportation Project allocation of \$1.7 million has come through for the Nice Ride bike sharing system. The City has authorized an agreement with Nice Ride to implement, operate and maintain the system, and has authorized permits for the bike sharing infrastructure to be placed on City right-of-way. The organizers expect the system to be up and running sometime this spring. Several kiosk docking stations are planned for Franklin Avenue in Seward.
- 5) Fifteen Minneapolis police officers who received lay-off notices last year are back on the street because the US Department of Justice approved the City's application to modify a previously awarded COPS Hiring Recovery Program grant of federal stimulus dollars. This has allowed us to re-hire 13 officers. Six of those officers had previously been serving in the Patrol Division of the MPD; the other seven graduated from the Police Academy last month. Additionally, the City of Minneapolis Department of Regulatory Services agreed to provide funding that allowed the MPD to rehire two more officers. This funding is slotted to cover one officer who will work in conjunction with Regulatory Services personnel on problem properties and one officer who will work with Animal Control on enforcement issues.
- 6) Working with city staff and other Council Members we are reviewing several different proposals to offer farmers markets indoors during winter months. For farmers markets held in grocery, a new policy is being written that makes clear that the City does not need to regulate them as "farmers markets," but treat them as a grocery store operating normally. For other indoor spaces, the farmer's market ordinance is being amended to allow licensed farmers markets indoors. I'm supportive these moves, which are in keeping with the goals of Homegrown Minneapolis and have involved the participation of the Homegrown Minneapolis Implementation Task Force.
- 7) I voted against a move to take the City's audit functions away from the Board of Estimate and Taxation and move them to a newly-created "Audit Committee" made up of three Council Members and three citizen appointees, one from the Council, one from the Mayor and one from the Park Board. This was, in my opinion, an ill-advised action for the Council to take, for three main reasons. First, I believe that it is preferable to have our auditors report to a more independent body, like the Board of Estimate, rather than to what will be, in effect, a completely Council-controlled body (the Council will, in effect, control four of six seats on this body). Second, the voters just rejected, less than two months ago, a proposal to scrap the Board of Estimate. One of the main arguments used by the pro-BOE side was that it houses the City's audit function. The Council appears to be disregarding the will of the voters. Third, the Council rejected a common-sense amendment I offered that would have made this bad proposal a little less bad, by adding a seat for an elected member of the BOE to this new, unnecessary audit committee.
- 8) After the 2010 Census, the City will have to re-draw our ward maps. I believe that the citizens of Minneapolis deserve a redistricting process they can understand, participate in and have confidence in. To change the redistricting process, however, will require a charter amendment. I believe that such a change should not be made by the Council, but by the voters. To present a proposal for an improved process to the voters in 2010, work needs to begin now to compile accurate information, research and expertise as well conduct a community involvement process. I believe that the Charter Commission is the appropriate body to lead that research and community involvement effort. With the appropriate support from the City staff, the Charter Commission is well positioned to study and recommend charter amendments that would lead us to a better redistricting process in the future." On January 6 I presented this issue to the Charter Commission and they agreed to set up a task force to begin working on it. I have been asked to convene the first meeting of this task force in the coming weeks.
- 9) There are openings on the Minneapolis Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee (closes 02/05), Civilian Police Review Authority (closes 01/29), Public Health Advisory Committee (open until filled), Senior Citizens Advisory Committee (closes 02/12). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.