

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the Prospect Park East River Road Neighborhood, 3-26-07

Cam's next Prospect Park Office Hours:
Pratt School, Tuesday April 17, 9:30-11am

Items:

- 1) Roundtable: the Future of Our Schools
- 2) Dining Out for Life
- 3) Downtown Transportation Plan public meetings
- 4) 1717 Franklin Ave SE
- 5) Future of NRP
- 6) Library Merger
- 7) Community Engagement Report (NRP)
- 8) Spray Paint ordinance
- 9) Rain Barrels
- 10) Tree Trust
- 11) Window Replacement Loan Fund
- 12) Wind Turbines
- 13) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) The School Board is proposing significant changes to our neighborhood schools, including merging Pratt and Tuttle, and closing Tuttle. What can we do as communities and a City to better support our schools, and how should we prepare for these proposed changes? Please join me and other special invited guests for a Roundtable Discussion on the **Future of Our Schools, April 16, 7-9pm, Van Cleve Park, 901 15th Ave SE.**
- 2) Please join me for a **Dining Out for Life** lunch at the **Cliquot Club, 2929 East 25th St, on Thursday, April 26, 2007.** A percentage of the proceeds of your meal will go to benefit all the services for HIV-infected individuals offered by the Aliveness Project. For more information, please go to <http://www.aliveness.org/>.
- 3) The City will host a pair of public meetings in April to discuss recommended changes to Downtown streets, sidewalks, bike lanes and bus routes. The meetings will include a chance to give feedback on a draft of the Downtown transportation action plan. Among the changes proposed in the draft: concentrating bus lines on key north-south and east-west corridors, opening some one-way streets to two-way traffic, and expanding bike and pedestrian paths. The first meetings will be on Wednesday, April 11, 11:30-1 in the Central Library's Doty Room, and Thursday, April 12, 5-7pm in the gathering room at St. Olaf Catholic Church, 215 S. 8th St.
- 4) The Zoning Board of Adjustment supported Robert Sykora's appeal last Thursday, granting variances that will allow for a substantial addition and remodel. I will be working with Public Works to resolve the remaining issue of the two requested curb cuts that will provide parking for the house without negatively impacting safety on SE Franklin.
- 5) I am generally supportive of HF822, a bill in the Legislature introduced by Reps Clark, Kahn and Mullery, to require the NRP Policy Board to evaluate the need for continued NRP funding and prepare recommendations to continue funding the program. I am not sure I can convince my colleagues to support this bill on the Minneapolis Legislative Agenda, but I will try.

- 6) I was one of two Council Members who voted against the proposed merger of the Minneapolis and Hennepin County library systems. To be clear, I am not convinced that this is absolutely the wrong idea. However, I do believe that the community has not been adequately consulted, given the immensity of the idea. The majorities on the Council and Library Board have voted to give half a billion dollars in assets (in land, facilities and debt payments) to Hennepin County over the next decades, while surrendering our ownership and control. They have voted to very significantly change the Charter outside of the normal Charter amendment process (either a unanimous vote of the Council or a majority approval from Minneapolis voters in a referendum), by asking the Legislature to change our constitution without the consent of residents. I am also very concerned that the representation Minneapolis residents have on the Library Board will be lost, and it will become more difficult to hold anyone accountable for the performance of the library system.
- 7) The NRP Policy Board has released its report on the Minneapolis Community Engagement system. You can download the report here:
<http://www.nrp.org/R2/AboutNRP/PB/PBAgenda2007/PBA20070326.html>.
- 8) I supported Council Member Schiff's Spray Paint ordinance changes, which respond to the needs of hardware stores while better regulating the sale of spray paint, paint sticks and broad-tip markers to minors in our ongoing effort to fight graffiti. Under the new ordinance, these materials must either be under continuous supervision or inaccessible to the public. In addition, a \$42,000 grant from the National Council on Prevention of Delinquency (a hardware retail industry group) will be used to conduct one-time checks on establishments selling spray paint, similar to our tobacco compliance program. It is my hope that these tightened regulations will help decrease vandalism by reducing young people's access to graffiti materials.
- 9) The City has received a \$100K grant from the EPA to provide 2,000 rain barrels at a reduced cost of \$45 (or half of standard retail price) to Mpls residents. Starting in late March, you can order one either online at www.thereusecenter.com/rainbarrels.html or over the phone at 612-724-2608.
- 10) Tree Trust, the nonprofit that Minneapolis works with to plant trees on private property, is providing 1500 trees to residents of Minneapolis. For \$15, participating residents will receive a tree, mulch, and information about proper planting and energy conservation. If you're interested in greening your city by planting a tree, or know anyone else who might be, please go here:
<http://www.treetrust.org/orderhere/index.html> or call 651-644-5800.
- 11) Lead paint on windows of old houses is now the primary source of lead poisoning in Minnesota. To deal with this problem, the Minneapolis/Hennepin County Lead Task Force (which I co-chair with CM Glidden and Commissioner Dorfman) has drafted a proposal to the State to create a revolving loan fund to replace all windows in pre-1950s homes. I testified at the Legislature on this topic this month, and I urge you to call your legislators and encourage them to support the bill, SF1015, authored by Linda Higgins. One positive side effect of this program, once created, is that it will help improve the energy efficiency of older Minnesota homes.
- 12) Planning staff are finishing a draft ordinance change to allow broader use of Wind Energy Conversion Systems in Minneapolis. I hope to shepherd these commonsense reforms through the Council process early this year.
- 13) There are openings on the Charter Commission, the Empowerment Zone Board, the Housing Board of Appeals, the Latino Advisory Committee, the Public Health Advisory Committee, the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority Board and the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.