

**News from Cam Gordon**  
**Council Member, Second Ward**  
**April 2009**

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

**April Roundtable Discussion.** Please join me for a roundtable discussion on **supporting our neighborhood businesses** on **April 23rd**, 7-9pm at **Joe's Market and Deli**, 1828 SE Como Ave. In these tough economic times, it's more important than ever for us to support our small, community-based independent businesses. I will be joined by Longfellow Business Association Co-Chair Scott Cramer, Seward Civic and Commerce Association President Jim Welna, Southeast Business Association Executive Director Michael McLaughlin for a conversation about the vital role of small businesses and business associations in our local economy.

**Heritage Preservation Ordinance.** Responding to the concerns of neighborhood groups, I attempted to strengthen staff's proposed Heritage Preservation ordinance change. I succeeded in more specifically defining the concept of "destruction" to include "the removal, damage, or enclosure of architectural, mechanical, or landscape features that may have an adverse effect on the historical integrity and significance of a property including, but not limited to, the removal of the primary façade(s), character defining façade(s), or the removal of the roof of the structure for the purpose of raising the overall height of the building or roof." However, I was unable to convince my colleagues to support an amendment I had planned to bring that would have required all demolition permit applicants to inform appropriate neighborhood group(s) and Council Member(s). This was disappointing, but in the end I supported the amended ordinance in part because of other enhanced public hearing notifications and other clarifications that close some gaps and enhance our ability to preserve historic and potentially historic resources. Additional administrative changes (not in ordinance) that call for the distribution of weekly reports of Zoning and Historic Preservation Applications will keep neighbors and neighborhood groups better informed about demolitions. I will watch carefully to see if this process meets neighborhoods' needs. If it doesn't, I will explore ways to require this in ordinance. You can read more about my thoughts on this issue on my blog.

**University Ordinance Making Authority.** The University has had a bill introduced at the Legislature (House File 1536) that would give them the power to make ordinances on any subject, covering all University owned and controlled land. You can read the text of the bill here: <http://wdoc.house.leg.state.mn.us/leg/LS86/HF1536.0.pdf>. The U's contention is that this will make it easier for them to craft consistent policies (with real consequences) for tailgating on U-owned parking lots, including some on the West Bank and in Prospect Park. City staff and I have some significant concerns about this proposal, and have been working with the University to see if there is any way to narrow either the geographic or subject matter scope of the proposed powers in order to win the City's support. I have also committed to work with University staff to explore possible changes to City ordinances that improve regulation of tailgating. You can read a University policy on tailgating here: [policy.umn.edu/groups/ppd/documents/policy/tailgating\\_pol.cfm](http://policy.umn.edu/groups/ppd/documents/policy/tailgating_pol.cfm).

**University District Alliance.** The Alliance's accomplishments were shared at a legislative Senate hearing on March 25<sup>th</sup>, and will be presented to the House in early April. Major accomplishments include a Homeownership Preservation Program that has preserved at least 22 homes for long-term owner-occupancy, a Homebuyer Incentive Program that will attract at least 15 new homebuyers to the University District, a website featuring the benefits of living in the University District at [www.livenearyourwork.org](http://www.livenearyourwork.org), a start on commercial district streetscape improvements in Cedar Riverside. The full University District Alliance Progress Report 2007 - 2009 is on the web at [www.community.umn.edu/alliance](http://www.community.umn.edu/alliance).

**Police Policy and Procedure Manual.** Council Member Schiff and I have convinced our colleagues to direct the Police Department (MPD) to return to us in July with a report on how the

MPD's Policy and Procedure Manual is changed, and how the process could include more input from Council Members, the Mayor's Office, the Civilian Review Authority and the public. We are concerned about some instances of policies having been changed in ways that we believe are bad for the City. One major example is that the Taser policy which the Council directed the Police Department to put in place in 2006 was changed the next year, without the CRA or City Council being consulted or informed, to allow much more flexible use of Tasers than originally allowed. Given the high-profile Taser death on the North Side last year, we are concerned that this policy change may be implicated. The purpose of the report in July is to start a discussion about what level of input and notification people outside of MPD should have when decisions like these are being made. I am extremely pleased that we're moving forward on this. Again, to read more detail on this topic please go to my blog.

**Relative Homesteads.** Responding to a new statute, the City's Regulatory Services department has put in place a new policy that will require all single family dwellings that are relative homesteaded to obtain a rental license. Affected property owners are being provided with a rental license application and instructions for how to submit the application and fee to Housing Inspection Services. Fully homesteaded single family dwellings will not be required to have a rental license. The effected properties are not subject to the \$1,000 fee for conversion of a property from owner-occupied to rental. I am supportive of this move, as relative homesteaded properties have been highlighted as a major issue for many U-area neighborhoods. Because these houses have been rented without a license, they have been significantly harder to control.

**Upholstered Furniture on Porches.** I am supportive of part of the ordinance brought forward by Council Member Hofstede, which would ban upholstered furniture on yards. However, for a number of reasons I cannot support the more far-reaching portion of the ordinance which would ban all upholstered furniture "not manufactured for outside use" from porches that are not completely enclosed. I believe that public safety benefits when people spend time on their porches, and would hate to put something in place that would discourage this positive behavior. I also have concerns that this ordinance is redundant – couches on porches that are moldy, rotting, or habitat for wildlife are already prohibited. The evidence I have seen makes clear that couches on porches are not a significant fire risk. I am supportive, in general, of reusing existing manufactured goods as long as possible, rather than putting them into the waste stream. I am also concerned about the economic justice of this proposal, which would allow only those who can afford specifically-manufactured outdoor furniture to enjoy their porches. Lastly, I am uncomfortable telling people they can't do things that are not, in themselves, harmful. For these reasons, I will not be supporting the ordinance as written, but only the portion regarding upholstered furniture on yards.

**Minneapolis Seventh Least Wasteful.** According to a nationwide study by Nalgene that evaluated waste reduction – including recycling, using public transit, and energy conservation – in the nation's 25 largest cities, Minneapolis came in seventh least wasteful in the nation. Interestingly, especially when considered in the context of the "upholstered furniture" ban being considered by the Council, Minneapolis ranked third in buying second-hand items, including clothing, electronics, and furniture. For complete rankings and results of the study, visit [www.leastwastefulcities.com](http://www.leastwastefulcities.com).

**Bicycling Sustainability Indicators.** My staff has led a process to change the Minneapolis Sustainability Indicator relating to bicycling. This week, the City's Bicycle Advisory Committee unanimously supported much more aggressive targets, including a bicycle mode share of 6% by 2014, 55 more miles of bike lanes and trails by 2015 and a 60% increase in the number of cyclists measured in bike counts by 2014. These recommendations will be reviewed by the Citizens Environmental Advisory Committee and the Environmental Coordinating Team before being acted on by the Council later this year. For more info, check out the blog.

**Taxi Fares.** I have introduced an ordinance to delay this year's reduction in the fares that taxicabs can charge. This change was the result of a formula that is strongly influenced by fuel

prices. I agree that this should be a major focus, but other economic realities must also be taken into account. There will be a public hearing on this issue at the Public Safety and Regulatory Services committee on May 13.

**Charter Amendment Meetings.** Council Member Ostrow's proposals to amend the Charter, including the elimination of the Park Board and Board of Estimate and Taxation, and the creation of a new City Administrator, will be discussed at four open meetings organized by the Charter Commission: Thursday, April 23 at Minnesota Transitions School (Board Room), 2872 26th Ave S; Tuesday, April 28, at North Regional Library, 1315 Lowry Ave N; Thursday, April 30 at Northeast Library, 2200 Central Ave NE; and Thursday, May 7 at St. Joan of Arc Church (lower level), 4500 Clinton Ave S. All meetings will take place from 6:30-8pm. If you have any opinions on these proposed amendments, I encourage you to attend one or more of these meetings and make your voice heard.

**Park Dedication Fee.** The Council is scheduled to vote on a new Park Dedication Fee ordinance on April 10. If passed, it would require developers to either dedicate land near their development site for public open space or to pay a Park Dedication Fee. State law requires that the same ordinance be adopted by the City Council and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. I am very supportive of this effort and am working for a fair compromise that will give us this tool (that is already in place in St. Paul and many suburban communities) to get needed funds to create new park space and make capital improvements to existing parks close to new developments. One amendment I am supporting is to delay its start date one year, to January 2011.

**Great Streets.** The Council has updated the Great Streets program, which provides resources to revitalize and sustain neighborhood business districts, in ways that will significantly increase the availability of the program in Ward 2. Most importantly, the program now includes the proposed station locations on the Central Corridor LRT line, increasing the program's coverage on the West Bank and in Prospect Park. The Central Corridor station on the West Bank has been listed as an "intervene" area, which makes all applications from the area more likely to be funded.

**2009 Climate Change Grants.** Based on the success of the last two years, the City has funded another round of climate change grants. These grants have been quite successful in mobilizing citizens to take measurable actions to reduce their carbon emissions. I encourage all Second Ward organizations to apply for this funding. Applications for the Micro Grants of up to \$1,500 are due by 4pm on April 16, and applications for the Innovation Grants of up to \$10,000 are due by 4pm on April 20. See here for more information:  
[www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/ClimateChangeGrants2009.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/ClimateChangeGrants2009.asp).

**Trees for \$25.** The City has also partnered again with Tree Trust to offer trees to residents for only \$25. If you're interested, you should visit [www.treetrust.org/orderhere](http://www.treetrust.org/orderhere) after the trees become available on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, but don't wait too long: there are only 1,000 trees being offered, and last year they went very quickly.

**Healthy Start.** The Department of Health and Family Support has issued a request for proposals for the Twin Cities Healthy Start program. Healthy Start is a federally funded program to reduce infant mortality and improve birth outcomes in targeted high risk communities in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The City has been a Healthy Start grantee for the past nine years, and is anticipating being funded for an additional five years from June 1, 2009 through May 31, 2014. Funding will be awarded to approved agencies annually, with the second through fifth years contingent upon federal funding and agency performance. For info contact  
[health.familysupport@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:health.familysupport@ci.minneapolis.mn.us)

**Domestic Violence Initiative.** The City is launching a new citywide program designed to reduce domestic violence. Officers who arrive at a misdemeanor domestic violence call will now do more investigative work at the scene, giving prosecutors more information to prosecute a case. These new strategies have been successful in increasing the conviction rate of misdemeanor domestic

violence-related cases from 54% to 76% in the 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct. I am very supportive of this program, which offers the opportunity to interrupt the cycle of violence.

**Minneapolis Employee Retirement Fund.** The Council has unanimously passed a resolution supporting the merger of the Minneapolis Employees Retirement Fund (MERF) and the State-level Public Employees Retirement Fund (PERF), and for such a merger to be fair to the City's finances.

**Street Furniture.** The Council has decided to reject all of the proposals we received for the coordinated street furniture program, and negotiate to extend the existing bus shelter contract with CBS Outdoor. We've also accepted the donation of bus shelters for Marquette and Second Avenues in downtown from Clear Channel Outdoor.

**Restorative Justice.** The Council has contracted with Restorative Justice Community Action (serving Southeast Como and Cedar Riverside), Midtown Community Restorative Justice and Seward Longfellow Restorative Justice Partnership this year.

**Dania Hall Site.** Community Planning and Economic Development staff are continuing to work towards a Request for Proposals for the Dania Hall lot. You can find more information about the process, including notes from the community meeting on February 27<sup>th</sup>, here: [http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/dania\\_hall\\_site.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/dania_hall_site.asp). My office is helping coordinate City resources for a possible community garden for the site that will be an interim use until redevelopment occurs. I have also been asked to meet with City staff and the Dania Partners.

**African Development Center.** The Community Development committee has authorized a \$200,000 Great Streets Gap Financing Loan to the African Development Center for their purchase of the old North Country Coop site. I was proud to support this great project, and I expect it to easily pass the full Council next Friday.

**Granary Road Construction.** The Council has authorized Public Works staff to acquire properties that will be used to construct Granary Road and the related stormwater ponds.

**Bioscience Business Development.** The City has accepted Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Bioscience Business Development grant of \$3.5 million for the Southeast Minneapolis University Research Park.

**Howe School.** The City's Community Planning and Economic Development will be consulting with the Minneapolis Schools for the sale of Howe School.

**Tom Leavey.** Thanks to Southeast Como resident Tom Leavey for his service on the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee, and his commitment to continue to serve on the Committee.

**Openings on City Boards and Commissions.** There are openings on the Workforce Council (closes 5/8), Public Health Advisory Committee (closes 4/10) and Rental Dwelling License Board of Appeals (closes 4/24). 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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