

## Second Ward February 2010 E-newsletter

**News from Cam Gordon**  
**Council Member, Second Ward**  
**February, 2010**

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

**2010 Off to a Violent Start.** As you've likely heard, there was a terrible tragedy in the Seward neighborhood on January 6. Three men were shot and killed in the Seward Market at the corner of 24th and Franklin. Minneapolis police responded effectively and professionally, arresting two seventeen-year-olds, both of Minneapolis, for the crime within days of its occurrence. They were charged with first-degree murder on January 15 and were indicted on February 5. I join the Police Chief and entire Minneapolis Police Department in thanking the community for coming together to help police solve this terrible crime. I hope that this will mark a turning point in relations between the MPD and the community. I also want to thank the Seward Neighborhood Group, Seward Redesign, and the Seward Civic and Commerce Association for doing so much to bring the whole community together in the aftermath of this horrific event. There was also a nonfatal shooting on the East Bank campus later in the month. Two arrests were recently made in this matter as well. I will continue my efforts through the City's ongoing youth violence prevention work to keep guns out of the hands of our kids and keep these sorts of violence from recurring in our communities.

**New Council.** 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, voting rights and improving voter turnout and registration. I will be vice chair of two committees: the Regulatory Services, Energy & Environment committee and Public Safety & Health committee. 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, multijurisdictional 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.

**Winter Parking Restrictions Went into Effect February 11.** Public Works is has instituted Winter Parking Restrictions, which **bans parking on the even sides of residential streets** (all streets that are NOT Snow Emergency routes or Parkways). They took this step for the first time since 2001 to ensure that our emergency responders (fire trucks and other emergency vehicles) are able to navigate every Minneapolis roadway after the large amounts of snow we have received this winter. The parking restrictions went into effect at 8am **Thursday, February 11**, and stay in effect until April 1, though the restrictions may be lifted prior to April 1 if snow accumulations no longer pose a challenge for emergency vehicles. Any vehicles left on the even side of any residential street between February 11 and April 1 are at risk of being towed. Please help spread the word to your neighbors, so that this unfortunately necessary restriction causes as little disruption as possible.

**New Ward 2 Intern.** I am in the process of hiring Lolla Mohammed Nur to join the Ward 2 Office staff as a community outreach and research intern. Lolla is a junior in the honors program at the University majoring in journalism and political science. She has worked as a reporter for the Minnesota Daily and the Twin Cities Daily planet and has also interned for the Council on American-Islamic Relations. Her primary work objectives are to 1) improve communications, involvement and connection to the community with a special focus on East African populations

and U of M and Augsburg students, and 2) to work on youth issues including youth violence prevention, student housing issues and youth development and employment.

**Solar on the Convention Center.** The Council has directed our staff to negotiate and execute a solar development contract with Best Power International. Unlike the vendor we originally attempted to contract with, EyeOn Energy, Best Power has brought a project of this scope to fruition in another location. They seem to have the capacity to actually deliver. We have also asked the Office of Energy Security and the Public Utilities Commission to re-designate the \$2 million grant that we received jointly with EyeOn Energy as a grant solely to the City of Minneapolis. I am hopeful that we will be successful, and be able to move forward on what will be the largest solar installation in the state.

**Central Corridor.** As you may have heard, the Central Corridor LRT project is included in President Obama's proposed budget. It sounds like the negotiations with the University are making progress, and the three additional stations in St. Paul have been funded, hopefully reducing opposition to the line. Unfortunately, now Minnesota Public Radio has added itself to the list of those filing a lawsuit. While lawsuits in these kinds of projects are common, it is discouraging that the Met Council has been unable to resolve more of these concerns by now. I remain optimistic that we will be able to keep this important project on schedule.

**Central Corridor Business Collaborative.** In January I convened a meeting of leaders from the Stadium Village, West Bank and Southeast business groups to help start organizing for the construction and other impacts of the LRT. They agreed to form a Minneapolis Central Corridor Business Collaborative. This new group will likely work with the larger, existing Central Corridor Business Resources Collaborative, which also includes St. Paul businesses.

**Central Corridor Community Agreements.** Over the past year I have been working with a group of community members, businesses, organizations and other elected officials to create a draft Central Corridor Community Agreement(s). Our intent is to establish a clear set of stakeholder agreements to ensure community benefits from development of the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit route. The first step toward an agreement is to create a "Coordinating Committee" to complete the agreement for adoption by different governments, organizations, and individuals and to oversee its implementation. I as first step we established a Nominating Committee to prepare a slate of community/business candidates for endorsement at a Community Assembly on **Sunday, March 28, 2010 at 2pm at the Central Corridor Resource Center in St. Paul.** They are now requesting nominations (self-nominations welcome). Please see [www.dcc-stpaul-mpls.org](http://www.dcc-stpaul-mpls.org) for more information.

**Social Host Ordinance.** I have authored a "Social Host" ordinance that will close a loophole that currently prevents the police from citing people who host events where alcohol is available to minors. The courts have ruled that this is not covered by the existing prohibition on providing alcohol to minors. A similar ordinance passed in St. Paul last year, a number of high-profile cases of alcohol-related accidents and crimes, both in the Second Ward and around the state, along with statistical data that clearly point to the dangers of underage drinking, prompted me to take this on. You can read more of the rationales for this ordinance at my blog. The ordinance has unanimously passed the full Council. The Public Safety and Health committee also passed a staff direction I put forward, making clear that the Council expects that appropriate Social Hosting citations will be eligible for restorative justice, and asking the Attorney's Office to report back to the Council on how the ordinance has been enforced one year from now. I will pay careful attention to this over the next year to evaluate its effectiveness, and consider possible improvements.

**Department Head Reappointment Process Officially Underway.** On February 3rd the Mayor took the first step to reappointing all of the department heads, except the Civil Rights director. He has moved the following to be appointed for 2 year terms and referred the names to the appropriate committees for public hearings in February and March: Patrick Todd, City Assessor; Susan Segal,

City Attorney; Steven Bosacker, City Coordinator; Mike Christensen, Director, CPED; Alex Jackson, Fire Chief; Gretchen Musicant, Commissioner of Health; Steve Kotke, Director, Public Works; and Rocco Forte, Director, Regulatory Services. The Mayor has also formally put forward Timothy Dolan for Police Chief for another 3 year term. The Police Chief appointment will return to the Executive Committee in February for a vote and then, if the committee votes to forward his nomination, to a public hearing that will likely be held March 3<sup>rd</sup>. A search is being planned to find a new director of the Civil Rights Department.

**Employee Survey Results.** The Council learned the results of the 2009 employee survey this month. The survey, done every four years, offers us a good indication of employee satisfaction and where we need to improve. It also gives us a chance to see how employee opinions differ on a department by department basis. While some results are encouraging, this year it is clear many employees are concerned about their futures and their work load, too many do not feel valued and we need to find more ways to appreciate innovation. For the full results visit:

<https://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/city-coordinator/survey.asp>

**Recycling in Multifamily Dwellings.** 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 has found the current law difficult to enforce, and that this significantly reduces compliance. Staff is recommending that we clarify the fines for violations, remove the underused and unnecessary system for building owners to request waivers from the ordinance, and make compliance with the ordinance a licensing standard for rental licenses. This matter is scheduled to come before the Regulatory Energy and Environment committee for a public hearing on **March 22**, at 1:30pm in Council Chambers.

**Election Committee February 19.** As the new Chair of the Council's Elections Committee, I have scheduled the first meeting of the year for February 19 at 10am. The primary focus of the meeting will be receive and discuss the results of a report from the St. Cloud University study of last year's Ranked Choice Voting election

**Reforming Redistricting Process.** After the 2010 Census, the City will have to re-draw our ward (as well as Minneapolis school and park board district) 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. To help get the process started, in January I presented this issue to the Charter Commission and they agreed to set up a task force to begin working on it and have since sent a letter to the Council requesting the support of City staff to help them review best practices and alternative to the redistricting process. As Elections Committee chair I am helping the task force set up a meeting on March 25 at 7 pm to gather input on what people think should be the principles and values that guide a redistricting process and decisions. If you want to participate in this please let me know.

**Service Availability Fees.** The Metropolitan Council funds its sanitary sewer work throughout the metro region by requiring new development to pay "Service Availability Charges." This system is broken, partly due to the downturn in the economy. Less development is occurring, meaning less funding for the sanitary sewer system. The Met Council chose, a little over a year ago, to begin charging full SAC costs (\$2,000 per 8 new seats in a restaurant) for sidewalk cafes. The City, among many other interested stakeholders, cried foul; sidewalk café seating offsets indoor seating, and can only be used on sunny days in warm months. The Met Council, to their credit, reconsidered and decided to charge only 25% of a full SAC for outdoor seating. However,

they declined to make this necessary, common-sense action retroactive. This has caught at least one Second Ward business, True Thai restaurant, in a terrible bind, owing \$6,000 for a sidewalk café that was used for only one season, and that would only cost \$1,500 today. I object strongly to this action by the Met Council, and I am searching for any way that these inappropriate and undue costs will not be borne by Minneapolis small businesses. This incident strengthens my resolve that the SAC system is badly designed and should be radically altered. Development in the built environment in Minneapolis does not require new sewer infrastructure – our sewers have existed for more than a hundred years – and the funds taken from Minneapolis small businesses go to pay for sewers in far-flung outer suburbs. Basically, density is funding sprawl. This is not wise regional planning, and argues yet again for an elected and accountable Metropolitan Council.

**Bike Sharing Moves Forward.** 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 with several kiosks/bike stations in Ward 2 in Seward, Prospect Park, the University area and the West Bank.

**City Hiring Back 15 Officers.** Fifteen Minneapolis police officers who received lay-off notices last year will be on the street, thanks to additional funding sought by the City. The United States Department of Justice approved the City's application to modify a previously awarded COPS Hiring Recovery Program grant of federal stimulus dollars. The modification of this grant will allow the MPD 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.

**Streamlining Open Appointments Process.** The Council has acted on a proposal from the City Coordinator that will make the process for becoming a member of one of the City's more than 50 advisory boards and commissions simpler, easier, and quicker. One of the examples is that we will be moving all of our appointments to two dates each year, one in February and one in November, rather than "sprinkling" them unpredictably throughout the year. Another idea is to develop a set of common policies and practices for all boards and commissions – a common attendance policy and a new-member orientation. I'm supportive of this work, which my Aide helped to develop in 2008.

**Hiawatha Transmission Line.** The City is working hard to respond to Xcel Energy's proposed Hiawatha Transmission Line. I attended a public hearing on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on February 10, along with several of my Council colleagues and was very impressed with number of people who attended and the quality of the comments made. I will likely be submitting my own comments next week in writing, in addition to the City's formal comments. Comments on the DEIS are due March 10<sup>th</sup>. To review the documents and submit your own comments visit [energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=19981](http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=19981). I have questions about the need for this line, in part because no formal or complete needs assessment was done. I am very concerned about the negative impacts it might have on the health and future prosperity of the residents in the area as well as the potentially devastating impact it could have on the Midtown Greenway and the future land use and transportation plans associated with it. I believe conversation and better use of more modern energy management and generation technology should be explored before a new power line and substations are approved. I have also been pushing for the line to be buried under 28<sup>th</sup> St, if it must be put in at all. It will be very important for people to who care about this issue to keep following it and to participate in the public comment opportunity and public hearing before the Public Utilities commission decision is made later this year. Copies of the route permit application, DEIS and other relevant documents are

also available at

[www.xcelenergy.com/Company/Transmission/Transmission%20Projects/Pages/HiawathaProject.aspx](http://www.xcelenergy.com/Company/Transmission/Transmission%20Projects/Pages/HiawathaProject.aspx).

**Parking Near Riverside Park.** I have passed along the Riverside Park neighborhood and West Bank Community Coalition's support for changes to the critical parking area along the park. These changes included a request for no parking except by permit, 24 hours per day. City parking services staff has responded, informing me that the City does not have the authority to restrict parking through critical parking areas 24 hours per day, but between 8:00am and 10:00pm. I understand that the neighborhood is reacting to this information, and I will support the 8am-10pm restrictions. I hope that we can get these changes made soon.

**Great Streets Funds for Ward 2 Neighborhoods.** The City's Great Streets program, which makes grants for façade improvement and other small-business support, will be funding several Ward 2 neighborhoods. The West Bank Business Association is set to receive \$50,000, the Lake Street Council is getting \$50,000 for an area that includes East Lake, and Seward Redesign is slated to receive two different grants, one for \$25,000 for the Franklin Station area and one for \$50,000 for the University corridor in Prospect Park. I look forward to seeing the great work on improving our business districts that this funding will support.

**Bob Olson Leaves City \$100,000.** Lifelong Seward resident Bob Olson has left the City \$100,000, in addition to the \$50,000 he left two of his neighbors and hundreds of thousands he left to the University library system. I appreciate his generosity, and will strive to ensure that the City allocates these funds to something that could serve as a memorial. Mr. Olson was a cyclist, and I am interested in trying to dedicate his gift to bicycle infrastructure.

**Southwest LRT.** The Council has chosen the Kenilworth alignment for the Southwest LRT corridor. I realize that there are some residents who live along the proposed line who are unhappy with this decision, but I strongly believe it's the best possible alignment for this important regional transportation investment.

**New Appointment to the Public Health Advisory Committee.** I have appointed Robin Schow, a Masters student at the School of Public Health and Prospect Park resident, to serve as the Ward 2 appointee on the city's Public Health Advisory Committee. This is a very important committee that works closely with our health department and our Public Safety and Health committee to help guide policy, monitor our health related sustainability indicators and determine where our health dollars from the federal Community Development Block Grants are invested. I thank all the people who applied and Paul Zerby for his years of service on the committee. Robin comes with a strong background in Public Health, providing nutrition counseling for uninsured and underinsured individuals for the NIP Clinic and working in transplant research at the University. She brings a variety of interests to the group, including air quality, food and nutrition, physical fitness, alcohol issues and citizen engagement. I think she'll be a great addition to PHAC, and look forward to working with her to increase our city's health.

**Second Ward Resident on Arts Commission.** Thank you to Cooper resident Kenneth Koense for his willingness to serve on the City's Arts Commission. I am confident that his experience helping to organize the LoLa art crawl will make him a valuable member of this important body. Please see below for other opportunities to serve on City boards and commissions.

**H1N1 Vaccination Clinic at Van Cleve.** The City Health Department and the Minnesota Visiting Nurses, will be offering H1N1 vaccinations at Van Cleve Park, 901 15th Ave. SE – **Saturday, Feb. 13; 10 a.m.-noon.** The walk-in clinics are for ages six months and older. This includes children nine and under needing their second dose. There is no charge for the vaccine, but please bring an insurance card if you have one. Parents or guardians must accompany those under 18.

**Benefit Concert for Seward Longfellow Restorative Justice Partnership.** Please join your neighbors in support of the great work the Seward Longfellow Restorative Justice Partnership is doing to make our communities safer and more livable. The event is **Sunday, February 28**, 2:00-4:00pm at Faith Mennonite Church, 2720 E 22nd Street. Performances will include songwriters and instrumentalists Linda Breitag, Ray Makeever, Bret Hesla and Sophia Breitag; bluegrass musician Chris Jones; jazz pianist Joel Sundseth and String Harmony, a classical ensemble. This is a family-friendly concert with songs of peace and hope that will have you singing along.

**Tea House Restaurant.** The Tea House restaurant has applied for a liquor license at their new location at 27<sup>th</sup> and University. My office is working with the applicants and concerned folks from the neighborhood to draft a set of conditions that will allow the restaurant to succeed while protecting the neighborhood from the increasing spread of alcohol-related businesses.

**Dinkydome.** Doran Companies is requesting that the City allow them to transform the upper two floors of the Dinkydome from commercial space into housing, while leaving the street level commercial. I will be closely following this application and weighing the need for additional residential space near the U versus keeping the existing commercial services, and as always giving strong consideration to the historic nature of the building.

**Dania Hall Lot.** The City of Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) has released the Request for Proposals (RFP) and other marketing documents for the City owned property at 427 Cedar Avenue. They can be found at [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/dania\\_hall\\_site.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/dania_hall_site.asp). There will now be a 3-month response period starting February 1<sup>st</sup> and ending April 30<sup>th</sup>. I am hopeful that we will receive some great responses that can lead to a great, community-serving redevelopment of this extremely important site.

**Neighborhood Sustainability Conference.** Please join your neighbors at the 5th Annual Neighborhood Sustainability Conference, **Saturday March 13**, 8:30am-4:30pm at Central Lutheran Church, 333 12th St S. The event will include a keynote presentation from Mark Lakeman from the City Repair Project, Grassroots Project Workshops, Participatory Design Charrettes, and Organizing and Outreach Skill Building Sessions. For more information, visit [www.afors.org](http://www.afors.org).

**Galileo's Birthday Celebration.** The Minnesota Planetarium Society has put together a celebration of Galileo's birthday on Monday, **February 15th** from 4:45-9pm at the Bedlam Theater, 1501 S 6th St. It's a fundraiser for the Society, and features a scene from the play "Life of Galileo."

**Met Council Land Use Advisory Committee Vacancy.** The Metropolitan Council has a vacancy on its Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) representing Metropolitan Council District 7. Following is a link to the news release for this vacancy. In the release you will find access to information about the district, the committee, and an application form.  
[http://www.metrocouncil.org/news/2010/news\\_672.htm](http://www.metrocouncil.org/news/2010/news_672.htm).

**Openings on Boards and Commissions.** There are openings on the Citizen Environmental Advisory Committee (closes 2/19), Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee (closes 2/26), and Public Health Advisory Committee (open until filled). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).

In peace and cooperation,

Cam Gordon  
Minneapolis City Council Member, Second Ward

673-2202, 296-0579

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