

# Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the Prospect Park East River Road Neighborhood, 10-27-08

Cam's next Prospect Park Office Hours:  
Pratt School, November 24, 9:30-11am

## Items:

- 1) RNC at Tom's Drugstore
- 2) 311 Reports
- 3) Environmentally Preferable Purchasing
- 4) Progress on Sustainability Goals
- 5) Low-Heat / No-Heat Ordinance in Effect
- 6) Campus Crossroads
- 7) Solid Waste Contract
- 8) U District Moratorium Approved
- 9) Ranked Choice Voting Implementation in 2009
- 10) Community Engagement and NRP
- 11) Proposed Noise Ordinance
- 12) Central Corridor
- 13) Plastics Recycling
- 14) Planetarium
- 15) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) Please join me, Associate City Attorney Peter Ginder and others at Tom's Drugstore **tomorrow at 7:30pm** to discuss events surrounding the Republican National Convention. Last month, the Public Safety & Regulatory Services committee rejected my attempt to get more information included in the MPD's "After Action Review" of events related to RNC. I was especially interested to know about how well our officers followed the July 25th Police Policies Resolution, even when in St. Paul. I also wanted information on the preemptive raids that occurred the Saturday before the convention, and as much information as possible about the actions of other levels of law enforcement. I am disappointed that my colleagues have declined to ask for this information, but I will continue to do so nonetheless.
- 2) The 311 department has begun sharing on-time performance measures for the most common complaints, sorted by neighborhood. I have brought the Prospect Park report with me, so that you can see how effectively City services are being delivered to the neighborhood in comparison to citywide averages.
- 3) The Council has established the City's first-ever Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy. I was very supportive of this action, which has gained the support of City departments through the Environmental Coordinating Team, and from the Citizen's Environmental Advisory Committee. The policy represents a serious step forward on many different fronts. For example, the City will begin purchasing 100% post-consumer copier paper for all of our regular copying needs. I attempted to strengthen the policy in two important ways – by covering products not specifically called out in the policy and by adding an annual report back to Council – but lost both votes on narrow margins. I will continue to work to make this policy as strong and measurable as possible.
- 4) Minneapolis has been ranked the **seventh** most sustainable large city in the US by SustainLane.com, up from #10 last year. Additionally, according to the census, we are within .1% of being the US city with the highest bicycle mode share – we're up to **3.8%**, just behind Portland's 3.9%.
- 5) Starting October 1, landlords in Minneapolis are required to keep interior temperatures at 68 degrees or above. If you're a renter, and your unit is cooler than 68 degrees, you can call 311 and make a complaint to housing inspections. My office spearheaded the effort to get this new ordinance passed, replacing the old, complicated external-temperature formula that was so difficult for our staff to effectively enforce.
  - 6) The Council voted unanimously to rezone for the Campus Crossroads project, in accordance with PPERRIA's formal position. There were some concerns from Motley residents about this project, so I applaud the formation of a PPERRIA committee focused on the Motley area to better address the unique concerns and perspectives of this community.
  - 7) The Council has voted to contract with Minneapolis Refuse, Inc, and Aspen Waste System for trash hauling. This contract is the result of the first open, competitive bidding process for the City's garbage service in decades, and will result in cost savings of around \$45,000 over the next five years.

- 8) The Council has unanimously approved keeping in place the University District moratorium on demolition and new construction of 1-4 unit residential properties. This action, which the committee took despite hearing some complaints from area developers, will give our staff and District residents some breathing space to work on a U District zoning and land use study.
- 9) The Minneapolis Elections Director has recommended that the City implement ranked choice voting in the 2009 municipal election, by using a combination of our existing machines and a hand count. This recommendation came at the same time she rejected both proposals to machine-count the vote next year. I'm thrilled by this historic opportunity, and I believe that the hand count will be an open, transparent celebration of democracy. There will likely be a delay on reporting final results for some close races, but in my opinion this is more than offset by the benefits of not paying for new equipment, not holding the costly, low-turnout nonpartisan primary, and implementing ranked choice voting in a timely manner – responding to the more than 65% of Minneapolis residents who voted for the IRV charter amendment in 2006.
- 10) The Council has voted to establish a new Department of Neighborhood and Community Relations, and a new City commission, the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission. These lay the foundation for what will likely be a similar, but significantly different, neighborhood revitalization program and a potentially much more effective City community engagement system.

The department will function under the supervision of the City Coordinator and is intended to both serve residents directly and support all other City departments to engage the community. It will be charged with strengthening our City's quality of life through vigorous community participation, promoting resident involvement in neighborhood and community organizations, and supporting clearly defined links between the City and these organizations.

The Commission will provide overall direction to a next phase of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, and be responsible for the review of neighborhood plans and recommendation of their approval to the City Council. It will also make recommendations on, and monitor the distribution and use of the basic Citizen Participation Services funds and the new Neighborhood Investment Fund. It will also help guide and improve all aspects of community involvement and civic participation in the City and carry forward the work Community Engagement Task Force's recommendations started last year. The Commission will be made up of at least 16 city residents. Eight of these will be selected by the City's officially recognized neighborhood organizations through a process that is yet to be defined by those officially recognized neighborhood organizations. Seven will be appointed by the City and one by the Park Board.

We were unable to convince a majority of Council Members to support giving the Commission the power to appoint (with Council approval) the Director of the new department, the authority to set neighborhood boundaries and hear neighborhood grievances.

Even with this setback, however, I think this is an important step forward for the City. Through these actions and the identification of a funding source for a new Neighborhood Investment Fund that will be used by neighborhoods to implement their plans, the Council has made clear that support for neighborhood groups, both in terms of administrative funding and project-based dollars, is an essential City responsibility.

- 11) Environmental Management staff is working on a new noise ordinance. The old City ordinance was found unconstitutionally vague, and staff has been enforcing the state noise statute, which significantly reduces our capacity to respond to complaints. The proposed new code would use a "C weighting" rather than an "A weighting," allowing us to more effectively control bass-heavy noise from bars. I plan to introduce these ordinances at the next Council meeting on November 7<sup>th</sup>.
- 12) City staff continues to work with the University and the County on the design for the Washington Avenue transit and pedestrian mall. Outstanding issues include whether buses and emergency vehicles should operate on the train tracks and whether there should be an "amenity zone" in the middle of the street, which could include benches, tables, and greenery, at the expense of sidewalk space on the sides of the street.
- 13) The City has extended the "All Plastics Pilot Program" in Northeast, which accepts plastic for recycling that is not accepted in standard pickup. I am very excited about this program, and I look forward to broadening it to more locations citywide.
- 14) The City has pledged \$5 million in Urban Development Action Grant funds to endowment fund for the Minnesota Planetarium and Space Discovery Center, which we hope will be built on the top of the Central Library in downtown.
- 15) There are openings on the Arts Commission (11/14/2008), Citizen Environmental Advisory Committee (11/7/08), Housing Board of Appeals (11/21/2008), Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (11/19/08), Public Health Advisory Committee (11/21/08), Truth In Sale of Housing Appeals Board (10/31/08) and Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee (10/31/08). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).