

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood 5-28-08

Cam's next Seward Office Hours:
Tuesday, June 24, 9:30-11:00am
Birchwood Café, 3311 E 25th St

Items:

- 1) Public Safety & Organizing Interns
- 2) Lurking
- 3) Free Speech
- 4) Homeownership Workshops
- 5) Bystrom Brothers LCDA Application
- 6) Arsenic Contamination Comment Period
- 7) Anti-Idling Ordinance
- 8) Air Quality Ordinance
- 9) Bicycle Statute
- 10) Pre-Employment Drug Testing
- 11) Employment and Poverty Disparities
- 12) No-Heat / Low-Heat Passes
- 13) Central Corridor
- 14) Green Institute and Lead
- 15) Phthalates
- 16) Crumbling Sidewalks
- 17) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) My office has hired Annie Welch for another summer as a public safety and community outreach intern. She will be working to help organize neighborhoods in the ward around issues of safety and livability, distributing this year's Welcome Packets, and helping with community events. I am looking into possibly hiring other interns as well.
- 2) Last week, the Public Safety and Regulatory Services committee considered my proposal to repeal the City's unjust and outdated Lurking ordinance. This ordinance disproportionately impacts homeless persons, people of color, and the poor. I believe that we must redirect precious law enforcement resources to behaviors that actually harm someone, and laws that carry meaningful consequences. To accomplish this repeal effort, I will also be adding more behaviors to the loitering ordinance, making it cover crimes related to vandalism and theft.
- 3) Council Member Ostrow is proposing a mandatory registration process for protests in Minneapolis. I strongly oppose this idea. I do not believe we should put ourselves in the position (that St. Paul currently finds itself in) of telling protestors where and when they can express themselves. I do not believe that most protest groups will participate in a mandatory process, and I fear that lack of permits will become a pretext for unnecessary and counterproductive law enforcement actions during this summer's Republican National Convention. I plan to vote against this proposal when it comes before the Council on June 6.
- 4) The African Development Center is hosting Homeownership Workshops on **June 7th and 14th** and **July 5th and 12th**, at Seward Tower West, 2515 S 9th St. For more information please contact Stephen Wreh-Wilson at 612-333-4772, ext 106, or 763-443-5914.
- 5) The City has ranked the Bystrom Brothers/Franklin Station Redevelopment project's application for \$550,000 in Livable Community grants second of eight projects Citywide. I am working with Economic Development and Public Works staff, along with Seward Redesign, to close a substantial funding gap for the necessary and major changes to the intersection of Cedar, Minnehaha and Franklin.
 - 6) There will be a public comment period on the proposed plan for the South Minneapolis Residential Soil Contamination Site, starting on June 2 and ending at midnight on July 1, 2008. There will be a public meeting at the YWCA on **June 11 at 6:30pm**, where we will accept comments verbally, or in writing. People may submit comments to Cheryl Allen at allen.cheryl@epa.gov or fax them to 312-353-1155. You can also submit comments online at <http://www.epa.gov/reg50opa/sites/cmc/index.htm>.

- 7) The Council is considering an ordinance making it illegal to idle any gasoline vehicle for more than 3 minutes, or any truck more than 5 minutes. This builds on the anti-idling ordinance focusing solely on trucks that passed last year. I strongly support this ordinance. It is not necessary to idle modern cars for performance reasons, and idling significantly negatively impacts air quality. Additionally, a reduction in vehicle idling will help the City meet our sustainability goals regarding carbon emissions and air quality.
- 8) The Council has amended the City's Air Quality Ordinance to a) adopt the State's rules by reference, b) strengthen our regulation of commercial and industrial spray painting and c) include new regulations for all new coffee roasters. This last item responds to the overwhelmingly negative experience of the Seward neighborhood with a coffee roaster since 2005.
- 9) Partly due to a request by my office, Representative Phyllis Kahn has introduced a bill, for consideration next year, to substantially improve the traffic laws with regards to bicycles. For cyclists, the proposal would make stop signs function like yield signs, and stop lights function like stop signs. I will be working within the City to support this on our legislative agenda. To see the bill, look here:
www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/revisor/pages/search_status/status_detail.php?b=House&f=HF4245&ssn=0&y=2008
- 10) I voted against a Human Resources proposal to require pre-employment drug testing for all City employees when it came before the Executive Committee earlier this month. I am unconvinced that this sort of policy would serve any purpose other than intruding unnecessarily into the private lives of City employees. It is unclear whether this will pass when it comes before the full Council on June 6th.
- 11) At my urging, the City's Economic Development staff presented a report on the employment and poverty gaps between white and minority residents to the Health, Energy and Environment committee on May 5. Despite many efforts to address poverty and unemployment in Minneapolis, our best data reveal some striking and disturbing racial disparities. Roughly 11% of white people in Minneapolis live in poverty compared to 43% of all black people (including African immigrants), 43% of Asian Americans and nearly 35% of American Indians. Additionally, the unemployment rate for whites is just over 4%; for blacks it is just under 14%. I co-authored a resolution with Council Member Benson that outlined this problem and created a joint Minneapolis/Hennepin County Racial Disparities Steering Committee to help address it.
- 12) The No-Heat / Low-Heat ordinance I cosponsored with Ralph Remington has finally passed the Council. The new ordinance simplifies regulations about when landlords must keep rental units adequately warm by basing them on date rather than external temperature. Landlords must now provide an indoor temperature of at least 68 degrees between October 1 and May 1, and an indoor temperature of at least 65 degrees September 15 through October 1 and May 1 through May 15. We are also raising the fine amount for no heat and low heat offenses, and writing language that will allow City staff to cite landlords who repeatedly violate this ordinance without 'reasonable notice.'
- 13) As you've likely heard, the State has put the \$70 million back into the Central Corridor Project. The University's preferred Northern Alignment does not, according to the work of their consultants in conjunction with the Project Office, fit within the federal government's Cost Effectiveness Index. There are a number of public hearings coming up, at which you can give your views on the proposed project: **May 29, 5-7pm** - Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Hennepin and Ramsey counties' regional rail authorities joint public hearing, Goodwill/Easter Seals, 553 Fairview Ave N, St. Paul. Open house at 4pm. **June 3, 1:30-3:30pm** - City of Minneapolis, City Council chambers, Room 317 City Hall, 350 S 5th St, Minneapolis. Open house at 12:30pm.
- 14) My office put together a meeting of City staff and the leadership of the Green Institute to discuss the issues around lead paint in old reused building components, especially windows. This meeting has launched a longer-term collaboration between the City and the Institute, which has the promise of creating a pilot project for selling old parts of buildings in lead-safe ways.
- 15) As you may have heard, the Governor has vetoed the bill phasing out Bisphenol-A and certain phthalates that I sponsored a resolution supporting. I hope that the legislature takes up this important issue again next year.
- 16) Some of the sidewalks that were installed in the Second Ward last year were defective, and have begun to crumble. Public Works is aware of this problem, and have required that the contractors involved do removal and replacement of the spalling sections of sidewalk as warranty work. Staff are also systematically inspecting the sidewalk repair work done in the last two years and the contractors are making repairs as they are identified. If you are aware of new sidewalk panels that are crumbling, please email the location to dan.bauer@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.
- 17) There are openings on the Minneapolis Commission on Civil Rights (closes 5/30/08), Latino Advisory Committee (5/30/2008), Minneapolis Workforce Council (5/30/2008), and Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities (5/30/08). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.