



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the West Bank, 4-17-13

Cam's next West Bank Office Hours:
Tuesday, May 7th, 9:30-11:00am
Hard Times Café, 1821 Riverside Ave

Items:

- 1) 515 on the Park to get Environmental Review
- 2) Take Action to Support Transit Bill
- 3) City to Study Energy Options
- 4) West Bank Business District Proposal Withdrawn
- 5) Rental License Conditions
- 6) Bee Ordinance
- 7) Recreational Fires
- 8) Urban Agriculture Expo
- 9) Trap Neuter Return Cat Program
- 10) Walkability Survey
- 11) Street Cleaning – Don't Get Towed
- 12) West River Parkway
- 13) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) After the Zoning and Planning Committee moved to deny an appeal to the City Planning Commission's approvals of the Fine Associate's housing project on 15th Ave across from Currie Park, the full Council referred the matter back to committee so that a required Environmental Assessment Worksheet could be completed. It was clear that this project requires an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW), based on a more careful review and determination by the City Attorney's office. This was brought to our attention through the appeal process, and this requirement exists because of the number of units involved when combining this first phase with later phases, and because it is part of larger Planned Unit Development (PUD). Originally the attorney made the case that the phases were not on contiguous property and therefore should not be considered part of the same project. This appears not to be the case because for purposes of PUDs streets do not break contiguity. After finding this provision, staff looked into past practice and determined that a mandatory EAW (based on dwelling unit count) was done on another multi-phase PUD that was bounded by three blocks (Bennett Lumber). I supported the motion to return this to the Zoning and Planning Committee until the required EAW is completed. It will likely take 3 or 4 weeks for the EAW to be completed.
- 2) A "Transit for a Stronger Economy" bill I strongly support seems to be in trouble at the legislature. Still there is hope that a bill with funding to increase bus service, support new Light Rail lines, Bus Rapid Transit and help create higher-amenity "Enhanced Bus" routes is possible. The bill is supported by over 50 organizations, including Transit for Livable Communities and the Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee. It would use a small sales tax increase, like nearly all US regions, to fund transit. I urge you to contact your State Legislators and encourage them to support this incredible opportunity to provide stable, adequate funding for transit in Minneapolis. You can take action here: <http://www.mntransit.org/takeaction.asp?aaid=7102>
- 3) The City Council has approved funding (up to \$250,000) to study the issues related to our utility franchise and forming a municipal energy utility in Minneapolis. This is an important next step to getting the information we need to make future decisions about energy options in Minneapolis.
- 4) I have heard from City staff that the proponents of the West Bank Improvement District have withdrawn their petitions to begin work on forming the WBID this year, to start in 2014. I understand that proponents will continue to work on outreach to businesses and potential changes to the area and service provision, and bring forward a new concept in the future.

If you need this material in an alternative format please call Ahmed Muhumud at 612-673-2162 or email Ahmed.Muhumud@minneapolismn.gov

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Hmong - Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800;

Spanish - Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llame 612-673-2700;

Somali - Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500.

- 5) The Council has amended our ordinances to allow the City to impose conditions on rental license holders with significant and documented violations of the housing code. We also approve a set of operating procedures that clarify when and how the conditions would be imposed. Owners of rental properties were already required to have rental licenses for each of their properties and the City has the authority to conduct inspections and issue fines or even revoke licenses if license holders do not meet rental housing standards. Now, when a rental property owner is in violation of a rental licensing standard/s, the City could also place specific operating conditions on the rental license. Property owners must adhere to these conditions in order for their rental license to remain in good standing. To learn more about the procedures and see examples of conditions see <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-104736.pdf>. You can find the amendment here <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-105139.pdf>
- 6) The City Council approved an ordinance on keeping honeybees that removes the requirement for signatures of 80% of neighbors for any hive that is one or more stories off the ground. When honeybees leave their hives, they tend to fly upwards and quickly disperse, so a hive on a rooftop is likely to have very little effect on near neighbors. Before this passed I successfully moved an amendment that changes the City's honeybee permitting process from an annual \$50 permit to a one-time City approval with a recurring free renewal.
- 7) I expect the hearing on the Recreational Fire ordinance amendment I am authoring to be held on **May 1st at 1:30 p.m.** at the Public Safety Civil Rights and Health Committee. I am proposing that we add an additional restriction to prohibit outdoor recreational fires during times of air quality alerts when the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency issues an Air Pollution Health Advisory for the Twin Cities Area.
- 8) The 2013 Urban Agriculture Expo will be held on **April 20th** at the Sabathani Community Center in Minneapolis. The Expo will be from 9:00am - 1:30pm, with educational seminars beginning at 9:30am. This event is for those who currently have an urban farming enterprise, are considering starting one, are supporters of urban farming, or are just curious to learn more. No preregistration is required for the event. For more see <http://blog.lib.umn.edu/efans/small-farms/2013/03/2013-urban-agriculture-expo-on-april-20th.php>
- 9) I have received a number of comments about a new project I am working on that would allow Trap Neuter Return (TNR) programs to operate in Minneapolis. Allowing TNR programs offers us a potentially effective and affordable way to address the out-of-control growth of the populations of wild cats that spread disease, kill birds and other wildlife, create offensive smells, damage property and disturb residents. In this approach cats are trapped, taken to a vet to be vaccinated and sterilized and then returned to a feral cat colony caretaker. The ordinance changes I am proposing will not take any current tool away from Animal Control staff. They will still have the authority to kill a stray cat after it has been held for the necessary time (5 days), has been checked for identification to return it to an owner and has been assessed to determine if it is suitable for adoption. To help get started I have established a working group that includes city staff, and representatives from Minnesota Spay Neuter Assistance, Audubon Minnesota, the Minneapolis Animal Care and Control Advisory Committee, Minnesota Voters for Animal Protection and the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis. I believe that Trap Neuter (vaccinate) and Return programs offer a promising, affordable and humane method of reducing feral cat numbers, while also protecting public health and reducing impact on wildlife. For information about the programs in New Jersey that might be a model for ours visit <http://www.aplnj.org/projectTNR.php>. You can also learn more and watch a short introductory video on the subject here <http://www.alleycat.org/page.aspx?pid=730>.
- 10) On April 8 I participated in a panel discussion of the District Council Collaborative's Green Line Walkability Survey. The program will include a presentation of Walkability Survey Findings many West Bankers participated in. You can find the full report here: <http://dcc-stpaul-mpls.org/special-projects/walk>
- 11) City crews have started cleaning all city streets and alleys. "No Parking" signs will be posted the day before sweepers come through, the City will make about 3,500 automated phone calls each evening to let residents know their street will be swept the next day. Folks can also use the City's Web site to find out when the sweepers are coming go to www.minneapolismn.gov/publicworks/streetsweeping and click on "street sweeping schedule lookup," to find out which week a street is scheduled to be swept. The weekend before that week, they can revisit the Web site to find out which day of the week the street is scheduled to be swept. You can also view streetsweeping videos at www.YouTube.com/cityofminneapolis
- 12) This spring West River Parkway will be repaved from 4th St S to Franklin Ave. This includes the ramps leading to and from Franklin. Road closures are scheduled to start on April 29th and will go for approximately 5 weeks. Because the paving work will be performed under full road closure, people planning to drive this stretch of the parkway will need to adjust plans accordingly. Bike paths and pedestrian walkways will be open and accessible. For specific questions you can contact me or Tracy Lindgren at tracy.lindgren@minneapolismn.gov from Public Works. You can also look for updates and more information here <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cip/all/WCMS1P->

102050 I know this will be a significant inconvenience for many people, but this stretch has been in need of replacement for a long time and a much better road surface will be welcoming your use in the end.

- 1)
- 2) Applications are now being accepted for open positions on the following City boards and commissions: Animal Care and Control Advisory Board, Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Heritage Preservation Commission, Minneapolis Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, Minneapolis Workforce Council, Neighborhood & Community Engagement Commission, Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Police Conduct Oversight Commission, Police Conduct Review Panel, Seniors Advisory Committee, and Telecommunications Network, Minneapolis. For a full list of appointment opportunities and position descriptions, go to www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/openings.