



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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

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

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the West Bank, 11-20-13

**Cam's next West Bank Office Hours:
Tuesday, December 3rd, 9:30-11:00am
Hard Times Café, 1821 Riverside Ave**

- 1) Thank You
- 2) Election Results
- 3) Cedar Riverside's New City Council Representation
- 4) Huge Success for Ranked Choice Voting
- 5) Plain Language Charter
- 6) Community Solar Comments
- 7) Target Center
- 8) Change the Name
- 9) Curry Park Tax Increment Financing District
- 10) ADC Parking Lot
- 11) Two New On-Sale Liquor Licenses
- 12) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) I feel both proud and humbled to have been reelected to a third term as Second Ward Council Member. I want to thank all of the voters of the West Bank who still live in Ward 2 for your continued confidence. As I have over the last eight years, I will work hard to do my best to represent you on the City Council, and work to make Minneapolis a more just, more democratic, more sustainable and more peaceful city for everyone. I consider it an honor and a great joy to be able to continue to serve the residents of Cedar Riverside and I look forward to working with The West Bank Community Coalition, West Bank Business Association, the Cedar Riverside NRP, the Cedar Riverside Partnership and others to help make this a better community for years to come.
- 2) Betsy Hodges will be our next Mayor. In addition to me, the Council Members representing wards 1 (Kevin Reich), 4 (Barb Johnson), 7 (Lisa Goodman), 8 (Elizabeth Glidden), and 11 (John Quincy) have been reelected. Challengers have won races in wards 3 (Jacob Frey), 6 (Abdi Warsame) and 10 (Lisa Bender), and new Council Members have been elected in Ward 12 (Andrew Johnson) 5 (Blong Yang), 9 (Alondra Cano) and 12 (Linea Palmisano). Scott Vreeland was reelected Park Commissioner for the district that includes the West Bank.
- 3) One of the most significant election outcomes for the West Bank is the election of Abdi Warsame in Ward 6, which includes much of the east side of Cedar Riverside. I congratulate Abdi on a very successful campaign and look forward to working with him to continue the great progress Cedar Riverside has made on investing in infrastructure, planning for growth, and improving safety.
- 4) From all reports, Ranked Choice Voting was a huge success in the election. Turnout increased from both 2009 and 2005, the last municipal general election that used the old voting system. Turnout was 31% in 2005, and **34%** this year. More than **9,000** more people voted this year than in 2005. In the mayor's race, a huge supermajority of voters - **87.7%** - used their second ranking. From what I have heard, most voters entered their polling places with a firm grasp on how to use RCV. I want to thank Minneapolis Elections staff for a fantastic job educating the public about RCV and the election in general. I am especially thankful to them for the great Voter Education Guide that was mailed to every household in Minneapolis, and believe that this is a precedent we should follow for all elections. I also want to thank FairVote Minnesota for their work educating voters all through the year and on Election Day. Everyone's work certainly paid off.
- 5) Both Plain Language Charter amendments passed by wide margins. This is a good thing, in my view, as it will make our most fundamental document easier for the public to understand and use. It will not go into effect until January of 2015 so this will now give us an opportunity to continue to address concerns and pass ordinances where it might be appropriate to replace a provision removed from the charter.

- 6) The City Council has approved comments expressing serious concerns to the Public Utilities Commission regarding Xcel's proposed rules for implementing the Community Solar legislation that passed earlier this year. These include concerns about the proposed bill rate compensation that is inadequate, the unjustifiable 10 megawatt annual cap and the 2.5 megawatt per quarter cap for the first 24 months of implementation will only constrain the market and should be completely removed. Additionally, the 5-7 different fees paid in advance – no matter the size of the system – is neither fair nor reasonable. The City Council does commend Xcel for stating in their filing that they plan to upgrade and provide adequate resources and staffing to manage the community solar garden program. This was not the case for their previous management of solar programs.
- 7) The City Council, despite my opposition, has approved a plan to use city sales taxes to renovate the downtown sports and entertainment arena. The proposal calls for extensive renovations and updating of the arena and fitness center that will cost a total \$97-99 million. The renovation costs will be divided 50/50 with Public/Private investment. All of the public investment of approximately \$48.5 million will come from the City of Minneapolis. The Timberwolves team owners will pay \$43M (44.3%) and the company (AEG) contracted to operate the facility will pay \$5.5M (5.7%). All of the city's debt for the proposed renovation and for the ongoing capital improvements is projected to be paid for through local sales taxes – the same source of revenue to be used to pay off our football stadium debt beginning in 2021. We will also have to continue using separate revenues from some tax increment financing districts, and other funds to pay off the existing debt we took on when we bought the arena and to cover ongoing capital and operating expenses. This totals roughly \$8-\$10 million a year and will likely be paid off in 2025. I opposed this plan primarily because I believe that the use of these funds should be subject to the charter provision that calls for a referendum before more than \$10,000,000 is spend on a professional sports facility and that the costs associated with improving and maintain this statewide, regional asset should be shared the state and region and not the sole responsibility of the city.
- 8) I was proud to initiate and co-author an open letter from six Minneapolis City Council Members to National Football League Commissioner Roger Goodell and *Washington Redskins* team owner Dan Snyder expressing our disapproval of the team's racist name in advance of the November 7th game against the Minnesota Vikings in Minneapolis and the march and rally sponsored by the national Coalition on Racism in Sports and Media <http://www.aimovement.org/ncrsm/>. You can find the full text of the letter on the Second Ward blog.
- 9) After a public hearing the Council's Community Development Committee unanimously recommended that the full council approve the Currie Park Redevelopment Plan and the Currie Park Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Plan authorizing the issuance of a Tax Increment Financing loan to Five15 Limited Partnership not to exceed \$4,955,600. Under this authorization, what would otherwise be paid as property taxes resulting from the increased value of the new apartment building will be first used to pay off the loan. You can find the full report here <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-116805.pdf> . Despite a clear divide in the neighborhood, I supported this last step in the Council approval process for this project. I regret that a clearer community benefits agreement was not reached with the developer but am convinced that property owner had met the requirements to qualify for this kind of assistance from the city and that it is consistent with or currently policies. I also believe that community involvement has improved this project and that it will provide needed mixed income housing to the area as well as neighborhood serving retail and nonprofit commercial space, improve safety with added eyes on the street, and will help us maximize the public investments already being made in the area. The concerns raised about traffic, congestion, as well as the need for more access to green space, park facilities, and other public amenities to serve the growing population are legitimate and are timely. I hope that they will be carefully considered as this mixed use apartment building is built and the developer prepares for the second and third phases of their project on 15th, and as we look to other future proposed apartment buildings in the neighborhood that are almost certain to be coming. The more all community stakeholders can be united in their hopes and what benefits and conditions they would like to see on future developments.
- 10) The City is moving forward with a proposal to lease the city-owned surface parking lot at 1927-29th 5th St. to the African Development Center to maintain and operate an accessory parking lot for its headquarters. If finally approved by the Council in early December it will be good for 3 years.
- 11) Liquor licenses have been approved by the Regulatory Energy and Environment committee for Dilla's Restaurant (On-Sale Liquor Class E) and the Nomad World Pub (On-Sale Liquor Class B, an upgrade from the existing Class C-1). I expect the full Council to support these licenses.
- 12) Applications are now being accepted for open positions on the following City boards and commissions: Board of Appeal and Equalization, Ethical Practices Board and Telecommunications Network (MTN), Minneapolis. For a full list of appointment opportunities and position descriptions, go to www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/openings.