

Second Ward December 2017 E-newsletter

News from Cam Gordon

Council Member, Second Ward

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ward2>

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Uplifting Racial Equity Efforts. On December 8 the Council approved three separate and significant actions that will formalize, embed and strengthen the City's ongoing work on racial equity into the next term and beyond. The first is an ordinance that CM Glidden authored that establishes a Division of Race and Equity in the Coordinator's Office and obligates the City to continue this work racial equity indefinitely. The second and third were both resolutions lead on. The first of these establishes a Racial Equity Steering Committee and charges them with creating a Racial Equity Action Plan to be completed and presented to the Council for approval in June of 2018. The last action creates a new Racial Equity Community Advisory Committee to help drive this work and provide guidance on these issues on an ongoing basis. This group of up to 19 community members will be open to all Minneapolis residents and will be central role in shaping and advancing our racial equity work in the future.

Election Results. Following the general election and a recount for Ward 6, the City has now certified all the election results that you can find at vote.minneapolismn.gov. I am honored to have been elected to another term on the City Council and I am grateful to the voters of Ward 2 for their confidence and willingness to give me this opportunity to work for and serve the people of Minneapolis for another 4 years. By the end of Election Day there were 249,512 registered voters and 105,928 of them had voted, giving us a 42.45% turnout. This is 10% more than the last municipal election in 2013, when 80,099 people voted, and is the highest turnout since 1997 when it was 46% with 96,772 people voting. The 39.74% Ward 2 turnout was higher than it has been in any City election since at least 1993 when it was 30%. (Note: redistricting occurred in 2002 and 2012). For Ward 2 precincts, precinct 2-2 (in Seward) wins for the highest voter turnout at 57.03% and precinct 2-8 (Cooper) wins with the most voters at 2,588 (54.6%). My congratulations go to the new Mayor, Jacob Frey, and all the Council Members, Park Commissioners and Board of Estimate and Taxation (BET) Members who were elected. I look forward to getting to know the new Council Members better, and working with all of my colleagues, on the Council, as well as on the Park Board, School Board, County, BET and State legislature, to make Minneapolis a more just, more sustainable, more democratic and more peaceful city for everyone. I am also grateful for the service of all the outgoing Council members, Park Board Commissioners and to Mayor Hodges for their years of service to our City.

Park Board Changes. The results of the Park and Recreation Board election will bring significant changes with the election of at-large members Londel French and LaTrisha Vetaw, Chris Meyer for District 1, including the area of Ward 2 east of the River, and AK Hasan for District 3 that includes the area of Ward 2 west of the River. LaTrisha is a fellow Green and also a Ward 2 resident. This election also marks the retirement from the Park Board of two other outstanding

Ward 2 residents: John Erwin and Scott Vreeland. John is completing his third term on the Board as an At-large commissioner, serving 2002-2005 and then again for two terms from 2010-17. Scott has also served 3 terms, but consecutively, from 2006-17. Both have been dedicated public servants and played critical roles in maintaining and improving our nationally recognized and locally cherished park system. They have been valued partners and colleagues for me during my entire time in office. I hope they will continue to offer their insights and advice about park board and other matters, and I wish them both the best in their next endeavors.

Park Superintendent. We also learned after the Election that Park Superintendent Jayne Miller will be leaving the City for a new position she has accepted in Pittsburgh. To honor her, the Council approved and presented a resolution (<https://lims.minneapolismn.gov/File/2017-01549>) of thanks and appreciation to her on December 8. I have enjoyed working with Jayne since she was first appointed in 2010 and have found her to be responsive, professional and a great partner. I wish her well and the new Park Commissioners the best of luck finding a new superintendent.

Money in Elections. Something I found disturbing about this year's city elections is the massive amounts of spending that was done, both through candidate campaigns, and also through independent-expenditures by Political Action Committees (PACs). This included \$91,156 by the PAC called "Minneapolis Works!" started by the Downtown Council and Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce to support certain Council candidates in seven wards. While the final campaign finance reports are not due until the end of January of 2018, based on the September and October reports it is clear that some unions, developers, other PACs and lobbyists in City Hall see value in contributing to City campaigns and that many candidates accept their contributions. According to my calculations the highest donor group is developers, who contributed a little over \$230,000 to candidates and independent groups as of the October reporting deadline, followed by unions with \$225,600, non-union PACs (which includes firms that lobby) at \$100,750. Two developer firms donated a surprisingly large share of the developer money, with those who own or work for Lupe Development (the company started by Steve Minn) with \$40,250 and United Properties (the Pohlad's company) with \$33,100 leading the way. Of all the candidates Jacob Frey accepted the most money from developers at \$50,059. Of the City Council candidates, Lisa Goodman, appears to be leading in developer contributions with \$19,692. Another observation worth noting is the large difference in the amount of money spent on different races. Here is the rundown of how much each of the winners had spent as of the October report: Frey (Mayor) \$602,952; Reich (Ward 1) \$104,831; Gordon (Ward 2) \$6,070; Fletcher (Ward 3) \$32,342; Cunningham (Ward 4) \$26,931; Ellison (Ward 5) \$25,452; Warsame (Ward 6) \$120,210; Goodman (Ward 7) \$123,210; Jenkins (Ward 8) \$25,828; Cano (Ward 9) \$48,761; Bender (Ward 10) \$74,258; Schroeder (Ward 11) \$14,776; Johnson (Ward 12) \$37,013 and Palmisano (Ward 13) \$41,718. Two hopeful observations are worth noting in the midst of all this. First, not all of the Downtown Council and Chamber's PAC supported candidates won despite the large influx of spending in those ward races, including 3 who were incumbents. Second, several of the winning candidates were significantly outspent but their opponents, in some cases by 3 times of more. This indicates to me that the voters in Minneapolis are able to make choices independent of massive spending on ads, mailings and consultants.

2018 Budget. On December 6th the Council approved the City's \$1.4 billion 2018 budget that is 6.2%, or 82.5 million dollars, more than last year's. It includes a 5.5% overall citywide property tax levy increase. It appears that if the appraised value of your property went down or stayed the same you will not see an increase on your own property taxes in 2018. If, however, your value went up, as most have in Ward 2, your property taxes will likely go up as well. Finance staff estimate that the average increase for Ward 2 properties will be around 8%. Property taxes cover roughly 23% of our budget. The budget approval sets in place all the general appropriations, expenditures and staffing for all the City departments for 2018; a 5 year plan for "capital" improvements to our streets, bridges, water system infrastructure, buildings etc.; and the 2018 utility rates we will charge for water, sewer, storm water, solid waste, and recycling services. These utility fees fund approximately 16% of the budget.

Budget Highlights. I supported the budget and find a great deal to commend about it. This includes the continued implementation of the 20-year plan to fund the infrastructure and operations of neighborhood parks and City streets; over \$5 million in environmental, clean energy and efficiency initiatives; approximately \$24 million in funding for housing, including \$6.5 million in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, \$750,000 to support construction of 30 new affordable homes, \$500,000 to expand the Homeownership Opportunity Minneapolis program, which will allow up to 15 Minneapolis families to transition into homeownership, \$1.9 million for a Land Banking Pilot to help buy, repair and maintain long-term affordability of properties in areas at risk of displacement, and funding for a new Housing Stability Specialist. I am also glad that the budget included \$150,000 for the Group Violence Intervention strategy, \$350,000 for collaborative, community-driven, public-safety strategies; creation of a centralized Data Practices request system; and the establishment of a new Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs.

Budget Amendments. I authored and supported several amendments to the budget before it was passed. I authored or co-authored five amendments. One was to fund two additional inspectors in the Health Department's Food Lodging and Pools division to keep up with growth in the restaurants, food trucks and other food vendors. The second was a staff direction to revisit our fee structures to make sure the fees we charge are covering our costs. My third was to change the Neighborhood and Community Relations department budget by decreasing its appropriation for Collaborative Safety Strategies from \$475,000 to \$435,000, and increasing its funding for Senior Support Services, (like those provided by the Seward Longfellow Healthy Seniors and Southeast Senior organizations), from \$20,000 to \$60,000. The fourth was a directive for staff to begin work on a City Municipal ID program. The last was related to concerns about uses of the franchise fee increase and directs staff to present options in the first quarter of 2018 on how to reduce the use of general fund dollars for the Renewable Connect program which currently seems to be relying on over \$300,000 from the franchise fee. I also supported motions that provided more funding for domestic violence prevention, our Next Step Hospital Based violence intervention program, adding two more housing inspectors, a lead poisoning prevention position that was slated to be cut, and one that re-appropriated \$90,000 to support the Labor Standards Enforcement Division with both enforcement and education.

Franchise Fee Ordinances. Along with the budget, the Council also approved a 0.5% increase to the utility franchise fees we collect from Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy through. The fees, set by ordinance as a percentage of natural gas and electric charges, are currently 4.5 percent for residential customers, 5 percent for commercial customers, and 3 percent for industrial customers. The amount paid on a monthly bill correlates with energy use, which can vary by season. The average residential customer currently pays a franchise fee of about \$5.30 per month (about \$64 a year). The increase to the average residential customer will be about 57 cents more a month for a total franchise fee of less than \$6 a month (about \$71 a year). A report about the energy efficiency and renewable energy programs we might support with this can be found <https://lms.minneapolismn.gov/File/2017-01413>. I believe that a stable, ongoing source of funds to support this work is important. To help ensure this increase will go to clean energy efforts I successfully passed a resolution that commits the City to using the increased revenue from the franchise fees to fund energy efficiency and renewable energy programs, policies and interventions that will serve all groups of users including homeowners, renters and rental property owners, and commercial and industrial businesses of all sizes.

Budget Disappointments. I still have concerns about the Downtown Asset Fund and the \$750,000 we are spending on programming and operations for the East Downtown/Stadium Park next year. I also have my doubts about the value we are getting for the \$125,000 we are paying to the Greater MSP. I was disappointed to see that four of the Police Chief's eight requested civilian Community Liaison positions were cut in order to fund more uniformed police officers although I am glad four positions remain. I was also strongly opposed to the last minute move in the Fire Department's budget to defund a promising new initiative of the Fire Chief's to hire 4 new Mobile Healthcare Providers to staff the newly formed Emergency Medical Services (EMS) medical transport team. All of the \$250,000 was moved to hire two more firefighters. Creating the EMS positions is a key next step for the EMS Pathways career development program you can learn more about here <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/fire/jobs/WCMSP-186908>. This is an idea that the award winning Fire Chief has been exploring for a couple of years related to the EMS Pathways program (mentioned below in the next item) and would allow the fire department to respond more efficiently and effectively to medical emergencies. There was funding in the budget for the needed EMS Mobile vehicles and I am hopeful that he can still start the program, even if the initial staff will be firefighters rather than the more desirable, and less highly-trained, Mobile Healthcare Providers.

Fire Chief Fruetel Awarded. On November 11 Fire Chief John Fruetel was presented the Profiles in Courage Award by the Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers in acknowledgement of his work and leadership in the area of diversity. The program specifically highlighted was the Minneapolis Fire Department EMS Pathways Academy. The EMS Pathways Academy, which started last year, is a paid internship through which students attend classes 3 days a week for approximately 4 months to earn an Emergency Medical Technician Certification. Once students have successfully gained the EMT Certification, the students are introduced to pathways to various EMS careers including EMT, Firefighter, EMS Dispatcher and Paramedic. Currently the MFD employs 6 firefighters who graduated from the program with additional graduates currently moving through the hiring process for a Cadet Class set to start early next year. Other graduates have started careers with Hennepin County EMS as EMTs and EMS Dispatchers with

several graduates moving on to continue their education for a Paramedic Certification on full scholarships. The MFD EMS Pathways Program is a partnership between the Minneapolis Fire Department, Hennepin County EMS, The Minneapolis Foundation and Project for Pride in Living.

Matching Funds for Police. The U.S. Department of Justice has awarded the City \$1.2 million to help add 10 police officers to the department. The grant money will be used as part of our ongoing effort to decrease gun violence, particularly among young people. It will fund ½ of the costs for adding 10 officers for three years. These officers will support the City's ongoing efforts, in particular the Group Violence Intervention strategy that focuses on preventing gun and gang violence. This year we have worked harder to track and analyze gun violence on a monthly basis. The number of gunshot wound victims in Minneapolis is down 19.37 percent from this point in 2016 but we still have a long way to go. As of September 25, 207 people had been victims of a gunshot wound (some fatal) in Minneapolis this year.

Zero Waste Plan. The Council has voted to adopt the proposed Zero Waste Plan in December. I consider this a major step towards a future with less waste, more recycling and composting, and fairer and more transparent waste service for everyone in Minneapolis, including renters and businesses. An implementation plan with next steps will come before the Council early next year. You can find out more here: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/mayor/ZWM/index.htm>.

Pedestrian Crash Study. The Transportation and Public Works committee heard report on pedestrian crashes in Minneapolis. The report's purpose is to "better understand where, how, and why pedestrian crashes are occurring in Minneapolis," using the best data we have. The data clearly show that streets with fewer lanes have fewer pedestrian crashes. Two way streets with four lanes have more than twice the rate of pedestrian crashes (measured as crashes per mile per year) of two way streets with two lanes. And it's even worse on one way streets, where three-lane one ways have more than three times the crash rate of two-lane one ways. Driver inattention and driver failing to yield are the most common contributing factors in pedestrian crashes. Most crashes involve turning vehicles, especially left turning vehicles. Most of the crashes are happening on a small number of streets. 80% of all pedestrian crashes occurred on 10% of streets, and 75% of all major crashes occurred on only 5% of streets. Most crashes happen at intersections with traffic signals. I appreciate staff's great work on this report, and know that I will use its findings when I'm assessing future projects. You can find the report at <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/pedestrian/data/WCMSP-206913>.

STEP UP. The City's STEP-UP Youth Employment Program is now accepting applications for 2018. STEP-UP is the City internship program for people who are 14-21 years of age. Each year it recruits, trains and places more than 1,600 people in paid internships with over 220 businesses, public agencies and nonprofits. The online application for summer 2018 will be open from December 11-February 16. Go to www.stepupmpls.org for more information. If you are interested in hiring an intern contact nina.robertson@minneapolismn.gov.

7th Annual Community Connections Conference. You are invited to the 7th annual Community Connections Conference on Saturday, February 10, 2018. The conference will display and build

collaborations between neighborhoods, cultural communities, residents and the City. We are currently looking for exhibitors to sign up by January 5. Exhibitors will receive complimentary breakfast, lunch and beverages, and an exhibitor table with a table skirt and two chairs. For official City-recognized neighborhood organizations, City departments and small nonprofits there is no charge. For more information see <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/conf/index.htm>

2017 Recycler of the Year. I am delighted to report that the Recycling Association of Minnesota has awarded the City of Minneapolis Division of Solid Waste and Recycling its top honor for 2017 in recognition of our city-wide organics program. Kudos to David Herberholz, Director of Solid Waste and Recycling, Kellie Kish, Recycling Coordinator and the entire Solid Waste and Recycling staff for this well-deserved recognition.

U-Visa Ordinance. On December 13 at 10:00am the Council will hold a public hearing and vote on a new U visa ordinance. This is a visa which is set aside for victims of crimes (and their immediate family members) who are willing to assist law enforcement and government officials in the investigation or prosecution of the criminal activity. For more information <http://lms.minneapolismn.gov/File/2017-01472>

Code of Conduct Ordinance. After establishing a staff team to coordinate work on a Code of Conduct Ordinance that would establish standards of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors for all City employees, I determined that it would be helpful to take more time. I hope to have something ready to be considered by the Council in late winter of early spring of 2018.

Withdrawal from Red Rock Corridor Commission. In November, with my recommendation, the City Council approved having the City withdraw from The Red Rock Corridor Commission. This Commission was founded in 1998 as a joint powers board to address transportation needs along Highway 61 between Hastings and the Twin Cities. At that time there was hope that a commuter rail line would be possible. In 2001, the Commission study identified the need to extend the Red Rock Corridor to Minneapolis, and in 2005, the Minneapolis City Council authorized joining the Commission. With the construction of the Green Line light rail line, however, the commission has since limited its work to building out a rapid bus transit service, from St. Paul to Hastings, and there is no alignment or station planned within Minneapolis. As much as I would welcome a commuter, or high speed, rail line along this corridor, participation in the commission no longer seemed appropriate and so, as the Council Member on the group, I authored and supporting having the City withdraw as a member.

Support for National Parks. I was proud to help draft and pass the resolution "Supporting the United States National Park Service" to call attention to the condition of the National Park System and request Congress to appropriate adequate funding for the system. The National Park Service (NPS) maintains a system that includes 417 park units, 23 national scenic and national historic trails, and 60 wild and scenic rivers, including the Mississippi Regional Recreation Area that runs through our city and Ward. Despite a mission to make parks open and accessible, because of Congressional underfunding the National Park Service has a backlog in Minnesota of \$21 million needed for repairs to aging historical structures, trails, sewers,

drainage, hundreds of miles of roads, tunnels, bridges, and other vital infrastructure. The resolution puts the city on record encouraging Congress to create a reliable, predictable stream of resources to address deferred maintenance needs in America's National Park System. For more about this effort see <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/projects/restore-americas-parks>

Conceal Carry Reciprocity. I was proud to author a resolution opposing a proposed federal bill (HR 38 and S 446) that would force each state to recognize the concealed carry laws of every other state. Currently, states have the right to choose which states' concealed carry permits they recognize, which is important because the requirements to carry hidden, loaded guns in public vary drastically from state to state. If the concealed carry reciprocity bill passes, Minnesota would be federally mandated to honor the weak or nonexistent concealed carry standards of other states, like North Dakota and Wisconsin, making Minnesota less safe and putting law enforcement at risk. You can find the resolution that the Council approved December at <https://lims.minneapolismn.gov/File/2017-01516>.

Keys for Heroes Program. Minneapolis has joined a statewide program to help reduce homelessness among veterans registered with Minnesota Homeless Veteran Registry that ensures that veterans experiencing homelessness have access to appropriate housing and services. When a veteran joins the registry, a team of housing and service professionals convenes to find the best resources and housing options available to support that veteran, and in some cases, the veteran's family. If a landlord participates in Keys for Heroes, the City may be more flexible on enforcement related to the tenant. Anyone who ever served in the U.S. armed forces, Army Reserve or National Guard can join the registry. See <https://mn.gov/mdva/resources/homelessnessandprevention/keys-for-heroes.jsp> for more information.

Nicollet Mall. The new Nicollet, completed at the end of November has opened as a greener, brighter and more user-friendly main street for downtown Minneapolis. The Nicollet renovation features twice the amount of greenery with nearly 250 new trees, including some already 40 feet tall along with the latest LED lighting. For more information about Nicollet, visit OnNicollet.com. In December Metro Transit routes 10, 11, 17, 18, 25 and 59 return to Nicollet Mall. Metro Transit will be adding a dozen new shelters on Nicollet later this year with heat, light and real-time displays. Hybrid rides and free rides on some routes will remain features on the mall.

Short-term Rentals. The City began accepting registration and license applications for short-term rentals, such as Airbnb and VRBO, in Minneapolis. If you are renting your home when you are not present during the rental period or operate a non-owner-occupied rental property who rents out an entire unit you may need to register or get a license. Go to <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/inspections/rental/shorttermrentals> to find registration and licenses applications.

Student Election Judge Program. The City's student election judge program received a "Clearie" award from The U.S. Election Assistance Commission in recognition of outstanding innovations in election administration. Since 1991, the City's student election judge program has recruited

high school students 16 and older to work on Election Day. Participants train with and work alongside adult election judges, getting hands-on experience in administering elections. The program increases the number of election judges the City has, provides the City with more judges who can speak languages other than English and helps diversify elections staff so it better reflects communities they serve. In this municipal election, 291 student election judges participated. That amounted to more than 10 percent of the City's entire election workforce.

Opioid Lawsuit. The City Council has initiated a lawsuit against manufacturers and distributors of opioids to recover costs incurred by the City in responding to the opioid crisis. We are joining a number of states, counties and cities across the country that have filed similar lawsuits against drug makers to help recoup costs associated with fighting the opioid epidemic. In the past 18 months, the Minneapolis Fire Department has seen a large increase in demand for service in response to the opioid epidemic. Since May 2016, when the Minneapolis Fire Department began administering naloxone treatments for opioid overdoses, the Fire Department has responded to 363 opioid overdose emergencies in Minneapolis administering 551 doses of naloxone to date. The naloxone treatments administered by the Fire Department have saved the lives of 328 people. There were 376 opioid-involved deaths in Minnesota in 2016, up 12 percent from 2015, according to recent data released by the Minnesota Department of Health. Prescription opioids, such as oxycodone and hydrocodone, accounted for the largest number of opioid-involved deaths.

Animal Boarding Facilities. The Council has approved a new zoning code amendment that distinguishes between animal shelters and animal boarding facilities and provides standards for the establishment of new animal boarding facilities. Animal Boarding facilities will now be allowed in commercial, downtown, and industrial zoning districts. An animal boarding facility is defined as a place or service where animals are kept or maintained (day or overnight), for the care, training, exercising and/or socializing by a person other than the owner of the animals for a fee. Animal boarding may include incidental grooming, dog walkers or training services.

Civil Rights Ordinance. In December The Council approved amending our Civil Rights Ordinance to remove outdated language and update it to better reflect the current responsibilities of the Commission, Director and the Department. You can see the changes here <https://lims.minneapolismn.gov/File/2017-01320>

Police Conduct Oversight Commission. The Council has approved amending the Police Conduct Oversight ordinance clarifying and codifying the working relationship between civilian oversight, the police department and city government, and making the chair a position elected by the Commission and not appointed by the Mayor. More information is available at <https://lims.minneapolismn.gov/File/2017-01372>

Family Partnership Request for State Funds. The Family Partnership, currently located in Ward 2 at 42nd and Lake Street, is looking to build a new headquarters. In December the Council approved adding additional item to our list of state bonding priorities for The Family Partnership's 36,000 square foot headquarters that will includes a childcare facility, a

behavioral health clinic, a Center for Healing and Empowerment for victims of violence and sex trafficking, and space for training and community gathering.

1035 14th Avenue SE. In November I met with Cindy Polich from the Theatre Elision, a small non-profit theatre company operating in the Twin Cities. She is evaluating purchasing the property at 1035 14th Avenue SE (former church and medieval museum) to renovate it and convert it into a performing arts center. Before she makes a decision she is committing to obtaining community input and support.

Mid City Industrial Streets. The Council has approved the layout (5 segments) for the Mid-City Industrial Reconstruction Project for the reconstruction of several streets in the Mid-City Industrial Neighborhood that sits just north of Ward 2 and Hennepin Ave between 11th and 27th Streets. <https://lms.minneapolismn.gov/File/2017-01311>.

New Inspectors for the 1st and 3rd Precincts. In November 30 Police Chief Arradondo announced a change in leadership of the 1st (downtown and Cedar Riverside) and 3rd (Seward, Greater Longfellow and much of South Minneapolis) Police Precincts. The current 1st Precinct Inspector, Mike Sullivan, will return as the Inspector of the 3rd Precinct where he served from 2012 until July of 2016. I am delighted to see Mike returning to the third and see him as a community oriented, compassionate and pragmatic leader ready and able to work with the community to solve problems and promote safety together. The Chief has appointed Eddie Frizell as the Inspector of the Minneapolis Police Department's 1st Precinct. Frizell has been with the department since 1993 and has worked in the 1st, 4th, and 5th Precincts. He has worked in recruitment, 1st Precinct Community Response Team, Internal Affairs, Emergency Response Unit, Mounted Patrol, Mediation Compliance, Crisis Negotiations, as Inspector of both the 1st and 5th Precincts as well as the Deputy Chief of Patrol.

Aeon Prospect Park Zoning and Funding. Aeon's plans for a new 5-story 70 unit apartment building at 3001 4th Street SE have been approved. Their land use approvals include a rezoning from Light Industrial (I1) to Commercial (C3A); a Conditional Use Permit to increase the maximum building height; variances to reduce the minimum vehicle parking requirement, the minimum bicycle parking requirement; and to allow for a building placement greater than 8 feet from the property line.

Green on 4th Apartments. The Council has approved the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Plan and Housing Development Plan for Green on Fourth Apartments at 2901 4th St SE and authorized loaning \$3,965,000 to the project that will be paid back over 18 years from future property taxes. The proposed development will be six stories made up of 243 apartment units, and three stories of underground parking with 191 stalls. Of the 243 apartment units, 66 will be restricted to households with incomes at and below 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI). Of the 66 income restricted units, 49 will be available at 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

Riverside Homes Refinance. Working closely with the West Bank Community Development Corporation (WBCDC) The Community Housing Development Corporation and the West Bank Community Corporation's application for revenue bond refinancing for Riverside Homes is

coming to the Council this month. These organizations are working to refinance, update and rehabilitate 191 units of housing in 74 town home, single family and multiplex buildings throughout the Cedar Riverside neighborhood, known as Riverside Homes, including several near Riverside Park and the River Bluff Townhomes in Ward 2. The refinancing will generate approximately \$16 million dollars for repairs and improvements and will hopefully preserve the units as safe, quality long term affordable housing for the next 30 years or longer. The plan extends ground leases with the WBCDC has on these properties with the City to 2093 and specifies that no resident will be displaced, that all affirmative action hiring requirements will be met and the WBCHC will sponsor a modest neighborhood jobs program. For more information visit <http://wbcdc.org/annual-meeting-features-riverside-homes-refinance-construction-update/> and <https://lims.minneapolismn.gov/File/2017-01431>

Seward Gets Great Neighborhood Award. Congratulations to the Seward Neighborhood for receiving a Great Place award from the American Planning Association (APA) at the Seward Neighborhood Groups annual meeting in November. Seward is one of 5 neighborhoods recognized in the United States in 2017 for demonstrating exceptional character, quality, and planning—attributes that enrich communities, facilitate economic growth, and inspire others around the country. According to the APA website, "Seward is a testament to the value of diversity when it comes to community building, economic resilience, and neighborhood stewardship."

East of the River Plan. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is holding a public meeting on the proposed East of the River Plan on **Tuesday, December 12**, 6:30-8:00 pm, at Van Cleve Park. You can find more information here: https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park_care_improvements/park_projects/current_projects/east_of_the_river_park_master_plan/

U of M Protected Bikeways project update. City Public Works staff have organized a meeting about the proposed U of M Protected Bikeways on **Wednesday, December 20**, 5:30-6:30 pm at Van Cleve Park. Public Works developed refined concepts for the whole project corridor based on the initial concepts shared at a previous public meeting in Southeast Como in April 2017. Those concepts are available on the project website: <http://minneapolismn.gov/bicycles/projects/WCMSP-197539>

Openings on Boards and Commissions. A number of board and commission positions are open for City Council and mayor appointments this fall. Visit <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/openings/index.htm> for more information and to apply.

Open Office Hours in the Ward. I usually hold open "Office Hours" in the ward every Thursday morning from 9:30 to 11:00 am. Please feel free to call the office at 673-2202 to reserve some time when I will be there or just stop by.

First Thursdays at the Oren Gateway Center, Nabo Café, 2211 Riverside Avenue;

Second Thursdays at Black: Coffee and Waffles, 1500 Como Ave SE;

Third Thursdays at T Rex Cookie Café, 3338 University Ave SE;

Fourth Thursdays at Blue Moon Coffee Café, 3822 E Lake St.