



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the Prospect Park East River Road Neighborhood, 7-25-11

**Cam's next Prospect Park Office Hours:
Pratt School, August 16th, 9:30-11am**

Items:

- 1) Cupcake Beer/Wine License
- 2) National Night Out
- 3) Managed Natural Landscape Ordinance
- 4) Bicycle Master Plan
- 5) State Budget
- 6) State Government Shutdown
- 7) Pension Reform
- 8) Solid Waste Director
- 9) U Combined Heat and Power Facility
- 10) Farmers Market Ordinance
- 11) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) The Cupcake has been approved by the Regulatory Energy and Environment committee for an on-sale Class D beer and wine license. Two nearby residents on Prospect Terrace objected to the granting of the license, due to parking concerns. I committed to work with Prospect Terrace residents to review the critical parking area that they have in place and evaluate strengthening it. Three residents and a representative of Tierney Brothers wrote in support of the license application. I expect that this will also pass the full Council next week.

- 2) National Night Out is Tuesday, August 2nd. If you're planning a neighborhood gathering, there are important deadlines for registering your event with the City and for blocking off your street. There is a single online process to register your NNO event and apply to close your street. From July 20 to July 28, there is a \$100 fee for blocking off the street. You need permission of 75 percent of your neighbors to be approved for street closure—please have their names and addresses with you when you apply. (You do not need their signatures.) Get started at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/nno, or call 311. For ideas for greening your NNO event, visit www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/nno/Green-Block-Party.pdf.

- 3) The Managed Natural Landscape ordinance I am authoring will be coming before the Regulatory Energy and Environment committee on August 22nd. If passed, it will allow our ordinances to catch up with the environmentally friendly practices being used by residents, including native prairie plantings and other purposeful, well-maintained yards that use something other than turf grass. For the first time, there will be the legal authority for inspections staff to allow grasses in yards over 8 inches in height. The ordinance will also help clarify the difference between turf grass lawns that are not being maintained and purposeful plantings. Staff will also be bringing forward some related process improvements, including allowing 14 days, rather than the usual 7, for property owners of ambiguous yards – those that might be either a managed natural landscape or a yard that is inadequately maintained – to communicate with the City about what the intent is for the yard in question. I see this as a major step forward in allowing and encouraging residents to use more ecologically sustainable plantings in their yards, with all the attendant improvements to storm water management, biodiversity, air quality and more.

- 4) The Council has passed the City's first ever Bicycle Master Plan. It was considerably improved by input from the new Bicycle Advisory Committee (or BAC), with four bike facility corridors throughout the city being added as a result of their advocacy. This outcome has also significantly strengthened the BAC itself. As we passed the plan, the Council also directed staff to work with the BAC on finalizing the recommendations they've made for an implementation plan, and return to the Council in November. For more information, please see my blog.

If you need this material in an alternative format, please contact Matt Bower at (612) 673-2188 or Matthew.Bower@ci.minneapolis.mn.us

If you want help translating this call – Hmong– Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2188;

Spanish – Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llame 612-673-2188;

Somali – Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' an wac 612-673-2188.

- 5) The budget deal between Governor Dayton and Republicans in control of the legislature is not as bad as it could have been for the people of Minneapolis, but it wasn't very good, either. The City was hit hard with a decrease in Local Government Aid and will be getting \$64 million instead of the more than \$80 million we are due under the state's own LGA formula. We anticipated this, however, and have already approved a backup budget that includes cuts to our paving program, Fire Department, Police Department and payments to our pension management fund. These cuts will likely result in layoffs to both the police and fire departments. More importantly, due to the Republicans' unwillingness to raise taxes on the wealthiest Minnesotans, the budget that will be adopted essentially borrows the whole difference between the two sides' positions, approximately \$1.4 billion. This structurally unbalanced approach virtually assures that the state will continue to face major deficits in future years, with significant consequences for state services and for municipalities across the state.
- 6) The shutdown of state government has had significant impacts on the City of Minneapolis. The City took on some functions normally provided by the state, including electrical inspections, and the shutdown delayed or otherwise impacted a number of infrastructure projects using either state or federal funds. More information is available here: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2011-meetings/20110722/Docs/2011StateGovernmentShutdownReport_final_draft.pdf.
- 7) During the special session, legislation passed that would consolidate our old city Police and Fire pension programs. The agreement, outlined in the legislation, would not be effective until January 21 and still needs to be approved by the members of the programs and the City Council. It appears that this bill is generous to the pension recipients and offers slightly better terms Minneapolis tax payers than the previously passed legislation that was not signed by the Governor. This has the potential to save Minneapolis taxpayers \$21 million next year, millions more over the long term, end a long drawn out litigation process and stabilize payments in the next several years until, eventually, the programs will be completely managed by the state's Public Employee Retiree Association. In the months ahead I will be carefully reviewing the specifics of the legislation and watching what the pension program members do to prepare for making my final decision on this when it will be voted on by the Council sometime in the fall.
- 8) Solid Waste and Recycling Director Susan Young is leaving the City of Minneapolis. I have appreciated Susan as a knowledgeable, can-do City employee, and have worked with her on several projects, most recently the commercial recycling ordinance. This transition also offers an opportunity to restructure the Solid Waste and Recycling department to have a greater focus on policy. Over the next few years, the leadership of solid waste and recycling will be faced with some great policy questions: how do we expand curbside organics collection citywide? Should we transition from our current multi-sort recycling program to a dual-sort system? I wish Susan well, and look forward to working on these complicated topics with her successor.
- 9) Following up on its recently released Twin Cities Campus Climate Action Plan that calls on the campus to reduce its carbon footprint by half by the year 2020, The University of Minnesota is proposing to build a new natural gas combined heat and power facility at the "Old Main" site just west of the Dinkytown Bikeway Bridge and the Education Sciences Building. The Old Main steam plant was decommissioned a few years ago, but the facility remains, at the hub of the steam distribution system for the campus. Two natural gas fueled turbines would be installed to generate steam and electricity. If the project goes forward, there will be a multi-year implementation period, and there will be a State pollution control permitting process. Additionally, funding for the facility would need to be part of the U's 2012 capital request to the legislature. The Board of Regents Facilities Committee approved the request on July 6 and it will now go to the full Board in November. The Regents' meeting agendas are online at www1.umn.edu/regents/meetings.html. This summer the University will host informational meetings on the proposal. For more information contact Jan Morlock, Community Relations, 612-624-8318 or Mike Berthelson, Facilities Management 612-626-1091.
- 10) I have introduced an ordinance that will, if passed, dramatically improve the farmers market rules in Minneapolis. My office has been working with farmers market managers and City staff for months on a set of recommendations that are included in this text. Among other things, this ordinance amendment will create the first-ever "farmers market" license type, and require that at least 60% of vendors at farmers markets are selling food that they grew or gathered themselves. A public hearing will be held at the Regulatory Energy and Environment committee in September.
- 11) There are openings on the Latino Advisory Committee. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.