



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood 11-6-13

Cam's next Seward Office Hours:
Tuesday, November 26th, 9:30-11:00am
Birchwood Café, 3311 E 25th St

Items:

- 1) Thank You
- 2) Election Results
- 3) Seward'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) Homicide at the Blue Nile
- 10) Funds for Seward Commons
- 11) Tri-State Bearing Building
- 12) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) Yesterday, I was proud and humbled to be reelected to a third term as Second Ward Council Member. I want to thank all of the voters of Seward who still live in Ward 2 for your continued confidence. As I have over the last eight years, I will 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. I consider it a great honor and a great joy to be able to continue to serve the residents of Seward and all of Minneapolis as a City Council Member.
- 2) Here is what we know about the election results so far. The mayor's race is still being tabulated, but Betsy Hodges has a substantial lead. 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 a new Council Member has been elected in Ward 12 (Andrew Johnson). The winners for three open seats, in wards 5, 9, and 13, have not yet been determined. I expect winners for these races to be announced by Thursday evening. Scott Vreeland was reelected Park Commissioner for the district that includes Seward.
- 3) One of the most significant election outcomes for Seward is the election of Abdi Warsame in Ward 6, which includes much of west Seward. Council Member-elect Warsame won won of the two Seward precincts in Ward 6, and Council Member Lilligren won the other. Warsame will be the first Somali Council Member in Minneapolis. I congratulate him on a successful campaign and look forward to working with him to continue the great progress Seward has made on strengthening the Franklin Avenue commercial corridor, improving safety and livability, and building cohesiveness between all of the members of the Seward community.
- 4) From all reports, Ranked Choice Voting was a huge success yesterday. 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.

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

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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, llama 612-673-2700;

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

- 5) Both Plain Language Charter amendments passed yesterday 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) On Friday, **November 8**, starting at 10:00 am, the City Council will take public comments about a new proposal that has been in the works for months to make significant improvements to 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%). The deal also calls for extended lease agreements for the team and AEG from 2025 to 2032 and an additional commitment from the city to cover \$50 million in ongoing building improvements over that same time period. 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.
- 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/nrcsm/>. You can find the full text of the letter on the Second Ward blog.
- 9) A young man from Saint Paul was shot and killed near the Blue Nile restaurant on Franklin Avenue on September 28th. His alleged murderer, Cedric Chappell, has been arrested, and it sounds like the case against him is strong. I have met with near neighbors of the Blue Nile, and have been working to find ways through the City's licensing authority to prevent future incidents of this kind.
- 10) The Council's Community Development Committee has voted to apply for \$635,000 in grant funds for environmental investigation and cleanup for Phase III of the Seward Commons development. The granting agencies are the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Contamination Cleanup and Investigation Grant Program, the Metropolitan Council's Tax Base Revitalization Account Grant Program and the Hennepin County Environmental Response Fund.
- 11) The old Tri-State Bearing building at 34th Ave S and 25th St E is moving to a public auction. The underlying zoning of the building is residential, and it may have lost its nonconforming rights as an industrial building. Future use of the building may require a rezoning to a low-density Office Residence district. My office has been in contact with Seward Redesign, and it sounds like there are several people interested in turning this building into something that benefits the broader neighborhood and fits in well with the uses along 25th St E.
- 12) 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, Minneapolis Workforce Council, Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Police Conduct Oversight Commission, Police Conduct Review Panel, Seniors Advisory Committee and Telecommunications Network. For a full list of appointment opportunities and position descriptions, go to www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/openings.