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### Remembering Niki Mitchell, 1960- 2015



*Niki Mitchell, my former policy aide, passed  
away unexpectedly in November.*

*My thoughts and prayers are with her family.*

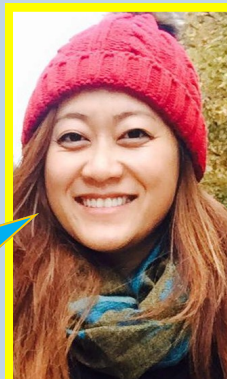
### Hello from the 5th Ward staff:



Sean Broom  
Ward 5 Policy Aide

Happy Holidays, folks!  
Special thanks to Rachel  
Nelson for filling in for the  
5th Ward office while I was  
gone on paternity leave!

It's been a busy year at the  
office. Happy New Year,  
everyone! Shout out to our  
summer intern, Samantha Vang,  
for helping out in the office!



Yer Yang  
Ward 5 Council Associate

## Minneapolis City Council Member Blong Yang

# The 5th Ward Lowdown

### Dear Neighbors,

We've reached the end of 2015 and what a year it has been. We've worked on many things to make Minneapolis a safer, healthier, and better place for all residents. Good things are happening in Ward 5 and great things are coming to Ward 5.

I mourn the loss of Jamar Clark and extend my deep condolences to his family. As we await the findings in the Jamar Clark investigation, I urge patience. The federal/state investigation will take some time. I have no idea what the investigation will find and thus, I will be ready for anything. I hope we all are. Community-police relations must improve and I am committed to doing what I can on the policy end to support that effort.

In 2015, we made some good progress in the area of housing. Slowly, but surely, city-owned boarded and vacant homes in North Minneapolis are being rehabbed. More people know about our Vacant Housing Recycling Program than ever before. There are now over 100 empty city-owned lots that can be used for community/commercial gardening, up from only 60 in 2014. Unfortunately, we still have 700 more empty city-owned lots on which we need to work for the future. I hope to make a big dent in the number of empty city-owned lots and city-owned boarded and vacant homes in 2016. If you want to build a new house, rehab an existing city-owned house, or start a garden, please contact my office at 612-673-2205.

The City has programs in place to help business start-ups. Small businesses, including start-ups, are important because they create a lot of jobs. We need jobs in North Minneapolis. If you want to start a business or develop a new building, especially on West Broadway, please call my office.

Happy holidays. I pray for good health and safety to each and every one of you.

Sincerely,

### The Adopted 2016 Budget

The City Council passed a \$1.3 billion budget on December 9th.

Earlier that day the Mayor's office sent out a press release announcing that I would be proposing two amendments to the budget. The first amendment was for \$310,000 for procedural justice and crisis intervention training for MPD. This training is part of the DOJ National Initiative for Building Trust and Justice Program. Its purpose is to address long standing issues between minority communities and the police.

The second amendment was for \$605,000 of upgrades and repairs at the Fourth Precinct. After several hours of testimony, some of which seemed to threaten the well-being of council members, I decided in consultation with other leaders to not put forward the amendment.

In hindsight, the only thing I wish that would have happened differently is that we spelled out what \$605,000 buys. The \$605,000 was going to replace the cameras (which were destroyed and/or painted over by protesters), pay for a new fence (during the protests, someone attempted to drive an SUV through the fence), pay for new glass to replace the windows (which were destroyed by protesters), upgrade the lighting, and other improvements (that every other precinct has). **It should come as no surprise to residents of the Northside that the facilities at the 4th Precinct are the worst in the city.** I will continue to work with the Mayor, my council colleagues, and the MPD to make sure that these needs are met.

DECEMBER 2015



### Budget Highlights:

- \$13 million for affordable housing
- \$140,000 for restorative justice
- \$1 million for body camera implementation
- \$350,000 for 30 TechHire Initiative scholarships for tech skill training for disadvantaged communities

### Amendment Highlights:

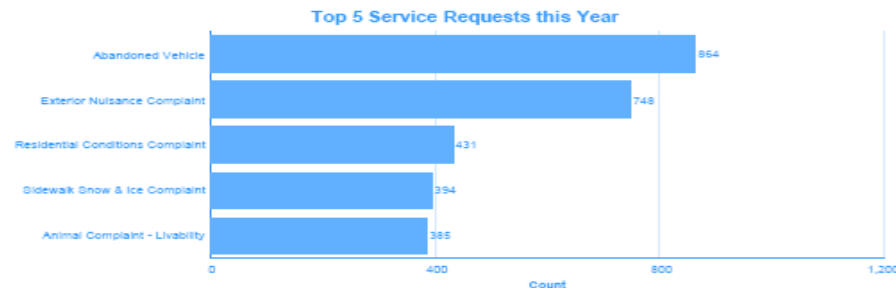
- \$310,000 for advanced procedural justice and crisis intervention training (Yang, B Johnson)
- \$87,500 for Domestic Violence intervention (Yang, Palmisano)
- \$129,000 for the Contextualized GED program at Summit OIC (B Johnson, Yang)
- \$42,000 for youth technical training expansion (Warsame, Yang)
- Staff Direction ordering the preparation of a website which will share the city's resources, goals and metrics on racial equity (A Johnson, Yang)





# 2015

## Ward 5 Highlights



### 2016 Projects in Ward 5:

- ◆ **Broadway Curve**
  - ◆ **Broadway Flats**
  - ◆ **Commons at Penn**
  - ◆ **Hawthorne Eco-village Apartments**
  - ◆ **Workforce Center at 800 West Broadway**
  - ◆ **YouthLink Supportive Housing**
- Construction Begins Opening Opening Construction Begins Opening Opening**

### PUBLIC SAFETY:

#### MPD Staffing Levels

We have 848 sworn officers. 862 is budgeted for in 2016.

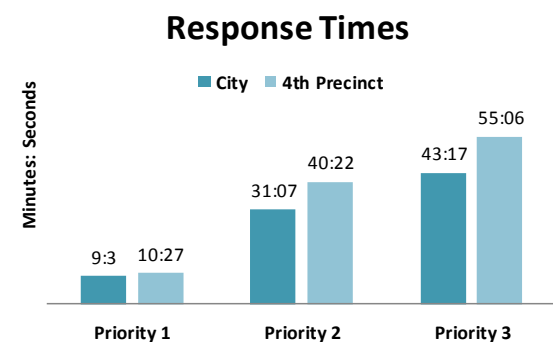
#### Body Cams

This year the City applied for a \$600,000 matching grant for body cams. We were awarded the grant and will begin the rollout of the body cams program in 2016. In addition to the grant funds, the City budgeted \$1 million for the implementation of body cams. The body cams will first be rolled out in the 1<sup>st</sup> Precinct in March 2016, and then they will be rolled out in the 4<sup>th</sup> Precinct before summer. Every precinct will have body cams by the end of 2016.

Before the rollout, there will be public outreach. The state legislature is also looking into body cam policies. I'm excited about body cams because they are an important tool in building better community-police relationships.

#### MPD Response Times

Response times (911 calls for service dispatched to the police) have slowed down across the City in the 3rd quarter of 2015, compared to last year. The 4th Precinct response times for priority calls are slower than the City's average as you can see in the table below.



#### February 20th

We've received a few phone calls and emails about the **proposed freight rail** reroute through Theodore Wirth Park. Like Governor Dayton and others, I support a full EIS for this project, and I want a thorough examination of all of the rails that would be affected by this. There will obviously be an impact from these new trains coming through the area and I want to make sure it is safe. The city has limited options when it comes to our response to what Canadian Pacific and BNSF want to do, but I am working with other council members and every elected official I can to make sure my constituents' voices are heard and their safety is assured.

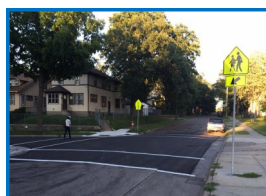


#### April 1st

A **Small Business Fair** was held to encourage folks to start businesses on the Northside.

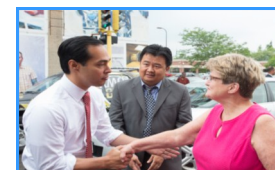
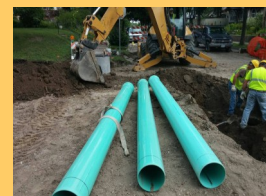
#### May 25th

Shout out to Public Works for painting the **crosswalks** and putting up pedestrian signs to make the **intersection of 30th Ave N & Humboldt Ave N** safer for students and residents. Hmong International Academy had requested this crosswalk for years.



#### June 29th

**26th Ave N Repaving Project** focused on the ends of the street. The western bookend of 26th between West Broadway Ave and Theo Wirth Parkway. The eastern bookend from Lyndale Ave N to 2nd St N. Crews have now wrapped up most of the work for the construction season. In 2016, work will begin to reconstruct the heart of 26th Ave N.



#### August 6th

##### Promise Zone

U.S. Housing Secretary Julian Castro toured the designated Promise Zone of North Mpls with local leaders, groups, and businesses.

For more information:

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/promisezone/index.htm>

#### November 20th

##### Infill Development

We started a process to bring together community members, faith leaders, non-profit leaders, and developers of all stripes to figure out what we can do to promote building houses on the empty lots. Every option is on the table – there will be nothing we don't consider to try and repair these holes in our neighborhood.

We are going to spend a couple months looking at this issue. By the middle of 2016, we hope to be able to report to all of you what we are going to do to address this important problem.

#### December 3rd

##### Vacant Houses and Recycling Program

My office and CPED hosted three forums this year on buying city-owned vacant homes. We want to get these homes into the hands of good homeowners.

For more information go to:

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/housing/>



#### December 9th

We toured **Unison's new eco-friendly paint booth**. Unison is a commercial HVAC company located in Ward 5. With the City's help they put in a new parking lot and an improved paint booth this year. Unison has created over 100 new jobs in the past couple of years.

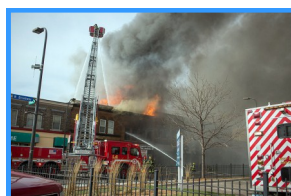
## February

#### February 24th

**Start Your Community Garden Forum** spurred a number of interested gardeners to lease city-owned vacant lots for gardens this summer. Ten more lots were leased in North Mpls.



## April



#### April 15th

The **900 West Broadway Fire** took out several buildings.

## June

#### June 5th

##### Lurking and Spitting

The City Council repealed the lurking and spitting ordinances. (Co-authors: Yang/Gordon)



#### July 10th

##### Flavored Tobacco

The City Council passed a first-in-the nation restriction on flavored tobacco ordinance in which there was an open, public process.

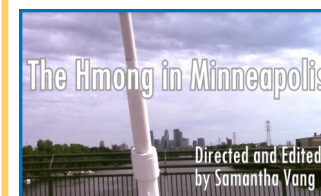
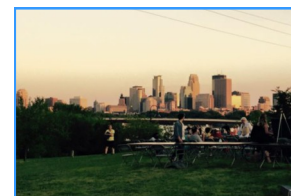
(Co-authors: Yang/Gordon)



## August

#### July 31st

The **Riverfront Fest** was held at Ole Olson Park in Ward 5, drawing a crowd of over 2,000. The event was put on by the Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the East Exchange Club. Our office played a role in putting this event together.



#### September 3rd

##### The HMINNEAPOLIS Forum

showcased a short documentary of the history and lives of the Hmong in Mpls. The first Hmong families arrived in 1979, and today there are an estimated 10,000 Hmong residents living in the city.

Link to the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYSjdScuL7Y&feature=youtu.be>

## October



#### November 20th

##### Community Gardens

The city owns about 800 vacant lots. Before 11/20/15, only about 60 could be used as a community garden. The city spends \$3,600 a year just to mow the lawn and shovel the snow on every lot that isn't used as a garden.

After a lot of study, CPED came back and recommended the expansion of the community garden program and proposed another 50 lots that can be used for growing food in the City. Working with my colleagues, we also reduced the costs of applying for and securing a community garden plot.

## December



#### December 11th

The City Council honored the Mpls **North High Polars** football team and gave recognition to their outstanding accomplishments. They were named the 2015 Mpls City Champs after going undefeated in city play. They were the Minnesota Section 4 Class A Champions and participated in the State Class A Final (the first Mpls public high school to do so in 38 years).

