

FOGGY BOTTOM & WEST END
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 2A
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 15, 2010
ST. STEPHEN MARTYR PARISH HALL
25TH & PENNSYLVANIA AVE., N.W.

Call to order

Chair Rebecca Coder called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM. She and Vice-Chair Armando Irizarry introduced themselves. A quorum was declared at 7:18 PM with the arrival of commissioners Eric Malinen and Frances Harmon. The Commission adopted the draft agenda.

General agenda

Public comments

A resident of 2501 M St., N.W., raised issues of concern about Francis Field: Infrastructure work by DC Water is taking away space potentially to be used for a dog park. Meanwhile, informal use of the field by dog owners creates noise in early morning and late evening hours. A poorly designed gate makes noise each time it is opened; the number of homeless persons using the facilities appears to be increasing.

A resident of Whitman Place echoed concerns about the dog noise and also about the new safety lights. Commissioner Coder agreed that such issues need to be discussed. Sherri Kimbel of Councilmember Jack Evans's office stated that she will report these concerns to the councilmember.

Brittany Waddell introduced new staff members in the George Washington University Office of Community Affairs.

Safety report

Officer Clemmons of the Metropolitan Police Department 2nd District presented crime data for Public Safety Area 207. A suspect has been apprehended in connection with robberies in the 2200 to 2400 blocks of Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. There has been a drop of twelve percent in thefts, but a fifty percent increase in thefts from autos. Officer Clemmons attributed this in part to new students at GWU leaving property unattended in their cars.

In response to a citizen complaint about “gross, crude and disrespectful” behavior by students roaming F St., N.W., and blocking intersections, especially at 21st St., N.W., Kevin Hay, the new Chief of Police at GWU, introduced himself and promised to deal with the problem.

In response to a citizen complaint, Officer Clemmons explained that a police unit conducting a traffic audit in the 2400 block of Virginia Ave., N.W., which had been requested earlier by the ANC, was federally funded and could not be detailed to other duties. Ms. Kimbel described complaints originating in the homeless feeding program at Western Presbyterian Church and stated that she has contacted Cmdr. Klein of the MFD 2nd District to discuss them.

Informational presentations

DC Water

Aleizha Batson, Public Outreach Manager for Public Affairs of the DC Water and Sewer Authority introduced colleagues who explained plans for two DC Water projects in the West End neighborhood:

Michael Thorstenson, PE, of the consulting firm Greeley and Hansen discussed a sewer replacement project extending from 25th to M sts., N.W. and extending along M to 24th St. Its purpose is to replace both water and sewer mains and to prevent overflow from sewers into Rock Creek. No excavation is planned for Francis Field; there will be limited street closures and some parking spaces affected. Construction will be limited to daytime hours; the project is expected to take six months.

Roger Gans, Manager, DC Water Planning and Design and Duncan Mukira, PE, Project Manager explained a second project aimed at

repairing and renewing the Crosstown Tunnel, a major infrastructure feature that lies 100-200 feet below the surface of the West End and carries 40 to 60 million gallons of water each day to downtown and the southeastern sections of the District. It is currently leaking into Rock Creek Park and “has to be fixed.” Handouts were distributed illustrating the scope of the project, the depth of the shaft on 25th St. that will give access to the work and a “traffic mitigation plan” for nearby streets. A 20’ wall and sound barrier will prevent unauthorized access to the shaft. The project will extend from September 2011 to September 2012. Together, the two projects will take approximately two years.

Discussion among commissioners and constituents focused on the impact on water pressure in neighboring buildings, construction noise and vibration, the duration of the project and its impact on the recently-installed improvements to Francis Field. The speakers assured the commission that these factors had been anticipated.

G Street Firehouse

Ellie Becker gave the historical background of Firehouse 23 (2119 G St., N.W.) and urged the Commission to recognize its centennial by means of a resolution which she drafted. By motion of Commissioner Coder and after slight modification, the motion was adopted by a vote of 4-0. A copy of the resolution can be found as Appendix I of these minutes.

GWU Phase 2 PUD

Ms. Waddell explained the difference between GWU’s Phase 1 Planned Unit Development, the overall campus plan approved by DC authorities in 2008, and Phase 2, which consists of the implementation components of Phase 1. She also explained the presentation of each component to the Commission requires two steps, an informational step and a formal response by the commission to specific plans for one of the dozen sites authorized under Phase 1. Her presentation tonight was to provide information about the building planned for Square 39, bounded by Washington Circle, 24th St., and New Hampshire Ave., N.W., which will be the new home for the GWU School of Public Health.

Pat Molinax, Development Manager for GWU, explained the planning program for the building. It will have seven stories, with two stories

below grade, an entrance on New Hampshire Ave. and a loading dock on 24th St. Parking will be eliminated on this site but equivalent spaces will be provided within the overall campus parking plan. The building is not intended to accommodate new hires at GWU but to pull together existing programs now scattered in other buildings. Construction is expected to take place during 2012-13.

Discussion focused on the impact on overall campus growth and on the impact on Washington Circle, particularly the continuing danger of pedestrian access to the Circle. It was pointed out that this is subject to an ongoing discussion between the neighborhood, the university and the National Park Service, which has jurisdiction over the circle but limited funds to redesign it.

Planned Unit Development

Stephen Cochran, AICP, of the DC Office of Planning, explained the revision currently under consideration “for conceptual changes to the zoning regulations regarding planned unit development (“PUD”)...The recommendations focus on clarifying regulations for bonus density, public benefits, community involvement, review process and enforcement for all types of proposed processes, a point system for acceptance of public benefits, guidelines for community input, and various pre- and post- applications requirements.” Mr. Cochran’s presentation elaborated on each of these points, pointing out that an October 4 hearing would be held on the concepts put forward but that formal adoption procedures would also accommodate ANC input at a later time.

Discussion focused on the proposed restriction of monetary contributions to affordable housing and to the proposed use of temporary certificates of occupancy as enforcement mechanisms for the delivery of public benefits. Commissioners and other commenters were skeptical that this procedure would yield effective enforcement.

Special Events

Jewel Hansen of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Challenge Bike Ride, formerly designated “Best Buddies,” distributed information on the ride’s route and times through Foggy Bottom. Commissioners voiced no

objection to these plans and directed the Executive Director to send a letter so stating to the Mayor's Task Force on Special Events.

Regulatory agenda

ABRA

The Commission reviewed liquor license applications from three applicants:

West End Cinema. Commissioner Coder introduced three motions: one to approve the application conditioned on ABC Board's acceptance of an executive voluntary agreement, one incorporating a voluntary agreement governing the hours and conduct of alcohol sales by the applicant, and a letter of support from the Commission for a "stipulated license" to take effect at the time of the Cinema's opening scheduled for October 10, 2010. Discussion focused on mechanisms for enforcing the voluntary agreement and on security arrangements during open hours. The proprietor, Josh Levin, assured commissioners that the Cinema would not operate as "a bar with a screen."

All three measures passed by a vote of 4-0 and are included as Appendix II of these minutes.

Walgreen. Constituent Gary Griffith explained that this application had been forwarded during the Commission's August hiatus and that an ANC protest of the proposed license would have to have been made in advance of the September 15 meeting date. A protest was filed by a group of 72 neighborhood residents and a hearing scheduled for September 20. Mr. Griffith explained the basis of the protest and urged the Commission to endorse it in the expectation of negotiating a voluntary agreement limiting the negative consequences of alcohol sales in this store. Commissioner Coder moved adopting of a resolution supporting the protestants. The resolution passed by a vote of 4-0 and may be found as Appendix III of these minutes.

PassionFood 6. Commissioner Coder reported that no copy of the public notice for this application had been received and that the

posted version at the construction site at Square 54 was impossible for passersby to read. In these circumstances, the Commission voted 4-0 to authorize Commissioner Coder to act on the ANC's behalf as more information about the application is obtained.

The meeting having extended past the time authorized for use of the Parish Hall, the Commission adjourned at 9:41 PM. Action on agenda items 14 and 15 is postponed until the October 13 meeting.

NB: Copies of appendices will be provided in printed version of the minutes.