

MINUTES OF MARCH 3, 2004 MEETING OF ANC-3D

The regularly scheduled monthly meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D was held on Wednesday, March 3, 2004 at Sibley Memorial Hospital's Ernst Auditorium. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Alma H. Gates at 7:30 pm. Present were Commissioners Mullane, Shapley, Finney, and Heuer, who arrived later. Absent per notice were Commissioners Haas and Hamilton.

1. POLICE REPORT - PSA 203 - BY LT. SULLIVAN

1.1 Crimes were down. The tally of monthly traffic violations was presented showing a notable spike of 160 speeding tickets in the 4900 to 5300 MacArthur Blvd. stretch of the boulevard. A request was made for photo-radar monitoring at the north end of Foxhall Road.

1.2 Commissioner Finney's inquiry about manning the shifts elicited the fact that there are now less than 2 available per shift given that PSA 203 has only 13 officers available, although the goal for each PSA under the new scheme is 21. All commissioners voted to send a letter of concern to Chief Ramsey and Council member Kathy Patterson, Chair of the Judiciary Committee, protesting the lack of coverage and warning that we would be tracking this issue to see the force meet its own goal for the PSA.

1.3 Commissioner Shapley announced that she would be organizing with Lt. Sullivan an alley clean-up this spring as part of the effort to identify places for tree infill and streetscape trees and empty tree-boxes for the next round of tree plantation by the city and the Casey Tree Endowment.

2. COMMUNITY CONCERNS

2.1 William Snape, of 5268 Watson Street, registered the need for the whole community to continue to pursue the question of the disposition of the Brady Estate now that it is up for sale by the Salvation Army per Mrs. Casey's donation to them after the collapse of the Mayoral Mansion project there. Richard Carr, on her behalf, is taking bids on the property with a deadline of March 31, 2004. It is zoned for residential use. He hoped that it could at least be maintained as a large, green open space rather than a town house development.

2.2 Kaarina Budow, of 4478 Reservoir Road, along with Catherine Sinatra, raised their problem with dangerous cut-through traffic using the alley off Foxhall Road and Reservoir road, where cars proceed south to Greenwich Parkway to return to Foxhall Road southbound. There are four entries to this one-lane alley, and retaining walls as well as people are endangered by this traffic. Delivery trucks are also using this cut-through. Two persons have been almost hit. Mrs. Sinatra reported a tally of about 150 cars each evening. They have been trying to get remedial action by the city for 2 1/2 years and have contacted both the police and the Foxhall Community Citizens Association. They would like to see posted at the alley's entries Do Not Enter signs or One Way signs, and perhaps No Through Trucks signs. The commission pledged to work with them using the DDOT process for such problems.

2.3 Neal Fitzpatrick, of 3900 Cathedral Avenue, affirmed the desirability of maintaining the Brady Estate as an estate with its green, open space. He works with the Audubon Society.

2.4 Laura Griffen, of 4545 Klinge Road in Wesley Heights, spoke on behalf of the Discovery Creek Museum's plan to bid for the Brady Estate by March 31st. She is on its board. They need to raise some \$30M for the bid. Their plan is to use the estate as a natural environmental learning center and sanctuary open to the public. They currently have three locations, the Children's Museum on MacArthur Blvd., the Glen Echo stables, and the Kenilworth Aquatic Museum in Anacostia.

2.5 WASA announced that there would be free Lead (Pb) testing for families on March 20 at the Hardy Recreation Center. This is to address citizens' concerns about excessive Lead (Pb) in DC's drinking water.

3. JEFF BLACK: BLACK'S SALT FISH MARKET AND CAFÉ

3.1 Jeff Black, owner, and his architect, Peter Hapstak of the firm "CORE" and a Palisades resident, presented plans for the renovation and facade re-design of this property at 4883 MacArthur Blvd. to keep the commission informed. Due to the discovery of structural problems at the street front, the opening will not occur until this fall. His effort to negotiate a paid parking arrangement for patrons with Our Lady of Victory fell through and so he is now working on the options of the Safeway or the CVS lots. He estimates a need for 20 spaces per night. In future, he might apply to the city to use sidewalk patio space.

4. FRANK ECONOMIDES' BOATHOUSE RESTAURANT, FORMERLY ILIJA'S

4.1 Steven Buckman, esq., represented Mr. Economides, the new owner, in explaining the plans for renovation and operation at the 5441 MacArthur Blvd. property. He disclaimed the rumor that it would become a "sports bar" and affirmed that the terms of the liquor license recently agreed with the ANC would be honored. He also said that they wanted to negotiate an easement with the Palisades

Community Church to facilitate access to parking. They need 5 spaces per evening. He explained how some construction was required and is being done with emergency permits. The new owner does intend to buy the building later in the year. The Economides family lives in the area and participates in various civic activities.

4.1.1 David Berkovile, chairman of the Board of the Palisades Community Church, averred that they had objected to the ABRA on the grounds that the new owner was supposed to be creating a "sports bar" and that the changeover required proper notice. But, he said, the property seems very attractive and they would continue to use it as in the past.

5. BZA #17144 - 5519 CAROLINA PLACE - THE KENNETH GOLDINGS

5.1 The owner, Ken Golding, presented the plan to modify and expand this home in a way that will still only occupy 33.2% of the lot and thus is within regulatory limits (40% occupancy). They intend to add a family room to the rear which does encroach 4-feet on the rear yard setback. They have obtained assent from neighbors. Commissioner Finney, as SMD representative, said he had no objection; and a motion to approve the special exception was carried unanimously. See Attachment A.

6. BZA #17139 - 4539 LOWELL STREET - LINDA & THOMAS WALTZ

6.1 Linda Waltz presented their need for a special exception to the side yard setback after a "wall check", which was done after completion of the construction for which a permit had been granted on January 13, 2004, revealed a different measurement and location of the property line than previously used. They had relied on the contractor to take care of all measurements and permits. This is an older (non-conforming) home, dating from 1927; there is a 3-foot setback now, whereas the 1958 rule requires an 8-foot setback. The addition constructed adds on rearward along that side of the house. They believed there was a 5-foot setback when doing this project. They have canvassed the neighbors and obtained assent. Commissioner Mullane, as SMD representative, had no objection; and the commission voted unanimously to approve the application, given the balance of equities and that the homeowner had done everything "by the book". The commission registered its complaint that once again DCRA was careless and put the homeowner in jeopardy and created inconvenience and unnecessary expense for the homeowner. Members of the audience seconded their discouragement from home improvement due to such mishandling. See Attachment B.

7. DDOT'S ANNUAL ANC-3D PERFORMANCE REVIEW FOR 2003 - COLLEEN S. HAWKINSON

7.1 In response to a request by the commission, the Ward 3 planner with DC's Department of Transportation reviewed the status of all the cases that had come before ANC-3D in 2003. This will be a regular event and set a model for compliance reporting to the ANC by other DC departments. She was accompanied by Mr. Beli Al-Lela, an engineer in the Infrastructure Office under Mohammad Khalid's supervision.

7.1.1 A constraint that emerged in the discussion was that DDOT can do only 3 traffic studies a year and already has 5 or 6 in queue from Ward 3 alone. A "warrant study" is a lower level option for some situations.

7.2 Chain Bridge Road: traffic calming study. Completed but no funds for further action for another 6 - 9 months under the FY04 allotment.

7.3 Whitehaven Parkway & MacArthur Blvd.: traffic calming study for schools' opening and closing times. Completed but no funds until FY05; interim measures will be taken. Follows Palisades Transportation Study recommendations, e.g., white striping on Loughboro Road, sidewalks on Arizona Avenue, and refurbishment of signage. Completion in summer 2004.

7.4 47th Street off the Blvd.: a Do Not Enter sign for the morning commuter hours has been installed on a 30-day trial.

7.5 44th Street & Volta Place: a four-way Stop sign has been installed. This is being done as part of a two-month "warrant study" (January - February 2004) which will take another six months to complete **(March - November 2004)**.

7.6 46th Street & W Street: a four-way Stop sign has been installed.

7.7 Alley at Norton Street & MacArthur Blvd.: storm drainage reconstruction need. This will be done under a contract in place for spring 2004. DDOT is collaborating with WASA and expects to construct one collector to transfer to the outfall pipe.

7.8 Foxhall Road, Nebraska Avenue to Reservoir Road: resurfacing and crossing improvements. This major project is in the design phase now and will use the \$1M leftover from the allotment for Field School modifications. It follows the recommendations of the Palisades Transportation Study. Construction is expected in fall 2004.

7.9 Foxhall Road & Reservoir Road: intersection turn signs to separate left and right lanes and prevent

alley use as cut-through.

7.10 Foxhall Road & Whitehaven Parkway: traffic light adjustment. The goal is for an “on-demand” signal.

7.11 Foxhall Road Sidewalk: Mt. Vernon College had pledged \$30K toward installing a sidewalk along their stretch of the road. DDOT will check on this matching fund.

8. JOHN GILL: ROCKWOOD PARKWAY TO NEBRASKA AVENUE

8.1 John Gill, a former commissioner and resident at 4907 Tilden Street, raised the danger to pedestrians on this stretch of road (from Glenbrook Road up Rockwood), which is used by many in Spring Valley and American University as it accesses the bus lines on Nebraska. He was almost run over by a truck recently at 4 pm. There is neither curb nor sidewalk on the south side and parking on the north side; hence people walk in the road. There were injuries reported years ago. This need was taken up by DDOT’s Mrs. Hawkinson and will be added to our ANC’s list of requests of DDOT.

9. ANC FOLLOW-UP WITH DDOT AND ABOUT DDOT

9.1 To create a record and emphasize the need for adequate DDOT funding for requests such as those reviewed above, Commissioner Finney will write a letter to Council member Carol Schwartz, chair of the Public Works and Environment Committee. This will reinforce our demand that all development, as well as hazards, requires traffic study and improvements, as evident in the criticism of the Upper Wisconsin Avenue Corridor Planning framework.

10. “GATEWAY TO WASHINGTON” SIGNS

10.1 Commissioner Finney raised the issue of the proposed new signs’ being both unnecessary at the western entry to Palisades on MacArthur Blvd. and also too large for the site. He made the same objection to siting the new sign at Westmoreland Circle. Samples of the models proposed for gateways all around the city were shown and discussed. They are in a “colonial” brick style and meant to be quite large for long-range drive-by viewing. See Attachment C.

10.2 The Commission agreed that where there was already an attractive and functional sign, in keeping with the neighborhood, the city should not replace that with this new model. A letter of protest with these objections will be sent to DDOT.

11. APPOINTMENT TO ZONING COMMISSION

11.1 Commissioner Finney asked consent from his colleagues to present a letter of objection to the proposed appointment of Gregory Jeffries to the Zoning Commission on grounds of the probability of conflict-of-interest between his private consultancy business and cases coming before the commission. Approval was voted unanimously.

12. ANC ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

12.1 The commission voted unanimously to approve the February minutes.

12.2 The commission reviewed the Treasurer’s Report. There is a balance of \$18,447.55 in the Bank of America account. This includes the direct deposit made on February 24th in the amount of \$6,029.40 for the second quarterly allotment of FY04. We are up to date on both our Quarterly Reports and our allotment checks from the city.

12.3 Chairman Gates asked and received unanimous approval to expend an additional \$134 to cover the cost of the new office fax/copier machine, which had been approved in the commission’s 2004 budget as a \$300 line item.

12.4 The meeting adjourned at 10:15 pm.

12.5 The next meeting will be Wednesday, April 7, 2004.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Stowell Shapley,
Secretary, ANC-3D