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Minutes of the March 6, 2007 meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1-D

These minutes approved at the April 11, 2007 meeting.

Call to order

[7:09 pm] Gregg Edwards called the meeting to order at 7:09 pm. Present were five of the six ANC 1D Commissioners: Gregg Edwards, Joe Esparza, Angelia Scott, Dave Bosserman, and Jack McKay.

Public discussion

[7:10 pm] **Philip Panell** spoke, representing DCVote, concerning the rally for voting rights planned for April 16, and an “appreciation reception” for ANC commissioners at the Reeves Center on March 25, from 2 until 5 pm. **Amber King** summarized her dispute with the Historic Preservation Office concerning her replacement of wood-frame and steel-frame windows with vinyl-frame windows on her house on Rosemount Avenue. Jack asked if it would be acceptable for him to request a one-month postponement from the HPRB for the hearing on this matter, currently on the HPRB agenda for the meeting of March 25. Gregg said that Jack could do so on his own, and Ms King agreed to the postponement. Former commissioner **Wayne Kahn** spoke for Hear Mount Pleasant, concerning their effort to permit live music in Mount Pleasant restaurants. **David Vacca** described current activities in Councilmember Jim Graham’s office. (Commissioner Jane Zara arrived early in this public discussion period.)

Secretary’s report

[7:59 pm] Jack asked for corrections to the minutes of the February 6 meeting. There followed a discussion of the problem of resolutions being brought to the floor at this meeting without a clear statement of the resolution sponsor. Jack asked for such names, as corrections to the minutes. Gregg moved that the minutes be adopted as already prepared. *Motion passed, five to one (Jack voting “no”).*

Gregg offered his minutes of the Historic Preservation Committee meeting of February 19, as follows:

“The Chair called a Special meeting to be held at 7 pm 19 February 2007 at La Casa (3166 Mt Pleasant St NW) to discuss Historical Preservation. Three forms of notice were posted seven days in advance, including electronic and four notices in each single member district. In attendance were all six commissioners and at least ten members of the public. The Chair called the meeting to order about 7:10, and turned the meeting over to Commission Jane Zara to handle the discussion. By unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned about 9pm.”

Joe moved approval of these minutes. *Motion approved, four to two (Jack and Stormy voting “no”).*

Treasurer’s report

[8:09 pm] Joe reviewed the state of ANC check writing privileges, and the ANC Security Fund. He moved this resolution:

ANC1D resolves that its FY2006 budget be continued at the same rate of expenditure for the same categories into FY2007 until a new budget is resolved for FY2007. Further, this resolution explicitly authorizes all non-personal expenditures, and all personal expenditures made within the last 90 days, made in accordance with the FY2006 budget during FY2007.

Motion passed by six to zero vote.

Committee reports: historical preservation

[8:22 pm] Jane reported on preparations for a Historic Preservation Forum on March 26. This was followed by a lengthy discussion of how this Forum should be organized, and about the functioning of historic preservation in Mount Pleasant.

Committee reports: commercial corridor

[8:55 pm] Gregg reported on plans by DPR for the “16th Street playground”, adjacent to the current Parks and Recreation building at 16th and Lamont, and about restaurant owners and their upcoming liquor license renewals.

Priority agenda determination

[9:26 pm] The commission undertook a discussion of topics to be put on the “priority agenda”.

Intersection of 16th Street and Park Road

[9:39 pm] Gregg’s resolution, tabled at the February 6 meeting, was reintroduced:

ANC1D resolves to advise the DC Department of Transportation that a left turn from northbound 16th St onto Park Rd be permitted for cars and busses with a left turn signal, with southbound 16th St traffic stopping at a red signal during phase of left turn. Additionally, a pedestrian light which signals “DO NOT WALK” during the left turn phase is needed.

Why: This is a deadly intersection, with one death in the last month. This change was recommended in the Columbia Heights traffic study.

[9:43 pm] Jack moved to amend this resolution by replacing that text with this:

Resolved, that ANC1D advises the District Department of Transportation to revise the intersection of Park Road and 16th Street Northwest according to the recommendations of the Columbia Heights/Mount Pleasant Traffic Study, specifically, permitting northbound 16th Street traffic turning left onto Park Road to do so from 16th Street, instead of turning right onto Pine Street (Sacred Heart Way), then left onto Park Road. ANC1D further advises DDOT to provide a dedicated left-turn phase to the traffic light, so that this left-turn traffic will do so only in synchronization with a "Don't Walk" phase of the pedestrian light.

Why: The current traffic arrangement is hostile to pedestrians on both sides of this intersection. On the east side, drivers wanting to make the left turn onto Park Road from 16th are diverted into Pine Street, a narrow road between a small public park and the entrance to a very popular church. This traffic can exit off 16th at full speed, because this is

a small-angle turn. Once on Pine, drivers tend to hurry to make the light at Pine Street and Park Road. Pedestrian crossing of Pine is frequent, because of the forcing of 16th Street pedestrians across Pine, visitors to the church on the east side of Pine, and patrons of the street market that sets up on weekends along that sidewalk. Diverting left-turn 16th Street traffic onto this small street, between a public park and the church entrance, creates an unnecessary pedestrian traffic hazard, as demonstrated by the count of three or four pedestrian collisions during the five-year period from 1997 through 2001.

On the west side of the intersection, pedestrians are confronted with buses legally making the left turn, and automobiles illegally doing so. Pedestrians may be confused by the conflict between the general ban on left-turn traffic, and the exception of buses, as well as the numerous violators of the ban.

The high risk to pedestrians created by the current traffic pattern has caused DDOT to erect barriers along the sidewalk on the east side of 16th Street, preventing pedestrians from simply walking north and south along the sidewalk. It is absurd to have a city sidewalk, along a major thoroughfare, intentionally blocked by pedestrian barriers, as if only automobiles are allowed to travel along this street.

The left-turn traffic diverted onto Pine also has the effect of isolating the triangular public park, which is surrounded on all three sides by traffic. Permitting the left-turn traffic to make its turn from 16th Street will nearly eliminate traffic on Pine, a change that will make that park far more accessible to pedestrians. Furthermore, the people who patronize the weekend sidewalk market, who commonly cross Pine in mid-block, will no longer be confronted by fast-moving cars turning off 16th Street.

This change will also reduce traffic congestion on Park Road on the east side of this intersection. The Columbia Heights Traffic Study noted that this one short segment of Park Road, between Pine Street and 16th Street, has level F service during the morning and evening rush hours. Evidently throwing the left-turn traffic into this block is the direct cause of excessive traffic congestion and inadequate traffic service.

The Columbia Heights/Mount Pleasant Traffic Study had this very explicit recommendation: "Left turns should be permitted from northbound 16th Street onto westbound Park Road." In the three years since this study was delivered to the District Government, nothing has been done, as the District Department of Transportation worried excessively about the flow of traffic along 16th Street to the suburbs. Given the recent pedestrian tragedy at this intersection, it is time the Department followed through on this recommendation.

Motion to amend passed, four to two (Gregg and Dave voting "no").

Amended resolution passed, five to one (Gregg voting "no").

Red light camera for Park Road at Klingle/Walbridge

[9:49 pm] Jack introduced this resolution:

Resolved, that ANC 1D advises the Metropolitan Police Department to install a red-light camera for westbound traffic on Park Road at the intersection of Walbridge Place, Klingle Road, and Park Road.

Rationale: this intersection suffers from a significant number of drivers failing to stop for the red-arrow light controlling westbound Park Road traffic. This phase of the light is the only "Walk" phase for the pedestrian crosswalk crossing Park Road on the west side of this intersection. This sets up very dangerous conflicts between cars and pedestrians, exacerbated by the curve in the road which limits the visibility of cars and pedestrians.

The District Department of Transportation has taken several measures to reduce the rate of running of the red light, but the problem continues, because some drivers do not understand that the red arrow means "stop", despite any adjacent green light. In the absence of significant traffic law enforcement at this intersection, these drivers are led to believe that they are not wrong in ignoring the red arrow light. A red-light camera installed at this location could provide some much-needed driver education.

Among the pedestrians using that crosswalk are parents and children walking to and from the Rosemount Center. The safety of these people, as well as neighborhood residents, is put at risk by drivers running this red light.

Resolution passed, six to zero.

Reinstate the jointly sponsored Metropolitan Police Department-ANC Police Service Area (PSA) for Community Oriented Policing.

[9:54 pm] Gregg introduced this resolution:

ANC1D resolves to advise the DC Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to reinstate a program that targets high risk buildings to deal with lawlessness and gangs by patrolling in and around those apartment buildings.

Why: This advice is based on a proven program: In a half-year period, as PSA301 Sergeant Steven Gauck developed this program, apartment residents reported that the gangs, drug dealers, and other criminal elements were driven out. The apartment buildings house over two-thirds of the residents of Mt Pleasant, and the area around them is the scene of most of the crimes of violence and against property in PSA301.

Resolution passed by five to one vote (Jane voting "no").

Security Plans in Apartment Buildings (Gregg)

[10:08 pm] Gregg introduced this resolution:

ANC1D resolves to advise the DC Council and the DC Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs to explicitly regulate security plans in the larger apartment buildings, say those of twenty or more units. Each holder of an apartment license with twenty or more units should prepare a security plan that has been certified to be in compliance with guidelines issued by the Metropolitan Police Department, the Fire Department, and the Office of Emergency Preparedness. Compliance with the plan should be monitored at least every two years by inspectors that are certified and trained in accordance with regulations approved by the Office of the Chief Tenant Advocate. Every new tenant should be given a copy of the security plan before signing a lease or moving in, and every current tenant given a copy of the most recent version any time there is a change, or at least every five years, whichever comes first.

Why: There are currently very few regulations specifying the duties of apartment providers to apartment dwellers. Yet most DC residents, perhaps two-thirds, live in apartment buildings. This represents a significant gap in regulation, one that allows large number of DC residents to be exposed to uncertain risk.

[10:16 pm] Jack moved that this resolution be tabled until the next meeting. *Motion to table failed, three votes "yes", three votes "no" (vote by commissioner not stated).*

Resolution passed, five to zero, with one abstention (Joe).

Adjournment

[10:17 pm] Jane moved to adjourn. *Motion passed by general consent.*