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Minutes of the June 5, 2007 meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1-D

These minutes approved at the July 11, 2007 meeting.

Call to order

[7:22 pm] Gregg Edwards called the meeting to order at 7:22 pm. Present were four of the six ANC 1D Commissioners: Gregg Edwards, Jane Zara, Dave Bosserman, and Jack McKay.

Public discussion

[7:22 pm] **David Ahn** provided an update on the Bestway. **Sherrill Berger** mentioned the traffic study currently beginning. **Barbara Hayden** summarized the activities of the Community of Christ concerning restaurant liquor licenses and voluntary agreements. **Claudia Schlosberg** said that Hear Mount Pleasant had acquired over 1000 signatures on petitions supporting live music and entertainment in Mount Pleasant. **Steve Mudd** summarized the activities of All Ways Mount Pleasant concerning the liquor license renewals. **David Vacca** spoke briefly of activities at District Council.

Gregg proposed that the ANC request David Vacca to report back to us concerning responses of the Council to our resolutions. *Motion passed, four to zero.*

Adam Hoey described the current activities of Mount Pleasant Main Street concerning the liquor license renewals, and voluntary agreements. **Gladys Mitchell** congratulated Commissioner McKay for succeeding in getting a street light repaired.

Secretary's report

[8:00 pm] Jack asked for corrections to the minutes of the May 1 and May 15 meetings. No corrections were offered, and Gregg declared both sets of minutes accepted.

Treasurer's report

[8:01 pm] Joe was not present, so there was no treasurer's report.

Commercial Corridor Committee report

[8:02 pm] Dave reported on the meeting of the Commercial Corridor Committee on May 22.

Consent agenda

[8:06 pm] The consent agenda was taken up, and the following resolutions passed, *en bloc*.

Monroe Street blockage

Resolved, that ANC1D advises the Public Space Office of DDOT to issue a one-day, weekday permit for a temporary street occupancy and blockage, for the installation of a rooftop air conditioning unit at 1839 Monroe Street NW.

Why: The DDOT policy of permitting such street blockages only on Saturdays is apparently based on an assumption that, during the work week, such a blockage might be problematical for traffic. In this case, the street in question is only one block long, ending at 18th Street on the east, and 19th Street on the west, so there is no through traffic. Whatever local traffic needs to get around such a blockage can easily do so via the parallel streets.

This block of Monroe Street is purely residential, and it will be less disruptive to the residents to have this short-term blockage take place during the work week, when residents are away at work, than to have it on a Saturday, when residents are more likely to be at home.

Pedestrian crosswalk intersection timers

ANC1D advises DDOT to install down-count timers for the pedestrian crosswalks at the intersection of Irving Street and Mount Pleasant Street.

Why: These timers are helpful to pedestrians in indicating the time left to cross the street. Foot traffic is extremely heavy at this intersection.

Stop for Pedestrians pylons

ANC1D advises DDOT to install "stop for pedestrians in crosswalks" pylons along Mount Pleasant Street, at the Hobart, Kenyon, and Kilbourne crossings.

Why: Too many drivers ignore the crosswalks, and need a prominent reminder that they are required to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks.

ANC1D Supports a Arts & Action Series for Lamont Park this summer.

ANC1D advises the DC Department of Parks and Recreation to grant permits, cosponsor the event, and waive all fees for a Community Arts and Action Series to be held this summer, initiated by Hear: Mount Pleasant.

Why: The series, proposed for Sunday afternoons and early evenings, builds on two successful events last Summer, 2006, arranged by some of the same people. Those events, like this one, is a start to fill the void left by the continued suspension of the previously unbroken fifteen year run of Mount Pleasant Day. Some of the organizers of that latter series have agreed to assist.

This new series celebrates the role played by artists, musicians and community workers in building strong and vibrant communities in Mount Pleasant and beyond. Scheduled to perform are local bands, singers, poets and theater groups. Tables and information booths will also highlight opportunities for residents to plug into and support local grassroots organizations which work everyday to address the problems which afflict our neighborhood.

Pedestrian rights in crosswalks

Resolved, that ANC1D advises the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to implement a program for targeted enforcement of the law requiring drivers to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks; and advises the Mayor to issue instructions to the MPD to that effect.

Why: The Pedestrian Protection Right-of-Way at Crosswalks Amendment Act of 2004 requires drivers to "stop and give the right-of-way to a pedestrian crossing the roadway within any marked crosswalk or unmarked crosswalk at an intersection. In fact, drivers ignore this law, speeding past pedestrians in crosswalks, even despite the Department of Transportation (DDOT) pylons instructing drivers to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks. Automobile drivers know that this law is almost never enforced, and that they are free to defy it.

The DDOT Online Survey of pedestrian complaints determined that the most significant deterrent to walking in the District is "unsafe street crossings or intersections", and that the factor most frequently cited for making it difficult or unpleasant to walk in the District is "drivers not stopping for pedestrians in crosswalks". The Department of Transportation has done what it can about crosswalks, enhancing their visibility and erecting "stop for pedestrian" pylons. Those are clearly ineffectual, and firmer action will be necessary to change the prevailing attitude of DC drivers that pedestrian rights can be ignored.

The Metropolitan Police Department has the mandate to promote traffic safety, but they are reluctant to allocate MPD resources to support pedestrian rights, preferring to focus on criminal issues. But pedestrian safety is a clear and compelling issue affecting District residents, easily as important as problems of crime. Just this past January, a pedestrian was killed in Mount Pleasant, crossing a street in a crosswalk.

The current practice in the District of giving pedestrians legal rights in a crosswalk, but failing to penalize drivers who violate those rights, is a prescription for more pedestrian injuries and deaths. Furthermore, the failure to enforce the rights of pedestrians crossing streets in crosswalks severely degrades the comfort and safety of walking as a mode of transportation in the District. The District's goal of a "walkable" community cannot be achieved without changing the culture of drivers in the District, and their attitude that pedestrians in crosswalks have no rights. This change can be brought about only by firm enforcement of the District law requiring drivers to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks.

Consent agenda passed en bloc, 4 to 0.

Rosemount Avenue door

[8:14 pm] Jack introduced this resolution:

Resolved, that ANC1D advises the Historic Preservation Review Board to permit the replacement door installed at 2017 Rosemount Avenue NW.

Why: the door is almost invisible from any public space, being hidden under a deep front porch, and turned to face to the side. Because it is practically invisible from the sidewalk, it does not disrupt the harmony of the architecture of the area. Compatibility, according to the regulations, requires only a harmonious relationship, not historical authenticity. There is no good reason for requiring the residents to remove their new replacement door and replace

with one that qualifies as "Tudor Revival", and is equally invisible from the public space.

Passed by 4 to 0 vote.

Support for voluntary agreement terminations

[8:17 pm] Jack introduced this resolution:

Resolved, that ANC1D advises the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board to approve the requests by the NHV Corporation (Haydee's Restaurant), Don Juan Restaurant, Inc. (Don Juan's Restaurant), and Jaime Carrillo (Don Jaime Restaurant), for termination of their voluntary agreements.

Why: The demographics of Mount Pleasant have changed very substantially during the past decade, as rapidly increasing property values and rents have brought about a great change in the average income level of residents.

Mount Pleasant is currently developing innovative procedures for dealing with the consequences of restaurants on the area, including the creation of a Neighborhood Hospitality Council to address any problems, without resorting to calling on ABRA inspectors. Problems of peace, order, and quiet in the community will be more quickly and effectively dealt with by direct action via such a Council, than by calling in inspectors, whose punishment restaurants for actions which take place outside their places of business are ineffectual, as evidenced by current complaints of public disturbances, despite the current voluntary agreements. A better method must be found, and ANC1D believes that neighborhood Councils will be a much more effective solution to the problem.

The termination of the current voluntary agreements will be temporary, as new agreements will be written as part of the license renewal process.

The existing voluntary agreements were developed by a secretive and discriminatory neighborhood organization. The Mount Pleasant Neighborhood Alliance develops its voluntary agreements behind closed doors, excluding not only the public but its own membership from participation. Residents of Mount Pleasant report that their attempts to join this organization are denied, with no explanation, not even an acknowledgment.

Passed by 4 to 0 vote.

It was noted that the first ABC Board hearing concerning these petitions was to be on June 20. Gregg asked Jack if he would be willing to represent the ANC at that hearing. Jack agreed to do so.

One VA with a Responsible Hospitality Partnership

[8:20 pm] Gregg offered this resolution:

ANC1D advises the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board (ABCB) to terminate all Voluntary Agreements (VAs) now in force for the eight licensees listed below, and renew those eight licenses with a single, uniform VA. That VA will be minimalist in its stipulations, with two exceptions:

First, in order to improve pedestrian safety and reduce traffic, it commits the licensees to energetically support and prefer with due diligence staffing (employees, contractors, and all creative workers including musicians) of residents with a half mile of Mt Pleasant.

Second, that the licensees support, participate in and be governed by a Responsible Hospitality Partnership process which includes a council that periodically can add or change conditions on specific or all licensees. The initial council will be constituted by those protesters to any of the current licensees who have filed by 4 June 2007 and are qualified by the ABCB. The scope of the council will include traffic & integrated transportation; training of staff & good communication with the neighborhood; trash & cleanliness, publicity, marketing and economic development; security, service & safety, including policing; music, entertainment, and cultural development; and quality of life. The decisions of the council, unless overruled by ABCB, for all intents and purposes will be considered as legally equivalent to any written stipulations in a VA.

Nothing in the new VA should be considered as diminishing the legally specified role of the ABCB or ANCs.

Why: The commercial corridor of Mount Pleasant is endangered, and appears increasingly unsafe. The appearance of gangs and other threats are serious problems for peace order and quiet. The paucity of street life endangers pedestrian safety. Declines in economic activity may impact economic values.

The Responsible Hospitality Partnership process has proven in many other locales to be a good remedy to similar problems. The current stringent VAs appear to contribute to social and economic conditions that endanger our neighborhood.

Joe Esparza arrived at 8:21 pm, as this resolution was being considered.

[9:01 pm] Jack moved that the resolution be tabled until the next meeting of the ANC, after the Commission agreed to a special meeting to be held on June 19 (no vote). *Motion to table failed, two votes for (Jack and Jane), three votes against (Gregg, Joe, and Dave).*

Resolution passed, 5 to 0.

Consolidate ABCB process

[9:07 pm] Gregg offered this resolution:

Resolved: ANC1D advises the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board (ABCB) to consolidate the handling of all eight licenses (listed below) under consideration this summer, or at least to the degree practical.

Why: Since ANC1D is seeking a single, uniform, and enhanced solution based on a Responsible Hospitality Partnership, and notes that many civic groups have become involved with similar aims, the time and practicality for most parties will be improved by a consolidated process.

Resolution passed, 5 to 0.

Support services contract of up to 1k\$ delegated to the Commercial Corridor Committee.

[9:10 pm] Gregg offered this resolution:

Resolved: ANC1D delegates to its Commercial Corridor Committee (David Bosserman, Gregg Edwards, Angelia Scott) the power to contract for support for its activities in organizing a Responsible Hospitality Partnership process, and allocates up to \$1 000.

Resolution passed, three votes for (Gregg, Joe, Dave), two against (Jack, Jane).

Adjournment

[9:27 pm] Dave moved that the commission adjourn, and meet again in two weeks. *Motion passed by unanimous vote.*