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Minutes of the April 21, 2009 meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1-D

These minutes accepted at the May 19, 2009 meeting.

Call to order

[7:02 pm] Chair Scott called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. Present were ANC1D commissioners Scott, Edwards, Bosserman, Lepanto, and McKay, constituting a quorum.

Secretary's report

[7:02 pm] Jack noted that minutes of the March 17 and April 7 meetings had been distributed. No corrections being offered, the minutes were declared accepted.

3150 17th St BZA application

[7:03 pm] Jack asked that the unfinished business from the March 17 meeting be taken up immediately, so that the resident affected, Mr Barnes, would not have to sit through the meeting awaiting his issue. The Commission agreed, and the resolution was brought from the table:

Resolved, that ANC1D advises the Board of Zoning Adjustment to approve Application No. 17919 for 3150 17th Street NW, increasing lot coverage to 88.7%, decreasing the rear yard depth by 16 feet, to allow a rear addition on an existing building. Commissioner David Bosserman, or his designee, is authorized to present this report to the Board.

Rationale: ANC1D has reviewed the plans and has neither issues nor concerns with the proposed zoning variance

Passed, 5 to 0 (Stormy, Jack, Gregg, Phil, Dave voting "yes"; Oliver not yet present)

Commissioner Tunda arrived at 7:08 pm.

Public discussion

[7:07 pm] The meeting was opened to public discussion. Dora Johnson, Fay Armstrong, and Tarek Bolden (of the Office of Planning) spoke.

Treasurer's report

[7:18 pm] Jack asked if there was any objection to the following payments: Tony Grillo, \$100 (postering for the April 7 and April 21 meetings), Lina Parikh \$550 (grants program support). No objections were voiced.

Jack requested permission to spend \$25 for laptop memory upgrade. *No objection from the commission.*

Jack presented the second quarter, FY09 financial report, displaying the guide document, and the quarterly report spreadsheet. *Quarterly report approved, 6 to 0 vote.*

Jack then brought up the budget for FY09, listing expenditures to date and authorized further expenditures during the fiscal year. The estimated disbursements for the fiscal year total \$35,924, exceeding the ANC's annual allotment of \$17,527 by \$18,398. *Budget approved, 6 to 0.*

Commercial corridor committee report

[7:36 pm] Gregg presented a brief committee report.

Informal meeting topics

[7:39 pm] The commission agreed that the topics for the May 5 informal ANC meeting would be: Statehood; public property stewardship; bike routes; commercial corridor.

Grants policy review

[7:48 pm] Jack moved the following:

The annual review of the grants policy should take place upon completion of a grants cycle, and delivery of a grants report, so that the results of the program can be assessed and taken into account in the determination of a continuation.

Approved, 6 to 0.

Business cards authorization

[7:53 pm] Phil moved the following:

Resolved, ANC 1D agrees to reimburse Commissioners up to \$100 per calendar year to pay for the printing of ANC 1D business cards that bear their name. Reimbursement will be made under normal ANC rules.

Approved, 6 to 0.

Bike lanes for Adams Mill Road

[7:54 pm] Jack moved the following:

Resolved, that ANC1D endorses the proposal for bicycle lanes on Adams Mill Road, as shown in drawings provided by Mr. Ali Agahi of DDOT on April 14, 2009.

Rationale: A safe bicycle route through Mount Pleasant is needed, for recreation and for bicycle commuting. The bike lanes on Adams Mill would link to the existing bike lane on Irving Street, would provide bicycle access to the Rock Creek Park bicycle path, via the Zoo, and would provide a safe bicycle route to the continuation of Adams Mill Road through Lanier Heights, to Adams Morgan. This is a significant enhancement of bicycle routes connecting our neighborhoods, and promoting bicycle commuting via the Rock Creek Park bike path.

The bike lanes would require a reduction of Adams Mill Road traffic lanes from two southbound lanes to one. Traffic is light enough on Adams Mill that a single lane is sufficient, and two traffic lanes are preserved at the Kenyon intersection.

To provide space for bike lanes on Adams Mill Road south of the Kenyon intersection, the sidewalk on the west side of Adams Mill Road will have to be eliminated. This sidewalk would be of limited value, because it would terminate at the Kenyon intersection, there being no sidewalk on the west side of Adams Mill Road through Mount Pleasant. Pedestrian traffic is better directed to the east side of Adams Mill Road.

These new bicycle lanes contribute significantly to the District's very sparse network of bicycle routes. This endorsement is not to preclude nor disfavor any other bike routes through Mount Pleasant.

Approved, 6 to 0.

DDOT reply to ANC resolution – Kilbourne alley gate

[7:58 pm] Gregg moved the following:

Resolved, ANC 1D advises the DC Public Space Committee that its answer to 1D's resolution on the Langstal-Sitomer gate (rear of 1614 Kilbourne St NW) does not satisfy the requirements of DC's ANC law, and thus should be reconsidered.

After some discussion, Gregg withdrew the resolution.

In support of a new mural for the Heller's Bakery building

[8:05 pm] Jack moved the following:

Resolved, that ANC1D advises the District of Columbia Commission on the Arts and Humanities to support the undertaking by Mount Pleasant resident Byron Peck for an improved mural for the wall of the Heller's Bakery building, 3221 Mount Pleasant Street NW. This is not an endorsement of any final artwork design, but of the general idea of a new mural at this location. While supporting this effort, the ANC does not wish to preclude the possibility of a restoration.

Why: the old, circa-1922 advertising mural has been degraded by age, vandalism, and unsuccessful attempts at restoration. A new mural would brighten the appearance of Mount Pleasant Street, and could celebrate the diversity of modern Mount Pleasant. Mr Peck has an unmatched record for fine inner-city murals, and this is an opportunity for the Mount Pleasant commercial strip to benefit from his talents.

Phil moved to table the resolution. *Motion to table failed, 2 votes for (Dave and Phil), 4 votes against (Gregg, Jack, Oliver, Stormy).*

Jack proposed to add "While supporting this effort, the ANC does not wish to preclude the possibility of restoration". *Passed, 4 votes for (Stormy, Phil, Dave, Oliver), 2 against (Gregg, Jack)*

Resolution passed, 4 votes "yes" (Stormy, Jack, Dave, Oliver), 2 votes "no" (Gregg and Phil).

Mount Pleasant Library

[8:19 pm] Gregg moved the following:

Councilmember Graham and the Committee on Public Libraries, Parks and Recreation - Mayor Fenty, DCPL and its Board, to follow the recommendations that emerged from a series of ward-wide meetings on next steps in providing library services:

- 1) To abandon any consideration of expansion or additions to the existing Mt. Pleasant Library, except possibly to accommodate mechanical upgrades.
- 2) To restore and renovate the library within the existing walls
- 3) To examine the question of where else in Ward 1 library services are needed and might be located;
- 4) To consider alternative design concepts that might meet the needs of Ward 1.

It is the intent of the Commission that points 1 & 2 occur simultaneously with points 3 & 4.

1D asks that the current budget before the DC Council be amended to enforce the delay and a study.

Why: The previous resolution with essentially the same content was addressed to the Library Board. They did not respond except to not bother to discuss it seriously. Now, the last chance is upon us to ask the DC government to intervene.

Passed, 4 votes "yes" (Jack, Stormy, Gregg, Oliver) to 2 votes "no" (Dave and Phil).

Remove Washington Standard street lights from 1600 Park Rd, NW

[8:23 pm] Gregg moved the following:

Resolved, ANC1D advises the DC Department of Transportation (dDoT) to keep the original "cobra" lights and remove, or not install Washington Standard streetlights in the reconstruction of 1600 Park Rd, NW.

Why: The sixteen or so new lights have large bases and are placed in the middle of sidewalks, making for a continuing series of obstacles that impede pedestrian traffic in this gateway block. The block abuts about 1300 residents, and so is one of the densest blocks in DC. Further, it is the gateway block that connects the northern half of Mt Pleasant to the Columbia Heights regional shopping area, and so is used by perhaps five thousand pedestrians a week.

The extra electricity for these lights, as agreed by a dDoT specialist, probably amounts to many million dollars in future costs. This alone justifies their removal.

In addition, the lights add dangerous glare to motorists in this heavily used cross-town arterial. It decreases the quality of life for pedestrians because of the glare. It adds light pollution to over half of the over five hundred living units on the block.

Jack moved to table the motion. *Motion to table failed, 3 votes for (Oliver, Jack, Phil), 3 votes against (Gregg, Stormy, Dave).*

Main motion passed, 4 votes "yes" (Oliver, Gregg, Stormy, Dave), 2 votes "no" (Jack and Phil).

Add the power to assess fines on public utilities to the Public Service Commission.

[8:37 pm] Gregg moved the following:

Resolved, ANC1D advises the DC Council, and specifically the Committee on Public Services and Consumer Affairs, to empower the Public Service Commission (PSC) to impose fines for misbehavior by public utilities under regulation, and particularly the duty to impose fines sufficient to pay treble damages including attorney fees to consumers that are the victims of such misbehavior. Such power should be granted as an emergency matter in

the current budget process, and then later expanded and clarified as separate legislation in a follow-on law for this purpose.

Why: As the Mayor's nominee for Chair of the PSC noted, currently regulated utilities can essentially ignore most rulings of the PSC with impunity because there is no penalty for doing so. This impacts rate-payers, such as the several who complained of huge and unsupported utility bills at a meeting of the All-Ways Mt Pleasant Neighbors Association and the DC Consumer Utility Board. Given the overwhelming asymmetry between most rate-payers and the legal resources of the utilities, the public policy norm of treble damages has proven to be a good balance between the interests of the two sides.

Jack moved to table the motion until the next business meeting. *Motion to table passed, 4 (Jack, Dave, Stormy, Oliver) to 2 (Phil and Gregg).*

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 pm.