

“Open Agenda” Notes for the May 23, 2017 meeting of ANC1D

Agenda approval

Public discussion

“Each Commission shall set aside a portion of each public meeting *to hear the views of residents* within the Commission area and other affected persons on problems or issues of concern within the Commission area and on proposed District government actions that affect the Commission area.”

Committee reports:

Transportation (Jon)

Public Space (Stuart)

Housing (Paul)

Secretary’s report

Minutes of the April 25 meeting (draft sent out April 26).

Treasurer’s report

Consent items: There were checks to James True, \$75, postering for the May meeting; HearSay Interpreting, \$100, interpreting at the May meeting; Julio Lopez, \$30, for assistance at the May meeting.

Approval to reimburse Adam Hoey up to \$700 for the replacement of burnt-out bulbs in the fiesta lamps over Mount Pleasant Street.

Unfinished business

District of Columbia Comprehensive Plan (Stuart)

Resolved, that ANC 1D adds its name to the diverse group of D.C.-area organizations and companies that support the below statement of priorities for housing and community development in the District of Columbia Comprehensive Plan. The priorities are below:

1. Meet the housing demand.
2. Equitably distribute housing.
3. Best utilize areas near transit.
4. Include families.
5. Prioritize affordable housing as a community benefit.
6. Preserve existing affordable housing

7. Protect tenants
8. Support neighborhood commercial corridors
9. Clarify zoning authority
10. Improve data collection and transparency.

Why: The District of Columbia has recently experienced rising housing prices that make the city an increasingly unaffordable place to live. A lack of affordable housing has been particularly acute in the Mount Pleasant neighborhood. In 2016, the median home sale price in Mount Pleasant was \$760,000, which was 40 percent higher than the regional median sale price of \$446,000. Nationwide, the median home sale price was \$322,000.

In looking to the future of D.C.'s housing market, it's possible to build new housing (including affordable housing), protect the needs of tenants in redevelopment, and grow the District's tax base in a way that makes business sense and advances the public good.

The D.C. government is working on revising the city's Comprehensive Plan, a document that city leaders use to guide how the city will grow and change in the coming decades. The D.C. Office of Planning is going to submit amendments to the Comprehensive Plan this year (the current version was adopted in 2006).

A diverse group of D.C.-area organizations – to include for-profit companies and non-profit community organizations – have developed a statement of priorities to ensure that affordable housing and community development are significant components of the Comprehensive Plan. By including these priorities in the comprehensive plan, the D.C. Office of Planning will ensure that the city government takes steps to alleviate the housing crisis in our cities. These priorities appear in full below:

1. Meet the housing demand. Through the Comprehensive Plan, the District should forecast, plan for, and encourage the creation and preservation of a supply of housing (market-rate and subsidized affordable) to meet the demand at all income levels. The supply of housing should be sufficient to slow rising costs of rental and for-sale housing.
2. Equitably distribute housing. Through the Comprehensive Plan, the District should fight against segregation, foster equitable access to opportunity, and comply with Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) priorities. The District should require that every part of the city participate in adding housing to meet the need for all income levels, with an emphasis on transit and commercial corridors.
3. Best utilize areas near transit. When redevelopment occurs on blocks surrounding Metrorail stations and priority transit corridors, the District should, through the Comprehensive Plan, permit and encourage mixed-use developments of medium to high density. To the extent feasible, redevelopments involving increased zoning should include affordable housing in excess of what is required by inclusionary zoning.

4. Include families. The District should be a city that houses people of all income levels and of all household sizes, including families. Through the Comprehensive Plan, the District should promote the creation and preservation of 3+ bedroom units along with other housing types.
5. Prioritize affordable housing as a community benefit. When rezoning or granting significant zoning relief, the District should affirm through the Comprehensive Plan that affordable housing (in addition to any underlying requirement) is the highest priority benefit and that other community benefits should be long-lasting.
6. Preserve existing affordable housing. When redevelopment occurs on properties with housing made affordable through subsidy, covenant, or rent control, the District, Zoning Commission, and neighborhoods should work with landowners to create redevelopment plans that preserve such units or replace any lost ones with similar units either on-site or nearby. These entities should provide the necessary density and/or potential funding to ensure it is financially feasible to reinvest in the property with no net loss of affordable units.
7. Protect tenants. Through the Comprehensive Plan, the District should ensure that when affordable housing is undergoing redevelopment, tenants have a relocation plan, are allowed to continue their tenancy with minimal disruption, and will have the right to return to their units or an equivalent replacement. Whenever feasible, redevelopment should observe build-first principles.
8. Support neighborhood commercial corridors. Through the Comprehensive Plan, the District should encourage the success of neighborhood commercial corridors and locally owned businesses, especially in disadvantaged communities. This includes increased housing density that supports businesses and providing equitable opportunities for locally owned businesses in mixed-use and commercial developments.
9. Clarify zoning authority. Through the Comprehensive Plan, the District should affirm that the Zoning Commission has the purview to allow increased density for Planned Unit Developments that supersedes the levels in the Comprehensive Plan's maps in exchange for community benefits.
10. Improve data collection and transparency. The District should provide the highest quality public data. It should standardize housing-related data collection across agencies, and release all data and forecast analyses to the public, to facilitate transparency and regular reporting on the status and progress of housing-related programs. Data should include a comprehensive housing database and demand-based forecasts alongside existing supply-based (pipeline) forecasts.

New business

Mount Pleasant Streetlight Upgrade

Resolved, that ANC1D advises the Department of Transportation to proceed with the Mount Pleasant Street streetlight upgrade, employing LED lamps of the lowest feasible Correlated Color Temperature (CCT).

Why: The Washington Upright and Teardrop fixtures streetlight fixtures will be a welcome improvement over the "cobra" lights currently installed on Mount Pleasant Street. The LED lamps promise a very substantial reduction in energy consumption, with environmental and cost benefits. However, ANC1D is concerned about the spectral quality of the LED lamps, which are inherently much bluer than the high-pressure sodium vapor lamps to which Mount Pleasant residents are accustomed. The blue tint can be perceived as cold and harsh, and will no doubt lead to complaints, such as have already been heard with the installation of LED streetlights in Mount Pleasant alleys.

ANC1D wishes assurance that the LED lamps to be used in these Mount Pleasant Street fixtures are as close to a spectral match with traditional streetlights as feasible, within the limitations of current LED technology.

Time limit for parked cars (Jack)

Resolved, that ANC1D advises the Council of the District of Columbia to impose a limit on the time a car can be left stationary on public space, perhaps 45 days. After that period of time it should be possible to declare the vehicle abandoned, and initiate the procedure for an owner to retrieve and remove his car.

Why: Current law provides no limit on the time a car can be left parked on public space, the onetime 72-hour limit having been rescinded in 2003. A car can be left in place indefinitely, representing an extremely inefficient use of a limited public resource. Such a car cannot easily be declared abandoned, because the provisions of the DC Code defining an "abandoned vehicle" are very hard to satisfy. In practice, it is impossible to have an abandoned car declared abandoned until the registration expires, which may be many months.

ANC1D suggests 45 days as a suitable maximum duration for a car to be parked, unmoved, on public space. Shorter terms can encounter difficulties with residents on vacations or business trips.

Sign on to DC Fiscal Policy Institute's Untie DC's Hands letter (Jon)

Resolved, that ANC 1D add itself as a signatory to the DC Fiscal Policy Institute's Untie DC's Hands letter† and advises the DC Council to reinvest current surpluses wisely, so as to

prevent shortfalls from future recessions and to likewise ensure more DC residents become less financially vulnerable.

Why: DC's economy remains strong, as does the DC government's finances. While taxes in DC are high, so, too, is its level of economic disparity. Without greater investment in education, affordable housing, and transportation, many DC residents will be hard hit the next time the regional economy cools. DC's elected officials would be foolish to squander the current opportunity to continue such investments and make significant gains in combatting homelessness and poverty.

Continue progress on the District's tax reforms (Jack)

Resolved, that ANC1D advises the District Council to continue with the tax reform steps laid out in 2014 and now embedded in the DC Code, resisting calls to rescind those cuts.

Why: The Tax Revision Commission identified several changes needed for the District's tax policies, in order to make the District a more attractive location for residents and employers, faced with competition from nearby suburbs. The Commission noted that "Middle-class residents pay a relatively large share of their income in District taxes. This undercuts the progressive design of the District's tax system and impedes efforts to attract and retain residents", and "The District's business franchise tax and commercial property tax rates are the highest in the region".

The provisions of the DC Code implementing the prescribed changes include reductions in the standard deduction, to produce a more progressive income tax structure, and a reduction in the business tax rate, to make the District more competitive with adjacent jurisdictions. These changes are only steps toward the goals specified by the Tax Revision Commission, and further steps in this direction will be necessary. The sooner those goals are achieved, the better it will be for the District of Columbia, as a whole, for the attraction of new residents and employers to the District.

More specifically, the changes in the standard deduction for the calendar year 2017 result in significant benefits to Mount Pleasant's low-income residents. Even at the lowest tax bracket, the increase in the standard deduction gives \$125 back to a low-income taxpaying family. Given the high cost of living in the District, this is a vital assist to the several hundred low-income families of Mount Pleasant.