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Minutes of the May 26, 2015 meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1-D

These minutes accepted at the June 23, 2015 meeting.

Call to order

[7:05 pm] Chair Agbro called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. Present were four commissioners: Frank Agbro, Adam Hoey, Rosa Rivas, and Jack McKay, constituting a quorum. Commissioner Arturo Griffiths arrived at about 7:14 pm.

[7:08 pm] Jack suggested that we proceed directly to the presentations, and asked if the commission was okay with that. No objections were voiced, and the commission proceeded to the resolutions for which there were associated presentations.

Expedite Bancroft modernization

[7:09 pm] Jack offered the following resolution:

Resolved, that ANC1D advises the Historic Preservation Review Board to permit the demolition of the Bancroft Elementary School gymnasium/auditorium, as not inconsistent with the Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act.

Why: Historically, Mount Pleasant is a row-house neighborhood, and that style defines the historic character of the neighborhood. Bancroft, and specifically the auditorium/gymnasium structure, is not part of that fundamental architectural style. ANC1D endorses the judgment by Historic Mount Pleasant that this Depression-era auditorium and gymnasium "do not in themselves hold any significant historic value to either the property or the community". The only question at hand should be whether the replacement is compatible with the historic neighborhood.

It is clear that the replacement of the auditorium and gymnasium is essential to the plan for modernization of Bancroft Elementary. As the HPO report states, "no viable option appears to exist that could meet ADA requirements, reinforce the central entrance and address the critically important need to improve circulation" in the school. But modernization of this decrepit school is utterly indispensable to the development of Mount Pleasant as a neighborhood attractive to waves of incoming residents, new to the city, and wanting schools that are suitable for their children. For years residents of Mount Pleasant have sent their children to schools outside the neighborhood, disdaining the shabby, unappealing school in the neighborhood. Many parents have moved out of the neighborhood in search of better schools. While there is more to a good school than attractive architecture, the modernization of Bancroft will be an essential step in the upgrading of our neighborhood school to meet the needs of the many young people moving into this neighborhood, and to end the flight from Mount Pleasant by residents discouraged by our neighborhood school.

The neighborhood's priority is clearly the enhancement of the neighborhood school to meet the needs and standards of modern times. The demolition of the old gymnasium and auditorium is an essential element in the modernization of Bancroft, and should be viewed, and approved, as necessary for adaptation of the overall structure to current use.

[7:12 pm] Mr William Skelsey, of Ayers Saint Gross Architects, spoke concerning the design of the proposed Bancroft modernization.

[7:28 pm] Upon completion of Mr Skelsey's presentation, Jack asked if the commission was willing to hear from Historic Mount Pleasant about the project. Erik Hoffland of HMP spoke.

[7:32 pm] The commission voted on Jack's resolution: *passed, 5 to 0.*

New construction for 3054 Mount Pleasant Street

[7:33 pm] Arturo, together with Jack, made the following motion: "that the commission allow ten minutes to hear from applicants for the construction of a condominium building, with ground-floor retail, on the site of Mount Pleasant Auto Repair, 3054 Mount Pleasant Street." The motion passed, Mr. Richard Foster showed the preliminary plans for new construction on that site.

Graffiti mural for Don Juan's

[7:49 pm] Jack offered the following resolution:

Resolved, that ANC1D supports the principle of deterring graffiti on the 17th Street wall of Don Juan's Restaurant with a defensive coating of "good graffiti". But ANC1D advises the Department of Public Works that any artwork proposed for this location must meet with the approval of the nearby residents.

Why: This particular wall is a frequent target of graffiti, which is troublesome for the property owner. The notion of deterring graffiti vandals from abusing this wall with a coating of "good" graffiti is promising. Nonetheless, the high visibility of this location to residents, in particular those directly across 17th Street from this wall, requires that affected residents have a voice in the artwork that is put on this wall to fend off graffiti.

[7:52 pm] A representative of the DPW murals program, Mr Mazi Mustafa, spoke.

[8:08 pm] The commission voted on Jack's resolution: *passed, 5 to 0.*

Public discussion

[8:09 pm] The meeting was opened for public discussion.

Lamont Park permit process

[8:43 pm] Franko offered the following resolution:

Resolved, ANC 1d advises DPR to suspend the ANC component from the permit approval process for Lamont Park for a period of at least 6 months to open up the park to individuals and groups to use the park on a first come first serve basis by applying directly and dealing with DPR throughout the entire process. The Commission will reassess the situation after the 6 month period.

Why?

It would facilitate and improve diverse cultural expression in our community. The current process has been a source of discord and has been subjected to subjective interpretations, misinterpretations and politicization as in the case of the Farmers Market. We need to make a conscious attempt to change the current process.

Furthermore the ANC should not play the role of policing, enforcing or intervening in park events except in

cases where the events disturbs the peace and order of the neighborhood. The ANC should not be a wedge to cultural and artistic expression. The current guidelines that DPR uses for usage of public parks by individuals and groups is quite effective and Lamont park should not be exempted from the permit process as other public parks in the city.

Resolution passed, 4 to 1 vote (Jack voting “no”).

Adjournment

[8:53 pm] The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 pm.