

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3B
GLOVER PARK AND CATHEDRAL HEIGHTS



ANC3B Public Meeting Minutes
July 13, 2017

Chairman Jackie Blumenthal (3B02) called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. All the Commissioners were in attendance including Ann Mladinov (3B01), Melissa Lane (3B03), Mary Young (3B04), and Brian Turmail (3B05), which constituted a quorum. (Three of the five Commissioners make a quorum.)

Chairman Blumenthal presented the proposed agenda for the meeting, and made a motion to vote on adopting the proposed agenda. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the agenda with the addition.

Police Report

Lt. Ralph Neal reported on crime statistics for the last 30 days in Police Service Area 204, including ANC3B. He noted that there had been little crime over the previous month including all categories of violent crime as well as burglaries and robberies and assaults with a deadly weapon (all zero in PSA 204, down from 2 or 3 in 2016). Thefts from motor vehicles were down from 11 in 2016 to 6 in 2017, other thefts down from 31 to 14, and total property crimes down from 45 to 30. Chairman Blumenthal mentioned the continuing call for improvements in protections against speeding and traffic incidents. Lt. Neal said that the Commission's proposal to add stop signs on Cathedral Avenue between 39th Street and Glover-Archbold Park would be a good step.

DC Water Presentation on Water Meter Replacement Program

Tanya Hedgepeth, Construction Outreach Coordinator for DC Water, and April Bingham, Program Manager for the Water Meter Replacement Program, presented DC Water's plans for replacing residential water meters in coming months in Glover Park and Cathedral Heights. Franklin Baylor, Field Services Foreman for DC Water, also showed samples of the meter transmitting units and lids to be replaced. The smart meters now in place were installed about 15 years ago and are approaching the end of their useful lives, so to assure that meters are working to provide accurate readings, DC Water's contractor Smart Grid Solutions is working ward by ward to replace 88,000 water meters in the city. About 62,000 remained to be replaced in July. All small diameter meters (5/8" to 2") will be replaced, including meters serving homes as well as businesses. The work in our area is scheduled to be done by the end of September.

About 95% of the meters covered by the program are in public space, outside the home, usually in the front yard. The process requires shutting off the water to the customer for about 15 minutes, to remove the old meter and install a new meter, lid and meter transmitting unit (attached to the underside of the lid). The new lid is black and exactly the same size as the old lid.

Discussion with DDOT on Possible Changes in Circulator Bus

Circe Torruellas, Project Manager of the DC Circulator bus system for DDOT, spoke about the changes being considered by DDOT in DC Circulator bus routes including proposed elimination of the section of the Union Station-Georgetown route that extends up Wisconsin Avenue to 35th Street at the southern edge of Glover Park. Ms. Torruellas was accompanied by Sean Egan, DDOT Deputy Associate Director for Transit Operations. She explained that in the spring, DDOT put forward for comment a series of possible adjustments in four Circular routes, including the change in service to Glover Park service, and DDOT is now reviewing the 2,500 comments. DDOT plans to issue a revised draft proposal in August or September and open an additional 30-day comment period. Ms. Torruellas said that the Union Station-Georgetown route is one of the original Circulator routes, and one of the two routes with the highest number of riders, along with the Woodley Park service. DDOT also gets complaints about late buses on those routes, and some commenters said that shortening the route would improve reliability, though the majority of responses about service to Glover Park asked DDOT not to take it away. ANC3B also submitted a resolution to that effect.

Chairman Blumenthal asked if DDOT considers future needs in deciding how to adjust Circulator routes. She noted that the Holiday Inn site adjoining the Circulator stop in Glover Park is being redeveloped with 200+ units, shops, and limited parking while the 30-line buses on Wisconsin Avenue are often too crowded to board during peak hours.

Other residents questioned whether the Wisconsin Avenue segment of the route contributed significantly to the delays the Circulator service was experiencing on the overall route, because there are relatively few blocks and few stops along that stretch. Ms. Torruellas explained that much of the congestion is on K Street and in Georgetown, where most of the riders are. She said DDOT would provide the statistics in the next draft.

Commissioner Turmail asked whether the delays and pressure to eliminate part of the route is related to the high number of Circulator buses out of service, and noted that DDOT is still working on getting a maintenance facility to handle repairs. Ms. Torruellas responded that the Circulator does not have its own location for repairing buses but is working with the DC Department of General Services to identify a site and the Council on providing needed funds for it.

Several residents asked about whether the announced extension of the Wisconsin Avenue Circulator route was still planned. Another resident asked DDOT to consider extending the route, to serve more of the multi-unit buildings in the Cathedral area, including on New Mexico Avenue. Ms. Torruellas responded that DDOT is not intending to extend the Circulator north on Wisconsin Avenue at this time, while the city is in the process of replacing the Circulator bus fleet, trying to stabilize service in areas in the highest demand, and focusing on routes where buses are meeting steady demand all day long, not just at peak hours. The goal of the Circulator is to carry high volumes of riders on buses, operating every 10 minutes, whereas Metrobuses provide local service and are more geared to rush hour.

The major issue posed to the ANC residents was how best they can get better transit service, and particularly whether investing in Circulator or Metrobus service would make more sense in meeting the local demand. Mr. Egan noted that DDOT is evaluating all options, working to improve efficiency and reliability, and will try to figure out what will be most worthwhile for meeting current and future needs, within the resources available. He also noted that the answer is not just more spending but getting the new buses and a maintenance facility for the Circulator, and getting the transit system into better condition and better balance. He explained that historically there had been only a distant relationship between the DC officials and the Circulator, but now that situation has been improved and DOT is both managing the Circulator and coordinating closely with WMATA, so decisions on transit service will be improved.

Commissioner Turmail asked if it would be possible to have smaller transit vehicles run in rush hours between Metro stations and some parts of the neighborhood, such as Cathedral Heights, to ease overcrowding and give people an option to Uber. Mr. Egan mentioned that the D1 and D2 are operated with small buses. Another resident asked if the NextBus app was operating as well as it could. Mr. Egan said that the new buses will have state-of-the-art systems to communicate real time information on their location, and new tracking equipment is also being added to older buses. A resident asked why accurate information on District bus services is not available on Googlemaps. Mr. Egan said that DDOT had hired an intern to enter current route data.

Ms. Torruellas encouraged everyone to go to the Circulator website and enter their comments on Circulator service while the survey was available online. She said that no changes in Circulator services would be made without a public comment period and additional public meetings. In any case, no change would be made in the routes until at least spring 2018.

Proposed Resolution Requesting Stop signs on Cathedral Avenue to reduce speeding

After several discussions with the ANC and within the Cathedral Avenue neighborhood, residents of several apartment buildings on Cathedral Avenue between 39th Street and Glover-Archbold Park had asked for new stop signs to be installed along that stretch of Cathedral Avenue to slow traffic and make it possible for residents to use their driveways and crosswalks safely. Commissioners Young and Mladinov presented a resolution to add stop signs east and west of the driveway and crosswalks at 4100 and 4101 Cathedral Avenue and new stop signs at Cathedral and Idaho. The Commissioners discussed the proposed changes and asked for comments. Several residents offered suggestions to add to the effectiveness of the new stop signs, including installing signs to let motorists know there are stop signs ahead, getting the vegetation along the roadside trimmed so the new signs are visible, possibly eliminating some parking spaces near the stop signs to improve sight lines, getting MPD to enforce the speed limits and stop signs on those blocks at least for the first few weeks to increase awareness of the traffic rules, and possibly installing speed cameras if drivers do not slow down. Chairman Blumenthal made a motion to vote on the proposed resolution. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the resolution.

Vote on letter regarding DC government draft opinion on ANC Ethical Standards

Commissioner Mladinov explained that in the spring the District's Board of Ethics and Government Accountability (BEGA) had issued a draft opinion that under current DC law, ANC members should officially be subject to the same ethics rules that cover District government employees. That could mean, as one example, that it would be a conflict of interest for an ANC Commissioner to vote on a liquor license application if s/he also had voted on the same issue at a GPCA meeting, either as an officer or as a member who works on citizens' association activities. BEGA asked for comments but set the due date before the date of the July ANC meeting, so the five Commissioners had sent a letter to BEGA as individuals to express concerns about the proposed opinion. Chairman Blumenthal moved to take a vote on approving the letter as the full Commission. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the letter as an official ANC statement.

Open Forum

Several residents asked about street conditions and the city's program for repaving. The Commissioners noted that DDOT has resurfaced several local streets in recent months, either by milling and pouring new asphalt or using a new technique explained by Commissioner Turmail of putting a thin "slurry coat" on top of the existing pavement. One person questioned why a bus stop had not been resurfaced when the rest of the street was done. Commissioner Turmail explained that the "pad" at the bus stop was concrete so it didn't make sense to coat it with asphalt.

Chairman Blumenthal recommended that residents put in a 311 service request for potholes, street repaving, and sidewalk repairs.

On the subject of sidewalks, Commissioner Young noted that the “Age Friendly DC” program had asked residents to walk their neighborhoods and make a list of all the sidewalks needing repair, but it was not clear what had been done with that list. Chairman Blumenthal said that list should be posted online and the Commission could share that. She also reported that when the ANC met with Councilmember Mary Cheh, CM Cheh explained that road wear is worse where there are no concrete curbs, and not all streets in Ward 3 had curbs. That is why the area had been seeing more curbs installed as a precursor to repaving.

Cameron Windham, Community Liaison for the Office of the Attorney General, spoke briefly to give residents a better sense of what the office has been doing. AG Karl Racine is the first elected Attorney General in the District, heading an office that is independent of the Mayor’s office and can establish its own priorities. He identified juvenile justice, affordable housing, and consumer protection as top matters for the office, along with financial literacy, youth violence, behavioral health services, and jobs and other services for returning citizens.

Administrative Matters

Chairman Blumenthal made a motion to approve the minutes of the Commission’s June public meeting. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the minutes as prepared.

Treasurer Mary Young presented the monthly financial report for June:

ANC3B June 2017 Financial Report

OPENING BALANCE: \$7,628.25

Income: \$2,930.71 - Allotment - 3rd Quarter FY 2017
\$ 402.16 - Unused funds returned on Wilson PTSO Grant
\$.92 - Additional Unused funds on Wilson PTSO Grant

Total Income: \$3,333.79

Outgoing: \$850.00 - Check #1272 - for Iona Senior Services Grant
\$193.00 - Check #1273 - to Jackie Blumenthal to reimburse P.O. Box Rental
\$ 90.00 - Check #1274 - to DLM Web Development for Website Management

Total Outgoing: \$1,133.00

CLOSING BALANCE: \$9,829.04

Chairman Blumenthal made a motion to adopt the monthly financial report. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the report.

Commissioner Young also presented the quarterly report for the third quarter of FY2017. Chairman Blumenthal made a motion to adopt the Third Quarter financial report. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the report.

Chairman Blumenthal announced the next public meeting of the Commission would be Thursday, September 14, 2017, as the Commission does not hold regular public meetings in August.

Chairman Blumenthal made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.