

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



ANC3B Minutes
March 12, 2015 Public Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm by Chairman Jackie Blumenthal (3B02). The other four Commissioners Ann Mladinov (3B01), Abigail Zenner (3B03), Mary Young (3B04) and Brian Turmail (3B05) were also present.

The Commission voted 5-0 to accept the proposed agenda for the meeting.

Crime Report: Sgt. Ben Firehock, Night Manager for Metropolitan Police District Two, presented the crime report for the latest four-week period (February 9 through March 12) for PSA 204, which runs from Macomb Street south to the Whitehaven Parkway area, and from Glover-Archbold Park to Rock Creek Park. He reported that in the past 30 days the area had one violent crime, a robbery not involving a gun. An individual was arrested in that case. There were also 6 burglaries, 4 of them involving vending machines in apartment laundry rooms. Sgt. Firehock said a series of apartments on Wisconsin Avenue had experienced this and he recommended that people be alert for unfamiliar people around their laundry room or vending machines, especially at unusual hours such as overnight.

There were 8 thefts from autos v. 16 last year at the same time, and 1 stolen auto v. 3 last year. The drop reflected the special patrols and other preventive policing in the Glover Park area in recent weeks, while thefts from autos almost doubled in Georgetown, indicating the perpetrators had shifted south. Sgt. Firehock said one individual was apprehended on 42nd Street and was being held for auto theft. He has a history of burglaries and thefts and the police believe he may be tied to similar thefts in the area. Total property crimes were up to 35 v. 30 last year, including 20 thefts not involving autos v. 11 last year. Sgt. Firehock reported that many of those 20 thefts were crimes of opportunity—a credit card left on a counter, a purse left on a chair at a hotel, several wallets, some bicycles.

Two other questions came up: Are the police patrolling Glover-Archbold Park on horses? Sgt. Firehock said no, only on mountain bikes. Mounted patrols in the park must be National Park Service police. A second question involved the police response to the recent water main break on 42nd Street, where police tape was stretched across the immediate block but no one rerouting the traffic away from that area after the break was discovered. Sgt. Firehock speculated it was probably a coordination issue.

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3B01
N. GLOVER PARK
ANN MLADINOV

3B02
E. GLOVER PARK
JACKIE BLUMENTHAL

3B03
W. GLOVER PARK
ABIGAIL ZENNER

3B04
CATHEDRAL HEIGHTS
MARY C. YOUNG

3B05
S. GLOVER PARK
BRIAN TURMAIL

Lt. Neal was also in attendance. He reported that the Commander in District Two, Michael Reese, had retired to take the job as deputy chief of police for the DC Department of Housing, so the commander position in the Second District is vacant. Two captains are alternating as acting commander. He said he would introduce the new Commander at an ANC3B meeting after that appointment is announced.

Mayor's Liaison: Michael Matthews, the Mayor's community outreach specialist for Ward 3, was also in attendance and said he hoped soon to have someone else working on the staff with him. He encouraged residents to call him 202-341-7706 or email michael.matthews@dc.gov if something happened like a water main break. He recommended that people call 311 first, get a case number and then email it to him so he could follow up and make sure the right person was contacted. Mr. Matthews also announced Eli Hoffman, the new DC Public Schools Community Action Team coordinator in Wards 2 and 3.

DDOT Planning: Ted Van Houten, new DDOT planner for the Western area (Ward 3, Ward 4 west of Rock Creek Park, Kalorama, Georgetown and Burleith), gave a presentation on DDOT's strategic planning process and how it fits within the department. DDOT now has 5 area planners rather than one per ward, so they can focus on how the transportation networks work across the city. The manager of that team is Colleen Hawkinson, who spoke at the ANC3B meeting in December about the MoveDC plan. The planning team does studies of corridors (including M Street NW right now) looking at how to improve the flow and safety of streets, and also livability (including Tenley Circle and Forest Hills in recent years) looking at transportation options, natural resources and public health. The planning office passes plans on to the infrastructure team to implement, and continues to attend meetings about plans as they move through the environmental assessments, design, and construction phases. Recently the office has begun to conduct post-construction analyses to assess whether projects have achieved the intended results. Mr. Van Houten outlined the functions of other offices in DDOT: Infrastructure (including DC PLUG, storm water, and other utilities), Traffic Operations (including traffic flow), Urban Forestry, Public Space (including permitting for activities using streets and sidewalks) and Administration (including communications, legal, and budget). In budgeting, DDOT a 6-year obligation plan for capital projects as well as a yearly project plan, which is reflected in the Mayor's proposed budget, based on availability of funding. The Mayor's FY 2016 budget was scheduled to be released on April 2, followed by hearings for the budgets for DDOT and other agencies, and Budget Forums to get public comments. MoveDC was DDOT's 25-year multimodal vision for transportation in the city, which can only be implemented if the goals are supported by projects and appropriations in the budgets.

A neighbor asked if there is an office that takes an overview of plans and developments affecting all modes of transportation in the city and how they come together. Mr. Van Houten said the Strategic Planning Office is part of the Policy, Planning and Sustainability Administration (PPSA), headed by Sam Zimbabwe. Other parts are responsible for safety, sidewalk and pedestrian policy, sustainability, the DC Circulator, WMATA liaison, and school transportation.

Mr. Van Houten encouraged people with concerns about streets, curbs, sidewalks, traffic signals, and other transportation problems to contact 311.dc.gov or call 311 or 202-737-4404. He said when those DDOT issues are reported, they go right to a person at DDOT and statistics about DDOT's 311 response times are reported regularly and shared at oversight hearings.

A neighbor asked about PotholePalooza, the city's annual spring program to accelerate response to potholes reported around the city. Mr. Van Houten said that people are welcome to put in a request at any time about pothole repair and PotholePalooza would officially be announced soon on the DPW website.

Chairman Blumenthal asked if there was someone at the DDOT Planning Office who should be contacted about solving the results of planning errors, and mentioned the No Left Turn signs at Calvert on southbound Wisconsin at Calvert and on westbound Massachusetts at Observatory Circle. Mr. Van Houten noted that DDOT has a new director, and CM Cheh's assistant, Dee Smith, said she had already mentioned those issues to the new director and chief of staff and expected they would address them soon.

Commissioner Young asked who coordinates between the Circulator, WMATA buses, and university shuttle buses. The representatives of WMATA and DDOT in the room noted that they meet frequently and coordinate services. Commissioner Zenner said she would like to see coordination between the colleges and the neighborhood working together to improve transportation options. The N8 bus used to connect Glover Park and AU but was eliminated so now some people use Car2Go to get back and forth from AU each day. Sheila Meehan expressed concern about the number of hop-on hop-off and tour buses that are operated in the area, especially along Wisconsin Avenue, and causing a lot of congestion. Mr. Van Houten said that tour buses are dealt with by the freight team at DDOT. Another question was raised about DDOT's plans for better east-west connectivity, which is mentioned as a goal in the MoveDC plan. Mr. Van Houten said that his team is beginning a cross-town study of transit needs, but Steve Strauss from DDOT said that study does not extend west of Connecticut Avenue. Several neighbors commented that the study should extend further west. Sheila Meehan noted that Glover Park used to have significantly more cross-town bus service, including to Stadium-Armory, which is no longer provided.

Bus Service: Jim Hamre, Director of Bus Planning and Facilities for WMATA, gave a presentation on bus service in the Glover Park-Cathedral Heights area. He was accompanied by Ann Chisholm, WMATA's Liaison to DC government, and Steve Strauss from PPSA in DDOT whose job is to monitor WMATA service changes and service plans. Mr. Hamre came to an ANC3B meeting earlier in the year to talk about the consolidation of bus stops on Wisconsin Avenue. This time he was following up on the WMATA board's discussion of possible service cuts and fare increases at its February 12 meeting (which ANC3B opposed in a resolution at its February 12 meeting). He said the board was able to cut some administrative and capital costs and squeeze a little more from the local jurisdictions to avoid all fare and service changes for DC in the proposed FY2016 budget. He explained WMATA's capital costs come from the federal government but operating funds come from the local jurisdictions.

Mr. Hamre said WMATA and DDOT work closely on DC bus services, are in frequent contact by email, and Steve Strauss monitors WMATA to make sure buses are used efficiently and the services stay on budget. He went through the objectives of recent changes in the 30 series, D1 and D2, and N buses, and noted that WMATA has seen improvements in reliability and overcrowding, but he requested the community keep in touch with comments and WMATA will continue making tweaks to address problems. He said there are no funds this year to add service but also no plans to make cuts. In the following year, there may be new buses to allow some additional service. Mr. Strauss said that there is no definite date for extending the Circulator up Wisconsin Avenue to the National Cathedral, which also depends on availability of new buses.

Mr. Hamre also discussed the WMATA snow response. This was the first year WMATA published maps of route changes during snow emergencies. He acknowledged the experience with the snow on January 6 was bad everywhere but the emergency routes seemed to work more effectively in later storms; WMATA had 114 buses stuck or involved in traffic incidents v. only 14 on March 5. He encouraged people to sign up for the Metro Alerts system to get information on any weather-related changes in bus service, and agreed to check into whether WMATA could separate weather-related Metro Alerts from general alerts so residents could sign up for just weather alerts if they choose. He also invited further comments on how to communicate better where buses will be and make sure information on buses that are stuck or not operating is provided to Metro Alerts, so WMATA can provide more trustworthy service in snow or other emergencies.

Chairman Blumenthal noted that it is scary for people in the snow to be dropped off by a driver who says "I don't have to go any further." She explained that the neighborhood is very dependent on bus service because it is our only transit option. The D1 and D2 buses are very crowded in the morning and often have to leave people behind at bus stops. People also complain about bunching on the 30 buses along Wisconsin Avenue. Mr. Hamre said that bunching is a concern; sometimes people have to use "self service demand management" and not all try to get on the same bus, so the first bus can try to keep closer to its schedule and other riders can catch the next bus. Right now WMATA has too many 30-foot buses, which are often used on the D1 and D2 routes, but more 40-foot buses will be put in service this year which can be used on the D1 and D2 routes, and that will increase capacity. He said frequency is a budget issue; bus service costs \$2/minute. If DDOT had \$250,000, WMATA could put another bus on a route.

There were several questions about pedestrian and bicycle safety, night and weekend service, plans for more articulated buses, the process for deciding on bus service priorities, and how to help people whose bus service is eliminated, such as on the route once served by the N8. Mr. Hamre said that bus service costs too much when there are only a handful of people riding; buses are designed for mass movements. The driver and operating costs are the almost the same whether the bus is full or has just one rider, so the service is not efficient unless a large number of people are on the bus.

Grant Request from Stoddert PTO: Stoddert parent Maria O'Donnell joined Mary Clare Claud, co-president of the Stoddert Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), to make a presentation about the PTO's request for a \$2,500 grant from the ANC to pay for a new gate and fence around the garden that is used by students and the community on the Stoddert Elementary School property. The fence is needed to keep out deer. Parents and other volunteers will do the work on the fence. The garden will have chickens that produce eggs to be used in the classroom and vegetables that can be harvested and potentially sold at the Farmers Market, so the project will have educational, recreational and health benefits.

Commissioner Turmail explained the process is that the applicant must make a presentation about the grant at an ANC meeting for Commission review and decision. Next the ANC will present the PTO application to the city auditor for pre-approval. The Chairman and Treasurer spoke about the recent change in the process for ANCs to make grants, in compliance with the city auditor's requirements as presented at the recent ANC Financial Management Training. The Chairman moved to get a sense of the members on the grant, with multiple seconds, and the Commission agreed unanimously (5-0) to give the requested grant to the Stoddert PTO as soon as the auditor's pre-approval is received, so the ANC can go forward with making the grant and getting the fence built before the growing season.

ANC Grantmaking: Commissioner Young mentioned that some members of the DC Council had been discussing whether the ANCs' authority to make grants should be extended or eliminated or if the rules should just be clarified. Chairman Blumenthal proposed that the ANC send a letter to Councilmember Anita Bonds asking to keep the authority for small grants to community non-profits at the grass roots level, in the hands of the ANCs. The motion was seconded and the Commissioners voted 5-0 to prepare a letter to CM Bonds to that effect.

Update on Glover Park Hardware: Chairman Blumenthal described the current information about the plans for Ace Hardware to open at a new location, the space formerly occupied by the LADO language institute, next to BreadSoda. The landlord has to install a freight elevator at the back for deliveries and also provide for accessibility for customers, since the site is below ground level. There is a plan to offer validated parking at the rear of the property. Ace will be creating a website to provide additional information.

Administrative Business: Commissioner Zenner announced that the ANC3B public meeting in May will be held on the first Thursday, May 7, instead of the second Thursday, because of a scheduling conflict. Chairman Blumenthal committed to having the agenda for that meeting posted a minimum of 7 days in advance of that meeting as required.

Commissioner Young presented the Monthly Financial Report for February 2015 (shown below). A motion was made and seconded to accept the report as prepared, and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve.

ANC3B – February 2015 Monthly Financial Report
(Approved at March 2015 meeting)

Checking Account

Opening Balance: \$8,699.94

Deposits: None

Checks: #1238 - \$25.00 for ANC Security Fund
#1240 - \$47.70 for Name Plates for Three New Commissioners
#1241 - \$572.00 for Business Cards for Five Commissioners

Closing Balance: \$8,055.24

Chairman Blumenthal announced that the next public meeting of ANC3B will be on April 9, 2015, at 7:00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 pm.