

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



ANC3B Public Meeting Minutes
May 11, 2017

Chairman Jackie Blumenthal (3B02) called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. Commissioners Ann Mladinov (3B01), Mary Young (3B04), and Brian Turmail (3B05) were also in attendance, which constituted a quorum. (Three of the five Commissioners make a quorum.) Commissioner Melissa Lane (3B03) was out of town and could not participate.

Chairman Blumenthal presented the proposed agenda for the meeting, with the addition of one item to consider: a letter to the DC Council in response to the Mayor's proposed FY2018 budget, which did not call for the expected level of per pupil spending. The Chairman made a motion to vote on adopting the proposed agenda, with that amendment. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the agenda with the addition.

Police Report

Lt. Ralph Neal reported on crime statistics for the 30 days between April 8 and May 8 in Police Service Area 204, including ANC3B. He noted that there had been 2 violent crimes v. 3 in 2016, but reported property crimes had increased to 49 in 2017 v. 36 in 2016, including 17 thefts from autos v. 12 in 2016 and 30 general thefts such as purses left in a shopping cart or packages stolen from a porch compared to 18 in 2016. Lt. Neal mentioned that crime often increases as the weather improves and his plan is to continue to educate residents to secure their property and be aware of their surroundings to help avert crime. He announced that he will have police officers on foot, stopping in local businesses and showing an increased police presence in the community. He also proposed a work station on Wisconsin Avenue where a police officer would be posted to provide information and offer tips to pedestrians on avoiding crime and improving their personal safety.

Presentation on Clean-Up Activities of the DC Department of Public Works (DPW)

Celeste Duffie, Community Relations Specialist for DPW, spoke about DPW's basic services, which include leaf collection, holiday tree collection, snow and ice removal, street sweeping, and mowing and grounds maintenance of public space during the summer. She mentioned that she did not see signs around Stoddert School indicating a specific day and time of the week dedicated to DPW street sweeping (usually twice a week, closing one side of the street to parking for several hours). She explained that DPW sweeps every street in the city periodically but for more frequent cleaning, people on a block or a street can request dedicated street sweeping. If 80% of property owners on a block request dedicated street sweeping, DPW can schedule it and get signs posted.

Ms. Duffie also outlined the Helping Hands program designed to support neighborhood clean-ups. With a refundable \$20 deposit, a neighborhood group or just a block can get clean-up supplies from DPW

including trash cans, shovels, rakes and brooms, and trash bags which DPW will pick up again when the clean-up day is over. See <https://dpw.dc.gov/service/helping-hand-neighborhood-clean>

Commissioner Young asked about 4000-4200 Cathedral Avenue through Glover-Archbold Park, where there is a sidewalk only on the north side, bamboo grows over the sidewalk in summer and snow is never cleared in winter, forcing pedestrians to walk in the street. Ms. Duffie noted that sidewalks through the park, even on public streets, are a National Park Service (NPS) responsibility, but DPW can contact NPS to ask them to clear the sidewalks and where there's a safety issue, DPW can go on the premises to clear an area, with permission. Chairman Blumenthal suggested that the ANC could write a letter to NPS to request clearing but Ms. Duffie said DPW would contact their counterpart at DPW and coordinate with them so DPW could get those sidewalks taken care of.

Commissioner Turmail asked whether DPW will be coordinating with DC Water as it installs permeable pavement in some parking lanes in Glover Park as part of the Clean Rivers Project/Green Infrastructure Program, which will require frequent sweeping. Ms. Duffie said that DPW coordinates with DC Water on parking enforcement when there is utility work going on, but DC Water is responsible for special clean-up required by its projects.

A neighbor asked about a north-south section of Whitehaven that doesn't get snow removal and wondered if street sweeping could be done on that street. Ms. Duffie asked if it is a public street or an alley on DDOT's list of municipal streets where DPW can operate. Chairman Blumenthal said that the ANC would look into that and coordinate with DPW and residents on the questions.

Presentation by the DC Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA)

Andrew Wiley, Residential Plans Reviewer in DCRA's new Homeowner's Center, discussed resources available to streamline the process and ease the burden on homeowners applying for permits for home improvements in a one- or two-unit building the owner uses as a primary residence. The Homeowner's Center is at 1100 4th Street SW, 2nd Floor, and is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:30 am - 4:15 pm and Thursday 9:30 am – 4:30 pm. <https://dcra.dc.gov/service/homeowners-center> 202-442-9470. Mr. Wiley urged residents to call ahead and talk to him or his partner Mr. Boghal so they can make sure the homeowner brings in the right documents and talk about time frames and scope of work. He said that for smaller projects, paper plans are accepted rather than electronic documents as required for larger projects, and processing is expedited. The Homeowner's Center tries to get homeowners through the permitting process with only two visits.

DCRA has a new 42-page "Deck Guide" (available at www.dcra.gov) which covers designs and drawings for decks up to 10 feet in height. The guide does not cover decks greater than 500 square feet in area, multi-level decks, or roof decks. If homeowners follow the guide, they don't need to get an architect to stamp their plans. They can design their own deck and apply for a permit without submitting detailed drawings, as long as they incorporate required fasteners and details where two different materials come together. DCRA also has a new guide with designs for ramps to accommodate people with disabilities, which allows homeowners to streamline the design and permit process for constructing ramps.

Chairman Blumenthal asked if DCRA had a list of what home improvements do not require a permit from DCRA. Mr. Wiley said that there is a list on the DCRA website. Painting, replacing cabinets, or changing floor finish such as putting in hardwood or tile do NOT require a permit. All deck construction requires a permit, and replacing a driveway over 50 square feet also requires a permit. Usually that's only a one-day process, if you pull a building plat from the DC Surveyor's office, draw your project and

add a few notes to it. The Homeowner's Center will help with that process. Homeowners should call ahead to talk about what they are proposing to do and what requirements they will have to meet.

Commissioner Turmail asked about the project a neighbor had been proposing which had not yet gotten permits even though the first application was submitted on February 9. Mr. Wiley said he should call the Homeowner's Center and they would check to see if further documents or reviews were needed. He noted that the city's new zoning regulations have brought some changes and have caused some problems for designers and homeowners.

Chairman Blumenthal mentioned that delays in getting permits are something the ANC hears all the time, and asked if the Homeowner's Center web page could include guidance on what people need to do before they submit permit applications. Mr. Wiley said that DCRA is trying to help with that through forums on how to choose an architect/designer, forums on sub-standard drawings and how to correct that problem, and possibly a webinar on what to do before people submit a permit application.

Mr. Wiley also offered that residents could be in touch with him if they have questions about improvement projects in their condo unit in a multi-family building or concerns about illegal construction, especially if it's a public safety issue, and also complaints about enforcement of permit or zoning requirements, including ADA requirements, height of new fences, etc.

Presentation on the Glover Park-Burleith Farmers' Market

Elizabeth (Lizzie) Ferrante and Eva Shpak spoke about the plans this year for the Glover Park-Burleith Farmers' Market which is held every Saturday from 9 am to 1 pm in the Hardy School parking lot from May to November. This is the second year that Community Foodworks is operating the market. Eva managed it last year and Lizzie is managing it this year.

They highlighted several features:

- food access programs, including WIC and SNAP.
- tables for local non-profits
- food trucks most weeks (to be listed in the newsletter online)
- a new community compost program working with DPW, allowing people to bring bags of food waste (not meat or fat or bones) that can be turned into compost and brought back to the community, for example, the garden at Stoddert School. (The city just launched this program, with one compost center in each ward; the Glover Park-Burleith Market is the site for Ward 2.)

They are working on getting a new bike repair service at the market this year.

Resolution Regarding DDOT Plan for a Traffic Signal at Observatory Circle and Massachusetts Avenue

Chairman Blumenthal presented a resolution supporting the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) proposed change in traffic control at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Observatory Circle. She noted that ANC3B previously had adopted a resolution requesting DDOT to lift the No Left Turn restriction during rush hour at Observatory Circle for vehicles heading outbound on Massachusetts Avenue but now more specific approval was called for.

At present there is no place to turn left from outbound Massachusetts for 2.5 miles, from Sheridan Circle (at 23rd Street) to Idaho Avenue NW (at 39th Street), except for a sharp turn at 36th Street which isn't even two lanes wide. She observed that Observatory Circle is an important collector road between Massachusetts and Wisconsin Avenue in Glover Park, but isn't a legal option during morning or evening rush hours. DDOT has conducted an investigation and determined that in one evening rush hour 245 vehicles made illegal left turn into Observatory Circle, and also reported 20 collisions related to turns in

that section of Massachusetts Avenue NW. The DDOT study supports the need to lift the No Left Turn restrictions but also concluded that it would be necessary to install a new traffic signal at Observatory Circle and Massachusetts Avenue to regulate traffic at the intersection.

Commissioner Young pointed out that with the current No Left Turn restriction at Observatory Circle, a large amount of traffic turns left from Massachusetts Avenue onto Idaho Avenue, and then turns left onto Cathedral Avenue to get back to Wisconsin Avenue, often moving at high speeds. Emergency vehicles also use that route. The changes at Observatory Circle should help divide the traffic between Idaho Avenue and Observatory Circle and reduce hazards on Idaho Avenue.

Anita Crabtree of Massachusetts Avenue Heights in ANC3C asked how the signals would handle a queue of cars waiting to make the left turn onto Observatory, since the left turn lane is only about 3 cars long. Chairman Blumenthal responded that the signal at 34th and Massachusetts would be synchronized with the new traffic signal to avoid back-ups.

Other residents expressed concerns about increased traffic and threats to pedestrian safety on Observatory Circle. Chairman Blumenthal observed that the current restrictions have pushed drivers to take other routes that are less safe, cutting across Massachusetts where there's no traffic signal and trying to use smaller streets such as Fulton as a cut-through to Wisconsin, where there's no traffic signal and the streets are not equipped to handle the volume safely. Throughout the day, pedestrians and bicyclists have to cross the traffic stream at the intersection with Observatory Circle without benefit of a traffic signal, so the proposed changes should improve safety significantly for them.

Chairman Blumenthal noted that the proposed resolution supports ongoing monitoring of how the change affects traffic and safety and the ANC would back any traffic calming needed. She committed that if the result of the changes is adverse as some residents fear, the Commission will work with them to correct that. She particularly highlighted the importance of ensuring safety at the intersection of Calvert Street and 36th Street, where pedestrians cross to get to Guy Mason Recreation Center.

Chairman Blumenthal made a motion for the Commission to vote on the resolution. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the resolution.

Letter to DC Council on School Funding for 2017-2018

Commissioner Turmail explained that the Mayor's budget for DC Public Schools (DCPS) for the coming academic year would require Stoddert Elementary School to make non-personnel cuts, Hardy Middle School to cut arts and also half a Spanish teacher, and Woodrow Wilson High School to eliminate 9 faculty positions, on top of 2 positions lost in 2016-2017, at a time when student populations are increasing. The DC Council expected to mark up the budget in the following week and take an initial vote on the budget by the end of May. Chairman Blumenthal proposed to direct Commissioner Turmail to prepare a formal letter to the Council asking that per pupil funding for the 2017-2018 year be increased or at least held to the same level as in the current academic year. Chairman Blumenthal made a motion to vote on that proposal. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 4-0 to have Commissioner Turmail prepare and send a letter to the Council as described.

Open Forum

Shawn Hilgendorf, attending the meeting as Legislative Director for Councilmember At Large Robert White, added further background on the DCPS budget. He said the Council expected to take its first vote on the city's FY2018 budget on May 30 and the second vote in mid-June. Mr. Hilgendorf explained that

as a first-term Councilmember, Robert White is not Chairman of any Council committees; however, he is a member of the Committees for Education, Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization, Labor, and Human Services, which cover the issues he cares most about, including affordable housing, workforce development, and education, especially early childhood development and adult education. Mr. Hilgendorf said the Councilmember's office is trying to add funds for two more attorneys in the Office of Tenant Advocate, more case managers to work with the city's returning citizens, and better access to transportation for adults trying to get training for jobs. He is fighting for transit benefits to be available to them, which is under the jurisdiction of the Transportation Committee.

There were no other comments.

Administrative Matters

Chairman Blumenthal made a motion to approve the minutes of the Commission's April public meeting. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the minutes as prepared.

Treasurer Mary Young presented the monthly financial report for April:

ANC3B April 2017 Financial Report

OPENING BALANCE: \$10,325.71

Incoming: \$0.00

Outgoing: Check #1267 for \$1671.70 - Grant to Stoddert PTO for Sports Equipment

Check #1271 for \$1,028.70 - Reimbursement to Commissioner Ann Mladinov for purchase of the new sound system for ANC3B

CLOSING BALANCE \$7,625.31

Commissioner Young reported that she had talked again with the DC Office of the Auditor and they had approved restoration of the funds that had been temporarily withheld from the District's allocation to ANC3B while the auditor reviewed use of that amount to cover the cost of fuel used for van services as part of the ANC's grant to Iona Senior Services to pay for transportation stipends to seniors with severe disabilities.

Chairman Blumenthal made a motion to adopt the monthly financial report. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the report.

Chairman Blumenthal announced the next public meeting of the Commission would be Thursday, June 8, 2017.

Chairman Blumenthal made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 4-0 to approve.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 pm.