

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



ANC3B Minutes
February 12, 2015 Public Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Chairman Jackie Blumenthal (3B02). All the other ANC members were also present: Ann Mladinov (3B01), Abigail Zenner (3B03), Mary Young (3B04), and Brian Turmail (3B05) for his first meeting of the new term. Vice Chairman Turmail introduced a half dozen Boy Scouts from Troop 666 who were attending the meeting with several parents as part of the scouts' work on a Citizenship Merit Badge. Also in attendance were Michael Matthews, the mayor's Ward 3 Outreach Specialist, and Dee Smith, Deputy Chief of Staff and Constituent Services Director for Ward 3 Councilmember Mary Cheh.

Police Report: Sgt. B.R. Firehock, 2nd District Evening Shift Supervisor, reported that the area PSA 204 had no violent crimes in the previous 30 days, but two burglaries (up from one last year) and a total of 43 property crimes (up from 38 last year). The largest number of thefts were either package deliveries taken from porches (5 reported to police) or thefts from autos (18), particularly thefts of air bags. The number of stolen autos in the overall PSA 204 area went up to 6 this year v. 5 last year. Of those auto thefts, 4 were in the Glover Park area. Sgt. Firehock said that most auto thefts occur in the "midnight tour" from 10 pm to 6 am. The police department has unmarked vehicles and plainclothes officers assigned to watch the most frequently targeted areas. He noted that thieves seem to be looking for particular types of vehicles and airbags, often working from a list of which vehicles or airbags are the most desirable for resale. He said airbags bring about \$200 each, and can be resold for as much as \$800. Thieves often break windows to get the driver's side airbag, so he also recommended using a J-bar or "club" that can be fastened across the steering wheel to keep the airbag from being removed. Sgt. Firehock reported that on February 10 one individual suspected of stealing a motorcycle from the back of a home in the 3700 block of W Street had been apprehended when he returned to try to steal a second motorcycle. The individual has been arrested previously for burglary and auto theft, so the police are looking at whether he might be linked to other stolen autos in the area. Sgt. Firehock advised always closing and locking doors to a home or vehicle, never leaving keys accessible, and not leaving unattended vehicles running.

Thefts of package deliveries were also discussed. Thieves appear to be watching for opportunities to take packages left on front porches, sometimes even following delivery vehicles to see if anyone comes to the door or if the packages are left sitting at the door. Sgt. Firehock asked people to report package thefts or anything suspicious they see that might be connected to a theft. The police district is working on this, and already have specific crime targeting teams deployed in some areas to watch for package thefts. Sgt. Firehock urged residents to report all suspected thefts of packages to the

police so they will be aware of the full magnitude of the problem and can better target resources to deal with it.

Sgt. Firehock was also asked about traffic outside Stoddert School, including double parking or parking in illegal spots on Calvert Street. He said he had not been involved in traffic issues but could ask for a traffic officer to come by the school to check the situation and remind people not to block the street or crosswalks when they are picking up or dropping off students at the school.

Stoddert Elementary School: Principal Donald Bryant and PTA Co-President Mary Clare Claud gave an update on activities at the school. Principal Bryant noted that Stoddert has a significant increase in enrollment since the 2010 renovations were completed, from 260 students then to 423 now, compared to an estimated capacity in the 300s. About 90% of the students are from the neighborhood (among the highest “inbound” ratio of any city schools). Bryant predicts that within two years the school will have 440 students, which he predicts will be the “top of the bubble.” He noted it’s not a “bad problem” to have such an attractive school, but it has meant severe strain on the facilities. Thanks to Councilmember Cheh’s help over the summer, six “demountable” classrooms that were not in the school budget were moved onto the campus, which have light, space, rest rooms, and new technology but no water fountains or covered walkways from the main building. Principal Bryant went through the logic for having 3rd and 4th graders rather than 5th and 6th graders or 1st and 2nd graders use the demountables. The school much prefers to keep the students in each grade together and not have students moving to and from the demountables multiple times over the course of the day when they have to change classrooms, which makes it difficult for 5th and 6th graders who have more than one teacher during the day. Security guards have to be employed to escort students each time they move between buildings, which can add significantly to the school costs. Security is a particular concern for the 1st and 2nd graders.

Principal Bryant also took questions about the possibilities for installing covered walkways between the main building and the demountables, which he said had been assessed and would further reduce available parking spaces, or moving the demountables, which he said had been extensively analyzed and ruled out. He said, “It’s a work in progress,” and the school will continue to work to use the demountables in a way that provides a safe and supportive environment for education for the students.

Mary Clare Claud encouraged neighbors to participate in the Big Chili Night fundraiser coming on May 2, and announced a new “Buy a Brick” campaign starting in the spring. She also encouraged residents to donate funds or time to PTA programs including the school garden. She said the PTA had not received the grant it was hoping to get for a fence to keep deer and other foraging animals out of the garden. Chairman Blumenthal noted that the ANC is empowered to give grants of up to \$2,500 for community projects and Vice Chairman Turmail offered to share the information with the PTA about how to apply for a grant from the ANC.

Principal Bryant as well as Dee Smith, Councilmember Cheh’s representative, thanked the neighborhood for sharing visitor parking passes so teachers can park during the day. DDOT does not have a program for providing temporary parking permits to teachers and several neighbors emphasized that they prefer not to have “DCPS parking only” zones. Commissioner Zenner offered to share information with the school on Transportation Demand Management (TDM) options to help achieve more efficient travel and reduce congestion, including ridesharing or car sharing for faculty or staff and also options such as “walking carpools” for families who have been driving to school to

drop off or pick up students. She volunteered to meet later with school representatives and recommended the resources available on <goDCgo.com>. Chairman Blumenthal noted that the ANC hopes to keep up the dialogue on Stoddert enrollment, capital improvements, and traffic and parking issues.

DC Tax Changes: Norman Evans from the city's Office of Tax and Revenue summarized key changes in DC personal income taxes that will benefit residents on their 2014 tax filings, including the increase in the personal exemption and the standard deduction. He also explained that Schedule H, the Property Tax Deduction, continues to be refundable but the total amount of the credit has been raised from \$750 to \$1,000 and applies whether the tax filer owns or rents the property. The method of calculating eligibility has changed significantly. For tax year 2014 and future years, the basis for calculating income is the federal adjusted income tax for all members of the household filing together. Multiple property tax credits can be claimed by one household if members file separately. For renters, the percentage of their rent that is considered property tax has been raised to 20% of rent paid. The income "ceiling" has also been raised for residents over 70. Mr. Evans also mentioned that there is a new law allowing senior citizens to defer city property taxes until they sell their property or until their death, without incurring interest.

One other new DC tax provision provides an income tax credit up to \$19,000 for the cost of labor and equipment to modify a motor vehicle for using alternative fuels (natural gas, ethanol, biodiesel, hydrogen or electricity from a charging station), and also a credit for buying and installing a charging station or alternative fuel storage unit, not to exceed \$1,000 for a charging station or \$10,000 for a qualified alternative fuel storage unit. He did not go into detail on changes in business taxes, but OTR does have briefings on those details. He simply noted the change in DC sales tax as of October 1, 2014, to include in the sales tax such items as bottled water including delivered gallons of water, storage of household goods and self storage, upholstery or carpet cleaning and repair, bowling alleys, billiard parlors, tanning salons, health clubs, and establishments that wash, wax, clean or detail vehicles (except automated car washes). For more information, Mr. Evans suggested contacting him for more information at <norman.evans@dc.gov>.

Resolutions: The ANC voted on three items

1 – Proposed Exelon purchase of Pepco: Chairman Blumenthal put forward a resolution to ask the DC Public Service Commission (PSC) to reject the proposed sale of Pepco Holdings, parent of the local electricity distribution company in Washington, DC, to Chicago-based Exelon Corporation. Exelon must get approval from the PSC in order to complete the purchase. This proposal has been the subject of several presentations at previous ANC meetings through the year by Pepco, the Office of People's Counsel and Grid 2.0. There was one question about whether the deficiencies in the Exelon proposal include only the shortcomings in its provisions for reduced rates and improved reliability. Commissioner Mladinov responded that in addition to lacking significant benefits to Pepco ratepayers, which is one of the key standards Exelon must meet to have its application approved by the PSC, the proposal also poses risks of anticompetitive actions by a combined Exelon and Pepco as a result of the dominant share they would represent in the regional transmission grid as well as the regional power generation industry, and the power they could exercise over the ability of potential sources of renewable power in the local area such as residential or community solar facilities to get access to the electric grid to share any excess power they produce. A motion was made to adopt the resolution and was seconded. The Commission voted unanimously, 5-0, to approve the resolution asking the PSC to reject the Pepco-Exelon proposal as not in the public interest.

2 – Proposed changes in Metrobus and Metrorail fares and services affecting ANC3B: The afternoon of the ANC February meeting, the WMATA board was considering options to balance its FY2016 budget, one part of which was an increase in fares and a long list of possible service cuts including reducing the length and frequency of service on the D1 and D2 in Glover Park and eliminating N3 bus service that runs on Massachusetts Avenue to Foggy Bottom and the National Mall. Chairman Blumenthal said Glover Park cannot accept any more bus cuts. “We would prefer to have more service, not less,” because Metro doesn’t serve the neighborhood; people have to rely on buses because they don’t have the range of transportation options as some other parts of the city. Dee Smith said she has shared the neighborhood’s concerns with Councilmember Cheh.

Several meeting participants mentioned that drivers have passed stops on the D1/D2 route without picking anyone up, and noted that someone should find out how much prerogative drivers have to diverge from the official route. Chairman Blumenthal said the ANC will be following up about bus service reliability and urged that any riders who have been passed or experienced other service problems should file a Rider Comment on the WMATA website, which will get to a staff member who is required to respond.

Chairman Blumenthal offered a resolution opposing changes to the D1, D2 and N3 bus service. A motion was made to adopt the resolution, seconded, and the Commission voted unanimously, 5-0, to approve.

3 – Glover Park Day: Chairman Blumenthal presented a letter she prepared to Betty Hester in the Department of Parks and Recreation supporting use of Guy Mason Playground for Glover Park Day on Saturday, June 6, 2015. Chairman Blumenthal noted that this year Glover Park Day will for the first time be using the brand new playground and it will be a wonderful chance to bring together the community to celebrate. The Commission voted unanimously, 5-0, to approve sending the letter.

Open Forum:

One comment was raised about the importance of Ace Hardware and the neighbors’ regret at its closing in January. Neighbors want Glover Park to be a vibrant business location, would like to have a hardware store in the area, and also don’t want to be known as a neighborhood of troublemakers. Chairman Blumenthal provided a brief update on the status of Ace Hardware’s search for a new location. The owner would like to stay in the area and is still looking for options but had not yet been able to find a workable alternative site in the Glover Park neighborhood. The owner of the building where Ace was located has faced some delays but is proceeding with the plans to put a Rite Aid into that space. Chairman Blumenthal said she would invite the developer to a future meeting to update the neighborhood on the project. The overall apartment development project on that site is a “by right” development so there was not a zoning case, which would have given the ANC official standing to weigh in on the project.

Another participant asked if there was any chance to get a traffic signal at Tunlaw and Davis Place. Chairman Blumenthal responded that the ANC had previously taken that suggestion to DDOT, which responded that it had tested the idea and it was not workable.

An additional comment related to the difficult turns DC Circulator buses make at 35th Street and Wisconsin Avenue, which is the current turnaround point for the route through Georgetown. Chairman Blumenthal noted that the Circulator is planning to extend service on Wisconsin Avenue

north to the National Cathedral. If buses are going all the way to the Cathedral, they would be turning somewhere other than 35th Street and Wisconsin.

The final question was whether any progress had been made on removing the restrictions on left turns from Massachusetts Avenue onto Observatory Circle. Chairman Blumenthal noted that the ANC is working with Councilmember Cheh's office and ANC3C, which includes part of Observatory Circle. ANC3C also has adopted a resolution on the "No Left Turn" at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Observatory Circle. Chairman Blumenthal noted that ANC3B is also following up on its October 2014 resolution to have the "No Left Turn" signs removed at Calvert and Wisconsin, and also at Massachusetts Avenue and Observatory Circle. She noted that ANC3B has passed two resolutions on the subject and will not give up on the effort to get that change.

Administrative Matters:

Chairman Blumenthal presented the minutes from the Commission's January meeting for approval. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as prepared. The Commission voted unanimously, 5-0, to approve the minutes as prepared.

Treasurer Mary Young presented the January 2015 Monthly Financial Report (shown below), including one expenditure for maintaining the ANC3B website. A motion was made and seconded to accept the financial report as prepared. The Commission voted to approve, 5-0.

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

Checking Account

Opening Balance: \$8,789.94

Deposits: None

Checks: #1239 - \$90 for DLM Web Management

Closing Balance: \$8,699.94

Treasurer Young presented an expenditure of \$572 for printing business cards for the five Commissioners. A motion was made and seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the expenditure.

Treasurer Young also presented the Quarterly Report for the First Quarter of FY2015 covering ANC3B activities from October-December 2014. The Commission voted unanimously, 5-0, to approve the Quarterly Report, which will be posted on the ANC3B website under DOCUMENTS/Financial Reports.

Chairman Blumenthal announced that the next public meeting of ANC3B will be on March 12, 2015, at 7:00 pm.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 9 pm and was approved 5-0.