

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



ANC3B Public Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 8, 2021

Chairman Brian Turmail called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, rather than meeting in-person, the Commission held the meeting using “Zoom” technology, as allowed under the District’s Emergency Legislation of March 17, 2020, and the Commission’s vote at its March 12, 2020, public meeting to amend the ANC3B by-laws to allow Commissioners to meet, hold official votes, and be counted for a quorum by participating using virtual technology.

All five Commissioners were participating: Ann Mladinov (3B01), Jackie Blumenthal (3B02), Melissa Lane (3B03), Elizabeth Elson (3B04), and Brian Turmail (3B05), which constituted a quorum. (Three of the five Commissioners make a quorum.)

At the beginning of the meeting, Chairman Turmail announced a change from the proposed agenda the ANC posted in advance. The DC Department of Health had scheduled to send a representative to speak about the current COVID-19 restrictions, but at 6 pm the agency had called to say the speaker would not be participating in the meeting as he had planned. For that reason, that discussion had to be removed from the agenda.

Chairman Turmail made a motion to approve the revised agenda. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the agenda.

Police Report

Second District Lt. Paul Johnson summarized crime reports in ANC3B in the preceding 30 days, which again had been very low, with a total of 6 property crimes (5 thefts and 1 stolen auto), and no violent crimes.

Chairman Turmail asked a question posted on the Q&A about the Stop Sign camera at 37th Street near Whitehaven Parkway, which had been in place but not in operation for a number of years and was reactivated around the beginning of March. Lt. Johnson said he did not have any information on that device but would check into it with MPD and DDOT and report back at the next ANC3B public meeting.

Presentation by Gabriel Robinson, Director, DC Department of Motor Vehicles

Chairman Turmail introduced DMV Director Gabriel Robinson, who had been had been scheduled to speak at an ANC3B just as the COVID-19 restrictions were being implemented in March 2020 and that presentation had to be canceled. Since that time, DMV had experienced many changes so he wanted to present DMV’s current operations and services. He described the change to an appointment-only system at the service centers in spring 2020, as the department had to protect staff and the public. Over the course of a year, DMV was able to make numerous services available online so residents would not have to visit a service center to renew a license, convert a provisional license to a full driver’s license, renew or replace a DMV-issued ID, get a duplicate registration, add a Residential Parking Permit to a registration, or sign up to be an organ donor. Most recently, DMV added online capacity to get a first-time registration in the District for a vehicle purchased from a private seller.

Mr. Robinson explained that some services require residents to appear in-person. The new Testing Center at 1421 Kenilworth Avenue NE in Deanwood just off 295 has now replaced the old center on Brentwood Road. The new center is open for Road Tests and was scheduled to start implementing parallel parking in May as part of the Road Test. The center is also administering Knowledge Tests in-person for people applying for driver's licenses or provisional licenses. The testing area was designed with rows of testing stations fairly close together, so not all of those testing stations could currently be used at the same time under COVID-19 restrictions, but DMV is continuing to expand the number of available appointments as restrictions are eased. To supplement the testing capacity, DMV is also allowing testing at two private proctored sites in the city, and exploring options for safe online administration of the knowledge tests. In recent months, DMV also started offering more appointments for seniors and new residents, covering titling and new registrations. Mr. Robinson said that though DMV does not have a Customer Call Center, residents having trouble getting needed appointments and services could call DC 311. The customer representatives can help people make appointments online, especially those who cannot get online themselves. Several meeting participants mentioned that they had been able to find in-person appointments available at DMV Service Centers by checking frequently for cancellations throughout the day and throughout the week.

A resident asked about the vehicle inspection process at Half Street SW. Mr. Robinson explained that the residents do not go into an indoor public waiting area but are asked to get out of the vehicle briefly and watch from a safe area nearby, in the open air, while the vehicle is being checked by the staff but then can return to the vehicle. Staff wear masks and only reach into the vehicle to remove the previous inspection sticker through the open car door on the passenger side. At the time of the meeting, there were no lines at the inspection center and no appointments required. Mr. Robinson encouraged people to get their inspections done as soon as possible, before the Mayor lifts the forgiveness period for expired vehicle inspections and registrations and people begin to come back in large numbers to get new inspection stickers. Several residents also said they had found no lines and very quick service at the DMV inspection center.

Presentation on Glover Park Main Street (GPMS) by Executive Director Kate Dean

Kate Dean provided an update on the activities of the Main Street, now in the Third Quarter of its second year. After focusing on the public health crisis in the first year, she reported that GPMS is now focusing on supporting improvements in the Wisconsin Avenue commercial corridor, between Whitehaven and Calvert Street. She said one streetscape project will focus on the northern entrance to Glover Park, at the gas station. GPMS also is planning to install twenty 60" x 18" banners hanging on streetlight poles at the northern and southern ends of the Glover Park commercial strip, to create an identity for the business district. Ms. Dean said the organization was looking for volunteers to form a committee to work with a designer, and then would be looking for public input on the top options for the actual design. GPMS plans to return to the ANC to ask for support in future months, when more details have been worked out and it's closer to the time to apply for a Public Space permit from DDOT for the banners.

Chairman Turmail asked about any updates on the Glover Park Whole Foods, which has been under renovation. Ms. Dean did not have specific information on when the store would reopen. He also asked about the fire at Laliguras. Ms. Dean reported that the fire 3 weeks before, apparently originating in a storage area in the Domino's located in the same building, had done serious damage to the recently renovated dining area at Laliguras, but the owner is hoping to make some changes in the interior and reopen. The Post Office also had to get some smoke remediation, but was expecting to reopen shortly.

Ms. Dean also reported that a new "streatery" was close to being set up from Slate down to Eerkin's (2404 to 2412 Wisconsin Avenue). Responding to a question about the nature of the barriers separating the outdoor dining from the traffic lanes in the street, she said that concrete Jersey barriers would be used because they are the safest dividers, and are much more effective protection for diners than water-filled barriers.

Commissioner Blumenthal spoke about the tour she and Ms. Dean had recently made to the new Kindercare site at the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Calvert Street. She reported that the facilities were almost complete, Kindercare had already signed up enough families and children to be fully enrolled for the coming year, and it was expecting to be opening soon.

Updates and Information

Chairman Turmail announced that at the May 13 ANC3B public meeting the Commission would be holding a discussion and presentation by DC Public School (DCPS) about recent DCPS proposals for a new elementary school next to the Old Hardy School at Foxhall Road and Q Street in the Foxhall neighborhood. The plans also call for a new high school or middle school in the Wilson High School feeder network, to be placed at the Georgetown Day School campus on MacArthur Boulevard which the District purchased last summer. The current proposal is to open a new school at the MacArthur site by fall 2022, and have a new Foxhall School by 2025. Because of the strong effect on Stoddert of any of the proposed changes, Chairman Turmail had asked for ANC3B to be represented on the Community Working Group for the Wilson High School Feeder Network.

Stoddert parent and PTO member Kate Gillespie showed a series of slides about the DCPS proposal and said DCPS was planning to make a decision on how to proceed with the two sites by the end of May, so it would be important for the community to respond in time to meet that target date. She explained that one option offered by DVPS would be to split the Stoddert School service area at Benton Street, sending half the Glover Park elementary-age students to Foxhall School. A second option offered by DCPS would split the Stoddert students by age and send the older grades (grades 3-5) to the Foxhall School while the younger students (K-2) would remain at Stoddert. Ms. Gillespie said that the Stoddert PTO was collecting questions and encouraging residents to write to the Mayor and the school board about the proposals.

Commissioner Mladinov provided a brief summary of the WMATA staff's final proposed budget for FY2022, which included most of the bus routes serving ANC3B (except the 30N and 30S, still scheduled to be eliminated). She said that WMATA Board would still be accepting public comments through the time of the April 22 board meeting where the budget vote was scheduled.

Open Forum

Chairman Turmail took a question from the Chat about the DDOT proposal for bike lanes on the New Mexico/Tunlaw/37th Street corridor. He explained that the ANC had sent a letter to DDOT asking the agency to take a broader look at the full transportation needs and effects on the corridor including transit, pedestrians, bicycles and other road users, but had not heard back. Commissioner Mladinov reported that the other two ANCs along the same corridor, ANC2E in Burleith and ANC3D west of Glover Archbold Park were still looking at the proposal and deliberating on the response they wanted to make. Several of the Commissioners in ANC3D had organized a virtual town hall on April 18 focusing on bicycle and transit safety on the corridor as part of the review of options for bike lanes and that forum would be open to residents.

Cathedral Heights resident Susan Spencer asked about the possibility of getting DDOT to remove several parking spaces on the north side of Fulton Street alongside the apartment building at 2800 Wisconsin Avenue, to avoid back-ups on Fulton west of Wisconsin when vehicles are attempting to enter Fulton from Wisconsin and encounter a vehicle coming the other direction. There are currently 3 parking spaces between the crosswalk at Wisconsin and the driveway into the parking garage at 2800 Wisconsin and perhaps another 2 parking spaces between the driveway to the garage and the entrance to the alley. Ms. Spencer had inquired about the possibility of removing those parking spaces during the official public comment period on the proposed traffic signal at Wisconsin and Fulton. At that time DDOT's Project Engineer for the traffic signal proposal said additional removal of parking spaces more than 25 feet from the intersection would require a separate Notice of Intent so he recommended that DDOT wait and monitor how vehicles were using the intersection after the traffic signal was activated.

Commissioner Mladinov explained that the ANC was awaiting recommendations from DDOT about how to address a request for removal of a parking space on Cathedral Avenue and would be taking the information from that experience to apply to the Fulton Street request.

Kate Gillespie mentioned that she had heard DCPS was thinking of easing the overcrowding at Stoddert by installing two additional “trailers” (which DCPS refers to as “demountables”) on Department of Parks and Recreation land next to Stoddert School, in the area where there are currently geothermal wells that could be damaged. Commissioner Turmail said he had heard the same story and would be watching out for what DCPS might be proposing. He said that no application had yet gone to the Department of General Services, but he would be following any developments.

Administrative Matters

Commissioner Mladinov had prepared minutes for the March meeting. Chairman Turmail made a motion to vote on the minutes. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the minutes.

Treasurer Elizabeth Elson read the ANC3B monthly financial report for March:

March 2021 Financial Report

OPENING BALANCE: \$14,307.77

Income: \$ 0.00

Total Income: \$ 0.00

Outgoing: \$ 0.00

Total Outgoing \$ 0.00

CLOSING BALANCE: \$14,307.77

Commissioner Elson reported that she would be presenting the ANC3B quarterly report for the Second Quarter of FY2021 at the next meeting. She also said that the District Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions had just provided her with amended corrected First Quarter data, so she would be checking that in preparation for the next meeting.

Chairman Turmail pointed out that the Commission had not yet received any grant requests in 2021, but had funds and would welcome proposals. He announced that the next meeting would be held Thursday, May 13, 2021, and would again be a “virtual” meeting.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 pm.