

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



ANC3B Public Meeting Minutes
May 10, 2018

Chairman Brian Turmail (ANC3B05) opened the meeting at 7:03 pm. Also in attendance were Commissioners Ann Mladinov (ANC3B01), Jackie Blumenthal (ANC3B02), and Mary Young (ANC3B04), which constituted a quorum. Melissa Lane (ANC3B03) was out of town and not able to participate.

Chairman Turmail presented the proposed agenda, noting that the Commission would cover the small number of required administrative items at the beginning of the meeting and then move to the panel discussion for the rest of the meeting. Commissioner Blumenthal made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded and the Commission approved the agenda by a vote of 4-0.

Administrative Matters

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

Treasurer Mary Young presented the monthly financial report for April.

ANC3B April 2018 Financial Report

OPENING BALANCE: \$ 10,077.51

Income: \$40.00 - Petty Cash Balance returned to Checking Account

 Total Income: \$40.00

Outgoing: \$ 25.00 - Check #1281 ANC Security Fund
 \$205.00 - Check #1285 DLM Web Management Update
 \$168.00 – Check #1286 USPS ANC PO Box Rental

 Total Outgoing \$398.00

CLOSING BALANCE \$9,719.51

Commissioner Blumenthal made a motion to approve the April financial report. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the financial report as presented.

Chairman Turmail announced that the next public meeting of the Commission would be held on Thursday, June 14.

Chairman Turmail then passed the microphone to Commissioner Blumenthal to lead the panel discussion about the Glover Park commercial area, which is in her Single Member District.

Panel Discussion: The Glover Park Commercial Center: Problems and Solutions

Commissioner Blumenthal presented the topic for discussion, saying the community is seeing a transition in the Glover Park commercial center, with several changes in commercial tenants as well as several vacancies, something that happens about every 10-15 years. The neighborhood is also changing from a community that included a large number of group homes to a population that includes more families with children. She noted the community has an opportunity to manage the transition, by thinking about the challenges and making use of resources available, including several city programs designed to help commercial areas revitalize, but the solutions require a lot of work from the community, businesses, or both. The discussion was intended to jump start that process and identify people willing to work to address the challenges and bring in businesses to meet the needs of the community.

Commissioner Blumenthal then introduced the panel members:

- Gina Schaefer, Owner, Glover Park Ace Hardware, 2233 Wisconsin Avenue
- Robert Isen, Owner, Calvert Center, 2330-2338 Wisconsin Avenue
- Jennifer Prats, Grants Manager, Main Streets Program, DC Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD)
- Theresa Cameron, Executive Director, Van Ness Main Street Program

Jonathan Willingham, Chief of Staff for Councilmember Mary Cheh, had also been invited to participate but was unable to attend. Commissioner Blumenthal reported that CM Cheh's office had promised any help they could offer, including putting funds into the DC budget for a Glover Park Main Street program if the community decided to pursue that option. [The FY2019 budget for the year starting October 1, 2018, had already been developed so the first budget year that would be possible is FY2020 starting October 1, 2019.]

Ms. Schaefer emphasized several external factors affecting businesses in the area:

- 1 - Occupancy costs, including rent, utilities, taxes and fees.
 - 2 - Consumer trends. Local customers tend to cluster their shopping so if they were going to Whole Foods in Glover Park, they might go to Ace Hardware for things not available at Whole Foods; without Whole Foods, they might go to Safeway or some other area altogether. New developments are attracting people, such as NoMa and Navy Yard. The stronger the neighborhood support is for existing businesses, the easier it is to attract a bookstore or a bike shop,
 - 3 - Competition. Stores like CVS and Rite Aid sell a lot of the same things Ace sells, including the mainstays of hardware store sales: housewares, lawn and garden, cleaning supplies. The other factor is online presence, with 1 in 4 or 1 in 5 purchases in the country happening through Amazon.
- Her recommendation: Neighbors need to patronize and promote local businesses. Local businesses also need to shop locally too.

Mr. Isen said he had been owner and manager of Calvert Center for over 25 years. After the El Salvador consulate left, the center was 60% vacant; now it is 40% vacant. Always before, prospective tenants would be contacting him to see if there was a vacancy, but that is not happening now, partly because of the effect of internet sales but also because there is a bit of oversupply of retail space in the city. He said he would be open to any options and hoped for community input on what people would like to see in that location. He said he would be considering clients who would be paying less rent for the space in order to get good tenants.

Ms. Prats described the District's Main Streets program, which currently funds local non-profit organizations in 16 business corridors in the city organized to coordinate efforts to revitalize the area and assist businesses to improve their facilities and operations. She said Main Street programs play a very important role in being an advocate for businesses, developing more effective marketing strategies, improving the appearance of the area, and branding the corridor in a way that attracts businesses and customers.

To establish a Main Street, a community has to form a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, hire a full-time Executive Director, and establish a board of directors who will be champions and ambassadors for the area and a voice to the community and local government. Cristina Amoruso, DC Main Streets Coordinator, was also at the meeting and provided additional details. She said a new Main Street program can get a grant of \$175,000 in the first year, based on a detailed financial plan aimed at specific goals such as reducing the vacancy rates and turnover, improving landscaping and storefronts, etc. To succeed, the community must have a strong vision and identify priority issues facing the neighborhood. DSLBD provides advice and resources to help in organizing the work, establishing a budget, seeking other grants, and growing the corridor and the Main Street program.

Ms. Cameron spoke about how the Van Ness Main Street program had evolved. Facing concerns about the appearance of the commercial corridor, several business closings, the changing pattern of development, and unmet needs of residents including seniors and families, the community formed a vision committee to evaluate the problems and options for addressing them. The ANC provided a small grant to do a study and create a plan. They identified a Main Street program as the best structure for their area, sought backing from leading local institutions including UDC, WAMU, and several restaurants, and got support from CM Cheh to put a line item for a Van Ness Main Street in the city budget.

She emphasized that to succeed, a Main Street organization has to have clear goals: Who is your audience? What is your vision? What retail do people want? What are your must haves? You can buy a lot online but you can't get the support you find at a local hardware store. She noted that Van Ness has a Metro station, a university, offices and embassies, and 14,000 people living in apartments along the corridor; a lot of people want more height and density. The Van Ness Main Street organizes a lot of events, does a lot of training for local businesses, supports storefront improvement projects, talks to people about what's happening in the area, and listens to local residents about what they want to see in the commercial corridor. Their main tenet is to support local businesses and help them be better. They also rely a great deal on the board members for fundraising, because although the Main Street program gets funding from the District, the Main Street activities require significantly more, so businesses and neighbors have to contribute and they all have to focus on raising money to support the Main Street program.

Commissioner Blumenthal invited questions and comments from others at the meeting. Many neighbors asked for more details about the Main Streets program and also talked about business challenges in the Glover Park commercial corridor, the future of the Whole Foods (which is still not certain), parking, signage, ideas for possible new businesses, potential for pop-ups, and chances for increasing awareness of efforts to retain current businesses and get more support for local commercial interests.

Commissioner Blumenthal asked everyone interested in talking further and working toward improvements in Glover Park to sign up for a working group to explore the ideas raised at this meeting and take them forward.

Chairman Turmail thanked everyone for participating and made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 4-0 to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.