ANC3B Public Meeting Minutes
May 13, 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.)

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. Lt. Paul Johnson, 2D, reported on crime in ANC3B during the past 30-day period compared to last year. In 2021 there were 9 reported crimes, the same total as last year. All the reports were for property crimes, not violent crimes—1 theft from auto, 2 stolen autos and 6 other thefts. He also gave a brief report on activation of the stop sign camera on 37th Street at Whitehaven Parkway. He said that someone in the community had requested that the camera be activated. (It had been out of operation for a number of years.)

Discussion of proposals for two new public schools near Foxhall Road and MacArthur Boulevard
Chairman Turmail introduced the discussion of the recent proposal from DC Public Schools (DCPS) to open two new schools within the current Wilson Feeder network: a new elementary school next to Old Hardy School near the intersection of Foxhall Road and Reservoir Road, on property that is currently part of the Hardy Recreation Center and Park, as well as a new middle school or high school nearby on the former Georgetown Day School (GDS) lower school campus on MacArthur Boulevard, purchased by the District last year. He said he had been invited to participate in the Community Working Group that was reviewing the proposals, and would soon be attending his first meeting.

Chairman Turmail introduced two speakers from DCPS, Claudia Luján, Deputy Chief of Strategic School Planning and Enrollment, and Andrea Swiatocha, Deputy Manager of Facilities, gave an overview of plans for development of the two schools which they refer to as the “Foxhall School” and “MacArthur School.” Ms. Luján said the goal of the proposals is to relieve overcrowding that has for years affected a number of area schools including Stoddert. She reported that the most recent projections of school enrollment for academic year 2028-29 show a majority of schools in the Wilson feeder network would have capacity issues, and the two new schools would not solve the capacity challenges. The starting point for the DCPS project was the establishment of a Community Working Group (CWG) comprised of school representatives and parents from each of the schools in the Wilson feeder network and civic associations and ANCs, but the ANCs invited initially only included what DCPS identified as the “impacted area.” More recently, the membership had been opened to all
the schools in the Wilson feeder pattern. The group had held 5 meetings and would be meeting in May and June, working toward coming up with final recommendations. The ANC3B meeting was the last ANC presentation that DCPS was holding.

The timeline for the Foxhall elementary school would be a year for design and two years for construction so the school would not be available for occupancy until August 2024. The buildings at GDS are already in place so DCPS anticipates that a new school could open there in 2022. The capacity of the Foxhall School would be 450-550 seats, while the MacArthur School would accommodate 600-700 seats. That is similar to other middle schools and high schools, but less than half the current Wilson enrollment. The estimated need is for about 1,300 more seats for elementary schools in the Wilson feeder network and about 1,000 seats for middle and high schools. The other DCPS goals include racial and socio-economic diversity as well as stability for families and students.

The options for the Foxhall School include: a) a pre-K through 5th grade school with students drawn by changing the boundaries for Stoddert, Key and Mann schools. That would solve the capacity challenges for Key and Mann but not for Stoddert; b) a campus for grades 3-5, drawn from Key and Stoddert. This would not require changing the boundaries for Stoddert, but it would mean that only pre-K through 2nd grade students would attend school at Stoddert, while the students in 3rd, 4th and 5th grades would attend the Foxhall School. The options for the GDS property would be either a new high school a new middle school, either supplementing Hardy Middle or moving Hardy Middle to the new site and using Hardy Middle property for a 9th grade academy to alleviate crowding at Wilson High School. The DCPS representatives said the District would not be providing transportation to the new schools under any of those proposals, but would work with WMATA on possible transportation for inbound and out-of-boundary students.

Andrea Swiatocha said the money is in the budget and DCPS hopes to get through the procurement process in the fall so a designer can be hired to develop detailed plans. She displayed drawings showing an L-shaped school wrapped around the Old Hardy School, with a 3-story classroom wing or a 4-story classroom wing. She said the new building would occupy 10-14% of the DPR land at that location.

She noted that a new middle school would solve the capacity issues at Deal Middle proposals by reassigning some students in the current Deal area, but would not address the Wilson’s overcapacity at all. A new high school would reduce enrollment at Wilson but would not solve either the Wilson or Deal capacity issues. She also said that the current process would not determine how boundaries would be changed for Stoddert, Key or Mann, and would not determine which students currently in the Deal network would be assigned to a new MacArthur School. That would be subject to consultation in the next year.

Chairman Turmail asked for questions from other participants. Jorge Highland, Co-President of the Stoddert Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), commented that no other school is more affected by the proposals than Stoddert, and the Glover Park area which is unique in the density of residents in the boundary area and how integral the school is to the neighborhood. He said the Stoddert families and students had been presented with two options for the Foxhall School that are not acceptable: one option that would split the neighborhood in half, under the possible boundary changes that had been shared, and other option that would split the school in half, including the strong Stoddert teaching team, in order to send grades 3-5 to the new school. Both options would make it very hard for families within the Glover Park area where students might currently walk 2 or 3 blocks to Stoddert but under the proposals would have to travel 1.5 to 2 miles to Foxhall, especially families that do not have a car. If the school were split, families who have students in the lower grades and upper grades would have particular difficulties. He described the transportation challenges as severe and said having two new school so close together would also have traffic impacts. Though DCPS has offered to “grandfather” families’ rights to keep current students at Stoddert, and potentially their siblings, he mentioned that when that was done at Hyde Elementary it didn’t actually help the overcrowding at the school and meant that capacity was a problem for years. For those reasons, the PTO recommends that DCPS look at expansion of Stoddert to meet the needs of the community, and noted that there is land available that can be used.
Claudia Luján commented that the previous funding allocated for Stoddert and Key was to replace the “demountables” (portable classrooms) with permanent classrooms. Andrea Swiatocha said that DCPS was anticipating construction of a total of 8 classrooms at Stoddert and Key, accommodating 180-200 students, while the DCPS plans for the Foxhall School would provide 400+ new seats, taking enrollment from 115% down to 92% utilization.

Chairman Turmail asked if DCPS had looked at the cost to add capacity at existing schools v. the cost to build and staff a new school, including administrative staff and use of DPR land. Ms. Swiatocha said that the $20 million proposed for Key would cover a two-story addition where the demountables are, which is the only area available. She said at Stoddert, there is very little land available for adding capacity, though Chairman Turmail questioned that, and noted that it did not appear that a cost-benefit analysis was done of all the alternatives to the Foxhall School. He also asked how DCPS is planning to deal with impacts on the fields at Hardy Rec Center for the Foxhall School building, playground, and parking, the cited the opposition of the Foxhall Citizens Association to the DCPS plans.

Ms. Luján said that she would take all the public feedback to the Chancellor and make sure he’s fully aware, and DCPS may have to come up with new options. She said DCPS is open and prepared to pivot if there are some reasonable alternatives. Public comment on the proposals were due by May 20th.

Chairman Turmail read questions from residents online for the DCPS representatives:
- Could DCPS consider other schools besides Key, Mann and Stoddert to draw students for the Foxhall School, such as Hyde Addison and Eaton? A: Other schools could be considered.
- Has DCPS looked at expanding the capacity at Stoddert? A: The Stoddert building is not designed to take another floor so it would be extremely expensive to add a 3rd or 4th floor, and the school would have to be closed during construction.
- Regardless of the decision, would Stoddert students have to change schools? A: No, after recent boundary changes, DCPS never did that. Current students would not be forced to change schools if their address became out-of-boundary. They could stay at Stoddert or they could change. It’s an “opt in” process. DCPS always allows “grandfathering.”
- Why are Stoddert and Hardy students facing the worst effects under the proposals? Families in Glover Park could have both their elementary and middle schools taken away. It seems like DCPS knows what it wants to do and it doesn’t matter the effect on Glover Park. A: The DCPS team could think about different boundary changes including other schools, but deciding to build an expansion to Stoddert instead of building the Foxhall School is beyond the staff’s authority; that would take a decision at a higher level, including the executive and Council that develop the budget. We have almost half the city feeding one high school, Wilson, so we probably need to rethink that.
- Can DCPS working with WMATA and the city to plan for transportation to allow students to get to the new schools? A: The school buses you see in the District are to transport students with disabilities. But there will be further discussions with WMATA. DCPS recognizes the logistical challenges of getting students to the two proposed school sites.

The final comment related to Old Hardy School (next to Hardy Rec Center), where the Lab School has had a lease to use the building for its elementary school, serving a few dozen students in the building. Last year ANC3B and others recommended that the city take back that site and expand and modernize the school to be able to serve public elementary school students. Now the District has given Lab School a 15-year extension on the lease for Old Hardy School, forcing DCPS to squeeze the proposed new Foxhall School entirely onto adjoining park land.

Commissioner Turmail expressed several concerns with the current proposals and introduced a resolution focused on the proposed Foxhall School, strongly opposing the two options proposed by DCPS and calling for DCPS to concentrate on expanding Stoddert. Chairman Turmail made a motion to vote on the resolution. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the resolution.
Presentation of Request for Zoning Special Exception for Addition at 2131 Observatory Place

Jeremy and Rachel Robinson presented plans for a 2-story addition to their home, which would meet zoning on the property except for a slight increase in lot occupancy, from 40% of the lot to 44%, which requires a special exception. They noted that no trees would be disturbed, neighbors’ privacy would be preserved, and most of the addition would be obscured from view from the street and the alley by the existing trees. The Robinsons presented support letters from their adjacent neighbors at 2129 and 2201 Observatory Place, which they also filed with the DC Board of Zoning Adjustment with their application for the special exception. There were no questions from other residents. Chairman Turmail made a motion to vote on the request. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to send a letter to the BZA supporting the Robinsons’ zoning application.

DC Food Project Grant Request for SouperGirl Soup Project

Krista Weymouth from the DC Food Project presented a request for a grant of $2,500 to purchase fresh soup as part of the SouperGirl program distributing fresh soup to families in need, and also to purchase T-shirts for staff and volunteers working on distribution of the food assistance. The DC Food Project, founded in Glover Park to organize a “share table” in the lunchroom at Stoddert and then expanded to provide weekend emergency food bags to students who are food insecure, has been extending its operations to more schools and more families. Because the COVID-19 emergency legislation amended the ANC law to allow grants to pay for food and other humanitarian assistance for residents District-wide, the DC Food Project grant can be used for food purchases to go to recipients outside the ANC area and supplies used to support distribution of the humanitarian assistance, such as the T-shirts. Chairman Turmail made a motion to take a vote on the grant. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the grant.

Stoddert PTO Grant Request for Tent and Tent Fans for 5th Grade Graduation

Jorge Highland, Stoddert PTO Co-President, presented a request for a grant of $1,475 to cover the costs of rent a tent for the graduation of the 65 fifth graders at Stoddert on June 18. Usually the graduation would be held indoors but the ceremony has to be held outdoors because of COVID-19 emergency restrictions, so the PTO had researched options for tents, weights, and fans, as well as delivery and takedown. The Commission voted to approve the grant. Chairman Turmail made a motion to take a vote on the grant. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the grant.

Letter to DDOT with Recommendations for Post-Pandemic “Slow Streets” Initiatives

When DDOT announced its COVID-19 pilot program called “Slow Streets” was closing, the agency asked for public comments by the end of May on how it could achieve similar goals of slowing traffic on residential streets and provide for safer walking and biking. Commissioner Mladinov presented a draft letter to DDOT recommending that the agency consult with ANCs and the community on projects designed to slow traffic on local residential streets and to follow standards for signage, Notice of Intent, formal public comment periods and “great weight” for ANC concerns, if DDOT pursues any future programs for “slow streets.” In August 2020, DDOT had designated 39th Street from Fulton Street to Massachusetts Avenue as a “Slow Street,” but Commissioner Mladinov reported that on May 2, DDOT had taken down the barricades on 39th Street and removed the designation of 39th as a “Slow Street.” That followed decision followed a series of letters and emails and comments at ANC meetings from residents and Commissioners about problems with the implementation. Chairman Turmail made a motion to vote on the letter. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve sending the letter to DDOT.

Presentation by Breadsoda requesting longer hours on that patio at 2233 Wisconsin Avenue

Commissioner Blumenthal introduced Dominick Garzaniti of Breadsoda presented a request to amend their settlement agreement with the ANC3B to allow extending their hours of service on the upper patio to 2 am on weeknights and 3 am on Fridays and Saturday. Commissioner Blumenthal said she would put out a call for public comment and based on the comments, the ANC could take up a resolution on the request at its June public meeting.
**Updates and Information**
Chairman Turmail reported that he was participating in a bike ride the next day with Councilmember Mary Cheh, DDOT representatives, and others along the route of proposed Protected Bike Lanes in Ward 3, including the New Mexico/Tunlaw/37th Street corridor. He also mentioned that CM Cheh would be returning to ANC3B the following Monday to review conditions on the Tunlaw Road segment of the corridor so she could see areas of concern. Chairman Turmail repeated the ANC 3B request in its February 11 letter to DDOT for a broader “corridor study” that includes an analysis of mobility and safety needs for all modes of transportation on Tunlaw and 37th Street, including requirements for bus service, delivery trucks, pedestrians, and parking.

Commissioner Elson gave an update on the Cathedral Avenue corridor where DDOT Community Engagement Specialist Donise Jackson had led a site visit on May 7, joined by DDOT engineer Adolfo Nino and Tony Donaldson from MOCRS, to discuss pending long-term safety issues including crosswalks, signage, parking, etc. Commissioner Elson reported that Donise shared a schedule for several immediate improvements and a plan for addressing remaining questions. Mary Young asked about any changes at the driveway to 4100 Cathedral. Commissioner Elson said she would check further.

**Open Forum**
A resident asked if the Commission would be holding an in-person or “hybrid” virtual/in-person public meeting in the future. Chairman Turmail said the Council was expected to extend the public health emergency which would mean the Commission could continue to meet remotely. Commissioner Lane mentioned that it was not yet clear when the school would be open for public meetings.

Chairman Turmail asked if Ted Mastroianni was present, as he had hoped to speak briefly on efforts to extend COVID-19 restrictions on portions of Beach Drive so it would continue to be devoted to recreational purposes such as bikes and walking and is not open to motor vehicles. He was not there so the Commission moved to administrative matters.

**Administrative Matters**
Commissioner Mladinov had prepared minutes for the April 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 April:

**April 2021 Financial Report**

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Commissioner Elson presented the ANC3B quarterly report for the Second Quarter of FY2021. She also presented corrected reports for the First Quarter of FY2021 and the Fourth Quarter of FY 2020, which had to be revised due to some glitches in the software used by the District Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions. Chairman Turmail made a motion to vote on the quarterly reports. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the reports as presented.

Chairman Turmail announced the next meeting would be on June 10.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm.