

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



ANC3B Public Meeting Minutes
May 19, 2022

Chairman Brian Turmail called the virtual meeting to order at 7:00 pm. 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 constitute a quorum.)

Chairman Turmail made a motion to approve the agenda, with the addition of an item to consider a letter supporting funding for expansion of Stoddert Elementary School if the ANC is asked to send a letter between meetings. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the agenda.

Police Report

Lt. Paul Johnson presented the statistics on crime reported in ANC3B for the previous 30 days compared to the same period in 2021. He reported there had been 2 stolen autos, 5 thefts from auto, and 7 general thefts for a total of 14 property crimes. There was also 1 violent crime, an assault with a deadly weapon involving a domestic dispute in an apartment, and he said that case should be closed soon.

Chairman Turmail asked if there were any added patrols assigned to the area because of recent incidents. Lt. Johnson said MPD had been using extra patrols for protests downtown, which seems to be easing, but a large number of retirements has left the police force depleted. He said MPD is allowing use of overtime and has been putting patrols in the business districts or any other “hot spots.”

Commissioner Blumenthal asked about calls related to Good Guys, including noise and disorderly people in the street. Lt. Johnson said he was aware of the concerns, and since the altercation at Good Guys in April involving patrons with guns in the establishment, MPD has been putting patrols there in the early morning hours, around closing time, and would keep doing that to try to avert further incidents.

Request for letter of support for new gym at British International School, 3300 Whitehaven Street

Eddie Mansius, Development Manager for Grosvenor Property Americas headquartered in London, presented the proposed project to add a new gymnasium at the school, occupying 3 levels in a portion of the area now used for underground parking. Architect Gui Almeda of Hickok Cole joined in the slide presentation, showing the plans for the addition. There is already an internal connector between the school and the top level of underground parking, as well as a ground-level access to the underground parking which will be used by the gym. That access point will be expanded with an elevator and lobby, redesigned as a pavilion fronting on the plaza, and a second point of egress will be installed at the east side of the gym, and both above-ground access points will be surrounded by landscaped gardens. The gym will take just 91 of the existing close to 400 parking spaces, which are currently largely unused. The school uses only 75 parking spaces, and there are no current office tenants. The hope is to open the gym for the 2023-2024 school year.

Mr. Mansius explained that construction of the gym is considered a "Modification of Consequence" to the original Planned Unit Development (PUD) covering the original development of the structures on that property, and therefore requires a letter of support from affected ANCs. Commissioner Blumenthal said she has consulted with Commissioner Elizabeth Miller representing the adjoining ANC2E where the property is actually located, and that ANC is supporting the proposal. Commissioner Blumenthal proposed a resolution for ANC3B to send a letter to the DC Office of Zoning in support of the proposed gymnasium addition. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve sending the letter.

Commissioner Blumenthal also explained that the same team is preparing plans for a second phase of development to add 278 residential units at the rear of the property at 3300 Whitehaven, abutting the Georgetown Safeway and Rock Creek Park, which would use remaining parking spaces in the garage. The second phase would be a "Modification of Significance" so the application for that project is expected to require a full hearing before the Zoning Commission with more input from the ANC and community before it can get formal approval.

Presentation on DDOT's new process for requesting Traffic Safety Investigations (TSI) via DC 311

DDOT Community Engagement Specialist for Ward 3, Christian Piñeiro provided a slide presentation on the new process DDOT asks residents to follow when they want to request a Traffic Safety Investigation (TSI) via 311.dc.gov or the related app. In November-December 2021 after receiving comments in the fall from ANC3B and other ANCs in the area about DDOT's previous process requirements, DDOT redesigned the process for residents and ANCs to file requests related to traffic safety and traffic calming, in order to improve ease of filing, streamline the processing, and help achieve the District's "Vision Zero" goals.

Mr. Piñeiro explained that requests for Traffic Safety Assessments and Traffic Calming Assessments used to involve 6 steps, including completing a 3- to 4-page questionnaire and getting a written endorsement from the local ANC Commissioner. Now residents simply need to answer the questions in the 311 system, describe the problem, and provide any related photos, maps, or letters of support. DDOT will send an acknowledgment within 10 days and then the requests go directly to DDOT Traffic Safety, which will investigate the intersections and roadway segments to analyze safety issues, and see what intervention might be warranted or if further data are needed. Some requests for TSI's are closed without a recommendation for any changes, such as if the engineers do not conclude that action is needed.

Special rules apply for requests for speed humps on blocks classified as local streets: DDOT does not collect data in those cases but just checks the distance from fire hydrants, alleys, or streetlights to see if installation would be allowed. Then it gives notice to the local ANC of the intent to install speed humps, after which the ANC has 10 days to gather comments. If DDOT gets any expression of concern or opposition, it will initiate more data collection. But if not and residents are supportive, it goes ahead with installation. Where data are gathered and do not show speeding, for example, DDOT will follow the recommendations of the engineers.

Mr. Piñeiro received several questions from residents about the process for tracking requests and the timing of DDOT's response. He said that DDOT's commitment is to respond to residents' requests within 130 business days with a report on the results of its investigation. DDOT has been tracking and processing requests on a quarterly basis, and then forwarding them to the divisions in charge of getting the work done. Usually installation is scheduled in the next calendar quarter, though some are delayed due to weather. For example, traffic humps are only installed in warmer weather. He also provided the DDOT dashboard <tsi.ddot.dc.gov> which shows the number of cases pending DDOT review, in data collection, pending installation or closed, and allows residents to find information by TSI number, date initiated and ANC/SMD.

Mr. Piñeiro added that in their requests, residents are not asked to suggest a solution, but simply to leave the analysis and recommendations to the engineers, who have to follow the standards in the federal Uniform Manual of Traffic Safety Devices (UMTCD). The other instruction is that requests should only include segments of one street, not on blocks of multiple streets. He also noted that the 311 system will generally NOT accept material copied from another document or format; the material has to be retyped, or residents can submit attachments, letters of support, etc.

He also asked that all ANC resolutions related to DDOT, not just for proposed projects but any issue, should be submitted to DDOT via the ANC portal, which is the only way that DDOT can track them.

Commissioner Mladinov offered that if residents are submitting a 311 request to DDOT for a TSI, they should let their ANC Commissioner know so the ANC will be aware and can help with anything else that is needed, and also share the information with Mr. Piñeiro so he can help track the progress of the request.

Discussion of design of bike lanes DDOT presented for New Mexico and Tunlaw Road north of Calvert

Chairman Turmail opened the discussion, noting that DDOT had first come to ANC3B in January 2021 to present a series of charts and diagrams for installing separated or protected bike lanes running the full length of the New Mexico/Tunlaw/37th Street corridor through ANC3B, as well as ANC3D and ANC2E. After gathering public comments, spend more time at the site, and reviewing the options, DDOT announced at the beginning of 2022 that it would not be pursuing protected bike lanes on 37th or Tunlaw south of Calvert Street, and was removing those portions of the corridor from its plans, as many members of the community had urged and the ANC had recommended in its November 2021 letter to DDOT. Also in response to the request in that letter for DDOT to prepare fuller illustrations of what it is considering in the remaining portion of the corridor, DDOT Bicycle Program Analysts Mike Goodno and Gilberto Solano returned to present maps and renderings at the April 14 ANC3B public meeting, showing a new design for installing protected bike lanes on New Mexico Avenue within Glover Archbold Park and on Tunlaw Road north of Calvert Street. DDOT offered those preliminary designs and engineering drawings for review and comment by the ANC and members of the public as part of DDOT's Community Engagement process for this project, before the agency moves on to develops any final plans or issues a Notice of Intent and opens a formal public comment period. Chairman Turmail also noted that DDOT had made a series of suggestions about safety improvements for pedestrians at intersections along the corridor, including adding wider and more high-visibility crosswalks, creating pedestrian islands or curb bump-outs, and using striping and white poles to narrow motor vehicle lanes and improve sight lines and movement patterns along the corridor. DDOT is continuing to adjust and develop, based on questions and comments from the ANCs and the community.

DDOT representatives were expected to attend the May meeting to answer questions but that did not work out, so the Commission opened the floor for questions, comments, and suggestions for further adjustments to the design. Leigh Ann Evanson who lives along the corridor spoke in favor of DDOT's proposal for protected bike lanes on Tunlaw, as did Sharat Ganapati of Glover Park and Garrett Hennigan, member of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association. They raised questions about whether all the current on-street parking is needed by residents or other people who belong to the community, whether the on-street parking on Tunlaw and New Mexico including within Glover Archbold should be RRP or unzoned/unregulated and whether some of the proposed improvements might reduce the speed of cars on that section of Tunlaw. They urged the ANC to get DDOT to install more pedestrian improvements, narrow the roadway on Tunlaw to reduce traffic speed, and provide better protection for bicyclists to make the streets safer and more comfortable for the majority of prospective riders.

Michael Phillips, resident for many years at the garden apartment court at 2626-2634 Tunlaw Road, and grandson of the original builder, said he was comfortable riding his bicycle on Tunlaw but removing half the parking spaces would be difficult for many residents. In his building, many people need to use the on-street parking in front of their apartments because the property has only 33 parking spaces for the 65 units, and the city allowed the apartments to be built without sufficient parking for all residents because there would be on-street parking. He also said it would not be safe to ask residents to cross Tunlaw to get between their residence and their parked vehicles, since people drive fast on Tunlaw and sight lines are difficult, especially at night. In response to the suggestion to encourage people living in apartments on Tunlaw to use parking spaces on New Mexico Avenue, he observed that it would not be practical for residents including seniors to have to walk all the way from a parking space on New Mexico at Garfield Street, up and down hills, carrying heavy groceries or other parcels. His recommendation was that if only one parking lane is preserved on Tunlaw, it should be on the south/west side of the street, alongside the apartments and condos where residents are living, rather than on the north/east side along the Russian embassy.

He also questioned who is using the unregulated spaces and mentioned that in earlier years the parking spaces on Tunlaw were RPP and used mostly by residents. In recent times, he observed that many of the vehicles have license plates from outside the District, so he speculated they may belong to people who come to jobs in the area or are visiting.

Further commenters supported other residents' points that those blocks of Tunlaw are dangerous because people drive too fast. One suggestion was to get improved enforcement of the speed limits, such as through a speed camera.

Chairman Turmail thanked all those who shared comments and said the Commission wants to hear from as many people as possible before it takes a position, so he encouraged additional residents to be in touch. In preparation for adopting an official statement to DDOT at the ANC3B public meeting in July, the full DDOT slide presentation from April 14 is on the ANC home page at www.anc3b.org for review, questions, and comment.

Presentation by Fire and Emergency Services (FEMS) Captain Michael Carroll about fire safety

Captain Carroll has recently been transferred to work with Northwest (Truck 5, 4811 MacArthur Boulevard) and offered to come to an ANC3B public meeting to share fire safety tips as the summer begins. He advised:

A. Smoke Alarms

- Change the batteries in your smoke alarms in the spring and fall ("when you change your clocks")
- Replace your smoke alarm devices every 5 to 10 years. They become less effective as they get older.
- Keep an active smoke alarm in every bedroom and at the top of the stairs.
- Keep a carbon monoxide alert near the furnace and dryer, if it runs on natural gas.
- Call 202-727-1614 or contact fireprevention@dc.gov to ask for a fire safety inspection at your home and/or help installing smoke alarms.

B. Outdoor Grills and Fire Pits

- Never use a portable gas or charcoal grill indoors
- Leave at least 3 feet between a grill and a wall or deck, when it's ignited, hot, or has any embers
- Open the lid before you turn on the gas grill and light it
- Never leave a grill unattended
- Put any charcoal left in the grill into a metal container until it is totally cold before disposing of it
- Keep at least 10 or 15 feet of vertical space above a grill or fire pit and a wood porch or deck above it
- Do NOT use a fire pit on a deck or wood patio

C. Home Emergency Planning

- Have a plan for your home and family to respond or escape in an emergency, and practice every 6 months
- Know who is inside the house at any time of day
- Get out of the house as fast as possible in a fire, staying low to the floor if there's smoke
- Have a designated meeting place for family members to go in a fire, at a safe distance from the home
- Do not go back into the building once you have exited

D. Fourth of July

- Only use legal fireworks. See list at: <https://fems.dc.gov/page/frequently-asked-questions-about-fireworks>
- Only buy fireworks from licensed dealers, not on the street

Letter to DPR Supporting Glover Park Day scheduled June 4 at Guy Mason Recreation Center

Commissioner Lane introduced a letter to DC Department of Parks and Recreation expressing the Commission's support for Glover Park Day on Saturday, June 4. She moved that the Commission take a vote on the letter. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the letter.

Resolution to Support Language in FY2023 DC Budget for Expansion of Stoddert Elementary School

As the Council approached its final vote on the proposed District budget for the approaching fiscal year, Councilmember Cheh, Ward 3 Board of Education member Ruth Wattenberg, and the Stoddert PTO and LSAT were proposing language be added to the budget legislation calling for the design of the currently planned capital improvement project at Stoddert to provide for adding a third story to the school as needed to accommodate future increases in enrollment.

The objective of the provision was to provide sufficient capacity to accommodate local students at Stoddert and avoid sending local students within the Stoddert boundaries to go to DCPS's proposed elementary school on Foxhall Road, outside the neighborhood and more than 1.5 miles farther for students in Glover Park-Cathedral Heights to have to go to get to school. Commissioner Blumenthal made a motion for the Commission to vote on expressing support for that position in the budget debate, if CM Cheh or others determined that additional support could be useful. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the motion, allowing Commissioner Blumenthal to prepare a letter to the Council backing budget language to allow for modifications in the design for the Stoddert renovation to support adding a third floor.

Open Forum

Residents were invited to share questions and comments. Barbara Lange asked what the ANC was doing about Metrobus service to the area. Chairman Turmail reported that the ANC had made a second request to meet with WMATA and was hoping to announce a date for that meeting shortly.

Administrative Matters

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

Treasurer Elizabeth Elson read the monthly financial report for April:

April Financial Report

OPENING BALANCE: \$15,260.63

Incoming \$ 0.00

Total Incoming \$0.00

Outgoing \$ 0.00

Total Outgoing: \$ 0.00

CLOSING BALANCE: \$15,260.63

Chairman Turmail noted that the Commission is seeking applicants for grants for non-profit organizations to carry out projects to benefit the community.

Chairman Turmail announced that the next meeting would be on June 9 at 7 pm.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.