

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



ANC3B Public Meeting Minutes
November 10, 2022

Chairman Brian Turmail called the virtual meeting to order at 7:00 pm. All five of the Commissioners were participating: Ann Mladinov (3B01), Jackie Blumenthal (3B02), Melissa Lane (3B03), Elizabeth Elson (3B04), and Brian Turmail (3B05), which made a quorum. (Three of the five Commissioners constitute a quorum.) Chairman Turmail made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the agenda.

Police Report

Lt. Paul Johnson reported that MPD Second District has a new Captain, Ronald Bridges, assigned to the sector that includes ANC3B. working in presented the statistics on reported crimes in ANC3B in the previous 30 days of 2022 compared to the same period in 2021. He reported there were no violent crimes but there were 10 property crimes including two burglaries: a break-in of a ground-level space at 4000 Tunlaw the evening of November 1, where a safe was stolen, and a break-in at the apartment building at 2712 Wisconsin early on October 16, where a package was stolen. (Other reported property crimes included 2 stolen autos, 4 thefts from auto, and 2 other thefts.)

A resident on Cathedral Avenue asked about speeding on Cathedral Avenue, after she barely missed being hit by a left-turning vehicle near Cathedral and New Mexico. Lt. Johnson reported that MPD assigns a traffic safety officer to observe traffic in that area at least once a week, to observe speeding and other infractions and issue tickets. Chairman Turmail said it would be great if something could be done to reduce speeding on Cathedral Avenue in ANC3B and across Glover Archbold Park by the end of the year.

Another resident mentioned the break-ins of vehicles on the street on and around 39th Street south of Cathedral Avenue. He said that neighbors had been sharing photos. The Commissioners noted that the break-ins in that area had also been discussed at a previous ANC3B public meeting, and raised to Lt. Johnson, who had assigned extra patrols to those blocks.

Several residents had also responded by purchasing new surveillance cameras at their homes, making use of the District's rebate program (up to \$250 toward the purchase of each camera. See ovsjg.dc.gov for more information. Residents can share surveillance camera footage with MPD when they have evidence of suspicious behavior or criminal activity, which has been one of the most effective aids for MPD in identifying suspects and averting additional crimes.)

Lt. Johnson reported that many of the thefts from autos recently had involved theft of catalytic converters, which is considered destruction of property. One prevention measure is to pay for installing a shield or lock over your catalytic converter so it cannot be removed. Lt. Johnson reported that MPD is continuing to post officers to watch areas where there have been incidents (including Garfield west of Wisconsin) and issue citations or warnings.

Discussion of Guy Mason Recreation Center Hours and Maintenance

Commissioner Blumenthal outlined recent comments about trash, poor groundskeeping and maintenance at Guy Mason, and also mentioned concerns about cutbacks in the hours for the adult recreation center in the community during COVID-19, which are still in effect and make it difficult to use the rec center for many people who work during the week. She introduced Christopher Dyer, Community Engagement Manager for DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), and Cesar Enriquez, Regional Director for DPR, to speak about the current operations and programs at Guy Mason and plans for the future.

Mr. Dyer said all DPR centers are currently open from 12 noon to 8 pm Monday to Friday and 9 am to 1 pm on Saturdays. He recommended that residents check the DPR website dpr.dc.gov for information on locations, hours, programs and events, and contact dprcustomer@dc.gov with questions or concerns. He noted that all DPR facilities' hours were cut after COVID-19, partly because of staff shortages, but DPR would be reviewing the hours in the spring and they are hoping to be able to staff up and extend hours after the new year. He said DPR would keep Guy Mason on the list for later hours. He also said that DPR would soon release its new 20-year Master Plan, "Ready to Play," and would be looking for ANC comments.

On maintenance, he explained that the District Department of General Services (DGS) is responsible for emptying recycling containers and performing general maintenance while the Department of Public Works (DPW) is responsible for the trash cans at the rec center and grounds. The Friends of Guy Mason (FOGM) have a contract to take care of the community garden. He also shared additional contact information for him (202-702-7453 mobile christopher.dyer@dc.gov) and for Cesar (202-391-2215 and cesar.enriquez@dc.gov). He suggested that anyone who sees a light out, overflowing trash or other problems at Guy Mason should send him or Cesar an email or ask Ralph Wright, Manager at Guy Mason, and they would try to get someone out as soon as possible to respond. He added that sending photos of the location is also appreciated.

Mr. Enriquez described the key programs at Guy Mason including the very popular co-op program for young kids at the rec center in the mornings before the site opens to adult residents. He said the pottery group is continuing in the basement, operated privately under a DPR permit, but DPR is looking to have its own pottery program there, offered through the DPR website. He said that it is possible to get a special permit for an activity that would require extending the operating hours.

They also took questions from the Commissioners and residents about hours and maintenance. One resident with young children pointed out broken equipment and tripping hazards, exposed electric outlets, and a broken trash can. Mr. Dyer said that Mr. Enriquez is giving much more attention to safety problems for the community and getting on things much more quickly. He and his team are now taking action to remove dangerous playground conditions and not wait for DGS. They had met recently with the new president of FOGM, Jeff Russell, and they now are working together to get to repairs quickly, and have "Level One" maintenance done such as overgrowth or other routine things. Mr. Enriquez said that now DPR also has a Risk Management professional working on playground safety, which will also help.

They are getting a tower with a 360° camera to see the whole playground, and want to have a full view to the back of the parking lot. Other questions related to availability of restrooms at DPR facilities, if children and family are using the playgrounds and fields, especially with the reduced hours. Mr. Dyer discussed various alternatives, and the staffing and security needs, and encouraged people to continue being in touch and expressing their interests and recommendations to DPR.

Presentation on application for Special Exception for an addition at 2646 39th Street NW

Commissioner Lane introduced the applicants, owner Armand Hekmat and architect Eric Gronning, who described what they are proposing for the property at the intersection of 39th and Edmunds. It is an existing 4-unit apartment with two stories and a cellar, and a party wall with the building to the west. They are asking for a zoning Special Exception from the DC Board of Zoning Adjustment to add 3 units, with construction of a third story and small penthouse as well as a rear addition. There would be no change to the windows, mansard roof, or appearance of the brick side and front, and every dimension is within the zoning standards.

BZA approval is needed because the property is in the RA-1 zone where new residential development requires a Special Exception from the BZA, and the Zoning Administrator has interpreted that to mean that an addition of any residential units must be approved.

Mr. Hekmat said that he had gotten notices of the plans to all the neighbors, contacted all the neighbors and had gotten support from everyone who reached out. Commissioner Lane said she had seen letters of support as well and had gone through all the plans. BZA has scheduled a hearing on the application (BZA 20851) on January 11, 2023, and Mr. Hekmat said that he hopes the builders can begin work in March. There were no other questions. Commissioner Lane made a motion to vote on sending a letter to the BZA supporting the zoning Special Exception for the proposed project. The motion was seconded and the Commissioners voted 5-0 in support of sending the letter.

Resolution on Proposed Legislation B24-433 to change RPP areas from ward-wide to a single ANC
Councilmember Mary Cheh had held a hearing on the proposed bill that would change the area where Residential Parking Permits apply, so instead of allowing parking for more than two hours in RPP spaces within the entire ward, an RPP would apply only within an individual ANC (following the boundaries that will be in effect January 1, 2023, and one block beyond the ANC boundary, if DDOT maintained its current regulations for implementing the RPP program). After the hearing where residents and ANCs submitted considerable testimony against the proposal, CM Cheh had told several ANC3B Commissioners that she was not going to take the legislation any further in the current Council session. The Commissioners explained that any bill that doesn't pass in the legislative term is moot at the end of December, so anyone hoping to pursue that type of change would have to introduce a new bill and take it through hearings and deliberations by the Council in a future session.

One resident asked why the Council was considering the legislation, and wondered if it had come from people who live near a Metro station, as has been mentioned in some of the news coverage. Several residents shared comments in opposition to the proposed bill, and made particular points about the difficulties for seniors. In order to get the Commission's views on the record on the concept, Commissioner Mladinov proposed sending a letter to CM Cheh to add to the hearing record for this term, expressing the Commission's concerns about the bill, on the basis that ANCs vary so greatly in area (Some are 6 or 8 times as large as ANC3B) and the ANC boundaries do not reflect logical or functional areas where people in the District live or need to drive and/or park around their homes. Public comments were due the following day, November 11, to the Council Committee on Transportation and the Environment abenjamin@dccouncil.us so the Commissioners encouraged other residents to submit comments on the bill if they had views or concerns they wanted to share.

Updates and Information

The Commissioners announced the preliminary results of the General Election on Tuesday, November 8, for ANC3B Commissioners for the 2023-2024 term:

ANC3B01: Kevin Lavezzo

ANC3B02: Jackie Blumenthal

ANC3B03: Melissa Lane

ANC3B04: No candidate on the ballot; write-in votes will have to be counted and certified.

ANC3B05: Gupi Howie

ANC3B06: Ben Bergmann

Theodore ("Theo") Wren introduced himself as the new liaison to ANC3B from the Mayor's Office of Community Relations (MOCRS). He described the office's role to advocate for the area and help get action from executive agencies on things like missed trash pick-ups, park repairs, or other services. He reported that with the cold weather, the District would be issuing a hypothermia alert. He said that he did not know of an emergency hypothermia shelter in Ward 3, but if people see anyone who appears to be unhoused when it is cold, they should call for homeless services and a van would be sent to take the individual to a shelter.

He also asked people to contact him theodore.wren@dc.gov or DC 311 if they see homeless encampments in the area. Chairman Turmail suggested 3 areas to check. Mr. Wren said he would be happy to do a walk-through with the Commissioner(s).

Mr. Wren urged people to rake their leaves into the tree boxes for DPW to pick them up. The Commissioners had announced in the agenda the District's target dates for collecting fall leaves in DPW's annual Leaf Collection Program for 2022-2023, using new area boundaries. The first collection date (unless weather disrupts the schedule) was set for each area, including:

Area C (north and east of Tunlaw Road and New Mexico Avenue): November 21-26

Area D (south and west of Tunlaw Road and New Mexico Avenue): November 28-December 3

Second collection dates are scheduled for two-week blocks: Area C January 2-14, Area D January 16-28

The Commissioners noted that those dates often have to slide because of weather or other difficulties have affected the rest of the Ward and the District as a whole.

Commissioner Mladinov reminded meeting participants that WMATAs Survey on Achieving a "Better Bus" Program were due to WMATA by the following day, November 11. She encouraged people to submit comments on bus services they use and value, as well as additional places they would like to go by bus or would like to see get improved or expanded service.

Open Forum

There were no other comments or questions.

Administrative Matters

Commissioner Mladinov had prepared the minutes for the October regular public meeting, but had not heard from all the Commissioners. She invited anyone to submit any additional changes and they could be made as amendments at a later time as needed. Chairman Turmail made a motion to vote to approve the minutes with the changes incorporated by the Secretary. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the October minutes.

Treasurer Elizabeth Elson had not received the bank statement so there was no financial report for October.

She had received updated figures from OANC on the expected FY2023 allotments so she had prepared a revised proposed budget to reflect the new numbers. The total allotment for the fiscal year for the Commission will be \$15,477, based on three quarters with the redistricted boundaries and therefore a higher population. With the new allotments added to the latest bank balance, the total funds available for the fiscal year would be about \$33,092. In the amended budget, she included \$10,000 for grants, \$2,000 for office equipment, and \$1,000 for communications. Chairman Turmail made a motion to vote to approve the preliminary budget with the new figures, with the knowledge that the Commission could vote to adjust it as the new year progresses. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the FY2023 budget as amended.

Commissioner Mladinov also had drafted the ANC3B Annual Report required by DC law for the 12 months beginning December 1, 2021, through November 30, 2022. Chairman Turmail said the draft would need several modifications to reflect the actions taken at the November meeting, but was supposed to be posted by December 1, 2022. He made a motion to approve the draft Annual Report as it was written, with the provision that Commissioner Mladinov would add the new details. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the Annual Report.

Chairman Turmail announced that the next ANC3B public meeting would be on December 8.

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 8:35 pm.