

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



ANC3B Public Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 9, 2019

Chairman Brian Turmail (3B05) opened the meeting at 7:00 pm. Other Commissioners in attendance were Ann Mladinov (3B01), Jackie Blumenthal (3B02), and Mary Young (3B04), which constituted a quorum. (Three of the five Commissioners make a quorum.) Melissa Lane (3B03) was not able to attend.

Commissioner Blumenthal made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded, and the Commissioners voted 4-0 to adopt the agenda as presented.

Police Report

Lt. Ralph Neal of MPD Second District gave a brief report on crime in the area in the previous 30 days. The statistics from April 9-May 9 showed 18 crimes in ANC3B: one violent crime, an assault with a dangerous weapon (gun) in the 2500 block of Wisconsin Avenue; and 17 property crimes including 1 stolen auto, 3 thefts from autos and 13 other thefts mostly on Wisconsin Avenue. The total was 18 crimes in the month, compared to only 7 total in the comparable period in 2018. Lt. Neal noted that security cameras have been very helpful in closing crimes, and recommended the city program of \$200-500 rebates to residents, businesses, religious institutions and other non-profits for installing private security cameras through the Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants, ovsjg.dc.gov or 202-727-5124. District residents age 60 and over and adults 18 and over with disabilities are eligible to receive security cameras free of charge through the Safe at Home program, if they have annual household income at or below 80% of Area Median Income

Discussion of Needs for Local Public Schools including Mayor's Proposed FY2020 Budget

Chairman Turmail launched the discussion, noting that at the end of March, Mayor Bowser released her proposed budget for the coming fiscal year (beginning September 30, 2019). In April the DC Council held hearings on the budget and by late May the Council was planning to issue its marked up versions of the budget. The Mayor's proposed budget showed increases in the budget for DC Public Schools, but on a per pupil basis many schools appeared to be facing reduced funding compared to the current year. He also noted overcrowding at Stoddert and other nearby schools, the proposed legislation to allow a long-term lease of Old Hardy School to the Lab School, and the ANC's concern that the city do adequate planning to take care of capacity needs. He introduced a panel of speakers to talk about school funding and other challenges:

- Jorge Highland of the parent teacher organization (PTO) and Local School Advisory Team (LSAT) at Stoddert Elementary School
- Marty Wells, PTO Vice President at Hardy Middle School (also a member of the LSAT for Payne and Amidon-Bowen Elementary School and Jefferson Middle School in SW Washington)
- Ruth Wattenberg, Ward 3 member of the District's State Board of Education
- DC Deputy Mayor for Education Paul Kihn (also a former member of the LSAT at Hyde-Addison Elementary School in Georgetown)

Kesha Lloyd-Lee, Co-President of the Parent Teacher Student Organization of Wilson High School, was not able to attend.

Mr. Highland said total funds for Stoddert would go up in the Mayor's budget but the increases would mostly go to pay for security that formerly was paid for by the central DCPS offices. The rest of the budget would not keep up with increased cost of living. With higher enrollment expected at Stoddert—already at more than 100 more than the building was designed for--the school is expecting to have to cut faculty members. Stoddert reached enrollment of 464 at the peak this year and could reach 500 next year, while the city projected enrollment of 440 this year and 471 next year. Enough 5th graders are enrolling to require a second grade class and teacher. That will require combining the position of Assistant Principal and math coach. Also the science teacher is being cut to half time and the school will have to put either Science or World Language “in a cart” to open up a classroom. If Stoddert gets 3 more students enrolled in kindergarten, the school will have to put both Science and World Language in a cart. Because of the increase in the number of students with English as a Second Language, Stoddert is required to add a second English Language Learning specialist and advisor. The school got a one-year exemption from having to hire another physical education teacher but next year that requirement is expected to apply. In addition, enrollment is also increasing at Hardy Middle School and in a couple of years, Hardy may need to use the space currently occupied by the Fillmore Arts Center that provides arts education to students from Stoddert and 2 other elementary schools. Mr. Highland said Stoddert was thinking about possible partnerships with other sites that could provide arts education facilities for elementary school students, including Duke Ellington School of the Arts. He suggested that Old Hardy School might also have space that could be used for that purpose. Since the expansion of Stoddert is not scheduled to be funded until FY2023 and 2024, he said the school will have to work with the city to get new “dismountables” to accommodate expected needs for academic classrooms.

Mr. Wells said schools citywide are facing budget problems because the overall budget is going up by 1% but teacher costs are going up 3% or more. For budget purposes, the average expense for a teacher is pegged at \$107,000 this year and will go up to \$110,000 next year. Because enrollment at Hardy is increasing, the school will not have to cut faculty. He noted that the city always undercounts the number of students and then when the school does an actual count in October and comes up with a higher number, it is hard to hire teachers at that late date. Many other schools will be cutting teachers and some of them do not have Science teachers or other resources that Stoddert has, including a PTO. He said 5 or 6 Councilmembers had told him that the Mayor's budget diverted a lot of money from schools to go to homeless shelters and social services. He also cited two other problems: Half of the students in the District attend charter schools, each of which is considered its own Local Education Agency (LEA) with its own corporate management and “overhead” functions to be covered, losing a lot of economies of scale, whereas DCPS as a whole is counted as one LEA. Dunbar, Ballou and Woodson High Schools have had beautiful renovations but they are half empty; there are 20,000 empty seats in DCPS schools while schools in Ward 3 are full. The city needs to provide quality education at public schools, market what it offers, and bring more students into schools with good facilities that are operating far under capacity. He agreed that Hardy Middle School is overcrowded, especially since teachers and students cannot use the corridors and stairs serving Fillmore Arts Center, so he also believes Fillmore Arts Center has to be replaced and he supported the suggestion that Duke Ellington could handle that function for students from Stoddert and Marie Reed Elementary Schools. (He expects that expansion at the third school now using Fillmore, Key Elementary, will provide space for an art room at that school.)

Ms. Wattenberg said she and the other speakers had all participated in the meeting the night before with the Wilson High School Feeder Pattern Community Working Group, and it is not in dispute that the proposed budget will mean real cuts in funding to some schools (in constant dollars). She cited several problems:

- The city's projections for school enrollment are often wrong.
- The DCPS staffing model is terrible.
- Principals do not have enough discretion to shift funds between needs and juggle staff dollars.

Ms. Wattenberg shared a resolution from ANC3F calling for more discretion for principals in how to use city funds. She also stated that the city budget for schools is opaque and hard to figure out. While Ward 3 schools generally do well in the budget, maybe losing one teacher or gaining one teacher, each year some school takes a "hit." Last year that school was Wilson and this year for unexplained reasons it is Stoddert. The overall proposed spending per pupil was up 2.2% but in constant dollars, that is lower than what schools were getting in 2013. And at 20 DCPS schools (17 of them in Wards 7 and 8), the budget called for a cut of 5% requiring loss of about 3 teachers each. Woodson High School is looking at a cut of 11, 12 or 13 staff. That is happening for many reasons. Even with recent renovations, Woodson is down to only 200 students, which is too small an enrollment to maintain the faculty and quality of education. She pointed to Wards 7 and 8 as the most important priority, as DCPS schools there have lost thousands of students and are continuing to lose students to charter schools. (There are 40 charter schools in Ward 8, while there are no charter schools in Ward 3). All the charter schools are looking for growth and have marketing employees on their staff. She emphasized that DCPS has to think about attracting more students to schools that are operating far under capacity. At the same time, the city is projecting increasing enrollment in DCPS schools in Ward 3 of 1,500 in the next 4 years and 3,000 in the next 8 years, even as schools already are at or over capacity. She said there are no easy answers; the city has to pursue a lot of avenues to solve current space problems, but Old Hardy School could be one way to add capacity in Ward 3. It had 200 students before it closed, on the same footprint as Mann or Hearst, so as many as 400 students might be accommodated at that site. For that reason, she said it would be irresponsible to say the city does not need Old Hardy School.

Deputy Mayor Paul Kihn said the Mayor's budget calls for \$56 million more for education and an increase in 5.5% in the DCPS operating budget. Some of the increase is going to central staff though in the coming year the central staff would be cut by 70 people. The budget for schools would go up 4.9% while enrollment is up only 1.9%. Though DCPS schools are well-funded, he acknowledged that was not to say that every student is getting an adequate education and that remains a goal. In spite of the highest per pupil spending in the country, part of that is the result of the very small number of students at some schools. The Comprehensive Staffing Model guarantees a certain minimum spending per school, which means that small schools are getting a very high per pupil funding (as much as \$30,000 per student at Anacostia High School, though they are losing 11 or 12 staff next year). He agreed that the school budget is opaque, and he also agreed that the city has to revisit the way it handles budget allocations, and find a way to deal with the imbalance in schools operating at overcapacity v. undercapacity.

He said that Ward 3 has the lowest allocation per student under that model because the schools are so full. For Ward 3 schools, excluding costs of security, the overall budget was proposed to go up by \$300,000. Though some of those funds are prescribed for certain uses, the total number of staff would be going up, even as a couple of schools would lose 1 or 2 employees. And citywide, the overall number of adults in the school would be going up by 118. He noted that this was probably not the best year to shift the costs of security to the individual schools because thought it is only an accounting change, it sowed additional confusion, when the purpose was to make more transparent how much it costs to operate each school.

On Old Hardy School, he said the city's position is that it is a school that is in use and has students in the building (as part of the Lab School) and the policy is not to take students out of an existing school. He said the city has three tools to deal with capacity issues: a) build more schools, b) change its policies, and c) change school boundaries. He complimented the working group on its work but noted that the city is already planning to expand local schools' capacity by 400 seats at existing schools. On the question of replacing Fillmore Arts Center, he agreed that maybe Duke Ellington could use some of its space for arts education for Stoddert students, since the front half of the school is used for academic classrooms for half the day and then students shift to arts classrooms. He agreed to talk with local school officials and PTOs about that option.

The Commissioners and other participants then had a chance to ask questions of the panel.

- Where there are students from the diplomatic community who are studying English as a second language in local DCPS schools, could the U.S. State Department get other countries to pay some of those costs? Several panel members said that would go against the terms of U.S. treaties, but individual schools could engage with an embassy in their local community to try to get additional support.

- Is the ratio of teachers to students going up or going down? Mr. Kihn did not provide an answer.

- Are school funds being diverted to housing programs such as the increased value of housing vouchers (up to \$2,400/month, allowing property managers to collect more than market rate for some apartments? Mr. Kihn said the city wants to provide opportunities for people across all income levels and also wants people to be able to stay in their homes, but funds for all those programs have to come from somewhere. (The Mayor proposed higher taxes for recording sales of commercial property to pay for increased support for housing.)

- Are charter schools evaluated on the same basis as DCPS schools? Ms. Wattenberg noted that education results at charter schools are not publicly available in the same way as they are required to be published for DCPS schools. STAR ratings are published for charter school students but STAR scores are only measured once during high school so actual learning and improvement in student performance are not tracked and it is therefore not possible to tell if charter schools are using funds effectively for educating their students.

- How many current students at Lab School who are attending classes at Old Hardy are District residents? Ms. Wattenberg said of the 65 students at Old Hardy, 20 are District residents of which 2 are paid for by DCPS. Since the Lab School's lease of Old Hardy School ends in 2023, she is urging the Lab School to explore other locations in DC, Virginia or Maryland, such as the sites of the two private schools that are giving up their space on MacArthur Boulevard. Chairman Turmail said ANC3B supports the mission of the Lab School but wants the city to make wise use of all its properties when local schools are so overcrowded.

The panel said the Council would take its first vote on the FY2020 school budget on May 14 and the second vote on May 28. Ms. Wattenberg urged that any comments on the budget should be submitted immediately.

Chairman Turmail said the Commission had drafted a letter about the FY2020 school budget but might want to amend it. Commissioner Blumenthal moved to vote on the letter and suggested adding points on Old Hardy School and Fillmore Arts Center. Chairman Turmail suggested supporting increased staffing flexibility and discretion in each school's use of funds. He said he would prepare a revised letter. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 3-0-1 to approve sending a letter. (There was one abstention.)

Updates and Information

The Commissioners announced several events of interest to ANC3B residents including DDOT's second community workshop as part of its Livability Study in Rock Creek Far West, including all of ANC3B) was scheduled on May 18 from 11 am to 1 pm in the Multi-purpose Room at Stoddert Elementary School. Kim Sescoc, consultant to the livability study, encouraged residents to participate in the May 18 event. She reported the workshop would include a brief presentation on the study team's preliminary recommendations for locations that should get transportation safety improvements, and otherwise would be designed as an open house to allow residents to look at maps and other materials, talk one-on-one about transportation safety concerns, with DDOT staff and consultants, and provide their comments and suggestions for other areas to be considered in the study. She urged everyone to check the study's website, get on the email list, and provide input electronically or in person.

She said the DDOT Livability Study Team planned to participate in Glover Park Day on June 1 at the Guy Mason Recreation Center and Playground, and would be sharing information and taking comments there.

Chairman Turmail also announced that the first day of the 2019 Burleith-Glover Park Farmers' Market would be Saturday, May 18, at Hardy Middle School parking lot.

Open Forum

Shawn Hilgendorf introduced himself as the Committee Director for the DC Council Committee on Facilities and Procurement, now chaired by Councilmember At Large Robert White. He was formerly Legislative Director for CM Robert White. The Committee jurisdiction includes matters related to Advisory Neighborhood Commissions. Mr. Hilgendorf reported that the Committee mark-up of the FY2020 budget asked for an additional \$122,000 for allocations to ANCs, the first increase in years; funding for assistive translation services so all ANCs can ensure that people with disabilities have access to ANC meetings; and technology support for ANCs. He also said the Committee found \$500,000 for DC Department of General Services to provide for student access; \$700,000 more to assist adults trying to go back to school, as well as seniors and people who are homeless. The Committee also included funds for a study of synthetic materials being used on playgrounds at District schools and parks. Chairman Turmail said the Commission is hoping to have CM Robert White come to an ANC3B meeting in the near future.

There were no other comments or questions.

Administrative Matters

Commissioner Mladinov presented the minutes of the Commission’s April meeting. [Chairman Turmail made a motion to take a vote on the minutes. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the April minutes as presented.

Treasurer Mary Young presented the monthly financial report for April:

April 2019 Financial Report

OPENING BALANCE:	\$11,392.52
Income:	\$ 0.00
Total Income:	\$ 0.00
Outgoing:	\$2,500.00 Check #1303 - Grant to Friendship Place AimHire Program
	\$1,505.00 Check #1304 - Grant to DC Food Project
	\$ 168.00 Check #1305 - ANC Post Office Box Rental
Total Outgoing:	\$4,173.00
CLOSING BALANCE:	\$7,219.52

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

Chairman Turmail announced that the next ANC3B meeting will be Thursday, June 13.

Chairman Turmail made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 4-0 to approve.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.