

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



ANC3B Public Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 11, 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 agenda for the meeting. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the agenda.

Resolution on Ghostline DC request to allow live music on rear patio at 2340 Wisconsin Avenue

Commissioner Blumenthal introduced a resolution to support an amendment to the Settlement Agreement between ANC3B and the previous business establishment at the Ghostline property, which prohibited live outdoor music performances. Tracy Wilson, co-owner of Ghostline DC, presented the proposal to host live jazz performances outdoors, with the help of a sound engineer to ensure the music would not disrupt adjoining residences. In September Ghostline tried a “pilot test,” which was successful in confining the sound to their premises. Commissioner Blumenthal explained that no live performances are allowed under the current District COVID-19 rules, but after the emergency restrictions are lifted, Ghostline is proposing to have live jazz on the patio one weekend night each week, and possibly increase to three nights per week. The proposed performances would last no later than 11 pm on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays and midnight on Fridays and Saturdays.

At the February meeting, the ANC opened a 30-day comment period to allow residents to submit their views on the proposal. The ANC received approximately 30 comments on the proposal, all but one of them positive. The condominium behind Ghostline offered its support, as well as the individual who lives directly behind the property. Commissioner Blumenthal presented a proposed amended Settlement Agreement to incorporate the proposed arrangements, including days and hours of operation. She also presented a resolution to support the amended Settlement Agreement, which includes support for a stipulated Entertainment Endorsement to Ghostline’s liquor license to allow live music without the usual waiting period. The ANC took questions from the other participants. Commissioner Blumenthal made a motion to vote on the proposed resolution and settlement agreement. The motion was seconded, and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the resolution and settlement agreement as presented.

Police Report

Second District Lt. Paul Johnson summarized crime reports in ANC3B in the preceding 30 days, which again had been very low, with 9 property crimes (7 thefts, 1 stolen auto and 1 theft from auto) and no violent crimes.

Chairman Turmail took a question from the Chat about the District policy on enforcing parking regulations, and reported that the city had announced it would be resuming enforcement of parking tickets in school zones, and in commercial loading zones.

Presentation by DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) on MoveDC and other initiatives

Donise Jackson, DDOT's Community Engagement Specialist for Ward 3, was joined by Haley Peckett, co-coordinator for MoveDC, the District's long-range (25-year) multimodal surface transportation plan. Ms. Peckett encouraged residents to complete DDOT's online survey about transportation priorities and took from Commissioners and residents, including about pedestrians, bicycles, and transit. She discussed the standards DDOT uses for deciding what types of bicycle facilities to install on different types of streets, DDOT's hope to develop bike projects that have community support, the priority DDOT gives to ensuring pedestrian safety, and the division of shared responsibilities with WMATA for planning transit services.

Ms. Jackson presented a summary of DDOT projects and priorities under Everett Lott, former Deputy Director now acting as Interim Director. She gave a brief description of the range of services DDOT provides, including public space management, Urban Forestry, visitor parking, crossing guards, and the Vision Zero program to eliminate transportation injuries and deaths. DDOT had also led several initiatives introduced during COVID-19, including "streateries" to extend eating spaces into the street as a way to expand seating capacity, Slow Streets, and bus priority lanes on several corridors including 7th Street NW, M Street and Martin Luther King Drive SE. She outlined several current DDOT projects in Ward 3: the Rock Creek Multi-Use Trail/Path, Cleveland Park streetscaping, and the study of the reversible lanes on Connecticut Avenue and potential replacement of one lane of parking with protected two-way bicycle lanes.

Ms. Jackson also reported that in calendar year 2020, DDOT had received 9,400 service requests in Ward 3. She noted that in recent years, DDOT had a significant backlog of service requests which the staff had been working through. In the course of the year, more than 7,000 service requests had been closed but 7,400 requests remained open. She explained that when DDOT examines a 311 request, the first step is to establish a Service Level Agreement (SLA) establishing the expected time until the case will be "closed" (when DDOT staff has determined the nature of response required and sent the case to an operating division to do the work). She encouraged residents to use DC 311 to request repairs or other services, since that is the only way DDOT can create a case number and track its progress.

Ms. Jackson responded to questions on several local 311 requests and committed to checking on their progress. She asked residents to contact her at 202-391-8764 or donise.jackson@dc.gov if DDOT shows a service request as closed but the work has never been done. She also invited residents to submit requests for paving repair in streets and alleys, and sidewalks as well as repainting crosswalks, to be included in DDOT's 2021 PaveDC plans.

Letter to WMATA on Proposed FY2022 Budget and Operating Changes

Commissioner Mladinov reported that WMATA had held public hearings on March 8, 9 and 10 about the proposed FY2022 budget. At the hearing, the WMATA Board members had stated that under the new federal Economic Relief Act of 2021, which was signed into law by the President on March 10, WMATA was expecting and hoping to get sufficient funds to be able to avoid some or all of the proposed reductions in both services and payroll. The final information about the exact funding will not be available for some weeks, but the WMATA Board expects to be able to adopt a revised FY2022 budget without the currently proposed cuts for January through June 2022. WMATA was inviting public comments through March 16, 2021, on the original FY2022 budget proposal.

Commissioner Mladinov had testified at the WMATA hearing on March 8 and also proposed a letter to WMATA opposing the loss of service on local Metrobus routes that was proposed in the original FY2022 budget, and urging that the transit system maintain current levels of bus service to Glover Park and Cathedral Heights, including the D2, 31, 33, 30N and 30S, and N6; restore weekend service that has not been operating such as on the D2; restart the N2 and N4 and restore rush hour service on the D1 and 37 buses as travel volume grow; and continue crosstown service on the 30N and 30S lines.

The letter also encourages WMATA to work with the community on future operating changes and take steps to build back customer confidence and support for transit service. She emphasized that this is a critical time for transit, as the region will be reopening, and the transit system has to be ready to welcome riders and ensure that they can get safe, comfortable, reliable service. Without that, more people will choose to use private motor vehicles and WMATA will not be able to play its essential role in both easing congestion and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the region. (The District's current goal is for 50% of commuting trips to be made by transit by 2046.)

Chairman Turmail made a motion to vote on the proposed letter. The motion was seconded, and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve sending the letter.

Updates and Information

Commissioner Mladinov reported on several DC Public Service Commission (PSC) issues. The PSC had not yet released a decision on the Pepco rate case but had approved a settlement agreement in the Washington Gas rate case, reducing the proposed rate increase and calling for Washington Gas to report annually on its efforts to achieve the District's Clean Energy goals. The PSC currently has only two members but the Mayor had sent the Council a new nominee for the third seat on the PSC, Emile Thompson, an Assistant Attorney in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District, working on homicide, who has also been on the board of DC Water, which is part of DC government, not subject to regulation by the PSC. The Council had not yet voted on his nomination.

Chairman Turmail reported that a community meeting had been held March 3 about the feasibility study District Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) had commissioned about possible enhancements to the Jelleff Recreation Center at 3265 S Street NW, next to the Safeway. Community residents have called for expanded and improved facilities to serve the neighborhood. DPR has been seeking public input and will review the study.

Open Forum

Tony Donaldson, the liaison between ANC3B and the Mayor's Office of Community Relations, reported that the District had opened its new pre-registration system had just opened that day for residents to sign up to be notified about available appointments for the COVID-19 vaccine, as the city marked the first anniversary of the beginning of COVID-19 restrictions. He urged all seniors who had not yet been vaccinated to register, as well as other eligible groups.

Mr. Donaldson reported that the Mayor's office was in the process of preparing the proposed District Budget for FY2022 and had been holding Budget Engagement forums to get public input.

He also asked residents to let him know about any DC 311 service requests that need attention, and provided his email address so people can contact him directly, as he wants to keep working with Donise Jackson and the ANC3B Commissioners to clear cases that have not been addressed. Mary Young asked about DDOT's progress on studying safety improvements on the Cathedral Avenue corridor, and Commissioner Elson said she would be checking on that as well.

Glover Park resident Katarina Savvas spoke about concerns with the plans for reopening District public schools, which have been severely limited in staff and number of students who could take in-person classes. She said part of that is because the DC Department of Health has been following standards adopted in May 2020, calling for social distance of 6 feet and pods of 11 students, and limits on the number of students with whom each teacher can interact in a day. That has made it difficult or impossible for middle schools or high schools to hold in-person classes for the majority of students. Ms. Savvas said that some research has shown that social distance of 3 feet is safe in schools, and many private schools in the area have re-opened, applying those standards. Ms. Savvas encouraged people to go to opendcschools.org to sign a petition to express support for easing the standards and reopening DC Public Schools.

Administrative Matters

Commissioner Mladinov had prepared minutes for the February 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 February:

February 2021 Financial Report

OPENING BALANCE: \$14,307.17

Income: \$ 0.00

Total Income: \$ 0.00

Outgoing: \$ 0.00

Total Outgoing \$ 0.00

CLOSING BALANCE: \$14,307.17

Treasurer Elson also presented the Quarterly Report for the first quarter of FY2021, ending December 31, 2020. She noted that the Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (OANC) had provided assistance in accessing the financial database and putting together data needed for the quarterly report, but in the process had identified some discrepancies in the reporting of ANC3B's quarterly allotments from the city. OANC had agreed to review the figures and get back to the Commission with any further information and guidance on any adjustments required. Chairman Turmail made a motion to vote on the quarterly report. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the report as presented.

Chairman Turmail announced that the next meeting would be held Thursday, April 8, 2021, and would again be a "virtual" meeting. He said that the Commission is starting to think about post-COVID-19 operations and would like to restart in-person meetings but also offer some of the benefits of virtual platform.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.