

ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 2F
Minutes of Regular Monthly Public Meeting
Wednesday, March 2, 2011 – 7:00 PM
WASHINGTON PLAZA HOTEL
10 THOMAS CIRCLE, NW

Present: Charles Reed (2F01) (Chairman), Samuel V. Goekjian (2F03), Matt Raymond (2F04), Mike Benardo (2F06) (Vice Chairman). [SMD 2F05 is vacant]

Absent: Emily Barton (2F02)

Chairman Reed called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He noted that a quorum was present and that the meeting had been duly noticed, and he directed that a copy of the notice of the meeting be filed with the minutes.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Commissioner Announcements

Goekjian announced there is illegal parking in the no-parking zone in front of Thomas Circle at 1300 Massachusetts Avenue. Resident **Jack Matheson** reported that fire trucks and other emergency vehicles are forced to block traffic at Thomas Circle when responding to an emergency at Thomas House, because they cannot maneuver the narrow two lanes that exist on Massachusetts Avenue in front of Thomas House. The current situation also presents a problem with bus loading and unloading for Thomas House residents. Reed pointed out that the problem needs to be dealt with through DDOT, and that it would be added to this evening's agenda. **Sheri Kimbel**, Ward 2 Constituent Member Services is willing to help Thomas House work with DDOT.

Benardo announced that BASSIS School's Information Session and brunch will be held Sunday, March 20 from 12:00-3:00 PM at 990 Florida Ave, NW. For more information about raising the bar for DC schools contact BASSIS School at BASSISSchoolDC@aol.com or 202-422-1161. Benardo also announced that street cleaning began March 1, 2011 and will run thru October 30th and ticketing is now in effect.

Reed announced that protest for the Substantial Change for the summer garden for Ghana Café 1336 14th is continuing. Reed also announced DHCD Education Series *Nuts and Bolts of Home Repair Basics*. The workshop will take place on Wednesday, March 23rd from 6:30-8:00 PM at 1800 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave., SE. For more information and to RSVP by March 21st, please contact DHCD at 202-442-6993 or email dhcdevents@dc.gov. Reed will attend the Cambridge Tenants Association 1221 Massachusetts Avenue to talk about the ANC and encourage resident involvement.

PSA 307 Report – Officer Suber

Officer **Suber** reviewed crime statistics for the prior month in Police Service Area (PSA) 307, covering a large portion of the ANC 2F area. PSA is experiencing a rash of burglaries in the downtown area in two particular buildings where there have been 14 reports filed. The buildings are condos on 11th street between the 1400 and 1600 block and P Street between 11th - 13th. Residents of buildings are not exercising sufficient care as to whom they let in the building.

Once in the building burglars kick down doors of residents who are at work. Suber stated that MPDC will at the request of condo associations come to buildings to conduct security training. Suber again reminded the community that theft from auto remains a serious crime issue, and asked that drivers remove all items from their cars when they park, no matter how small or insignificant the items may be. Insignificant items may appear otherwise to would-be thieves, and the result is often a broken car window.

Jack Evans, City Council Member, Ward 2-

Evans addressed the District's financial situation and answered several questions about DC's finances, including the District's relationship with the Wall Street bond rating agencies whose ratings of DC's obligations affect the interest rates at which the District can borrow money. Other points made by Evans were:

- "The challenge that we face is that we must live within our means and make the difficult decisions," Evans said. "That being said, I would not trade our financial situation with any other state or jurisdiction and the good news is that our revenue estimates indicate that the city is on the upswing again."
- District residents learned from the Washington Post that Kwame Brown, Chairman of the City Council, was responsible for the city leasing two "fully loaded" 2011 Lincoln Navigator SUVs at \$1600 and \$1900 per month, respectively, for his use. Evans indicated that it was not enough that the cost was excessive but also that he rejected the first SUV because the interior was the wrong color.
- The District's Department of Transportation (DDOT) will host the first semi-annual public forum for the DC Circulator on Thursday, March 17 from 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm to give passengers an opportunity to discuss current and future bus service. The forum will take place at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel (140 L Street, SE). Evans encouraged everyone who uses the service to attend the meeting.
- The good neighborhood news is the convention center hotel is on track.

Community Announcements

Ed Bailey announced that he and **John Guggenmos** are returning to 1435 P Street, NW and will be opening a new bar named #9.

Jacques Patterson, candidate for City Councilman at Large, introduced himself to the community and left pamphlets.

- 10 Minute Recess -

BUSINESS MEETING

Approval of Agenda

Upon motion by **Goekjian** seconded by **Benardo** and after further discussion, the draft agenda was approved with additions, with a direction that a copy of the amended agenda be filed with the minutes and posted on the ANC 2F website:

Add Under ABRA Eagle Café; Ghana Café
Add Under DDOT: 1330 Mass Ave Traffic Issue Thomas House Traffic
Add Under Education Committee: Option Charter School
Add Under CDC: 1207 Q Street Classify as Blighted Property

Vote: (4-0) Unanimous

Approval of ANC 2F Minutes of Meeting of February 2, 2011

Minutes of the meeting of February 2, 2011, were presented for approval. Upon motion by **Raymond** seconded by **Benardo** and after further discussion, the minutes were approved with direction to the Executive Director to post the same on the ANC 2F website.

Vote: (4-0) Unanimous

DCHSEMA/Street Closures

Isabelle Thompson presented a request for street closing for the Marine Corps Marathon, to be held Sunday, October 30, 2011 from 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM. **Thompson** stated that the request complies with ANC 2F published street closing policy and that he had made substantial progress in dealing with others entitled to notice and opportunity to comment. **Thompson** can be reached at 703.432.8550 and isabelle.thompson@usmc.mil.

Upon motion by **Benardo**, seconded by **Raymond**, and after further discussion, it was,

RESOLVED, That after review of the street closing application of the Marine Corps Marathon, to be held Sunday, October, 2011 pending before the DC Homeland Security Emergency Management Agency (“DCHSEMA”) and presented to the ANC, ANC 2F advise HSEMA to grant such application.

Vote: (4-0) Unanimous

ABRA

Testimony before DC City Council

Reed reported that he gave testimony before the DC Council Committee on Human Resources (ABRA Oversight, on February 22, 2011), and summarized his testimony by reading the key paragraph of the testimony.

“I come to testify unfavorably on the one part of ABRA that is failing. I refer to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board. Under its current chairman, the Board has abandoned any semblance of fairness, and has become an advocate of the licensees it was organized to regulate. In my view, it is violating both the letter and spirit of the laws the Council has enacted. Those laws exist to protect the safety and welfare of the District’s citizens and visitors. They are also designed to strike an appropriate balance between the interests of the alcoholic beverage sellers and the citizens of the District. The Board, however, now gives lip service only to considering the views of ANC’s, whereas the ANC Act requires that ANC recommendations and advice be accorded “great weight.” It has changed its practices, refusing to accept provisions in voluntary agreements which have routinely been accepted by prior Boards.”

Ghana Café 1336 14th Street-Protest Substantial Change (Summer Garden)

Reed stated that the parties were still unable to reach settlement concerning the licensee’s pending request to add a 51-seat rear summer garden and bar behind the establishment. As a result, the matter will go forward to a protest hearing on February 16 [subsequently changed to by the Board to April 20].

Upon motion by **Reed**, seconded by **Goekjian**, and after further discussion, it was,

RESOLVED, That ANC 2F expend \$750.00 to partially cover expenses for expert witness testimony before at the ABC Board hearing in support of its protest on grounds that the licensee’s proposed new operations will disturb the peace, order and quiet of the community and lower the real estate valuation of nearby properties.

Vote: (4-0) Unanimous

Eagle Café 1414 9th Street, NW

Bernardo laid before the meeting, a voluntary agreement for ratification by the Commission. Upon motion by **Bernardo**, seconded by **Reed**, and after further discussion, it was,

RESOLVED, That the Commission adopt and ratify the voluntary agreement presented to the meeting with respect to the application of Eagle Café, 1414 9th Street, NW Street, License ABRA-085990, that such agreement be submitted by the Commission for approval by the ABC Board, and that, subject to such approval and continued compliance with the agreement, this Commission shall withdraw its pending protest of the license application.

Vote: (4-0) Unanimous

Aria 1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW

The application is for a license at premises located outside the residential areas of the Commission and the Commission has not received any complaints regarding the applicant. Accordingly, no motion for action was proposed, in accordance with the Commission's liquor licensing policy.

Education Committee (Evelyn Boyd Simmons, Chair)

Chair, Evelyn Boyd Simmons reported the following:

Focus on Garrison

Most ANC2F parents who have attended outreach events have infant and toddler-aged children so elementary level schools seem most relevant. ANC2F shares only a small portion of its boundaries with portions of Francis-Stevens, Ross, and Thomson. Most of the ANC2F area overlaps with Garrison and Seaton elementary school boundaries. Likewise, our partner in our education initiative LCCA's boundaries overlap most substantially with Garrison and Seaton. Garrison in-boundary parents have demonstrated the most interest and have been most active. Therefore, for the time-being, our focus will be on working with DCPS and Garrison. We will seek opportunities to support efforts at Seaton, Francis-Stevens, Ross, and Thomson.

February 8, 2011 Garrison Open House was held to provide information to parents early in the school lottery period. Few additional parents attended but those who did had not attended previous events. The meeting with parents the previous Saturday likely addressed a lot of the interest. The February 7 Borderstan article on the Open House and PTA/Community Partnership received 600 hits by February 21 – a very strong number. The lottery closed February 28 and in-boundary applications for Garrison were almost 3 times last year's numbers.

Collaboration with ANC1B

A group of Garrison parents who live just north of S street – and outside of ANC/LCCA boundaries -- who are interested and active have contacted their ANC and asked them to collaborate with us. In addition, the U Street Neighborhood Association has established an Education Committee.

Community Building

- First time collaboration between Ross and Garrison to field co-ed neighborhood soccer and t- ball teams for ages 4-7. These teams are open to all neighborhood kids.
- Ross started parent-led story time for kids under 4 – open to neighborhood
- TD Bank offers financial literacy instruction to Ross and Garrison 3-5th grades
- Safeway eScrip program raised money for Ross and Garrison
- St. Ex Memorial and Labor Day Chili Cook Off and Pig Roasts to benefit Garrison this year. Last year fundraising was for Ross.

Support for Other ANC2F Schools

- Referred library volunteers for Ross
- Helped seek host family for Thomson Mandarin teacher

Options Charter School NW Campus, 1501 11th Street, NW

Dr. Vincent will meet with the Education Committee, and chair Evelyn Boyd Simmons will address any issues and report to the ANC.

Resident Joel Heisey noted that Options Charters School is currently renting parking spaces from the New Bethany Baptist Church. This issue will be placed on the April ANC agenda.

DDOT

1300 Mass Ave Thomas Circle traffic

Upon motion by **Reed**, seconded by **Benardo**, and after further discussion, it was,

RESOLVED, That ANC2F appoint an Ad Hoc committee to be chaired by Goekjian to work with DDOT on the traffic issues surrounding Thomas Circle and Thomas House, and to report to the Commission at its April meeting.

Vote: (4-0) Unanimous

Farm Fresh Market

Upon motion by **Goekjian**, seconded by **Reed**, and after further discussion, it was,

RESOLVED, That the Commission recommend to DDOT to approve the pending renewal application for public space permit to conduct a farm market at Vermont and H Streets, NW, upon the same conditions (**except** police presence for traffic control) as was previously recommended by this Commission.

Vote: (4-0) Unanimous

Community Development Committee Report (Mike Benardo)

1211 10th Street, NW – Application for Variances related to lot occupancy and side yard restriction, Owner Charles Sisson

Applicant is seeking a variance from the lot occupancy requirements under section 403, and a variance from the court requirements under section 406, to permit a rear addition to and conversion of a one-family dwelling into a four (4) unit apartment house in the R-4 District at premises 1211 10th Street, NW. The CDC voted unanimously (6-0) to review again with architect present at the March 2011 CDC meeting.

1525 14th Street, NW

This project is new construction in the current parking lot between Posto Restaurant and the Great Wall Szechuan House. The presentation was made by Eric Colbert. Several years ago, the board approved a residential condominium building project at this location. Due to current market circumstances, this project was not able to be constructed. Evidence was presented that it is extremely difficult to finance new condominium construction, and the project is too small to be an effective residential rental building. The current proposal is to construct a commercial building, with two floors of retail. The current proposal is the same height and density as the previously approved scheme. The proposed building is 6 stories, compared to the previously approved scheme of 7. Plans include keeping the ground floor restaurant and third floor gallery in the existing building. The first below-grade level will be storage. Two additional below-grade levels will be for parking, which will be accessed by a car elevator. The total gross area of construction above grade is slightly above 55,000 square feet, including the existing adjacent building. Applicant is seeking variance from the open court width requirements; a variance from the roof structure height limitation; a variance from the off-street parking requirements; a special exception from the roof structure requirements; and a special exception from the rear yard requirements.

This case was referred back by the full Commission at its February meeting, where the matter was discussed in depth. The CDC in its subsequent February meeting unanimously recommended (6-0) that the ANC advise BZA to grant the requested variances and exceptions.

Upon motion by **Reed**, seconded by **Raymond**, and after further discussion, it was,

RESOLVED, That ANC 2F recommends that the BZA grant the requested variances from the roof structure height limitation and off-street parking, open court width requirement; and the requested special exceptions from roof structure and rear yard roof structure requirements.

Vote: (4-0) Unanimous

1207 Q Street, NW Blighted Property

Upon motion by **Reed**, seconded by **Raymond**, and after further discussion, it was,

RESOLVED, That **ANC2F** oppose the pending application to DCRA for relief from the blighted property enhanced tax designation of 1207 Q Street, NW; and the appropriate officers of this Commission be and are hereby designated to represent the Commission in opposition at the hearing on this matter currently scheduled for March 30th.

Vote: (4-0) Unanimous

Arts Overlay Committee (Andrea Doughty)

The Branding and marketing project of \$200,000 is well under way as the March 31st grant comes to a close. The banners are up, a little repair work had to be done due to high winds, and marketing art events are taking place as well as the new advertising campaign that will kick off at the end of the month. The website is being developed as resource for arts moving forward. New non- profit entity The Arts District Confederation will carry the arts mission forward.

The next Arts Overlay Committee meeting will be March 14th at 6:00 PM at the Hotel Helix.

New Business

Proposal to advise the DC Council as to the lease by Council Chairman Brown of two luxury automobiles with public funds. - No motion for action was made on this matter.

Treasurer’s Report (Sam Goekjian)

Upon motion by **Goekjian**, seconded by **Reed**, and after further discussion, it was,

RESOLVED, That the following expenses be and are hereby adopted:

Cynthia Cota	\$962.45
Verizon.....	\$70.00

Vote: (4-0) Unanimous

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was duly adjourned at 9:18 PM.