

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A
Minutes
Miner Elementary School
September 8, 2011

Present: Commissioners Alberti, Healy, Holmes, Hysell, Lawler, Mack, Ronneberg and Veenendaal-Selck

The meeting was convened at 7 p.m.

1. Agenda

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

2. Minutes

The minutes were accepted by unanimous consent.

NOTE: Because of the appearance of Council Chair Kwame Brown and the presence of the Ward 6 Redistricting Task Force for final ANC action on the Redistricting Plan, the agenda was taken out of its regular order.

3. Economic Development and Zoning

1317 D St. NE

This is a request for support for a BZA application for a three-story addition to a residential property at 1317 D St. NE and the removal of an existing garage. The addition would include the expansion of a bedroom in the basement, the expansion of the kitchen on the first floor and a bedroom on the second floor, a new bedroom on the third floor and the demolition of the garage at the rear of the property. The total lot occupancy will be reduced and the rear lot setback will be increased. The Committee felt that the changes met the burden of proof for the requested special exception. **Motion:** The Committee moved/Dr. Ronneberg seconded a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation to send a letter of support for the application for a special exception for 1317 D St. NE. The motion passed 7-0.

1309-1311 H St. NE

This is a request for support for a BZA Application for an easement at 1309-1311 H St. NE to allow implementation of the developer's agreement with a the church on the corner that will allow trash pickup; the reduction of the building's FAR from 3.0 to under 2.7; and substantial changes in the design of the façade, enhancing the building's appearance. The committee suggested further changes, and the developer agreed to one of them. **Motion:** The committee moved/Dr. Ronneberg seconded a motion that the full ANC send a letter of support to the BZA for the requested zoning relief at 1311 H St. NE. Mr. Holmes mentioned that he had worked hard on behalf of the ANC to have the buildings designated as historic, and had lost by one vote, and so it was with sadness that he voted in favor of the motion, which passed 7-0.

1303 Linden Ct. NE

This case was continued in the Committee from the previous month. The architect showed new drawings removing a penthouse so that the building height was lowered to three stories except for a small “pop-up” stairway that provides access to the roof. The building has been lowered 10 feet. The owner stated that the utilities for the new structure would tap into the utilities from 1320 G St. NE, the owner’s current address. There was discussion about whether the property could be used as a residence, rather than an artists’ studio, and neighbors testified that their light and air could be affected by the structure. Committee members also said the proposed use did not meet the requirements for a variance because the property could be used for other productive uses. **Motion:** The committee moved/Dr. Ronneberg seconded a motion to accept the Committee’s recommendation that the full ANC write a letter to the BZA opposing the requested zoning relief for 1303 Linden Ct. NE. The motion passed 7-0.

1350 Maryland Ave. NE

Valor Development is in the process of purchasing 1350 Maryland Ave. NE, which is one of the properties that are set to be downzoned from C-3-A to C-2-A as part of the rezoning requested by the ANC. Valor asked the ANC to consider excluding some properties on the NW corner of 14th and Maryland if Valor built a residential structure that was only slightly larger than permitted as matter-of-right in a C-2-A zone, in exchange for working with the ANC on the building’s design and community amenities. The Zoning Commission delayed final action on the proposed rezoning to permit negotiations between Valor and the ANC.

In August, Valor returned to the Zoning Committee with revised drawings that addressed massing and design concerns the Committee had expressed at the July meeting. It felt the new design would fit very nicely into the fabric of the eastern end of Maryland Ave.

Valor has committed to a deed restriction that would restrict any development to a 3.4 FAR. In addition, Valor would enter into a contract with the ANC that would ensure that the proposed design would be built. Valor has also stated that they are committed to funding the installation of a CaBi station, and an application to extend the Historic District to the commercial properties on H Street.

Dr. Ronneberg said the negotiation has taken a lot of time, as the developer agreed to extensive redesign, and now it looks much like the other houses in the neighborhood. Mr. Hysell thanked Dr. Ronneberg for all his efforts on the project, who in turn saluted Valor for its hard work. **Motion:** The committee offered/Dr. Ronneberg seconded a motion to request that the Zoning Commission record be re-opened so a letter of support from ANC 6A can be added. **Amendment:** Dr. Ronneberg asked that the motion be amended to say that that an addition will be added to the letter acknowledging that Valor will further reduce the height of the building, and they will be returning to the Committee to inform them of that. Mr. Alberti asked whether that is an additional reduction and was told that it would be to two stories. The amendment passed 7-0 and the motion passed 7-0.

Membership

Motion: The Committee moved/Ms. Lawler seconded a motion to nominate Laura Gentile (6A06) and Melissa Boyette as members of the Economic Development and Zoning Committee. The nominations were approved by unanimous consent.

Motion: The Committee moved/Dr. Ronneberg seconded a motion to remove Arkan Hale as a member of the Committee, as he has not attended a meeting for a year. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

The report of the Committee was accepted by unanimous consent.

4. Community Presentation - City Council Chair Kwame Brown

City Council Chair Kwame Brown took questions from the audience, so his remarks are arranged by topic, rather than chronologically.

Budget:

This is the toughest budget the City has ever had. We had a fund balance of \$1.5 billion, which has been spent down. We have a 12% cap on debt. The question is how do we get better cash on hand? I have a commitment to do that. The question is how. We have a fiscally strong budget - we've made cuts and restored \$30 million to that budget. And we've been working at it There have been 19 legislative sessions—more than have ever been held before—and making tough decisions.

Irene Blinick asked who's looking at DC borrowing and making sure our loans are sound. Chairman Brown said that the independent Chief Financial Officer looked at it the first time, and an independent financial advisory firm has also looked at it. He said America's been downgraded and everyone is looking for budget cuts. DoD cuts will affect DC, and, he said, they want to make certain everything is in order. Another resident asked who looks at the Council's budget numbers, and was told that Dr. Gandhi checks the fiscal impact of the budget, comes to the Council, Councilmember Evans holds hearings, and makes recommendations to the full Council.

Education:

Education is on the mind of every Washingtonian, it's so important. You know I went to City schools. And the DC schools are improving. My concern is the middle schools, where there's been a decline. You can't have true reform in 9th grade if you're reading at 5th grade level. I'm going to make it so that the problem goes. One problem is that there are too many students in out of boundary schools. There are no longer seats in the community for those that need them. It shouldn't be us vs. them; the quality should be the same. There's money in the budget to retain teachers. Schools should be maintained.

Skip Coburn asked about the savings in the budget for schools and was told that there will be a mid-session budget hearing on education. He said they should be spending correctly for education.

Rose and Hubert Williams expressed their disappointment that Eastern High School will not institute a 10th grade class this year, causing their daughter to go to Wilson. They said a plan is needed for a hybrid process, rather than integrating one grade at a time, it should be done 9th and 10th, 10th and 11th, like School Without Walls. Brown said he didn't agree with the single grade at a time integration plan.

Ethics Bill:

There should be a comprehensive look at ethics; it hasn't been addressed since 1978.

Transportation/Councilmember Wells:

David Holmes said that there are more transportation projects in Ward 6 than any other Ward, and mentioned the South Capitol Street Bridge, the trolley, etc. and said that our Councilmember did a good job of managing it all, and asked for an explanation of his removal from the Committee.

Chairman Brown replied that in January he developed a committee structure. He gave Sekou Biddle a seat on Truancy and Schools, but after the special election it was time to redo the committee structure. I put the Committee on Economic Development into the Committee of the Whole and I looked at Environment, Public Works and Transportation. Mary Cheh said she would be interested. Look at Ward 6—planning has never been out of the Committee of the Whole. And I looked at “liveable, walkable...” And I tried to have a conversation with him—I had a 60-second conversation. Transportation will move forward in Ward 6. I'm supportive of streetcars, I've supported every transportation initiative, every issue of Tommy's—the bag tax, single sales.

Andrew Hysell said that streetcars are a top issue, and he is concerned about the delays and the fact that the streetcar currently stops at 3rd Street. He said that options like New York Avenue as a terminus should be explored, because it should not be stymied. Chairman Brown said he wants no “streetcar to nowhere”, and where it goes at Benning Road and working with the Union Station Redevelopment Corporation and Amtrak is important. I'm in favor of moving quickly so it goes somewhere. He said he's committed to working with Councilmember Wells. He said he thought it would go all the way down Benning Road to the Metro stop in Ward 7. He said he wants it to go somewhere—the streetcar can open the City up. Mr. Holmes pointed out that it's a matter of equity; the people who survived all the reconstruction put their money into the future of the streetcar. He said he ran for chair on H Street, urging people to stay, to find a way for them to stay here and build here.

DCRA:

Margaret Holwill spoke about the community having trouble getting DCRA to do its job. The agency, she said, is giving illegal permits, allowing illegal curb cuts. What's wrong at DCRA when people can't get the services they need? Chairman Brown related a story about how he lives up the street from a house with a collapsed roof and he went through the whole exercise. The collapse happened on Friday night, the driveway collapsed, it was raining, on Saturday he went to the DCRA website, on Monday he waited in line for hours, so I understand the frustration with the agency. Donna Scheeder commented that the agency's whole orientation is toward people who are building things, and not oriented toward people who need help and don't know anything about dealing with it. She said customer service and satisfaction need to be emphasized and there should be a public roundtable out in the community.

Another question about AppleTree School and DCRA focused on the history and the specific problems those fighting the school are having trouble getting any attention from

DCRA and Zoning. Chairman Brown said he would work with Councilmember Wells on the issue.

Parks and Recreation:

Raphael Marshall, Executive Director of Sherwood Rec Center, said he has always supported Chairman Brown and he is personally ecstatic that Councilmember Wells is now in charge of the Parks and Rec budget, which has been severely cut. He said that Parks and Rec is always the first thing to be cut. He pointed out that two people at the meeting are park partners, and they deserve to have adequate funding. Chairman Brown responded by saying that he and Councilmember Wells are friends, that they've played basketball together, and neither of them wants to see the City go backward. He said he thinks that recreation should be connected to education, that there should be after-school programs, and we should take an extensive look at the City's resources, for example there should be a hearing on Reservation 13.

Homeland Security

In closing, Chairman Brown noted that Washington and New York are targets for terrorists, and that Homeland Security is ready to participate in making it safer.

He asked for applause for his wife for not demanding his earlier return from this meeting.

5. Redistricting

Mr. Holmes began the discussion by presenting eight variations on the redistricting maps drawn up by the Task Force to determine which plans would be discussed. Each was voted on as it was presented.

1. Task Force - 4 votes
2. Ronneberg with Kingman Park - 0— Kingman Park appears to be gone
3. Ronneberg without Kingman Park - 4
4. Alberti - 1 - in color - 2
5. Rice - 1 - (Grace)
6. Rice, vertically oriented, minus the thumb 1 m
7. Ronneberg 7 - thumb vertically oriented across H
8. Alberti - cleans up District 8.

He then asked for a discussion of the individual plans that received three or more votes.

Elizabeth Nelson reported on the position of the North Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association, saying that the current boundaries have served the neighborhood very well, and would therefore like them to change as little as possible. They have three recommendations: 1/ Kingman Park should not be included in 6A because it had the potential to complicate the redistricting process; 2/that the block bounded by H, I, 7th and 8th Streets NE be restored to ANC 6A, citing the impact it will have on allowing ANC 6A to participate in crucial development and zoning decisions on H Street west of 8th Street during the next ten years; and 3/that ANC 6C not be allowed to "grow" into ANC 6A during the redistricting process.

Mr. Holmes brought the discussion back to reaching consensus and adopting a plan to recommend to the Task Force, and asked for another vote to winnow down the list: The vote was Alberti #8 - 3 votes; Ronneberg #7 - 4 votes; and Ronneberg #3 - 4 votes.

Motion: Dr. Ronneberg moved/Ms. Lawler seconded a motion to accept Plan #3, despite the low population of SMD 6A01. Ms. Lawler said that while she recommends the plan, it has risks because of the low population numbers, and the odd shape of some of the districts. She said she would have a hard time explaining the districts to her constituents.

Amendment: Mr. Alberti moved/Mr. Holmes seconded an amendment that the retention of all of Lincoln Park be included in the motion. It was determined that Lincoln Park needs a motion to itself.

Mr. Holmes said that if the resolution to accept Plan #3 passes, there will be no further votes on Plans #7 and #8. Mr. Alberti suggested that the commissioners vote on their personal preferences before the final vote and asked people to vote on their two favorite plans, and Plan #3 and #7 each got 7 votes. The motion to adopt Plan #3 passed 4-3. It was agreed to recommend that Plan #7 be offered as an alternative.

Motion: Mr. Alberti moved/Mr. Holmes seconded a motion that 6A recommends that Lincoln Park in its entirety remains in 6A, Mr. Healy said that no-one lives in the park, it's a shared resource, and a lot goes on there. The motion passed 4-2-1.

Motion: Dr. Ronneberg moved that if the Task Force feels that 1694 is an insufficient number for 6A01 that it keep taking squares to the north of Square 889 until there is a number adequate to the Task Force's needs, the motion passed 4-2-1.

Dr. Ronneberg said he is concerned with ANC 6C's rationale for needing additional commissioners. Ms. Lawler agreed. Skip Coburn said that the Task Force will make sure that there is sufficient justification and rationale for actions.

6. SMD Reports

Mr. Alberti reported that on September 20, an appeal of the DCRA's granting of permit for the renewed construction of the AppleTree Learning Center will be heard. He also reported that there was a collapsed roof at 1518 Constitution Ave. NE and he is working with DCRA to get it fixed, but there are the usual problems dealing with the City.

Ms. Veenendaal-Selck announced that there would be a back-to-school night at Eliot-Hine Middle School and local organizations were invited to participate.

Mr. Holmes reported that there has been a recent underreporting of robberies from cars. He reported that in the 100 block of 12th St. NE the entire alley is blocked with cars stuck in their garages. The people never shared their plans for constructing an elevator which they began digging out using water pressure, with muddy water running into City drains. DOE came and educated them.

Mr. Hysell reported that he had met with residents of Tennessee Ave. NE about break-ins and a shooting on Emerald Street, and their effect on the street.

Dr. Ronneberg reported that there have been three shootings in his SMD, one at Sherwood Rec Center, one aiming at bicycle, and shooting from cars. He reported that 1336 H St. NE buckled in the earthquake, and looks like it's falling down.

7. Officer's Reports

Chair

Mr. Holmes reported that the new PSA boundaries are out, and that H Street is in one PSA, and the rest in two PSAs.

Treasurer

Mr. Alberti presented the Treasurer's Report. It showed that the opening balance in the checking account was \$20,938.37 and the savings account balance was \$4,205.06. There were two interest payments to the savings account of \$0.17 and \$0.18. There were disbursements of \$140.96 to FedEx Office July '11 statement (Check #1521); \$180 to Roberta Weiner for June 2011 minutes (Check #1522); \$200 to Heather Schoell for the July '11 agenda package (Check #1523), and \$207.30 to FedEx Office for August 2011 copying (Check #1524), leaving a balance of \$20,210.11 in the checking account, and \$4,205.41 in the savings account.

Motion: Mr. Alberti moved/Ms. Lawler seconded a motion to approve the disbursements. It passed without objection.

Motion: Mr. Alberti moved/ Mr. Holmes seconded a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. It passed without objection.

8. Committee Reports

Transportation and Public Space

Mr. Mahmud said that this motion, to request the ANC to send a letter of support to Councilmember Wells position that the 14th and H Streets NE bus stop be relocated back to the northwest corner, may be moot because it is already happening. Mr. Holmes said that the ANC needs to show support for going forward to relocate bus stop. **Motion:** The Committee moved/Mr. Alberti seconded a motion that the full ANC support the Committee's recommendation and send a letter of support for Councilmember Tommy Wells' position that the 14th and H St. NE bus stop be relocated back to the northwest corner. The motion passed without objection, 7-0.

The report of the Committee was accepted by unanimous consent.

Alcoholic Beverage Licensing

1242 H Street

Motion: The Committee recommends/Mr. Healy seconded a motion that the full ANC protest an alcohol license for 1242 H St. NE unless there is a signed, approved voluntary agreement before the protest date. The motion passed 6-0-1 with Mr. Alberti not voting.

Atlas Room

Mr. Healy reported that he was contacted by ABRA to see if the ANC had signed a VA with the Atlas Room since the Board didn't have any record of receiving and approving one. The signed VA has been posted on the ANC's website since last July and the Committee

recommended re-sending the existing, signed VA to ABRA. **Motion:** The Committee moved/Mr. Healy seconded a motion to approve the VA signed between the Atlas Room and ANC 6A. The motion passed 6-0-1 with Mr. Alberti not voting.

The report of the Committee was accepted by unanimous consent.

Community Outreach

Elizabeth Nelson, Committee Chair, presented a request for a \$1500 grant to the Sherwood Neighborhood Volunteers to continue with their project of restoring and maintaining the grounds at the Sherwood Rec Center in conjunction with the Capitol Hill Garden Club and many sources of funding, including Frager's, Ginkgo Gardens and the Capitol Hill Community Foundation. Ms. Nelson reported that they are doing a good job, and did well with the grant they received from the ANC last year. **Motion:** The Committee moved/Mr. Alberti seconded a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation to provide a grant of \$1500 to the Sherwood Neighborhood Volunteers to continue their beautification project for Sherwood Rec Center. The motion passed without objection.

The report of the Committee was accepted by unanimous consent.

9. New Business

Medical Marijuana

Mr. Healy said he had been contacted by an individual who was interested in applying for a license to open a medical marijuana dispensary and cultivation site. Mr. Alberti said that it is the Department of Health that is charged with licensing and enforcement of dispensers. Mr. Holmes said an oversight Board will be appointed soon. Mr. Alberti said that the Board and the Department of Health will be setting policy. The discussion was tabled until more information is available.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.