

**REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ZONING
COMMITTEE OF ANC 6A
April 27, 2011**

Present: Members*: Charmaine Josiah, Jeff Fletcher
Commissioners: Drew Ronneberg, David Holmes

Drew Ronneberg chaired the meeting.

*The meeting was held without a quorum

Status Reports

Resolution of Previously Heard BZA/HPA Cases: Drew Ronneberg stated that the special exception for the rear addition at 809 9th St NE was approved by the BZA and that the application for a special exception to permit a child development center at 1329 North Carolina was withdrawn by the applicant.

Vacant Properties: No Report.

H Street Business Liaison Report: Charmaine Josiah reported that she met with Ken Brewer and Tony Richardson about promoting small business incubator space on H St..

BZA #17521-B (601-645 H St NE)

Mr. Chip Glasgow from Holland and Knight stated that the applicant has been unable to secure financing for the 601-645 H St project because of the downturn in the economy and unique challenges of the site, and is consequently asking for a 2 year extension to their BZA order. The original BZA order was granted in 2007 and one extension was granted in 2009. Mr. Glasgow stated that because the comprehensive plan, the small area plan and the underlying zoning have not changed in the meantime, there are no material changes in circumstance which would impact their request for a second extension. The site is located in ANC 6C, but ANC 6A has party status because the lot is located within 200 feet of its border.

Mr. Glasgow said that the District has 1.5 years left on their lease and that there are items in the contract that could extend it by another 2 years. The owner has been trying to negotiate a 15-20 year lease, but so far the District has not been willing to sign a long term lease. This has made it difficult to secure financing. Mr. Glasgow said that the District was the only prospective office tenant, and if they moved, the owner would likely convert the office space to residential. One of the bookend buildings could be easily retrofitted for residential but the other building would have to have its floor area physically reconfigured.

Bobbi Kregel testified that there are material changes in circumstance because H Street has changed so much over the past 4 years that it was worth revisiting the project. Jill Reedy, who lives on the 600 block of G St, immediately behind the project, spoke about the changes in H Street, the impending arrival of the streetcar and the fact the many new residents have moved to the area and the increase in the enrollments at Ludlow-Taylor as evidence of changed circumstances. They asked that the ANC not support the two-year time extension.

ANC 6C voted to hold a special meeting on May 2, to consider the extension. Drew Ronneberg felt that the ED&Z committee shouldn't make a recommendation to ANC 6A before ANC 6C held their special meeting. The other committee members felt that the extension was justified and worried that if it was not granted it would reopen the project to changes that might not be improvements to the current design.

Recommendation (passed 3-1): The ANC write a letter of support for a two-year extension of the BZA order for 601-645 H St NE and also write a letter to OPM, with copies to Councilmember Wells, urging them to make a decision about whether to enter into a long-term lease agreement with the owner of the property.

Street Closures for the H Street Festival

Anwar Saleem, the Director of H Street Main St asked the ANC to write a letter to the mayor asking that the signature requirements to close H Street for the H Street Festival be waived. The signature requirements require that 90% of the nearby households sign a petition supporting the street closing.

The Committee felt that residents were well aware of the H Street Festival and that the Festival was a very positive event for the community. They felt that the time would be better spent on organizing the festival than gathering signatures for a petition.

Recommendation (passed unanimously): The ANC should send a letter to the mayor requesting a waiver of signatures for closing H Street for the 2011 H Street Festival.

Public Space issues at 701 10th St NE

Drew Ronneberg recapped the public space issues regarding this property which include 1) the front of the building illegally projects onto public space much farther than the neighboring building and negatively impacts its light and air, 2) a 24 foot curbcut was constructed over the opposition of the ANC and in violation of DDOT's curbcut guidelines and 3) air conditioners were installed on public space without a permit. The ANC appealed the curbcut, but it was never addressed by DDOT and thus is still active. Also, DCRA placed a hold on the C of O for the property until the public space issues were addressed.

Drew stated that the property recently changed hands and that the owner agreed to remove the curbcut and move the air conditioners in exchange for the SMD's rep support for granting a waiver for the front of the building being built on public space. Since that time, DDOT recommended granting the waiver in a staff-level decision, which Drew thought ran counter to the regulations that require the case go through the Public Space Committee. The owner has since been silent about whether they will follow through on their commitment to apply for a parking variance and remove the curbcut. Dr. Ronneberg felt that owner would be more likely to seek a variance from parking requirements and remove the curbcut if the waiver for the occupation of public space for the front of the building went through a public process of obtaining Public Space Committee approval.

Recommendation (passed unanimously): The ANC should appeal the granting a public space permit for 701 10th St NE.

Next Scheduled ED&Z Committee Meeting:
Wednesday, May 18, 2011
7-9 PM
640 10th St NE
Sherwood Recreation Center, 2nd Floor