

ANC6A Community Outreach Committee

August 13, 2012 Minutes

Church of the Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith annex, 1235 C Street NE

Meeting called to order at 7:38 p.m.

Committee members present: Rose Williams, Jean Kohanek

Committee members absent: Elizabeth Nelson (chair), Pat Joseph, Louis Barbash

Commissioners present: Andrew Hysell, Nick Alberti, David Holmes

Community members present: Dr. Charles Vincent, Amos Pierre, Chris Hardgrave, Ben Kramer, Brittany Kramer.

I. Agenda adopted.

II. Dr. Charles Vincent, Executive Director of Options Public Charter School, and Amos Pierre, Principal of Options Academy, presented the school's plans to expand into rental space at 702 15th Street NE.

Mr. Pierre stated that the new facility will house Options Academy, a more intensive, therapeutic program for students with emotional disturbance. The facility will serve 50 students (with a capacity of 60); 30 will come from Options main campus (1375 E St. NE) and from P Street facility (1501 11th St. NW), and the rest from outside special education placements. The facility will feature wraparound services including special education and psychiatric services, with a 3:10 ratio of staff to students in each classroom. Students will be bused from designated stops all over the city right to the door of the facility. Mr. Pierre acknowledged that these students have the greatest challenges in terms of conduct and anger management, in addition to mental health issues.

Commissioners, committee members, and community members voiced concerns about the potential for problems in the neighborhood from an influx of students, given the past issues with fighting, urination, gambling, and drug use; issues that were largely solved when the most challenging students were moved to a site in another part of the city. Students from the main Options campus are often seen roaming in the neighborhood, and some of these problems have started to return. Mr. Pierre and Dr. Vincent stated that comprehensive nature of the program, combined with the direct transportation aspect is what will keep students from having an adverse impact on the neighborhood. Commissioner Alberti asked if they could guarantee that students will not be arriving at the facility via their own transportation. Mr. Pierre replied that there will be a variety of transportation arrangements for students. Some students may have court dates or other appointments during the school day that could require them to be brought to the school in another fashion and transportation for some others will be the

responsibility of their guardians (e.g., students in half-way houses), but all students will be offered bus service from designated spots in the city to the door of the school in a yellow bus on a daily basis. They will also be bused back and forth between the 1300 E St. and the 702 15th St. locations. In addition, cameras will be installed around the perimeter of the building, and a security guard will be on duty.

Dr. Vincent stated that if any poor behavior is seen in the neighborhood, to contact him immediately—they can send staff members out to collect students and shut down the behavior. A community member voiced concern that the staff's reach does not extend far enough north from the main campus to address student behavior problems in the neighborhood, Dr. Vincent offered to extend the staff range to H Street NE. In response to a question from Commissioner Hysell, Mr. Pierre stated that they have to make regular incident reports to the Charter Board, so they will be aware of any ongoing issues at the facility. Commissioner Holmes asked if the program at the new campus was the same program that was moved out of the E St. campus to northwest DC about three years earlier; Mr. Pierre said it was.

Dr. Vincent reiterated that community members should contact the school if there are any issues with students, and offered his cell phone number: (202) 270-4448. The campuses are connected by radio, and staff can respond immediately. He stated that school has an open-door policy and community members are welcome at any time. He invited the community to come to the school's open house in early September (date TBD).

- III. Meeting adjourned 8:15 p.m.
- IV. **The next meeting will take place Monday, September 17, at 7:30 p.m. at 1235 C St. NE**