

Minutes - September 15, 2014

Community Outreach Committee (COC) of Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6A
Maury Elementary School (ES), 1250 Constitution Avenue NE

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm.

Committee members present: Elizabeth Nelson (Chair), Jean Kohanek, Roni Hollmon, Pat Joseph, Gladys Mack, Shirley Worthy, Rose Williams, Louis Barbash (quorum)

Committee members absent: Maurice Cook

Commissioners present (second half of meeting): Sondra Phillips-Gilbert, Nick Alberti

Community members present: Ed Gilbert, Scott Perry

I. Agenda

Adopted.

Committee member Louis Barbash assisted Chairperson Elizabeth Nelson in chairing the meeting.

II. Ms. Nelson reported on ANC/COC activities:

1. At the September 2014 ANC meeting, the commissioners approved the COC recommendations with respect to the grant applications from Miner Elementary School (ES) Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), Maury ES Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and Serve Your City.

2. Ms. Nelson is currently doing all the development/maintenance of the ANC 6A website free of charge as she has for the past twelve (12) years. The ANC has never budgeted funds to perform these tasks in the event that she is unable to continue doing them. Committee member Gladys Mack asked if this meant that the COC was considering hiring someone to carry these duties. Ms. Nelson said that she had no plans to quit so she is not suggesting that the ANC make plans to begin a hiring process, only that the ANC might want to consider setting aside funds. She has started keeping track of her hours so that an estimate can be made as to how much time is involved. Ms. Nelson estimates that she probably spends about 15-20 hours per month although there are periods when she may exceed that. She will have a more accurate estimate by the time of the next ANC meeting. Another consideration is that some items are very time sensitive - which could increase the cost. Committee and community members present suggested that an hourly rate for such services is likely to be in the range of \$50.00 to \$75.00. Mr. Barbash reported that he knows of a service that charges \$25.00 by the post. Committee member Jean Kohanek will do additional research on this. Ms. Kohanek said that she would be willing to serve as a backup in an emergency but that she would not be able to commit to doing it on an on-going basis.

Mr. Barbash asked if there is a requirement that all ANC materials be posted on the website. Ms. Mack said that there is a requirement that all materials be available to the public and that having it on the website was a good way to accomplish that. Mr. Barbash and Ms. Nelson noted that it was also less expensive and more convenient to the public than maintaining an office (another alternative). Ms. Nelson also reported that, at the September 2014 ANC meeting, Ms. Naomi Mitchell of Councilmember Tommy Wells' office stated that ANC 6A had a reputation for being one of the most transparent, due to the content on the website.

3. Ms. Nelson reported that Committee member Maurice Cook has offered to help the Rosedale Tiger Cheerleaders apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN) with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Ms. Nelson forwarded his contact information to the organizer, Ms. Chandell Butler, who said she would follow up on the offer.

- III. Mr. Barbash introduced the topic of “thank you” letters for organizations providing facilities for ANC meetings. He noted that this has been done annually and that Ms. Nelson was prepared to draft the letters. Ms. Worthy said that she thought it was a good idea and the polite thing to do.

Ms. Williams moved (seconded by Mr. Barbash) that:

The COC recommends that ANC 6A send thank-you letters to organizations providing meeting space for ANC 6A activities. The measure passed unanimously.

- IV. Mr. Barbash introduced a discussion of possible changes to the administration of the grants program, the first in a series of such discussions. The COC will provide a detailed report, farther along in the process. The following topics were discussed:

1. Mr. Barbash cited the current timing of the grant application cycle, with smaller grants considered monthly and larger grants considered twice a year. Ms. Nelson noted that the way the funding is divided prevents the entire budget from being depleted early in the fiscal year.
2. Ms. Worthy asked why EINs were required of grant applicants. Longer-serving committee members explained that the ANC has always restricted grants to public charities, exempt under 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. Such organizations must either have an EIN or have less than \$5,000.00 in annual receipts. Mr. Barbash pointed out that some organizations may use fiscal agents; Ms. Nelson offered the example of the North Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association (which has an EIN) serving as the agent for the Kingsman Basketball League for a grant application some years back.
3. Committee member Pat Joseph suggested that there might be some limit placed on funding to the same organizations during a fixed time period, though she recognized that ANC 6A is a small area and that will limit the number of organizations serving that population. She did not advocate a ban, but preference for organizations not having received recent funding.
4. Ms. Kohanek noted that, due to the small size of the ANC area, there is a limited number of charitable organizations with an ANC 6A focus. She offered to do some research of the grant applications, which are all posted on the website, to analyze amounts and timing of grant funding. [A partial accounting, through 2012, is available on the website.]
5. Committee member Rose Williams noted that it was good to publicize the grants program but that a lot was already being done in this area. Ms. Nelson reported her outreach activities, which include running notices in local publications and contacting potential applicants directly. Ms. Worthy asked if Ms. Nelson followed up with local organizations to remind them of the opportunities and was told that she does.
6. Mr. Barbash noted that some potential applicants might be intimidated by the application form; however, the COC provides extensive help in completing the application, especially for new applicants. Ms. Worthy noted that the current application is very simple. Ms. Kohanek added that a cover sheet could be developed to help potential applicants better understand the process.
7. Commissioner Sondra Phillips-Gilbert said that a reference to the grant application process should appear on the homepage of the website. Ms. Nelson noted that it already does. She has recently changed the font of the reference to make it more obvious.
8. Ms. Phillips-Gilbert suggested that a reference to the grants program be added to the monthly Hill Rag ad.
9. Ms. Phillips-Gilbert said that verification was needed that organizations were spending the money consistent with their grant applications. Specifically, she requested that Serve Your City be required to give a report including documentation of ANC 6A participation in the aquatics component of their program, since the Deanwood Aquatic Center, the facility being used for the aquatics activity, is located in Ward 7. Ms. Williams noted that there is already a requirement that an accounting be made of funds

spent within sixty (60) days. Commissioner Nick Alberti explained that the ANC receives a letter from each applicant, at the time they receive the funds, documenting the expenditure; this information is included in the Treasurer's quarterly reports posted on the website. Several Committee members suggested that applicants might be asked to provide an very brief additional report, either at the end of the project or after it has been underway for some time, outlining the activities and quantifying participation, especially with respect to ANC 6A.

10. Ms. Nelson noted that, at one time, the presence of the grant applicant at the ANC meeting was required by statute. However, Mr. Gottlieb Simon, Director of the ANC office, recently told her that the law has been changed. An ANC may still require applicants to present their applications in person, if that is the ANC's policy. But they may now allow someone else to do it for them; the representative could be someone unaffiliated with the applicant, for example, a commissioner. However, it is important to be consistent and treat all applicants the same. So, the COC may consider advising the ANC to change the current requirement or, if the requirement is retained, develop a policy regarding what action is taken if an applicant fails to appear at the ANC meeting. In any case, the policy must be set by the ANC rather than relying on the statute.
11. Mr. Scott Perry, a community member, said that he had contacts that could be helpful in publicizing the availability of grants. He will provide information to Ms. Nelson.
12. This discussion will continue at subsequent meetings.

V. Committee member Rose Williams resigned her membership on the COC since she is moving outside the ANC 6A boundaries. She will be sorely missed, being one of the longest-serving members. The COC thanked her for all her hard work on the Committee.

VI. Confirmation of next meeting date.

The next meeting will be held Monday, October 20, 2014 at 7:00 pm at Maury ES, 1250 Constitution Ave NE (enter from 200 block of 13th Street).

VII. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.