

ANCa Public Safety Committee
NOTES
Sherwood Recreation Center
June 20, 2007

Committee members: Stephanie Nixon (Chair, Commissioner ANC6A08),
Annie Earley, Laura Brown

Committee members absent: Daniel Wolff, Mark Laisch

Commissioners: Gladys Mack

Community members: 1

Police Officers: Master Patrol Officer Burgess (PSA 102), Officer
Pradier (curfew powershift, PSA 103)

A quorum was not achieved.

Ms. Nixon called the meeting to order at 7:18 PM

Letters to be submitted:

1. ANC6a submit a letter to FEMS and MPD regarding cooperating in dealing with illegal fireworks
2. Request that ANC6a send a letter via certified and "regular mail" to the owners of the six properties outlined in section "E" requesting that he/she clean it up and properly secure it.
3. Request that ANC6a issue a letter of commendation for Police Commander Diane Groomes to the office of Police Chief Lanier.

Action items:

1. ANC6a submit a letter to FEMS and MPD regarding cooperating in dealing with illegal fireworks
2. Follow-up with Officer Burgess regarding motorbike questions (2.a.)
3. Laura Brown report on the handling of illegal dumping violations on the weekends/after hours (DPW/MPD)
4. Request that ANC6a send a letter via certified and "regular mail" to the owners of the six properties outlined in section "E" requesting that he/she clean it up and properly secure it.
5. Request that ANC6a issue a letter of commendation for Police Commander Diane Groomes to the office of Police Chief Lanier.
6. Look into inviting Rufus King to an ANC6a meeting to discuss the handling of repeat criminal offenders in DC
7. Laura Brown to report on potential forms for a DC Community Guide

A. Fire and Emergency Medical Service (FEMS) – Firecracker/Fireworks and Hydrants

1. FEMS was present at the most recent PSA 103 meeting discussing this issue. Fire Marshall Gary Palmer and Chief of the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Dennis L. Rubin have created a citywide plan in cooperation with MPD regarding illegal fireworks.

Chief Fire Marshall Gary Palmer

Gary.Palmer@dc.gov; <http://fems.dc.gov/fems/site/default.asp>

Working on a city-wide plan with the Office of the Attorney General's Office, MPD, and the Fire department. A list of permitted (safe and sane) fireworks/firecrackers is available at <http://fems.dc.gov/fems/cwp/view,a,1213,q,636562,femsNav,|31511|.asp>. They are working with DCRA to ensure that the sales of fireworks/firecrackers is done legally. They also enforce the use of only legal fireworks/firecrackers. There is a 26 page list of legal fireworks. Dates for sales can occur between approximately June 25 and July 5. Call 727-1614/727-1600, manned from 8:45 am – 4:45 pm.

Fireworks/firecrackers – anything with a bang to it is illegal.

How should we report these? Call 311/911 to report especially if unsure because there needs to be immediate verification. A hollow bang vs. a rounded bang. Clarify the law to 311/911: Cannot do that because they are their on agency (i.e., often on holidays people hear from call takers that fireworks and firecrackers of all kinds are legal from call takers)

People can submit information about the use of these to the Fire Marshal's office. Smoke alarm give-away; Fire Department will install this for free in private dwellings. In apartments, the landlord is responsible for doing this installation.

Motion: PSA103 and ANC6a suggest that FEMS and the Fire Marshall pair with MPD to combat illegal fireworks in the District (e.g., on July 3, pair armed fire investigators with MPD officers to enforce the law)

2. Thirty to forty percent of the district's fire hydrants are currently not in service or are in disrepair. Robert McLafferty – 2nd Battalion Chief

2nd Battalion Fire Chief Robert McClafferty

Robert.Mcclafferty@dc.gov 202-673-3382, home in real emergency ONLY 540-373-9333

The information on hydrants given was 4000 of 9000 tested; however, there are several statistics floating and we to clarify this. Before the present Fire Chief this was done in a more piecemeal manner. During these tests pillow cases and barbells have been removed from hydrants. Engine 8 10% of these were out of service, 33% are in need of service. Engine 15 15% were completely out of service. Now they are going back out and continuing to re-inspect them to make sure that WASA has made the repairs. Engine 10, 6% of hydrants no good, 25% were having issues – going out to re-test them.

DC has a very aggressive fire department and has water that they carry around on the truck. Most of the time they go home with a contained fire. Once in the roof, there is not much that can

be done. Engine 10 is the busiest company in the whole world. Last year they answered over 160,000 calls.

New Fire Chief is giving resources that they didn't have before. There are now guys dedicated for testing the hydrants. If the hydrants aren't in working order what is the status, then what is wrong with them. When they open the hydrant up and it isn't working or not giving enough water.

In the summertime, they used to cut the hydrant on for the kids. If you open too many, then it decreases water pressure. 2nd Battalion Chief: They will be having block parties at the stations and they look forward to getting to know the neighbors (1520 C St SE).

B. August Committee Meeting

The committee voted to not meet in August 2007. The July meeting will remain as scheduled. The committee will continue to keep track of nuisance properties and will push to new business in September.

C. Motorbikes

1. Many residents in ANC6a are concerned with the number of dirt bikes using the sidewalks as roads as well as serving as transportation for the neighborhood drug trade (it is reported that riders carry walkie-talkies to communicate with one another), and of course the audible revving of engines that disrupts neighbors day and night.
2. Master Patrol Officer Burgess provided the committee with considerable insight into the laws concerning motorbikes.
 - a. There currently exist no helmet laws in the district for motorbikes under a certain CC (he will follow-up with the details.) However, children under 12 must wear a helmet on a motorcycle (over 50CCs). Officer Burgess to follow-up to confirm this as well.
 - b. Dirt bikes are illegal in Washington, DC.
 - c. MPD employs a "no pursuit policy" when dealing with dirt bikes. Officers must wait for the bike to stop and the rider to physically step off the bike. They then can confiscate the illegal dirt bike.
 - d. MPD advises residents to call 311 or 911 if they are witness to these bikes being used in the city

D. DC Agencies 24/day Access

1. The committee has noted a number of tasks being transferred from DC Agencies (e.g., DPW, DCRA) to MPD. We are concerned that such an increased burden placed on MPD will lead to an inefficient use of their time. The committee suggests that DC agencies are available 24 hours/day, seven days per week.
 - a. Weekend illegal construction duty is passed on from DCRA to MPD. Additionally, MPD deals with issues concerning illegal dumping rather than DPW. It should be noted that the MPD does have an investigative unit for illegal dumping.

- i. PSC member Laura Brown will follow-up on who handles illegal dumping on the weekdays vs. weekends and off hours. Additionally, she will determine if there is a certain threshold that must be met before the MPD special unit steps in.

E. Nuisance Property letters

1. A number of nuisance properties have been brought to the attention of the committee
 - a. ??? Benning Road, NE (next to Capital Liquors) – is currently a vacant lot that is being used by drug dealers and prostitutes late at night. Capital Liquors (who are renters) say there is nothing they can do about the lot other than clean it up every morning.
 - b. 330 18th Street, NE – 20 to 30 men routinely loiter in front of this building. They are reported to leave two parking spaces open for SUVs to pull in and block police cameras during drug deals. The elderly woman living on the corner is moving after 40 years due to noise and security issues.
 - c. 18th and D Streets, NE parking lot – For the past two and a half years this land has served as a makeshift parking lot/garbage dump. Currently, a truck that is broken down is sitting on the lot. Neighbors have requested that the ANC act to try to ameliorate this continual problem. The property is owned by Master Liquors (Briley Builders, Inc).

Motion: The committee moved that the ANC sends a letter via certified and “regular mail” to the owner of each property outlined above requesting that he/she clean it up and properly secure it. Additionally, email the text of the letters to James Burger at james.burger@dc.gov

- d. 1766 Gales Street, NE – the current resident is reported to be using the bathroom outside, hoarding garbage in and outside of his house and allowing homeless people to set up camp in his yard. From the appearance of the building, it seems that it currently does not have any running water.

Commissioner Gladys Mack informed the committee that she contacted the DC Sanitation Department on June 5. She also contacted Mrs. Oliver at the DC Housing Authority on June 19 and found out that the property is listed as subsidized housing. Mrs. Oliver informed Commissioner Mack that DoH will investigate the claim, but that they cannot enter the property. The property was inspected by DoH in October 2006.

DCRA informed Mrs. Mack that they cannot do anything to investigate the matter and suggested that she contact DoH and the DC Sanitation Department.

It was noted that the owner visits the property monthly to pick up the rent check.

Motion: The committee moved that the ANC send a letter to the Department of Health and CPEP (DC mental health services) to investigate the current state of the building and yard. A letter should also be sent to the owner outlining the committee’s concerns and planned course of action.

- e. 1762 Gales Street, NE – MPD investigated the property and found people illegally residing on the property. They were arrested, but returned soon after. Neighbors are quite upset about the current situation.
- f. 1500 Gales Street, NE – The house’s windows are boarded up, but neighbors state that they the boards are loose and people are illegally living in the house.

Motion: The committee moved that the ANC sends a letter via certified and “regular mail” to the owners of 1762 and 1500 Gales Street, NE regarding the presence of “squatters” in their property and the subsequent concerns voiced by neighbors.

Additionally, the committee suggests that residents take an active role in reporting nuisance properties to the city. They may call 311 and should also visit www.dc.gov to request that vacant properties be boarded up.

F. Sherwood Recreation Center

- 1. Sherwood Rec Center will now be locking its gates each evening – no overnight parking is allowed in an effort to promote neighborhood safety.
- 2. The PSC committed to working with Evelyn Lightfoot to keep field lights on at night to enhance neighborhood security

G. Chief Lanier at ANC meeting

- 1. Chief Lanier has been invited to the June, July or September full ANC meetings as well as the 102 and 103 PSA meetings but we have been informed that she is traveling and thus unavailable to attend The PSC supports the ANC in sending a letter to Chief Lanier requesting her presence at a community meeting in the near future.

Commendation of Commander Diane Groomes

Motion: The committee suggests that ANC6a send a letter of commendation on behalf of Commander Diane Groomes to Chief Kathy Lanier. Commander Groomes has helped to provide a visible police presence in our ANC and continues to exhibit her commitment to the neighborhood and district at large.

Concerns Regarding Sentencing and Maintenance of Criminals

- a. Discussion of criminals (e.g., David Brine) who are consistently arrested and released without fulfilling their sentence and repeatedly violating parole requirements.

Motion: The committee requests that the ANC6a invite Rufus King to the next meeting to discuss the District’s treatment of repeat violators and the options neighborhood residents have in terms of dealing with this challenge.

Teen Summit

In the spirit of DC's "Summer of Safety", the 1D police station opens up its doors to teens each Saturday this summer. Community volunteers work on projects, visit museums, etc. with the teens. Additional volunteers are always welcome and needed.

Guide to DC With Community Outreach

Sylvie Lee discussed current efforts to create a shared resource for community members to expedite reporting of problems and directing questions to the proper individuals/agencies.

1. The forum for such a database was undecided – perhaps a Google group or some other moderated forum that can be updated and modified. It was suggested that PSC members and other community members evaluate PSA 102s Google group and discuss opinions at the next PSC meeting. Laura Brown will research options and report back.

Crime Location Reporting

1. Commissioner Nixon reported that the Pentacle achieved a 60% reduction in crime during a phase of special monitoring by the police.
2. Residents are concerned that a group home is being run out of 1637 E Street, NE. The owner does not hold a C of O for a community-based residential facility. This is a known drug area and community residents are concerned that this is not the best location for such an establishment.

Curfew Regulations

Officer Pradier (#1101 - 202-361-1066) discussed police procedure concerning curfew violators

1. Young adult and children 17 years and younger must abide by curfew
 - a. Curfew hours are: Sun-Thur 11:00 PM to 6:00AM/ Fri-Sat 12:00 AM to 6:00 AM
2. When a minor is picked up by the police, officers attempt to make contact with the minor's parents. If no parent is available, minors are held until 6 AM the next day and taken to child protection services.
3. Police officers do not know if the parents are ever issued a fine.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM