



District of Columbia Government
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A
P. O. Box 75115
Washington, DC 20013



June 15, 2013

Mr. Terry Bellamy
Director
District Department of Transportation
55 M Street SE, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Mr. Bellamy,

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A (ANC) strongly asserts that the conversion of public parks to private use should be discouraged. We also believe that permitting for this use of public space should be sent to the ANCs for their consideration with at least 45 days advance notice for the opportunity to exercise their great weight. Our ANC adopted a motion at our June 13 meeting to authorize this letter expressing our sentiments by a vote of 8-0 (with five Commissioners required for a quorum). The meeting was our regularly scheduled, publicly¹ announced monthly meeting.

Three parks, at least, in ANC 6A have had, or are authorized to have, portions converted to private use. These parks are neighborhood gathering places, a place to enjoy some greenery, to exercise kids, and are owned by the entire community through the city or the National Park Service (NPS). In one example, the park has been divided by a fence that excludes city workers from the repair of lights and the fountain water pump. In another, a city office offered a substantial portion of a corner park to an adjoining church to pave and expand their structure. In the third, shrubs have been planted to exclude public access.

We are eager to see neighbors take responsibility for improving the condition and appearance of our parks, although the choice of which shrubs and trees should be subject to City review for appropriateness and safety. We hope DDOT will help with such arrangements. Plantings and fences should not, however, exclude the public from use of these small corner parks. We can't lose park space; there is little enough now.

¹ ANC 6A meetings are advertised electronically on the anc6a-announce@googlegroups.com, ANC- 6A and NewHillEast yahoo groups, on the Commission's website, and through print advertisements in the *Hill Rag*.

These “pocket” parks are a defining element of the historic L’Enfant plan. Their loss affects the livability and pleasantness of our neighborhoods.

To restate, we are opposed to the conversion of public space in our corner parks to restricted private use, and feel very strongly that this permitting of public space should be presented to the appropriate ANCs for consideration prior to issuing any permit.

We ask that you send a representative of the Public Space Regulation Administration to ANC 6A’s July 15, 2013 Transportation & Public Space Committee meeting to discuss DDOT’s processes and policies governing requests by private citizens and corporations to build upon, landscape or otherwise utilize public park land. Please let me know who we should contact regarding your staffs’ attendance at that meeting.

Respectfully yours

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Holmes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Holmes
Chair

cc: Mayor Vincent Gray
Council Chair Phil Mendelson
Councilmember Marion Barry
Councilmember Tommy Wells
Jeffery H. Powell, DDOT Acting Associate Director
Matthew Marcou, DDOT Deputy Director for Public Space Regulation