

Minutes
ANC 6A Transportation & Public Space Committee Meeting
Capitol Hill Towers (900 G Street NE)
July 20, 2015

- I. Meeting called to order at approximately 7:00 pm.
- II. Introductions - Committee members in attendance were Commissioner J. Omar Mahmud (Co-Chair), Elizabeth Nelson and Andrea Adelman. Also in attendance were ANC Commissioner Calvin Ward and other members of the community.
- III. Announcements
 - A. Traffic signal at Maryland Avenue and 10th Street NE is slated for installation in early August 2015.
- IV. Community Comment
 - A. A community member complained about public urination in area around H Street and the Capitol Hill Towers, particularly the alley that lies between the Capitol Hill Towers and the H Street Connection.
 - i. Commissioner Mahmud agreed with the resident that this is a serious problem and that he sees this problem first-hand regularly given his house is immediately adjacent to the alley as well. Commissioner Mahmud suggested that this is a particular problem at this location given all of the pedestrian activity at Eighth (8th) and H Streets NE where two major bus lines intersect. Commissioner Mahmud pointed out that some cities like San Francisco offer self-cleaning public restrooms in high pedestrian area traffic areas, but that this solution is expensive and it could attract unwanted activity inside the bathrooms. However, he agreed something needed to be done and that he has asked for Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) support on this issue in the past. Commissioner Mahmud also suggested the best thing to do for now is to call 911 anytime this activity is witnessed. Even if the person is no longer there by the time MPD arrives, MPD will see this is a problem area in need of additional patrol resources if our calls for service are captured by dispatch.
 - B. A community member pointed out that our sidewalks are in need of serious repair, pointing out a couple locations that are extremely difficult to navigate with her wheelchair, including the 700 block of Tenth (10th) Street NE and the 900 block of Tenth (10th) Street NE.
 - i. Commissioner Mahmud thanked the resident for raising this concern given it is something he has been concerned about for some time. Commissioner Mahmud pointed out that the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) needs to do a better job of addressing repair areas that prove to be dangerous for handicapped and elderly pedestrians. Commissioner Mahmud pointed out that he has put in service repairs for the 700 block of Tenth (10th) Street NE for about two (2) years with no response from DDOT. Commissioner Mahmud indicated he would put in a repair request for the 900 block of Tenth (10th) Street NE and update residents once and if he receives a response from DDOT.
- V. New Business
 - A. Presentation from representatives for Midnight on Mars 5K run. Commissioner Mahmud introduced Ashley Lawson and Matt Green representatives for the run, and thanked

them for attending our meeting. Ms. Lawson and Mr. Green then shared the following information:

- i. Run organizers and participants are part of a growing urban group of runners in the District focused on promoting fitness, culture and running. The run will take place on August 1, 2015 around 9:00-10:00 pm. The organizers indicated this run has taken place along H Street the last two (2) years.
 1. Commissioner Mahmud expressed concern that organizers had not come to the ANC community in prior years to share this information. Commissioner Mahmud also expressed concern that residents may not be aware of this event given it is less than two (2) weeks away so he encouraged the organizers to get the word out immediately. Commissioner Mahmud also encouraged the organizers to come to the ANC with information about the run next year at least three (3) months prior to the event. The organizers agreed to this.
 - ii. The run route will cover areas in Capitol Hill and the H Street corridor. Commissioner Mahmud asked for clarification on the exact route to be run, but the organizers did not seem to have a route finalized on paper. However, it was made clear the run would start at Gallery on H, an art gallery in the 1300 block of H Street NE then head down Fourteenth (14th) Street NE to Maryland Avenue NE, heading along Maryland to Sixth (6th) Street NE where the route turns north towards I Street/K Street NE. Runners will then make their way back to H Street NE and run down the corridor towards the starting point.
 - iii. The run actually does not require permitting because participants will be limited to the sidewalk. The run will have about 200 participants so it is not big enough for participants to run in the streets and seek closure of streets on the route. There is also no need to seek closure of sidewalks to accommodate the run since participants will just run amongst the pedestrians.
 1. Commissioner Mahmud, Committee Members Elizabeth Nelson and Andrea Adelman raised concerns about a large number of participants running down sidewalks that are full of pedestrians going to bars and restaurants in the evening along H Street and people walking with strollers, small children and dogs on quieter side streets along the corridor. They also sought clarification on how the organizers are proactively thinking about pedestrian safety issues. Ms. Adelman also suggested runners not use the bike lanes along the route.
 2. The organizers responded that this is meant to be a fun run and not a competitive event where people are running aggressively for time. All participants will be given safety instructions and reminded before and during the race to be mindful of pedestrians and respectful of their space. Participants will be encouraged to spread out and space themselves so that they do not stampede down a sidewalk leaving nowhere for pedestrians to walk. Participants will also be told not to run with music earbuds in both ears and the organizers confirmed runners will be told not to use the bike lanes.
 3. Commissioner Calvin Ward pointed out that he has seen similar events in the city and that he thought they looked cool.
 4. Commissioner Mahmud thanked the organizers for attending and again stressed the importance of addressing the safety concerns pointed out during the presentation.
- B. Request for support of plan to convert in to a community garden the parking area located in the middle of the square bound by Fifteenth (15th) Street NE, C Street NE,

Sixteenth (16th) Street NE and D Street NE. Commissioner Mahmud thanked residents for coming to present information about this matter to the committee, including Commissioner Ward and resident Lee Smith, who gave a slide presentation and provided the following information:

- i. The goal is to turn what is now an unkempt nuisance property with abandoned vehicles, illegal parking, garbage, public drinking, drug dealing activity and other problematic activity into a community use like a community green space or garden.
- ii. Mr. Lee also suspects police enforcement may be complicated by the location here, which is between the First (1st) and Fifth (5th) police districts. It is harder to get each police district to focus on resolving this. He has put in countless 311 requests related to this property over the years, but there is a serious lack of vehicle parking enforcement for this area.
- iii. Mr. Lee has also worked with the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) nuisance property division on resolving these issues. OAG discovered the owner of the property is now deceased so the property is in probate with back taxes owed. Mr. Lee also indicated Ward 6 Councilmember Charles Allen wants the city to take possession of the property but that he needs ANC support, which he indicated should come in the form of a petition signed by local residents along with a letter from the ANC.
 1. Commissioner Mahmud suggested this sounded like a reasonable ask and that he would be happy to put this matter on the committee's August 2015 agenda if residents were able to present a petition indicating community support for the proposal to turn this into a city green space or garden. The ANC could then take a full vote on this matter during the September 2015 ANC meeting. Mr. Lee and Commissioner Ward agreed with this approach.

VI. Additional Community Comment

- A. A resident in attendance expressed concern about the proposal to install a traffic signal at Tenth (10th) Street NE and Maryland Avenue NE. She is opposed because she believes there are already too many signal lights on Maryland Avenue and that an additional light will back up commuter traffic, making the commute downtown longer. Commissioner Mahmud informed her that he understood this concern, but that years of safety concerns at this intersection, including the need for safe passage for children given the playground at this intersection and the school on Tenth (10th) Street, resulted in the city finally agreeing to take action. The resident also expressed concern about not knowing much about the design plans for the Maryland Avenue reconstruction that will take place between the Starburst intersection and Stanton Park. Commissioner Mahmud agreed to email her information about the plans the following day.
- B. A resident expressed concern about Mia's Coffeehouse located at 101 Fifteenth (15th) Street NE, a business for which the ANC recently approved a sidewalk café, using public space to store trash. Commissioner Mahmud indicated the ANC's consistent approach was to oppose any public space use that involved the storage of trash on public space.

VII. Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 pm.