

Meeting Minutes  
Transportation & Public Space Committee (TP&S)  
Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6A  
Capitol Hill Towers (900 G Street, NE)  
April 20, 2015 at 7:00 pm

- I. Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm.
- II. Introductions  
Committee members in attendance were Omar Mahmud (Co-chair), Todd Sloves (Co-chair), Lara Levison, Elizabeth Nelson and Andrea Adleman. Also in attendance were ANC 6A Commissioner Matt Levy and Paige Byrne representing the Wylie Street Garden.
- III. Announcements - Co-Chair Todd Sloves announced:
  - A. There would be a public meeting for the C Street Corridor Project on April 30, 2015 at the Rosedale Recreation Center.
  - B. There will be a Maryland Avenue Redesign Project meeting (including DDOT representatives) on May 12, 2015 at 7:00 pm at the Northeast Branch Library.
  - C. DDOT is accepting public comment on the second publication of proposed rules on “pocket parks.” Co-Chair Sloves gave some background on the issues involved, including ANC 6A support for the increased transparency and public access the regulations would offer but also noted that DDOT had not accepted all of the ANC’s comments made during the previous comment period. The comment period closes May 2, 2015.
- IV. The agenda was amended without objection to move discussion of the pocket park regulations to the final item under New Business. *Motion offered by Co-chair Omar Mahmud and seconded by Elizabeth Nelson.*
- V. Agenda item Number 5 was an update on the streetcar; the streetcar team will come to the May 2015 meeting instead.
- VI. New Business
  - A. **District Department of Transportation (DDOT) proposed new sign regulations:** These proposed regulations would allow the mayor to designate “entertainment areas” (DEA) in which signs like the large video sign on the Verizon Center would be allowed. The process by which the mayor would select and designate these entertainment areas is not clear.
    - i. ***Co-chair Mahmud offered a motion (seconded by Ms. Nelson) that ANC 6A send a letter to DDOT requesting these changes to the proposed new sign regulations [per draft text circulated at the meeting]:***
      1. ***As sign regulation is a land use/zoning issue as well as a transportation issue, the Zoning Commission should review sign permits for aesthetics and land use considerations in addition to the traffic safety review by DDOT.***
      2. ***Because the impact of electronic signs on a neighborhood would be so significant and long-lasting, the Council (and not the Mayor) should approve any DEA.***

3. *The ANC must be notified of permit applications for all digital signs, not just signs with motion or moving images, and allowed time to comment on the size and placement of these signs.*
  4. *No sign permit should be issued unless the applicant proves that the sign will have no adverse impact on the character or integrity of the DEA or adjacent neighborhood.*
  5. *Certain types of electronic signs are allowed in DEAs (discussed below). The regulations must provide that no part of any electronic sign or the light it transmits within a DEA will be visible from any area zoned for residential use or zoned C1 or C2A. Applicants for permits should be required to include sight line studies in the permit application (not currently required in 13 DCMR 904.1).*
  6. *Roof signs should not be permitted.*
  7. *Residents affected by violations of the sign regulations should be provided with a right of private action, to sue for enforcement in DC Superior Court.*
- ii. *The motion passed unanimously.*

**B. Request that DDOT move Linden Court to the top of its alley-repair list**

- i. Co-chair Sloves explained that each ANC is allowed to prioritize its own alley repair needs. He described the current condition of the Linden Court as likely to be the worst in 6A. It is so bad that repairs would be ineffective, providing only temporary relief. The entire alley must be completely reconstructed. DDOT will not develop an official cost estimate until it gets close to the top of the repair list, but it is believed that the endeavor would be so expensive as to exhaust the District's entire annual alley repair budget. So, perhaps it should not be considered an alley "repair" and funding should be allocated from another part of the budget.
- ii. There was discussion of other funding sources including the possibility of financial assistance from the developer of The Maryland for which the owners will access their parking via the Linden Court alley. DDOT has accepted an agreement with Valor Development, who would be willing to repave the alley, but Valor would be doing the work, not providing funding so the money could not be diverted to an alley reconstruction taken on by the District. Paving the alley would be a temporary fix, and DDOT would have to remove the paving in order to repair the alley. Some residents attending the meeting spoke in favor of moving Linden Court to the top of the alley-repair list. Others questioned whether it could be known that this is indeed the worst alley, given that an assessment of all alleys has not been conducted.
- iii. *Ms. Nelson offered a motion (seconded by Co-chair Sloves) that the Committee recommend that the ANC 6A send a letter to DDOT requesting that Linden Court be moved to the top of the ANC 6A alley-repair list. The motion passed unanimously.*

**C. Save the Wylie Garden proposal:**

- i. Paige Byrne made a presentation on the location, history, benefits and value of the Wylie Garden site (corner of Thirteenth (13<sup>th</sup>) and Wylie Streets), which serves as a community garden. Two of the lots are owned by the H Street Community Development Corporation (HSCDC) and one by a

private individual. HSCDC has announced plans to sell its two (2) lots. Community and Committee members engaged in a discussion of what might be done to preserve the garden for continued community use. Nick Alberti and Tony Green (community members) noted that the HSCDC is a non-profit receiving City funding, and it would be consistent with its non-profit status to continue allowing the community to use the site. Ms. Byrne is leading a campaign to save the garden and encourages neighbors to join the effort, including signing a petition; several supportive neighbors attended the Committee meeting in support.

- ii. ***Co-chair Mahmud offered a motion (seconded by Co-chair Sloves) that the Committee recommend that ANC 6A send a letter of support for preserving Wylie Garden to Kenneth Brewer, President of H Street Community Development Corporation. The motion passed unanimously.***

**D. Request for DDOT to clarify the process for getting a block designated for resident-only parking:**

- i. Co-chair Mahmud provided background on the issue. A year or so ago, ANC 6A requested clarification on the resident-only parking rules at the request of the residents on the 900 block of L Street NE. Those residents were seeking resident-only designation for their block but were denied - ostensibly because new regulations were under development and soon to be released. To date, DDOT has not provided an updated process explanation, so these residents have not been able to pursue the designation.
- ii. ***Co-chair Mahmud offered a motion (seconded by Co-chair Sloves) that the Committee recommend that ANC 6A send a letter to the new DDOT director requesting clarification and issuance of the rules for resident-only parking. The motion passed unanimously.***

**E. Parking and pedestrian safety issues at northwest corner of Fourteenth (14<sup>th</sup>) Street NE and East Capitol St.:**

- i. Co-chair Sloves introduced the topic, noting that the matter had been discussed at both the February and March 2015T&PS Committee meetings. Committee Member Nelson had raised the issue of the illegal parking of Al's Pizza delivery vehicles on public space at the corner of Fourteenth (14<sup>th</sup>) Street and East Capitol Street NE. They are causing a safety hazard because they are constantly driving on the sidewalk, which is heavily used by pedestrians and children on bicycles and scooters. She has had difficulty in persuading the police to intervene. Commissioner Matt Levy reported that he has since asked the owners to modify the behavior of their drivers. Ms. Nelson reported that there has been no improvement and that, in her view, the ANC needed to request enforcement. There was some discussion as to whether the ANC should assist the owners in identifying a solution to their parking issues, perhaps requesting a loading zone or identifying private parking spaces - or whether the owners need to take responsibility for identifying and implementing solutions themselves.
- ii. ***Ms. Nelson offered a motion (seconded by Co-Chair Mahmud) that the Committee recommend that ANC 6A send a letter to both DPW and MPD requesting enforcement action. The motion passed 4-0-1 (Levison abstaining).***

F. DDOT's second proposed rulemaking on "pocket" parks:

- i. Co-chairs Mahmud and Sloves and Ms. Nelson gave the background. In July 2014, DDOT issued a draft of revised regulations governing the maintenance of triangle or "pocket" parks also known as Federal Reservations. The draft was issued in response to concerns about maintenance issues at these parks and the need for continued public access to the parks. ANC 6A reviewed the draft and issued comments during the initial comment period. For the most part, the revised regulations reflect the position adopted by ANC 6A; they make plain that the parks are to remain a public asset, accessible to all, and outline a transparent process for allowing community input into the landscaping and maintenance of the parks. However, the ANC's request for a clarification of the definition of "triangle parks" was not incorporated.
- ii. Committee members and community members spoke on various aspects of the regulations. Most notably, Joyce West, whose home is adjacent to Reservation 266, spoke at length about her discomfort at being so close to a public park and requesting that the eight (8) foot buffer in the regulations be increased to twenty (20) feet. She also expressed concern that the City would not be able to adequately maintain the parks and that adjacent homeowners would be unwilling to assist with the maintenance since they do not have control of the space and would have to go through too many bureaucratic hoops to obtain permission to conduct maintenance. She handed out photos to illustrate these points. Two community members, whose homes also abut Federal Reservations, expressed similar concerns. Commissioner Levy stated that eight (8) feet is a random distance; some residents are concerned that the process is moving backwards; and there should be some grandfathering of parcels that are well-maintained and have already gone through a process. Others present countered that the regulations would actually increase public maintenance of the parks by reinforcing that they are community assets and guaranteeing that individuals and organizations other than the adjacent homeowners could use the spaces and participate in their care.
- iii. As the committee had to vacate the room at 9:00 pm, the discussion ended while views were still being aired. Also, the deadline for comments is currently set at May 2, 2015, before the date of the next ANC meeting.
- iv. ***Ms. Nelson offered a motion (seconded by Co-chair Mahmud) that the Committee recommend that:***
  1. ***ANC 6A submit a letter [draft text was provided at the meeting] in support of DDOT's regulations but requesting a modification of the definition of "triangle park" to eliminate ambiguity and asking that DDOT attach a list of triangle parks to the regulations, also to eliminate ambiguity.***
  2. ***ANC 6A request an extension of the deadline for comments.***
- v. ***The motion passed 5-1 (Commissioner Levy voting in opposition).***

VII. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.