

**ANC 6A Transportation & Public Space Committee Meeting Minutes
Maury Elementary School (1250 Constitution Avenue, NE)
October 20, 2014**

- I. Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm.
- II. Introductions
Committee members in attendance were Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) Commissioner J. Omar Mahmud (Co-Chair), Todd Sloves (Co-Chair), Jeff Fletcher, Lara Levison, and Andrea Adleman. Also in attendance were ANC 6A Chairman Nick Alberti; Gil (Gilbert) Davidson, Housing Inspection Program Manager, Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs; Jeff Baxter, District Department of Transportation (DDOT); James Cheeks, DDOT Traffic Safety and Traffic Engineering; and over 20 residents.
- III. Community Comment - None.
- IV. Announcements - Mr. Sloves made the following announcements:
 - A. The US Department of Transportation has announced a new initiative to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety. For more information, please go to <http://www.dot.gov/office-policy/transportation-policy/secretary's-action-plan-bike-and-pedestrian-safety>
 - B. The “Right Tree, Right Place” planting program in cooperation with Casey Trees is accepting requests to plant up to two trees on residential property (with a co-pay). For more information, please go to <https://www.pepco.com/forms/pepco/residential/treerequest.aspx>
- V. New Business
 - A. **Consideration of traffic calming petition for the 800 block of Seventh (7th) Street NE**
 - i. Commissioner Mahmud explained that he had met with residents in the 800 block of Seventh (7th) Street NE to discuss serious safety concerns related to traffic speeding on this block. The concerned residents have completed the traffic calming petition required by DDOT before DDOT will consider traffic calming improvements on the block. Mr. Mahmud indicated he completely supports this request.
 - ii. *Commissioner Mahmud offered a motion that the Committee recommend ANC 6A send a letter to DDOT in support of the resident petition requesting traffic calming analysis and improvements in the 800 block of Seventh (7th) Street NE. Mr. Fletcher seconded the motion, which passed without objection.*
 - B. **Consideration of traffic calming needs for intersections on Tennessee Avenue, Fourteenth (14th) and Fifteenth (15th) Streets NE**

- i. Co-chair Todd Sloves presented maps and described needs for traffic calming at Fourteenth (14th) Street and Tennessee Avenue NE, Tennessee and F Street NE, Tennessee and E Street. NE, and Tennessee and Fifteenth (15th) Street NE.
 - ii. *Co-chair Sloves offered a motion to ask DDOT to evaluate these intersections for stop signs [for the directions that do not currently have stop signs]. Co-chair Mahmud offered a friendly amendment to ask DDOT to consider additional signage in addition to stop signs, for example, “cross traffic does not stop.” Mr. Fletcher seconded the motion, which passed without objection.*
- C. Request trash and recycling collection for residents of Atlas Court NE
Commissioner Mahmud moved that this item be removed from the agenda at the request of the residents who originally proposed this item for ANC consideration. The motion was seconded and approved without objection.
- D. Discussion with officials from the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), Department of Consumer Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) and Department of Public Works (DPW)(not in attendance) concerning collaborative partnership with residents, businesses and ANC 6A to address sanitation, traffic and safety concerns in alleys
 Commissioner Mahmud opened the discussion by describing the tremendous challenges faced by stakeholders in ANC 6A’s alleys. There are many more bars and restaurants in recent years, rather than retail stores, which puts a strain on transportation demand in alleys and efforts to keep alleys clean. There are problems relating to hosing off mats in back, oil and grease collection, maintaining clean trash collection areas (by both residents and businesses), increased traffic, illegal parking, etc. Residents can call 311 to request assistance in a reactive manner (e.g. alley cleaning, illegal dumping, etc.), but a proactive approach to dealing with these issues seems to be lacking. Commissioner Mahmud expressed gratitude that residents, businesses and city officials all seem willing to help, so the next step is planning a coordinated effort to proactively addressing alley concerns, which he hopes to begin tonight. Mr. Mahmud thanked all neighbors, business owners and city officials in attendance and suggested that discussion during the evening would be more helpful if participants focused on cooperation and solution development rather than engaging in a blame game for any past acts. Mr. Mahmud then opened the floor to city officials in attendance, which would be followed by an opportunity for other attendees to engage in the discussion. Mr. Mahmud also expressed regret that DPW was not in attendance and asked that the representatives from DDOT and DCRA at the meeting reach out to colleagues at DPW about attending the next meeting.

- i. Comments by Gil (Gilbert) Davidson, Housing Inspection Program Manager, Property Maintenance Division, DCRA: If there is dilapidation, missing gutters, commercial or residential, you can call 202-442-9557, option 6, to request a property maintenance inspection. If it is on private space, it is DCRA's responsibility; if it is public space, it is DPW and DDOT. DCRA deals with it from a business perspective. DCRA also oversees the noise ordinance for the city. DCRA works with Alcohol Beverage Regulation Administration (ABRA) and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). There is also a noise task force. Improper curbs and things of that nature, that is DDOT. If it is private property, and there is trash, DCRA can cite the owner. Property maintenance covers the entire city. DCRA has jurisdiction overall, but DCRA cannot tell DPW or DDOT what to do. If residents have issues with trees, that is DDOT.
- ii. Discussion of whom to contact, and responsiveness. Mr. Davidson mentioned a "One Choice" program for businesses, which is a current DCRA effort underway to reach out to businesses to inform them of their legal obligations concerning trash, noise, cleanliness, etc. Neighbor concern: 311 calls can get misdirected. Another problem is that agencies often do not reply. Mr. Mahmud: It would be helpful to have a one-pager from each agency with information on who to contact with specific concerns. Mr. Davidson: You can give everyone here my email. I give out my email, cell number everywhere I go. I am on call 24/7. (Gilbert Davidson, Housing Inspections Program Manager, Office: 202-481-3393, Cell: 202-439-4403, gilbert.davidson@dc.gov). I have mentioned redoing the pamphlet on who does what, and who are the key players in the key agencies, but the agency wants to hold off on this effort until November. Jeff Baxter, DDOT: About non-responsiveness, what is happening is that we get a lot of things routed to us via email or phone call, but that does not hold us accountable. We like to use the 311 system to validate that there has been an issue reported.
- iii. Commissioner Mahmud: This is the first of what I hope are many discussions. This meeting is more about coming up with creative ideas to address alley issues proactively, although we also appreciate hearing information about how to address specific matters that currently need resolution. We want to know what tools are at our disposal from the different agencies. What can neighbors and businesses do to change conditions in their alleys? We are hoping concerned agencies can coordinate on creative solutions and possibly explore best practices that have been developed in other urban areas similar to the District. This is less about whether a city agency is responding to a specific complaint or not, but participants should still feel free to speak to those issues as well since we have city officials here. I just wanted to stress that complaints about current issues can be brought to my attention offline so the discussion tonight is not

- dominated by those concerns. Neighbor Kim Tomadjolou: Yolanda Hood with DPW is excellent. But how do you contain the problems that are large, constant, and cannot be solved in one visit?
- iv. Neighbor Kim Tomadjolou: My concern is enforcement. You guys are powerless to stop businesses and my neighbors from not following the rules. Examples: trash bins overflowing and alleys closed due to construction. Thousand (\$1,000.00) dollar fines were issued, but the problem has not stopped. Should violators get fined until the problem is fixed? Trash, garbage, oil and grease cans getting knocked over, drain stopped up, illegal cement dumped from a construction site. It is one or two businesses that do not get it.
 - v. An attendee raised an issue about the alleys around Kingman Park and Rosedale, which were recently redone. They left a 12-inch step going into the community garden. Is it an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) violation? The location is between Twentieth (20th) and Twenty-First (21st) and D & E Streets. Mr. Baxter: That would be DDOT; I will take care of it.
 - vi. Discussion of alley repair. Neighbor: we talked about the repair of our alley, and alley repair funding, on Maryland Avenue in the spring; people have been trying to get it repaired for 20 years. When the claim is switched over to a work order, you are unable to track it any more. Mr. Baxter: We are working on that, on a way to provide updates back to constituents. Mr. Cheeks: There is a list on the web that shows where you are in the order. We will email the link. It is a list, not a schedule. Mr. Mahmud asked that Mr. Cheeks send him the alley work order list, which he agreed to do.
 - vii. Resident Iris Gill: We live on the 1000 block of Florida Avenue NE. There is an abandoned lot (two lots wide) right next door with a big hole that breeds mosquitos and collects trash. Our three kids often cannot play outside due to mosquitos. The owner abandoned the lot three years ago after digging the hole, and the owner is out of the country. Our (house) foundation is exposed. We reached out to the ANC, and the ANC contacted DCRA and were told there were no violations they could be cited for. Mr. Davidson: Until recently, DDOT maintained vacant lots, but due to recent court ruling, they no longer do. If it is a hole, we can probably use our nuisance abatement fund to fill the hole, and grade it. Then we place a lien on the property for the cost. Send me an email. Mr. Mahmud thanked Mr. Davidson for this proposed solution and indicated he would follow up as well.
 - viii. Increasing use of alleys along H Street NE. Example: Linden Court, 1300 block of H Street, off Maryland Avenue. Neighbor Brad Greenfield: According to DDOT, this alley is so atrocious that it would consume all the alley funds for a year, so nothing will be done. Mr. Sloves: Usage of that alley is about to increase ten-fold. The new development at 1350 Maryland Avenue NE (spaces for 42 cars) will have parking access only through this alley. The businesses can no longer

load and unload on H Street because of the streetcar. Trucks back into the alley, blocking H Street as they do it. The developers of 1350 Maryland Avenue agreed to repave it, but it needs to be rebuilt. Neighbor: This is also going on with AutoZone (sold for development). It is not just one alley. There is no space to conduct business. Where can the businesses unload? Other examples: Atlas Court, 1200 block of I Street and 1200 block of Wylie Street: it is about two (2) feet wider than a trash truck; the trash trucks are causing property damage. We are seeking help to see if we can get the trash moved somewhere. Commissioner Mahmud: You cannot widen that particular alley between I and Wiley Streets because there is private property on either side. Mr. Mahmud indicated he has talked to the resident, Ms. Hoover, about petitioning to get trash collection moved to the front of houses on her block so that DPW trash trucks will not need to travel down this very narrow alley. Recycling collection has already been moved to the front of houses along this block.

- ix. Neighbor: The alley that is north of the 1200 block of H Street does not drain at all because the only drain in the alley is all the way at the Thirteenth (13th) Street end and the alley is not sloped properly in that direction. There is a collection of “sludge” from all the trash cans and dumpsters that continues to collect. I and others have tried to shovel this sludge, but it is difficult to remove. Is there a “sludge machine” to get it out? The liquid is from restaurants hosing off their mats, there is food, and birds come in and drop it in your yard. Mr. Mahmud: This is a perfect example of the need for agency cooperation; need a forward-thinking solution process. Mr. Mahmud also pointed out that this alley is challenging given it is such a long block. Mr. Cheeks: You need the District Department of the Environment (DDOE) as well. Mr. Davidson: Inform DCRA of any businesses that are dumping grease. Leave me an anonymous message.
- x. Discussion of budgets for alleys. Will there be increased budget, especially for H Street, where there will be more usage? Mr. Baxter. There is an infrastructure project management team. The information comes into our city works system, then they construct a budget for next year. Deep patches, that is a different division. Mr. Cheek: Yes, the budgets are already underfunded. Mr. Sloves: Are you putting in amounts and knowing you will have a ten (10) year backlog? A two (2) year backlog? Mr. Cheeks: We have made that cry to the overall government for years. We have a five to ten (5-10) year backlog. We have produced those numbers, shown them to everybody. We are doing some different type of alley treatments, some green alleys. Those are kind of expensive also. We are working with DDOT to get some more funding for these projects.
- xi. Prioritizing alleys. Mr. Mahmud: How does DDOT prioritize alley projects? Do you have a grading system? Can the community weigh in on prioritization of projects in their neighborhoods? Can the ANC

provide insight? Mr. Cheeks: Many got on the list from the Council or the ANC. We do go out and inspect a lot of the areas. We do a prioritization internally. Inspectors have certain criteria they use. Jeff (Baxter) is in that area. Mr. Baxter: Yes, Aaron should have sent the ANC 6A list to you. The city has 1,600 miles of sidewalks, and not enough funding for those either (\$35-50 million). There are two alleys being worked on in your ANC. Mr. Mahmud asked that DDOT follow up with him with confirmation of the alleys to be worked on next by DDOT in our ANC. Mr. Mahmud also asked for an opportunity to provide ANC input concerning alley project prioritization in ANC 6A.

- xii. Discussion of interagency coordination. Neighbor: there are several issues with alleys: surfaces, crime, drainage, parking, etc. Is there interagency communication between the various agencies to coordinate strategy so you coordinate the issues? Do you communicate with each other? Mr. Davidson: We used to have “core groups” in the districts, with a representative from each agency. These were big during Mayor Fenty’s administration, then fell off. District One still does it. It was very successful. Mr. Cheeks: We called it a walk-through. Everyone was there, taking notes, and we took care of that alley. Commissioner Mahmud: I think our next Ward 6 Councilmember, likely Charles Allen, would probably be very supportive of that. Having people together to collaborate is exactly what we are talking about at tonight’s meeting. Any opportunity for communities and city officials to collaboratively address difficult issues is a great idea. Mr. Davidson indicated that he would get Mr. Mahmud more information about engaging “core groups” for ANC 6A. Mr. Mahmud responded that this is exactly the type of collaboration he was interested in hearing about from city officials and that he eagerly looks forward to receiving more information from Mr. Davidson.
- xiii. Discussion of development of H Street. Neighbor KT: You cannot keep reacting to each incident that comes up. You need someone who can oversee and make certain decisions when there is development going on. This area has been transformed very quickly, with no study on how to deal with problems. If it cannot function, it becomes more than just fixing all these little things. Mr. Sloves: An article went around about the 1,161 new units coming to H Street. If there had been a DDOT study of whether we could deal with this many new units, would you say you could? Mr. Cheeks: I have to deal with the outcome of all these developments. What we said would happen is happening. Our agencies are pushing these projects through. We do not always have the infrastructure in place to deal with proposed development.
- xiv. Statement from a manager at one of the restaurants: I am new to the neighborhood. Is there some way we can bring government officials to train business owners on their legal requirements? The restaurant where I am working now, they know nothing. I see violations all over the place. They started this business without training. Mr. Mahmud

encouraged the manager to engage DCRA given the “One Choice” program Mr. Davidson mentioned earlier would likely be helpful. Resident: I am concerned about construction at Thirteenth (13th) and H Streets, which impacts the rear alley. This guy, because he was constructing his business, did not want us to have access to the alley, and he put up a thirteen (13) foot fence. I called the fire marshal. The owner has to agree to give us a key or take it down. The owner is in another country. His whole project is illegal. Neighbor KT: He has been building it for 5-6 years.

- xv. Statement by business owner on H Street: I have lived in the Linden Court alley since 2009. My husband and I run our business there. Our managers live in the Linden Court alley and it is a nightmare. A lot of the frustrations you feel, I also feel. We have paid out-of-pocket to have (work done). All the plumbing has to go out the front of the building. We bring our own sump pumps out to empty those potholes. I understand the frustration as a business owner, neighbor, friend, and mother.
- xvi. Neighbor: The alley behind Rite Aid and the H Street Connection has been an on-going problem. Mahmud: That is a private alley, owned by Rappaport, who owns H Street Connection. The site will be developed with retail and housing, but we are currently working with the Rappaport company to address concerns raised by residents on this block.
- xvii. Neighbor: Can you get gating on a narrow alley that is not used for cars. It accesses from Elliot. 600 block. There is or used to be a gate across the alley. Mahmud: E-mail me the specifics. I think we got an answer from DDOT about that before.
- xviii. Discussion of illegal parking in alleys. Mr. Mahmud: People are pulling into openings of alleys, parking their cars while they pick up food or run errands. Does the city have a specific way of effectively dealing with this type of illegal parking issue? Mr. Cheeks: They can get tickets. We can put up signs. Mr. Mahmud stressed that this needs a proactive solution. Waiting for parking enforcement often does not help given the person may only be there for a short time.
- xix. Meanwhile, residents are blocked from driving through the alley to gain access to their homes. This is a serious problem in the alley right next to Horace and Dickies in the 1200 block of H Street NE. Mr. Mahmud encouraged DDOT to consider some approaches so he could follow up.
- xx. Other solutions: How about some sort of program, like Casey Trees taking care of trees. Mr. Mahmud suggested we also look at an “adopt an alley” program, or something similar to that to encourage stakeholders (residents and businesses) to take an “ownership” interest.
- xxi. Mr. Mahmud wrapped up the discussion by thanking everyone for coming out to the meeting, which was a very encouraging discussion, and repeated the following follow-up items: 1) more information about

“core groups” to come from Mr. Davidson; 2) DDOT to provide us with the current alley work order list along with identification of ANC 6A alleys in the prioritization list; 3) commitment by DCRA and DDOT representatives to get the other agencies (DDOE and DPW) to come out to our next meeting, which should be in the next couple of months; and 4) city agencies to go back to their colleagues in the agencies and start developing proactive solutions to the issues discussed tonight, and to identify tools currently in place to deal with these issues. Mr. Mahmud also repeated his request that agencies look at other urban areas like ours to discover best practices.

VI. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.