

MINUTES

ANC 6A Transportation & Public Space Committee Meeting
Capitol Hill Towers, 900 G Street NE
December 18, 2017 at 7:00 pm

- I. Call meeting to order: 7:06 pm
 - A. Introductions
 - i. Committee members in attendance: Co-chair Todd Sloves, Jeff Fletcher, Elizabeth Nelson, Lara Levison, Hassan Christian
 - ii. Also attending: Commissioner Amber Gove, 6A04

- II. Announcements
 - A. The Committee will meet on the *fourth* Monday in January and February, since the third Mondays of both months are federal holidays. Those dates are January 22 and February 26, respectively.
 - B. ANC 6A is seeking volunteers to participate on committees.
 - C. Lara Levison is resigning from the Transportation and Public Space Committee.

- III. Community Comment - none

- IV. New Business
 - A. Presentation by District Department of Transportation (DDOT) officials of Streetcar Storage and Maintenance Facility Needs Assessment Study.
 - i. Presentation by Haley Peckett and Veronica Davis. Ms. Peckett is the project manager for the Union Station and Georgetown extension, and Ms. Davis led identification of the potential streetcar storage sites.
 - ii. DDOT is currently working on extending east and west at same time, but east (to Benning Road) will happen first, opening in 2024. More service will require more vehicles. They have six (6) now and will need four (4) more for the Benning Road extension. Current storage is for 10-12; DDOT will need to store 15 more vehicles for both extensions. That will require another storage facility.
 - iii. Ms. Peckett noted that a DDOT representative spoke at the ANC 6A meeting in July 2017 about the Georgetown extension. She handed out a new newsletter designed to show the public and City Council that the streetcar program is performing well. The Georgetown extension will provide great connectivity across the city. DDOT anticipates high ridership for the streetcar going across town, comparable to other cities' high-level ridership lines. DDOT is proposing dedicated lanes, off-wire operation, and higher (five-minute) frequencies, to provide round-trip service from Union Station to Georgetown and back in one hour, requiring 15 vehicles for that leg.
 - iv. A new site is needed for a streetcar storage and maintenance facility. They looked at parcels where the value was in the land, and there is development capability. The identification process so far has taken place in two tiers: Tier 1 (identification) and Tier 2 (shortlist). A list of eight (8) sites resulted, and they are planning to include up to three (3) in the NEPA assessment. None of the proposed sites are in ANC6A, though one proposal is adjacent in the Hechinger Mall, which abuts ANC 6A. About 120 people will work at the site. Whether it will be open or covered will depend on the location of the site.
 - v. Discussion of the storage facility options:

1. Hechinger Mall location: Concerns were expressed about impacts on traffic and pedestrians, possible reductions in access to shopping, and adding another DDOT facility in the neighborhood when we already have the Spingarn streetcar facility. Ms. Peckett noted that at this site, the design would be for two levels: a lower level for the streetcar facility, and the upper level, which would be at street level because of the hill, would have retail.
 2. Option N: Ms. Nelson noted that this site is supposed to be used for recreation. Commissioner Gove noted that DC has a 99-year lease for that property from the National Park Service (NPS) and is putting in little league and soccer fields. Although it is zoned by the NPS for transportation, they are not thrilled with the idea of it becoming a streetcar facility. Commissioner Gove thinks it should be off the table.
 3. Mr. Fletcher commented that the Pepco sites under consideration may need cleanup. Several people commented that Option F of the GAO building at 441 G Street NW seems like it would be especially difficult. Why are there not options in Georgetown? DDOT was not able to identify any.
 4. Community member Will Hansfield suggested looking at 3401 Water Street NW, which was a railroad facility. The owners are selling the building now. Ms. Peckett said they would look at it since they need a small storage facility in Georgetown for three (3) vehicles.
 5. DDOT will release the storage and maintenance feasibility study in January 2018 identifying three sites. There will be two public meetings, January 23 and 24, one on the east side, one on the west side, 6:00 - 8:00 pm, open house style. The feasibility study will be on the ANC 6A meeting agenda in January 2018. In the spring, possibly May 2018, the environmental (NEPA) study for the Georgetown extension will be released. The Georgetown line and car barn will be designed concurrently if funding is available.
- B. Discussion of legislation (B22-0351) introduced by Councilmember Charles Allen that would create a School Parking Zone Program, allowing DDOT to issue permits for school staff to park in particular zones during school hours.
- i. Chris Laskowski from Councilmember Allen's described the genesis of the bill. The bill came out of a concern that DC is spending tens of millions to renovate schools and include parking that is required by zoning requirements. This space is being taken away from play space in order to meet these requirements.
 - ii. What the bill does:
 1. Authorizes the Mayor/DDOT to set up school parking zones. These would be a defined area around or close to the school that would be available for teachers and staff to park during the day with the purchase of a parking pass. The way it is written, there would be opportunities for ANCs and communities to weigh in on what areas are designated. Councilmember Allen received feedback from the executive that this section should be more prescriptive.
 2. Sets up a fund for payments and fines, which would be used for transit subsidies for teachers at the school.

3. The Council cannot amend the zoning code directly. So, the third section pushes back on the zoning requirements. If you have these school parking zones, you would not have to include the parking required by the zoning code.
- iii. The Executive wants improvements made to the bill before they can support it. Councilmember Mary Cheh's committee has the bill; some changes will be made before it is marked up.
 - iv. Discussion/Q&A
 1. The main impetus for the bill: as schools are being built or renovated, they are told they must build parking instead of playgrounds because of zoning requirements. Parking is even displacing existing play space.
 2. The school zone would be shared by teachers and residents during the day; residents would not be prevented from parking there. For locations where transit headways are low (buses are infrequent, for example), it is hard for teachers to depend on transit.
 3. Concern from the Executive (Mayor): this would be free parking off site, because the Executive would not be able to impose a price, and free parking would encourage driving. The way teachers' contracts are written now, DC is supposed to provide parking on-site as a benefit for its employees.
 4. Who would be responsible for administering the program? Mr. Laskowski: we left it to the Executive to determine through regulation, but we will have to be more prescriptive as we move forward. DDOT would manage the fund, set the boundaries, manage the signage, etc.
 5. Schools are losing play space in real time. This is the case at Maury Elementary School per Ms. Nelson and Will Hansfield (former transportation staff for Councilmember Cheh, now transportation planner for Georgetown Business Improvement District (BID)). Maury will have to cut play space in half because of the parking requirement. The playground at Maury is a community space after hours that we do not want to lose. At Eliot/Hine, they will have to convert a tennis court to parking. Yet there is ample street parking within 3-4 blocks of many schools during the day.
 6. Mr. Hansfield: Because the parking is distributed, rather than concentrated, this is a reasonable compromise, to share the public resource of on-street parking. Schools are not always accessible by transit; some people will need to drive. A fee of \$10-20 per month is likely for the parking pass. One school had to build a parking garage, which was very costly, but still does not provide parking for all the teachers and staff. DDOT set up a perimeter parking plan for one Capitol Hill school but cannot do it again because they did not have the authority by law to do it.
 7. Commissioner Gove: DC has parking requirements but not play space requirements. According to a memo sent by the principal of Maury, at 8:00 am there were 126 available legal parking spots within 2-3 blocks of the school. In the updated proposal for the Maury school design, 46 percent of the property would be taken up by parking. The design is being finalized right now for Maury. She recommends having a discussion at the ANC in February 2018. (Someone said that Maury can seek a variance.)

8. Co-chair Sloves: In putting this topic on the agenda, I did not realize there was a specific problem at a specific school (Maury) that was the impetus of this bill. If we had noticed this specific issue to the community, we might have drawn out more participation. It might seem underhanded if we offered a recommendation about Maury without having been clear about the issue on our agenda. We should make sure that is clearer when it goes to the full ANC.
9. Mr. Laskowski: there are other schools in the same position. It is in the interest of the community to say that children's play space is the priority. Councilmember Allen would like it to go to markup soon.
10. Ms. Nelson recommended to Commissioner Gove that she contact the zoning committee and ask them to put it on their agenda for their next meeting which is coming up shortly.
11. ***Co-chair Sloves offered a motion, seconded by Ms. Nelson, recommending that ANC6A support the concept proposed in this legislation, and that we support it on the basis that it provides an important fix for the problem in our community in that we are prioritizing parking on school property over recreational space. The motion passed unanimously 6-0 with Commissioner Gove voting.***

- C. Consideration of support for petition for traffic calming near Miner Elementary School on Fifteenth (15th) Street NE and Sixteenth (16th) Street NE
 - i. Sherilyn Rigby: There is a blind alley along the south side of Miner, between the east side of Sixteenth (16th) Street and west side of Fifteenth (15th) Street. Cars come flying out of there and do not stop until they are on the sidewalk. There are no stop signs. There is a 15 mph sign there. People are cutting around the traffic; often they are driving their own children to Miner. She brought it up to the school, and people brought up other traffic safety problems around the school. Ms Rigby stated that she is here to learn what are the best ways to calm traffic.
 - ii. Commissioner Gove recommended that we ask DDOT to establish (or revise and existing) Safe Routes to School plan.
 - iii. ***Co-chair Sloves offered a motion, seconded by Jeff Fletcher, to recommend that the ANC to ask DDOT to investigate pedestrian safety around Miner Elementary School as well as establish or review a "Safe Routes to Schools" plan for Miner. The motion passed unanimously 6-0 with Commissioner Gove voting.***

V. Additional Community Comment - none

VI. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.