

MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 28, 1990, MEETING  
OF THE DUPONT CIRCLE ANC (ANC 2-B)

The Dupont Circle ANC held a regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, November 28, 1990, at 7:30 p.m. at St. Thomas Church. Commissioners Rieffel, Bass, Evans, and Maggi were present.

Chairman Evans called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The police representative from the 3rd District was not present.

During the Open Forum, Mr. Richard Levy called the attention of the ANC to the conditions at Stead Playground. He stated that the dirt at the playground is full of glass, that although parents have asked that the playground be given more attention, no work has been done. In addition, additional equipment is needed for 1 and 2 year olds. Mr. Bass responded that the ANC had been briefed by representatives of the Recreation Department of plans for major renovations at Stead, but has heard nothing since. It was agreed that the ANC would send a letter to the appropriate authorities calling the hazardous conditions to their attention.

Another citizen commented that loading at Larimer's is continuing to create problems.

Mr. Evans noted that on December 4 there will be Council hearings concerning downtown development. The resolution under consideration flies in the face of 20 years of work by the ANC and other community groups.

Mr. Evans moved, and Mrs. Rieffel seconded, a motion that the ANC opposes the enactment of this resolution (PR 8-531. The ANC supports the concept of a living downtown and reaffirms its position that the Comprehensive Plan is law and not just a guideline. Further, the ANC believes the Zoning Commission is and should be independent and that the Council should not place undue pressure on it. The ANC also believes that a living downtown helps prevent crime and will help slow the decrease of population in the District.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Mrs. Rieffel presented the attached letter, and moved that it be approved and transmitted by the chairman, with amendments as proposed by Mr. Maggi. The motion was approved, unanimously.

Mrs. Rieffel moved and Mr. Bass seconded a motion that the ANC approve an amendment to the ANC 's FY 1991 budget to authorize the expenditure of up to \$400 for a FAX machine. The motion was approved, with all commissioners voting in favor except Mr. Maggi, who abstained.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alaire Bretz Rieffel  
Recording Secretary

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Mr. Arnold Goldstein  
Superintendent for National Capital Parks Central  
900 Ohio Drive, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20242

Dear Superintendent Goldstein:

The Dupont Circle Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC 2B) at its regularly stated meeting on November 28, 1990, passed the following motion.

The Dupont Circle Advisory Neighborhood Commission urges the Superintendent for the National Capital Parks Central to stop the consumption of alcohol within the park within Dupont Circle by exercising his authority under 36 CFR §2.35(3)(i) to "close all or a portion of a public use area or public facility within a park area to the consumption of alcoholic beverages and/or to the possession of a bottle, can or other receptacle containing an alcoholic beverage that is open, or that has been opened, or whose seal is broken or the contents of which have been partially removed." We note that the following criteria specified in 36 CFR § 2.35(3)(i) (A) and (B) are met by present circumstances within the Dupont Circle Park:

"(A) The consumption of an alcoholic beverage or the possession of an open container of an alcoholic beverage would be inappropriate considering other uses of the location and the purpose for which it is maintained or established; or

"(B) Incidents of aberrant behavior related to the

consumption of alcoholic beverages are of such magnitude that the diligent application of the authorities in [other provisions] over a reasonable time period does not alleviate the problem."

In particular, we call your attention to the following circumstances, all of which have continued over a long period of time:

The consumption of alcohol within Dupont Circle is so commonplace that public drinking is a disturbing element in culture of the park. Every morning park maintenance personnel must remove great quantities of empty beer cans and similar litter. Alcohol is not consumed in moderation, such as beer or wine with a picnic, but is consumed in excess. This inevitably leads to public drunkenness, public urination and defecation, and public vomiting.

The concentration of inebriated persons within this park make the park unsafe and unpleasant for other uses. Women who walk through the park are verbally harassed. Persons who wish to play chess at the tables in the park do so at their peril. The park is unsafe not to mention unpleasant) for any activities for children. Prudent neighborhood residents walk around the periphery of the park, especially at night, rather than passing through the park.

Inebriated persons loitering in the park often resort to violence. As you know, a fatal double-stabbing occurred on a Sunday afternoon by persons who had been loitering and drinking in the park. There have been innumerable less serious incidents. That the park is unsafe even though it is completely exposed and offers no hiding places is particularly appalling.

The ability of the Park Police to control violent behavior is limited because of their inability to control drinking. This fact is well-known in the community, and persons who wish to drink publicly congregate within the park for that purpose. This makes a mockery of law enforcement within the park, and is manifestly unfair to your officers who are responsible for maintaining order in the park, who must wait for a criminal act to occur before they have authority to act, rather than acting to prevent crimes by controlling public inebriation.

The park is named for Admiral Samuel du Pont, a member of the prominent du Pont family of Wilmington, Delaware, who have contributed the fountain. Members of the du Pont family who reside in the Dupont Circle neighborhood have expressed great consternation about the misuse of the park caused by the inappropriate consumption of alcohol there.

Parks should exist for the enjoyment of the entire community, and particularly for the enjoyment of the very young and the very old. It is precisely those people who now are precluded from using the park. We urge you to act immediately to rectify this situation.

While we understand that your officers who patrol the park now have the authority to enforce laws against the illegal use of drugs, we note that the park has become a popular rendezvous point for bicycle messengers at the end of the day, who consume both alcohol and marijuana there publicly. The ANC has also received complaints that individuals have been riding motorcycles around the park's sidewalk as if it were a racetrack. We ask that you vigorously enforce the present laws concerning the use of illegal drugs and other crimes within the park.

The Dupont Circle ANC will be happy to cooperate with your efforts to improve the conditions in Dupont Circle. Please let us know how we can be of assistance.

Very truly yours,

Jack Evans  
Chairman