

Minutes of the December 8, 1999 Public Meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2B (Dupont Circle)

Chairman Pitsor called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. Commissioners Micone, Shannon, Jackson, DeHart and Newton were present. Commissioner King was out of town.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS The minutes of the November, 1999 meeting were approved as distributed.

POLICE AND CRIME REPORTS

Lt. Tagliaferro spoke for the Third District. The only crime category to increase was office burglaries. Arrests were made for several Connecticut Avenue robberies. The Third District is trying to develop a plan to prevent robberies. 3D has assigned two foot officers in the shopping areas during the Christmas shopping season. Officers Kennedy and Weekes were introduced as the PSA 309 Powerwatch officers.

Commissioner Jackson requested that 3D begin enforcement of the truck and bus restriction on Q Street since the white (legal) signs have been posted. Chairman Pitsor asked whether plans have been developed to cleanup graffiti since it is part of the Clean City Initiative. Commissioner DeHart requested that any plan also include handbills on cars which are also illegal. Lt. Tagliaferro was unaware of any plan to work on graffiti but agreed to report back at the January meeting. Chairman Pitsor reported a problem from lack of police response when DPW was attempting to do tree work on in the 1700 block of Q St. Commissioner Micone inquired about the status of a death at 2130 P St. Lt. Tagliaferro indicated the death was the result of a sexual act and that it was not yet determined to be murder. Chairman Pitsor asked Lt. Tagliaferro to report back on all the above items at the next meeting.

A resident asked about the "No more prisons" graffiti and why the police have done nothing despite City Paper's publishing the picture of the person responsible. Also, it was noted that the "Fur Kills" posters had also been featured in a press report. Chairman Pitsor asked Lt. Tagliaferro to report back on these matters. Nancy Fiedler asked why parking tickets are issued at apartment buildings on P St (west of the circle) but not in front of the hotels.

OPEN FORUM

Chairman Pitsor reported that the Safeway at 20th and S Sts. would reopen on Friday, December 11 and that DCMAP will be attending the January meeting to present their banner program for Dupont Circle.

Chairman Pitsor reported the death of Mark Clapp, landscaper for Dept. of Interior and in particular the planned Dupont Circle renovation project. The Dupont Circle park project will be delayed and the previously announced January presentation postponed.

Chairman Pitsor responded to accusations by the *Intowner* newspaper that ANC 2B makes decisions prior to meetings. He indicated that we are covered by the same sunshine laws as the city council. Per the law, we can meet to freely exchange ideas and discuss the ramifications of matters before the commission. The public meeting is to publicly discuss matter, take and record formal votes on matters and air reasons for decisions. All Commission decisions are made at public meetings.

Judy Werdell asked if anyone has seen the *Northwest Current* in the neighborhood. She suggested that we call and request its presence in the neighborhood.

ISSUES

1. **S and T Streets Parks** Iris Molotsky represented Friends of S & T Sts. Parks and Richard Mason represented ANC 1C09 in whose SMD the parks exist. Mr. Mason gave a history of the parks past renovation and the plan for Phase II renovation which is needed because the grass is almost gone. The plan would call for waist high iron fences around both parks and dividing the S St. park into two sections. The southern most section would be restrict to people use, the remaining areas would be unrestricted. An irrigation system will included for both parks. All funding will be private and the Friends group is tax exempt.

Heather Shaner of St Street spoke representing residents opposed to the renovations. She questioned whether sufficient notice was given of meetings by the Friends group to develop the plan. Her group supports the irrigation system and signage, but no fences. They would prefer the police enforce the existing dog leash laws and rules of the parks in their current state. She reported that the park is attracting people from outside the neighborhood via a website posting for a dog-run park. There is also concern that dividing the S St. park would limit some recreation uses.

Ms. Molotsky summarized the areas of agreement among the two groups and thus is hoping for some compromise. She reported that *The Intowner* published the polling notices and public meetings. Leaflets were also distributed for each meeting. A resident of 1700 block of 17th St. does not want the S St. park divided because it is needed for her child' recreation. A resident at 17th and S Sts moved in the area because of the parks. He felt the notice was insufficient, the fences would change the existing dynamics which are positive and the overall process to develop the plan was deficient.

Chairman Pitsor asked if there would be gates for the separate sections. Mr. Mason reported there would be perimeter fencing and formal gates. Ed Grandis appreciated the recent make over of the parks but questioned whether long term maintenance was considered. Also, the fences can

become a nuisance since they will collect trash as it is blown around the neighborhood.

Commissioner Shannon questioned why we were capitulating and creating a dog run for people from outside the neighborhood. She felt that a combined ANC 1C and 2B meeting was needed before making a formal statement regarding the proposal. Commissioner Shannon then moved and Commissioner Micone seconded that:

ANC 2B take no position on the Friends of S and T Sts Park Resolution at this time. ANC 2B will facilitate further meetings with concerned residents. ANC 2B does support installation of park usage signs and an irrigation system.

The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Micone commended the parties on their initial work on the project.

- 2. John Hopkins University, special exception request.** Stephen David, Assoc. Dean reviewed the plans of the university's purchase and use of 1717 Massachusetts Ave. They have a zoning hearing on January 5, 2000. They plan to consolidate students from several buildings around the neighborhood into this site as the current tenant leases expire. There are 83 parking spaces in the buildings. Most students at the other buildings use public transportation, only about 20% drive to JHU. They anticipate a maximum of 300 students. There were no specific answers to questions about further growth.

O St. resident, Jeff Brooks felt JHU is a major asset in the neighborhood. He knows residents who attend. Ms. Kelly of 1727 Massachusetts Ave. reported the current tenants are not good neighbors and that the parking garage ramp is problematic. Mr. David reported that they plan to have a community auditorium as space becomes available. During the first seven years the building will still be on the tax rolls since space will still be leased. Only the space used by JHU will be tax exempt and they will decide later about a community amenity.

Chairman Pitsor then moved and Commissioner Jackson seconded that

ANC 2B send a letter to BZA re: case #16526 supporting the special exception use at 1717 Massachusetts Ave for a change from office to post secondary evening and weekend classroom use per the Johns Hopkins University Campus Plan. Additionally, the parking spaces at 1717 will be available to students and the university will work with the community to develop activities for the Dupont Circle community within the space.

The motion passed unanimously.

- 3. Firehook Bakery Pierre Abushacra, owner,** presented his plans to add sidewalk seating. He plans to utilize the area under the existing awning and will not be using umbrellas. There will be 24 seats with an 11' clearance from the wooden planter fencing to the curb. The request is for

rental from April through October each year.

Ms. Puglisi, a resident, suggested that they have year round seating for sunny winter days. Judy Werdell asked that they be mindful of the storm drains which catch trash and also consider upgrading the adjoining tree boxes. Mr. Abushacra responded that he agreed with Ms. Werdell's concerns and would be adding one staff person to regularly clean the patio area.

Commissioner Micone indicated that he would contact Mr. Abushacra if trash became a problem. He then made the following motion that was seconded by Commissioner Shannon.

ANC 2B supports the public space application for Firehook Bakery at 1901 Q Street NW

The motion passed unanimously. He expressed his thanks for the work on the cafe plan as there was some initial opposition to the sidewalk cafe at this location.

4. **Class B ABC renewals.** Both the Oasis Market and Fairfax Market are in Commissioner Micone SMD. He indicated that he had received no comments from the community on either establishment. The ANC took no action on these renewals.
5. **World Bank Public Space Application, 1850 I St.** Brian Stephenson, architect, presented on behalf of the bank. The public space use is for an outdoor play space for their child care center at this location. There will be a 7' fence (which exceeds the 42" norm). They will be changing the landscaping and will include a 3' hedge on the east side of the proposed space. They will be adding green space inside the fence. The center is to be a developmental site for staffing other World Bank child care centers and have considered an intern program with UDC. They plan to open the interior center on January 3, 2000.

Commissioner Micone questioned the security plans given that some segments of society are opposed to the bank. Mr. Stephenson responded that the gates will be alarmed, there will be outdoor cameras, and the bank lobby has security staff and is immediately adjacent to the proposed space. Judy Werdell asked if the Bank would consider improving the treescape along I Street and Mr. Stephenson indicated they would.

Chairman Pitsor then moved and Commissioner Shannon seconded that:

ANC 2B support the public space request by CarrAmerica and The World Bank at 1850 I Street per their presentation and we request that the Bank install tree protection along I Street.

The motion passed unanimously.

6. **Council Bill 13-34** Chairman Pitsor introduced this bill as the Prohibition on the Sale of Beer/Malt Liquor in Single containers of 40 ounces or less. The bill was introduced by Council

member Catania to resolve problems in some neighborhoods from the sale of smaller single bottles and cans of beer. Resident Jonathan Heller reported that he saw similar restrictions in the proposed omnibus liquor reform and he is opposed to it because he enjoys purchasing single test bottles of micro brewery and imported beers and would be prohibited under the proposed legislation. Chairman Pitsor noted that Mr. Catania indicated that in some parts of the city 30% of all liquor sales are by single bottles. Commissioner Shannon reported on her discussions with several store owners. Chairman Pitsor moved and Commissioner Micone seconded that:

ANC 2B send a letter to Council member Catania that although we understand the intent of the proposed legislation, it is a broad approach. ANC 2B has had success with individual voluntary agreements to resolve the problems with store owners regarding single bottle sales. Also, the proposed legislation would prohibit consumers from purchasing certain specialty and imported beers that are sold only as singles. Therefore, ANC 2B cannot support the legislation as currently drafted.

The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Parking Task Force** Commissioner Micone reported the task force met on November 30. They evaluated the many positions previously discussed. They have set a tentative date of January 18 to have a draft proposal for review. At that time the committee will schedule a public meeting for a full review. Mr. Micone noted that approximately 90 new spaces are anticipated in the survey area which is greater than other task forces found. Ms. Puglisi, a resident of 21st St. asked why we have to move our cars every week for mechanized street cleaning when the personal sweepers in the past were more efficient. Chairman Pitsor responded that the program was initiated as a result of neighborhood lobbying.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner DeHart reported that construction for the 15th & O Sts site was planned to begin approximately December 13. She understands that the Fresh Fields store is on schedule to open in September, 2000 although there are questions on the architectural style. The liquor store next door to Fresh Fields' site has been purchased and will be renovated. The new store will cease sale of malt liquor and the new owner is looking for suggestions from neighbors on updated stock offerings.

OLD BUSINESS

Anne Seminara of 1727 Massachusetts Ave repeated her past protest of the new Planned Parenthood Offices at 18th and Massachusetts Ave. She finds the zoning order offensive given there were 103 protests and only 6 people at the hearing. She also objects to the current fence. Commissioner Jackson responded that the fence was a standard construction fence to prevent injuries during the construction process and would not be a permanent fence. Chairman Pitsor agreed to help Ms. Seminara investigate why she has had no response from BZA on her protests.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new businesses discussed at this meeting.

Chairman Pitsor announced the next public meeting for January 12 and adjourned this meeting at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald Jackson
Secretary