



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Dupont Circle Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2B

September 21, 2023

Ms. Tanya Mitchell
Mayor's Special Event Task Group
Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency
2720 Martin Luther King Junior Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20032
tanya.mitchell@dc.gov

Mr. Japer Bowles
Director
Mayor's Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Affairs
2000 14th Street NW, Suite 101
Washington, DC 20009
japer.bowles@dc.gov

RE: 2023 17th Street High Heel Race

Dear Ms. Mitchell and Director Bowles,

At its regular meeting on September 13, 2023, the Dupont Circle Advisory Neighborhood Commission ("ANC 2B" or "Commission") considered the above-referenced matter. With 8 of 9 Commissioners in attendance, a quorum at a duly-noticed public meeting, the Commission approved the following resolution by a vote of (8-0-0):

WHEREAS, the 17th Street High Heel Race was first organized by Billy Williams and Eric Little on Halloween 1986 and consisted of 25 drag queens running from JR's Bar up 17th Street NW to the upstairs bar at Annie's Paramount Steakhouse,

WHEREAS, by 1991 the 17th Street High Heel Race saw extreme police brutality against the spectators, leading LGBTQ activists to obtain apologies and concessions from the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), which led to improved relations between MPD, the DC Government, and the LGBTQ community,

WHEREAS, by 2004 the costs involved in public safety around the 17th Street High Heel Race prompted Councilmember David Catania and Mayor Anthony Williams to have the city cover all fees related to public safety for the event,

WHEREAS, in 2010 Mayor Adrian Fenty and the DC Council designated the 1500 and 1600 blocks of 17th Street NW as “Frank Kameny Way” after the gay civil rights activist Dr. Frank Kameny,

WHEREAS, community activist and businessman Dave Peruzza, the owner of Pitcher’s DC Bar and A League of Her Own and the longtime manager of JR’s Bar, coordinated the race from 1997 until 2019,

WHEREAS, in 2017 the DC Government became an official sponsor of the event, and in 2018 the DC Government took over the organizing of the event, including the logistics and fees,

WHEREAS, Swann Street NW between S Street and T Street NW has been renamed by the DC Council and the Mayor to commemorate William Dorsey Swann, a formerly enslaved Black drag queen, and it is expected that the 17th Street High Heel Race participants will extend beyond 17th Street NW to walk along Swann Street NW,

WHEREAS, the 17th Street High Heel Race is expected to draw several thousand pedestrians starting on the afternoon of the race and extending for hours after its completion, and

WHEREAS, Dupont Circle is a neighborhood accessible by countless modes of public transportation, and public celebrations and events such as the 17th Street High Heel Race are a critical component of Mayor Bowser's Comeback Plan, which envisions a vibrant and equitable future as part of DC’s Downtown Action Plan.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that ANC 2B fully endorses and celebrates the hosting of the 17th Street High Heel Race along Frank Kameny Way on Tuesday, October 24th, 2023.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2B calls on the Mayor’s Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Affairs and the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) to work with the ANC to create a safe space for the thousands of participants and spectators of the race, including a pedestrian-only zone and other public safety measures.

Commissioners Vincent Slatt (2B03@anc.dc.gov), China Dickerson (2B04@anc.dc.gov), Patricia Bencivenga (2B07@anc.dc.gov), and Meg Roggensack (2B01@anc.dc.gov) are the Commission’s representatives in this matter.

ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Meg Roggensack". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "R".

Meg Roggensack
Chair