

ECKINGTON CIVIC ASSOCIATION MEETING

CARING FOR THE COMMUNITY WE LIVE IN

MEETING MINUTES MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2017

Attendance: 36 people

PRESIDENT AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **VERNON (ECA PRESIDENT)**
 - DDOT is hosting “Tackle Urbanism” on North Capitol & Lincoln Rd to increase safety, to discuss short-term improvements. Monday, Feb 13th at 6:30pm, located at 1200 First St NE in NoMa.
 - Composting at Harry Thomas Rec Center. Compost Volunteer Day, and will teach people how to compost. Sat, Feb 25th at 9am-12pm.
 - Q – Composting – you can drop off your food scraps and collect compost
- **TERRY – BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE**
 - March Cleanup – if we want to do that, we can try to organize that. We’d like to do some tree plantings, but not yet fleshed out. March Cleanup could be weather permitting.
 - Could do a Doodle Poll and send to board, we can distribute.
 - Q – Has ANC set up beautification day?
 - No, not yet.
- **OUTREACH & MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**
 - The chair is on sabbatical, so the committee needs a new chair and additional members, if anyone is interested in joining.
- **SAFETY COMMITTEE**
 - The safety committee needs a new chair
- **KATRINA VELASQUEZ (ECA VICE PRESIDENT)**
 - Interested in organizing a clothing swap/donation.

REPORTS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS

- **SYLVIA PINKNEY – ANC 5E04**
 - Commissioner Pinkney gives an overview of land being developed, or potentially being developed in the future, in part to prompt thinking about how to push for more affordable housing in the community.
 - Plot of land on NY Ave between North Capitol & 1st st across from Hyatt – one parcel of land. Parking Lot across from NY Ave Pizza place – another plot of land. Interest has been shown in both of those, but we are waiting on movement. Mobile gas station on side of parking lot, but nothing permanent. On the other side of the parking lot, there’s an Exxon Station owned by Joe Mammo – he owns 60-70% of gas stations. Hoping whoever does it buys both gas stations and parking lot and does one whole thing.
 - Many people don’t realize we have a project going on on FL Ave right now which will be 182 condos. They should have the building up – they haven’t had the opportunity to do much because there’s so many problems underground, trying to stabilize the dirt. The Eckington area will receive tree boxes in the unit block of Q st, Quincy Place, and R st,

and a Historic Trail throughout all of Eckington – those are our benefits from this project. Won't happen until building is up.

- Q – Has he given an update beyond “we have problems”? We haven't been able to get much of a response.
 - No, but will email tomorrow morning.
 - Q – Who is contact person for 50 FL
 - Andrew Viola.
 - Q – Are soil stabilization issues having any impact on surrounding properties?
 - Not that I know of.
 - Also noticed, we now have a 4 story home – added on 2 units on top of home. They purchased home in 2005, acquired permit in 2007, sat on it until 2016 – suspect other homes will do that since they had the permit prior to zoning regulations. (26 P st NE)
 - Councilmember Anita Bonds – Oversees affordable housing and ANCs. I showed you these pictures b/c I want to touch on affordable housing. Councilmember Bonds had a Coffee & Chat a few weeks ago; Comm Pinkney talked with her about how the community needs assistance in helping advance minimum affordable housing that developers give us to a higher level. She will work with us, but will have to be done legislatively. Hopefully get that done before these developments start. ANCs are governed by laws, recently ANC laws were changed, but at this point, instead of Gotlieb Simon advising, he will be “supervising” the ANC, your April quarterly report will go to ANC office instead of auditor's office. One change they wanted to make was to start paying ANCs - \$50/meeting. I was against that because I figure, if this is your community, you should be able to come out and do what you love and there shouldn't be a price on it.
 - There are policemen riding through, especially in alleys behind 1st st, T st, Todd st, Summit place b/c I requested it after getting calls about gun shots in alleys several days in a row. When you see police, stop and say hello, thank you for being here.
 - DDOT has come to grips with virtual circle – they are having a meeting. There has never been a meeting, only a study – “Dave Thomas circle” around the Wendy's. On Feb 23rd, meeting at Gallaudet College (will put info on listserv) – starting 6:30 Feb 23d, including on virtual circle – will present 5 recommendations. That's the time for community to weigh in.
 - Q – Is there a way to see rec's in advance.
 - Q – Hannah Powell heard that NY Ave Streetscape & Trail would be focus of meeting, not changes to Wendy's circle. More focus on street scape, lane shifting. Heard that DDOT is doing more formal study later this year, need to get contractor on board.
 - Comm Pinkney – heard about the meeting from several sources
 - Please remember to renew your visitor parking passes.
- **COMMISSIONER HANNAH POWELL – 5E03**
 - 1 other meeting - Tomorrow, 6-8pm at Woodridge Library – Rhode Island Ave Streetscape project – safety improvements including pedestrian access through underpass near metro; 30% design review so presenting proposed options.
 - Affordable housing – Being discussed at ANC; reminder that ANC meets on 3rd Tuesday of every month at 7pm. Affordable Housing is difficult problem, councilmember Bonds was kind enough to join at Committee of Whole meeting. Because of dissension, is process to figure out what community's voice is moving forward. Example – last month, MRP presented Elevation project, coming back for modification to development. Went to ANC, voted not to support project (even though ECA did vote to support) so community input going to zoning hearing (Thurs 6:30pm, open to public) – community's weight comes from ANC. Just want to bring that to your attention, encourage you to consider coming to ANC meeting and having voice heard. As we figure out moving forward as a community – since there are 3 developments at various points in process, appreciate everyone's input. Other ANCs have development committees. Encourage you to weigh in.

- Q – Could you recap what conversation was at ANC?
 - Believe the response was, we want more. Struggling as a community – what is the appropriate thing to ask? A previous development that came through last year – ANC requested 14% vs 8% affordable, zoning commission said that wasn't a reasonable requirement to put on developers and set aside community's voice in that area.
 - Q – Is 8% standard?
 - 8% is result of years-long negotiation with dept. of housing and community development, others. Not projects that are on city land – if you're developing on city land, have a whole host of requirements (e.g., units at 30% AMI). Eckington projects are on privately owned land. But city has requirements to set aside a certain number of units. Later this year, will simplify – 8% of units, but rather than 80% AMI, will be at 60% AMI. Would love to discuss – what are priorities? More units at 60 or 80% AMI, or fewer units at deeper levels of affordability?
 - Q – Sounds like there's a standing rule about 8% being reasonable – may have some flexibility to play at margins. If we want to make bigger bolder push, is there a process for doing that?
 - I think that's what Comm Pinkney was getting at – would require legislation.
 - Contact info – Hannah Powell – 5E03@anc.dc.gov or Hannah.Powell@gmail.com
 - Comm Pinkney – ANC Commissioners are supposed to advocate for you, not developer. If you start feeling sorry for developers, you're going to be stuck. They refuse to move the bar. That's why my suggestion to commission is that we raise the minimum, so no one will have to negotiate.
- **CYRIL CROCKER – ON BEHALF OF COUNCIL MEMBER MCDUFFIE**
 - Shared calendar of community meetings – feel free to call
 - 202-724-8078
 - Q – Air BnB Bill – What are next steps? I have concerns about it.
 - First recommendation – read the bill. There's been a lot said about it that may not be accurate. There is a hearing process, would be held on the bill, hasn't been scheduled yet. Fully expect that there will be comments from community that will be taken into consideration.
 - Q – Will he do engagement w/ his constituents as opposed to city-wide?
 - He is Ward 5 councilmember and heads Business & Development Committee, representing entire city. So, he represents both.
 - Q – what are highlights of bill
 - ECA member - Trying to restrict what owners can do in terms of renting, for how many nights. Washington Post said it was too far. I think there needs to be more thinking, more balance.
 - Comm Powell – Have a copy of Bill, may be something that ECA may want to pass a resolution on the bill or a statement.
 - Response – Worked w/ District Gov before on exec side. Helpful not to think in terms of thumbs out/down, but in terms of what you do/don't like, what is/isn't fair – maybe this is too much, maybe regulations are too strong – that input is really productive.
 - Q – How does timing work? Would there be time for ECA resolution?
 - Should have time – will not move too quickly.
 - Comm Pinkney – DPW now has 10 cameras, if you have dumping in your alley or cars parked illegally, can request camera for alley or similar.
 - Vernon – Alley cleaning is a big issue. No cleaning until March or April, right?
 - Comm Pinkney – you can call, but for most alleys, not cleaned until spring.

- LIONEL FROM MAYOR'S OFFICE

- Sharing newsletter
- Mayor having budget engagement forum – Feb 23rd, 25th, 27th. These are what mayor will use as guide for budget. Please share your views – advocate for what you want, bring a neighbor or friend.
- Updates
 - Private Security Camera program – Eckington as most signed up, would like to catch illegal dumpers
 - Also, mayor having State of the District – March 30th at UDC
 - Know you're all going on in the news with the new administration, republicans meddling in affairs of DC. Our staff and mayor are supporting for DC values and residents.
- Q – What can we as DC residents do to fight back against congress?
 - My friends are writing letters to Jason Chaffetz who wants to return district to MD
 - Kevin McCarthy – mayor sat with him to talk about how repealing healthcare will affect district – they need to have a plan for how they will provide better healthcare for residents.
- Please come to budget engagement forum, and to council budget hearing session – when the mayor submits budget and council decides what they're going to do. Come to hearing and/or submit testimony.

MPD SAFETY UPDATE

- Sargent McComack

- Recent robberies involving taxis – lead to juvenile arrest, and another lead to arrest
- Two burglaries in last week and a half, both with rear doors (left unlocked)
- 46 arrests in this area since Jan 1 in 502 (Eckington and surrounding area), including 1 involving handgun from shots fired at 315 Franklin st
- Several AWW with knives, 6 were domestic and lead to arrests
- Personal Safety – When you're walking through the neighborhood, if someone asks you for money, what do you do?
 - “Sorry, I wish I could help, but I don't carry cash.” Don't take out your wallet.
 - Look the person in the eye, have confidence. If something does happen, you want to remember what the person looks like.
- We need to plan for things like this. Robberies have been happening. Someone's calling in false deliveries for NY Pizza, has been robbed three times. If you're making a delivery, wave down a police officer and ask them to accompany you.
- Civil Disturbance Unit – standby unit – standing by for protest at Trump Hotel or Whitehouse. Instead of having them at station, they're at Lincoln Road (T st to r st to Rec Center, some on other side of North capitol) – 7 additional officers in the area.
- Pepper spray – legal to have, as are stun guns. Pepper spray works well, you can get it at Dick's Sporting Goods or a law enforcement supply store.
 - Q – Is it the same pepper spray that you use?
 - Hopefully it's better.
 - Q – When should you use? Don't want to escalate a situation

- When defending yourself.
- Q – If someone says give me your wallet, do I give the wallet or use pepper spray?
 - Every situation is unique. Don't keep everything in your wallet – just take what you need. I can't tell you when to pepper spray someone, but if you feel threatened, they say give me your wallet, sure.
- Q – What are we protecting against? Robberies at gun point?
 - There have been. This is part of living in a big city. There's robberies, purse snatches, someone getting drunk and leaving the bar. Up until last week, there was nothing you could carry to protect yourself or have in your house. Not trying to scare anyone. This neighborhood has gotten a lot safer than it was years ago. You can't walk down North Capitol w/out seeing police. Special beats up NY Ave, Lincoln Rd, NW side to Rhode Island Ave, we wear visible jackets, but it does create visibility.
 - Response – Don't want people to go around pepper spraying all the time, don't want someone to get sprayed for asking directions – people have different levels of feeling threatened.
 - You will be held accountable, just as we would be as police officers. Now that we have these body cameras on, it's like taking the pope on a ride along. This is a tremendous tool.
- Q – Some things I've noticed, were around 4th & V st NE, has there been more presence there?
 - You'll see Officer Wilson on his scooter, guys from the mountain bike trail. XM Radio has offered their restrooms so you'll get a lot of activity there.
- Q – What is the shelf life for pepper spray?
 - 4 years
- Q – It's good to know that it's legal, but it feels like you're saying that we should always carry pepper spray because we should always be on high alert. I'd be interested in knowing how the crimes this month compare to previous times, is there any reason to be alarmed, has it increased?
 - No. Now that pepper spray is legal, I recommend people carry it. Just so you have something. Until last week, you couldn't carry it, you had nothing to protect yourself.
- Districts 501 & 502 are now combined. Captain Kimberlee Williams is our Captain – Kimberlee.Williams@dc.gov
 - Q – Where can I get a stun gun?
 - Don't know anyone who sells them. Maybe in VA or MD.

REQUEST FOR SUPPORT OF BZA APPLICATION #19398

JIM BORBLEY 1922 FIRST STREET, NE

- Bianca, architect.

- Extending our deck back about 10', which will not exceed our neighbor's deck, but exceeds lot occupancy. Right now, there's a protected tree in the yard. Because there's a protected tree, ground is not level – children cannot play there. Only smooth area for play is on deck, but not enough room for children to play.
- What we are proposing is not as far out as neighbor's deck. Because of how far out neighbor's house goes, our yard doesn't get sun, grass doesn't grow.
- Q – Have you talked to urban forestry?
 - Protected tree, cannot take it down, but there's a disease on all elms in city – you cannot cut them down, if you cut one down, you could kill all in the region. You can only trim them in the winter. This tree is so intrusive to house – lays on top of roof. Have 2 small children, deck would give us some relief of home we want to stay in – love this neighborhood, would be beneficial to family if we could extend deck. Not obtrusive to neighbors on either side. We are trying to do this the right way, Sylvia and I have talked many times. Would help us stay here and not sell our home and move outside the district.
- Q – Does the deck go out to tree?
 - No, it's 10' away. Tree is protected.
- Q – What is space now?
 - Just gravel. Have tried to grow things, even weeds don't grow – there's no sunlight.
- Q – What's the lot occupancy going to?
 - Going to 80%, limit is 72%.
- Neighbor says – another neighbor has deck that goes back all the way to the alley.
- Q – Have you spoken to other neighbors?
 - Both of neighbors next to us have agreed, have signed. Neighbors have small children. Would be able to help our neighbors have somewhere for their kids to play.
- Comm Pinkney – what is lot occupancy now?
 - 60%
- Shelly – nothing to add from planning committee. Was concerned about tree, they've addressed that.
- Motion to support plans as written. Second.
 - In favor: 19
 - Opposed: 0
 - Abstention: 0
- Motion passes.

REQUEST FOR SUPPORT OF BZA APPLICATION #19428

MICHAEL CROSS, 1937 2ND STREET, NE

- Currently 4 unit apartment building, we started project as new zoning code went into effect. Our application continues to change as new zoning regulations change. Hearing is Feb 22nd. We are enlarging property. This zone is 60% lot occupancy zone, proposing

53%, but going up additional story (from 2 to 3). Seeking relief for 3rd story – limits rooftop structure from disturbing original rooftop elements. Property has mansard roof across the top; we’re proposing to remove mansard roof, have set-back roof deck as proposed in plans. Special exception is seeking relief for modifying element in order to add 3rd story addition.

- Q – How tall would structure be?
 - Below 35’ height – listing right at 35’.
- Q – Why are you here, if it comes it at 35’, you can do that by right?
 - We no longer are in conversion – they have added a section for these “purpose-built” buildings – you’re not converting 4-unit apartment building to apartment building – now you just need to comply, conform with all other building regulations for buildings in this area. Of which we do – lot occupancy, height, all except rooftop elements. Any roof addition needs to respect turrets, dormers, other elements on front of building, will consider mansard roof an architectural element.
 - Q – What will roof look like w/out element? Shows pic
 - Q – Is there any way to build the 3rd story and work around rooftop piece? Can you build it into 3rd story?
 - Very likely, however, we feel the building as designed will look more complete as a new building than one where we’re keeping mansard roof on the front and “scabbing” a 3rd story.
 - Q – Can you explain what entire project is?
 - Project- matter of right – is 4-unit box. Virtually square, sits on tremendous lot. Lot area allows us to provide, instead of small 1-br flats, more family-size units w/ 2-br, 2 bathroom flats on each floor.
 - Q – So by nature of size of lot, you can expand significantly?
 - Significantly – and we’re not maximizing lot.
 - You’re not moving structure forward?
 - Front is same except for roof; expanding back.
 - Q – I think faux mansard roofs are not attractive, so this would be an improvement; ones where they keep roof it’s not attractive.
 - Q – How far are you extending, and how many units will it be, and rental or condo?
 - Hasn’t determined if 5 or 6 – planned for 5, but legally allowed for 6. If it’s 5, what will be in other space?
 - Right now planning for 5. Now how family-size 2-br 2-bath lots. Basement becomes storage area for residents. Upper floor is more of “penthouse” suite – 3br unit.
 - Owner – part of reason for uncertainty is, lot size – trying to determine whether we can get a 6th unit – at cusp of number of sq. ft. per dwelling unit – within 2%. Waiting to see if we can do it, if not, will stay w/ 5 units.
 - Q – Have you talked to owners on either side?
 - We’ve tried. They are not residents. One is already extended beyond current building. They’re rental buildings. I’ve written letters to addresses in tax records alerting to plans, haven’t had any response.
 - Q – Will there be parking?

- Yes. Lot is pretty steep – part of plan is to level out in steps, will be 3 legal parking spaces, and then step going up to ground level.
 - Q – Comm Powell – you’re the owner?
 - My husband, myself, brother in law
 - Q – Condos or rentals?
 - Haven’t decided – working out details as we figure out what we are, aren’t allowed to do
 - Concern – depth in front is departure from other buildings on 2nd, 3rd St. haven’t seen anyone do deck in front – they’ve tried to work with the mansard roof, do other architectural features to accommodate. That’s one of my concerns – have to be concerned about setting precedents. Allowing big deck on front of building – usually deck is on the back.
 - Reason for deck on front – units below will have smaller deck of rear bedroom. There’s a restriction – can only be so much distance from fire safety exit and outdoor space –
 - Deck is on front – General rule is set back equal to height, instead of creating flat face on the front. There is a roof deck proposed in space, between original front wall and new front wall.
 - Q – Other popups on street, there’s 2 similar buildings to the right – they’ve done a popup w/out space in front, they’ve tried to work the roof into it. That’s the look that has come up on this block, this is different.
 - Took out original roof, made steeper, taller roof.
 - Motion to support roof relief. Seconded
 - In favor: 7
 - Opposed: 6
 - Abstained: 6
 - Will draft letter in favor, will be at ANC meeting.

DISCUSSION OF COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENT (CBA) FOR FOULGER PRATT ECKINGTON PARK PROJECT

- Folger Pratt is developer w/ land on corner of R st & Harry Thomas Way. As part of PUD, have to come to community and talk about changes they want to make in zoning. As part of that, we discuss changes we want to see in community as part of CBA. Would like a brainstorming session about what we would like to see in community.
- Affordable housing – have put into CBAs in past, had some issues, but still worth trying out
- Vernon gives recap of what was in agreement w/ JBG last year – bike sharing, car sharing, neighborhood signs, and charitable donation to 3 nonprofit orgs in neighborhood.
- Comm Powell – they want us to bring them a list of things we want. They look at CBA as list of X million of value of project will go to community.
- Timing – they want to go to zoning in June, so the earlier we talk about what we would like to see, the better. Last year, we discussed in meeting and then sent out survey online.
- Ideas

- Donations for schools
- Affordable housing
- Transportation study
- Fits in community in terms of scale, massing, height
- Grander staircase at top of Eckington Place for students walking to McKinley
- Switching out highway streetlights to standard street lights
- Don't allow for RPP availability
- Support car sharing, bike share
- Banners – replacing banners – with a significant amount of money to do well (e.g., H st) – but should be covered by JBG
- MBT Trail – more call boxes along trail to fill in where JBG and MRP have theirs
- Mural project where you can have artists and maintain – upkeep included
- How project will affect traffic – mornings on R st is really bad – if cars are coming from there – don't know what solution is, but some sort of investment to ameliorate traffic
- Ample bike racks and bike share
- Significant investment in Harry Thomas Rec Center (e.g., locker room refresh, new building – up and out over pool)
- Traffic study – including 4th & 3rd st, 1st & U st NE to 2nd st & Lincoln Rd, and others – formal traffic study- for traffic, speeding, blocking intersection – early in project
- Another Eckington Sign (if we have a location)
- Park amenities – public restroom and water station
- North Capitol Main Street project – donation and/or dedicated sponsors for events
- \$ for park upkeep- e.g., lawn mowing, cleaning, etc.
- Tree box maintenance (2nd st NE) – maybe part of beautification effort? Plant trees
- McKinley Tech PTA – starting an internship program, looking for businesses to host interns – not many details yet, but could work w/ DCPS & McKinley in that capacity
- Other development on North Cap – east side
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- Q – Can we look at versions from JBG, and revisit survey results? And reach out to people who got nice signs on H st, find out what else we can ask for.

Next Eckington Civic Association Meeting: Monday, March 6, 2016

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