

# ECKINGTON CIVIC ASSOCIATION

CARING FOR THE COMMUNITY WE LIVE IN

NOVEMBER 7, 2016

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## 1. PRESIDENT AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

**\*\*Reminder\*\* Election of ECA officers; President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer at the Dec. 5 ECA meeting.**

**We will have a pot-luck party at the Dec 5 meeting**

**Fall Cleanup - Sat., Nov, 12. Meet at 10:00 A.M. outside Harry Thomas Sr. Rec Center.**

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## 2. REPORTS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS.

- **LIONEL GAINES – MAYORS OFFICE**

- If problems with utilities during the winter, or city doing repairs, check resource guide
- Safe Track surge 10 – info available
- Plan DC – Nov 14<sup>th</sup> meeting – mayor and council want input on planning and development for city.
  - The next meeting is November 14<sup>th</sup> at 6pm at the Luke C Moore High School – 1001 Monroe St NE
  - Learn more here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/plan-dc-citywide-meetings-on-amending-the-comprehensive-plan-tickets-28378866955>
- Statehood Question on ballot
  - Constitution can be amended at any point; constitutional officers will represent us.
- Question: Who manages traffic with DC government?
  - District Department of Transportation has traffic officers
  - MPD also manages traffic

- o Question: Buses rerouted for safetrack are jamming traffic in south Eckington, especially around Wendy's
  - 2 traffic control officers have been deployed
  - Follow-up Concern: Officers at intersection don't seem to be attentive-headphones on and using cell phone; one almost got hit this morning. If you can let MPD know – they need to be more attentive.
  
- **COMMISSIONERS LEWIS & PINKNEY NOT IN ATTENDANCE**
  
- **ECA BOARD INVITED ANC CANDIDATES TO MEETING IF THEY WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A STATEMENT**
  
- **MIKE AIELLO – RUNNING FOR ANC 5EO3**
  - o Would like to work with surrounding commissioners. The edges of our community are changing, and we can work with them to get what we need and want. There's developments to the north and south, which represents a big opportunity. I'm president of the condo association on R Street and worked with Eckington Yards development to get that CBA through. I hope you all vote tomorrow.
  
- **HANNAH POWELL – RUNNING FOR ANC 5EO3**
  - o I'm also running, against Mike, who I think is a very cool guy. I'm running because I love Eckington, and want to support the community in the future. There's a lot of development going on. You've probably seen on the listserv that I've been going around to a lot of corners talking with people, hearing your issues. It's surprising, when I go about 2 blocks, the issues change in terms of rank order. In the NW Eckington, it's more about trash, in the south the concerns are more about trucks. I hope to be able to integrate offices into the ANC, and better work with developers and integrate that. Please vote tomorrow.
  
- **RANDY NOTES THE FOLLOWING:**
  - o For ANC, Mike and Hannah are running, and Renee Lewis is the incumbent but was not able to attend due to her child's illness.
  - o For ANC 5EO4, Mary Alice Farmer sent her regrets. Sylvia Pinkney the incumbent is also running.

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### 3. MPD SAFETY REPORT

MPD officers not able to attend

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#### 4. UPDATE ON “PEPCO PARK”

##### STACIE WEST, DIRECTOR OF PARKS PROJECTS, NOMA PARKS FOUNDATION

- Thanks to everyone who came out to last community conversation on Oct 25<sup>th</sup>. We’ve hired a landscape architect for “the park” (which is yet to be named). Their name is Nelson Byrd Woltz. To select this firm, NoMa parks held a design competition, and NoMa parks shared community input. We also looked for credentials with an urban neighborhood, and also experience with contamination (for example, train tracks have used arsenic for lubricant).
  - We will remediate soil while constructing the park – it’s more efficient to do this in “one fell swoop.” This firm has had success doing environmental remediation in other cities. They presented the preliminary design, which has had no feedback yet.
- We got a lot of info at the meeting, and all the feedback is posted on a site called ImagineNoMa (<http://imagineinomaparks.org/>). There’s a link from that site to the presentation, and you can go through the presentation and answer the questions.
- We will have a dedicated community meeting in early January about the parks design. We don’t want to come back to people until we know more about dry utilities, topography, etc., so that’s what the firm will be working on, and working with Department of Environment to approve remediation. So far there’s been some great comments from people. I’d encourage you to take a few minutes to go look. Designers have the link and they’re downloading people’s feedback.
- We’d like to do a dedicated webinar with the ECA to get input later in the spring.
- Has flier about NoMa parks, timelines for developing, etc.
- Questions
  - When will the whole thing be done?
    - The northern part of park was purchased w/ Folger Pratt; southern part is outright owned by district. They will use a portion of the site to stage their construction on the northern parcel. We hope to deliver southern parcel in summer 2018. The northern parcel may have some temporary conditions with re-routing of MBT, construction. We’re trying to get a construction manager on board to help phase that w/ Folger Pratt.
    - FP hired same architect firm.
  - Closing MBT?
    - May have to reroute while Folger Pratt is under construction.

- o When do you expect to have a rough timeline for all stages?
  - Expect to have that in January, since we'll know more about FP's timeline at that point too. Depends also on the district's remediation plan approval.
- o Is there a deadline for getting people's feedback?
  - Since we're releasing questions every few days, if people could comment by early December that would give us the most impact. But it's an ongoing thing, and we may post more questions in the future.
- o Have you considered naming it after someone who has had historic impact in the neighborhood?
  - We haven't talked much about it beyond recognizing that names are important. Suggestions along those lines are welcome. I don't know what district policies are for naming, and it is a district park. I don't know of any new parks that hadn't already been something before.
  - Mayor's office says: That's something you can put forward to the commissioner, who can put forth to the council. It shouldn't be a hard process – especially for a historic figure or someone who has done a lot for the community.

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## 5. DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM PRESENTATION

### NIKKI D'ANGELO PETTY, COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM COORDINATOR – WARDS 5 & 6

- I want to tell you about what my team does, and share some DCPS updates.
- I represent all schools in wards 5 & 6. My team does all things community engagement, including large-scale things like putting together the city-wide search forums for finding the new chancellor. We also work with schools on their budgets, with their local school advisory teams. We also work with Langley and McKinley schools, principals and parent organizations, around what they want to do with community engagement.
- DCPS Updates
  - o DCPS Study Abroad program – that program serves current DCPS students in 8<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> grade who are studying a world language, and sends them to countries all over the world. Last summer, they sent 400 students from all wards to 18 countries, where they learned language, culture, immersion. They extended the application to Nov 13<sup>th</sup>.

- o EdFest – Saturday, Dec 10 from 11-3. It's free (as is parking) at DC Armory. It's an Education Festival – all DCPS schools and charters have representatives to talk to parents & community members about entering school lottery, talking about schools.
- Questions:
  - o If the ECA were interested in working with schools to do a community activity, would you be the best person to contact?
    - Yes. We can do something informal, or have a formal process for getting civic associations or business partners involved with schools in a more formal way.
  - o Are there any ideas that you have for things that are needed with McKinley or any other schools in Eckington?
    - One thing I've heard from principals is parent involvement in general and working with their parent organizations. McKinley's HS parent organization is active, but the middle school organization isn't. They just did a new board election at Langley, and if anyone is a parent with a student at those schools, this is a great time to do that.
    - ECA member: Our daughter goes to Langley. Through the national PTA, there's a national Excellence program. There's a number of things you have to do to be recognized, and no schools in DC have been. We're working on it to follow the "road map to excellence," and at the end of the year we write an essay about becoming a better PTA, so that's one of the initiatives we have going.

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## 6. PRESENTATION ON ECKINGTON NON-PROFIT, GEARIN' UP BICYCLES

### **STERLING STONE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

- Notes from my soap box: Make sure you vote tomorrow. If you need information about where your polling place is, you know someone who needs help, let me know. I'll put you on a bike, uber, whatever. I'll get you there.
- Gearin' Up (<http://gearinupbicycles.org/>) is a community non-profit bike shop – we're a bike shop that works with kids. We have a staff of 3 adults and 8 youth (6 from McKinley Tech, 2 from SE DC), and dozens of peripheral youth. We engage youth, give them skills so that they can get meaningful employment in the 60 or so bike shops around the DMV area. They don't need a college degree, can make about \$18/hour, and do meaningful work.

- How can you get involved? If you ride a bike, we do full service repairs. You can be an adult customer. Average price for a tune-up in DC costs \$95; we charge \$65. Not every resident decides to buy the most expensive bike but we all need a tune up. So we teach the kids how to do a shop-quality tune-up in our shop. It takes an extra day, but at the end of the day, the kids are gaining skills, which is our ultimate goals. We were proud to have one of our youth mechanics, Antoine, is now one of REI's senior techs. This year we placed 5 youths in area bike shops. We already have in the pipeline about 6 different youths that will be hired by the spring.
- On top of what we do in the shop, we do a lot more in the community. We keep an eye on the MBT trail. We've piloted a program called "gearheads" – you may see kids with the green shirts on, they've been sweeping up glass, giving out popsicles. We plan to expand next year, have a greater presence, and hope to expand to other trails, maybe the Anacostia trail. We've taken some of the known troublemakers on the trail, and instead of putting a rock in their hands, we put a wrench in their hands. We're proud that we've been able to reverse that. WE haven't solved all the problems on the trail, but we're working on it.
- We also set up pop-up shops, with kids who were trained in our shops, and send them to bike deserts. We offer tune-ups and repairs to anyone who needs them, free of charge.
- We've been working with developers to make sure that they're offering bike infrastructure. We also are looking at opening another shop, where we'll have a shop run entirely by youths, and we'll be making sure the MBT is well-maintained and continues to get a good rap.
- If you have questions, feel free to ask. Pamphlet has info about adult classes, ways to get involved. You can make a donation, give time, money, hang out with us. We believe that the relationships youth build with people is what gets them on the right path. Mentoring them, talking with them, is what it takes. If you'd like to get involved, reach out.
- Questions:
  - We love your shop. Do you know about any effective strategies to advocate for a bikeshare station?
    - Let me know where you want it.
    - At the Harry Thomas Park.
    - ANC Commissioner Pinkney has talked about getting another bikeshare, but not sure if she's looking at Harry Thomas Park.
    - We work with DDOT people, can send a text message.

- Mayor's office: If you want a bikeshare station placed along Lincoln road, come to the planning meeting.

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## 7. REQUEST FOR SUPPORT OF WORK ON PUBLIC SPACE - CURB CUT AND RETAINING WALL

### 1840 3RD ST NE

- Randy gives background: Starting in Sept, Zoning Council says people requesting variance should go to ECA before submitting application.
- Derek, Erika:
  - o Live at corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> & T. Our house is landlocked, don't have an alley or curb cut to park. We want to put in a curb cut and parking pad and retaining wall, so we can level the yard, make sure things don't roll down the hill.
  - o We've brought copies of our plans to pass around. The main thing is, the curb cut would be along 3<sup>rd</sup> street. We want to put a fence up so things don't go into the street.
  - o For the retaining wall, want to go with brick, are looking into handmade brick to match the rest of the neighborhood and our home. Wherever there's a corner, the bricks will interlock to match the aesthetic of our house, as will the joints. Sightlines – the fence, which is about 40", the wall wouldn't be higher, but would put a wrought iron fence on top.
  - o Taking away parking spots – the curb cut would be about 10' wide, less wide than the car. There's 4 houses on the block and they all have curb cuts, so we won't be taking away parking spots from other homes. And because the street doesn't have residential parking spots zoned. We don't plan to move, we like the neighborhood, our kids are in school here. We want to make it a home we can stay here, and the parking pad would help. Makes it easier to take the trash out, to move motorbike.
  - o Still have to go before the city, figuring out the regulations.
  - o Neighbor who lives down the street agrees that the impact on parking will be minimal.
  - o Estimates 1 space will be lost from parking.
  - o Requesting exception for curb cut and fence on top of retaining wall?

- Only exception is for fence on top of wall. You can get a curb cut – it leads to 19' of private space, the way we've drawn it is 15', so may need an exception for that.
  - Some of the private space is already fenced in. Our private space is 70 \* 32'. Our whole space is 50' by 85'.
- o Neighbor: I love watching your kids out playing. So if much of your land is public space, we could just join the game. So, I could see why they'd be asking about putting up a fence – I could see why they'd be asking, if you're taking possession of the yard in some capacity.
- o Neighbor: But the property is raised up a few feet – I would never think it's public space.
- o Sterling – I thought it was also so developers couldn't come in and build buildings right up to the sidewalk – as long as you're not putting your building up to the sidewalk, I don't think they have any problems.
- o Also, you're doing all the landscaping and mowing already, so you're taking care of the property.
  - Derrick: Yes – put in trees, rose garden, all along that space.
- o Mike: With the retaining wall and fence, how tall?
  - Derrick: Retaining wall is maximum 42", and fence is 36" or so, but most is notional, so about 70".
  - Neighbor: Would be helpful to see what sitelines would look like if you were riding a bike, if you're able to see traffic.
    - Derrick: The wall wouldn't be any higher than the white picket fence is now, and the fence on top would be mostly see-through.
- Derrick asked for a letter of support
  - o Randy: Because there's no formal plan, I think a preliminary opinion would be fine, but I'm not sure if a final letter of support would make sense until you've made your formal application.
- Motion to provide support of the preliminary plans.
  - o Second
  - o In favor: 15

- o Opposed: 0
- o Abstention: 0

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## 8. REQUEST FOR ZONING RELIEF, 18 T ST NE

### ROSE M. WALLER, ESQ. AND ED NEIGHBOR

- Randy notes that Ed did a preliminary meeting with the ECA Board and planning committee in September.
- Rose Waller represents Ed Neighbor. Ed will talk about what he plans to do with the property. It's a vacant property, and brought boards of what the property looks like now, and some proposed changes.
- Ed: My wife and I bought the property in 2012. We took the property and made it into 2, 2-story, 3 bedroom condos. When we were ready to sell, we saw that while the permits were done, it had not properly gone through zoning, and so we were not able to get a certificate of occupancy to sell the properties. I've been working to meet all the requirements for DCRA, office of planning, and all that. What we have now is, on the current property, we have 1 issue on the front of the property and 2 issues in back of property.
- On the front of the property, when we did the property, there was a 4' berm that runs on most of the properties along the street. We removed the berm so we could clear out an area for a door into the bottom level of the property. Our remediation is for us to pu the berm back. Office of Planning did not like that we took the green space out of there, and when we removed 4', the new measuring point for the feet is not ok w/ the new 35' height restriction. So we need to put the berm back for those reasons. The green space would be about 4' by the building and gently slope to the sidewalk to be consistent. Also put some shrubbery out front to keep with the aesthetics of other homes on the street.
  - o Clarification question about door in front
- On the back of the property, there is a lot occupancy issue. When we built the property, we put 2 parking spaces in the back, one for each unit. It had a single concrete deck, and we added 2 more decks above that. In order to get up to the decks, we built a spiral wrought-iron staircase that goes from parking deck up to all 3 levels of back deck. That spiral staircase is counted in the lot occupancy, and that put us over the lot occupancy limit. I have to take the staircase and move it into the deck structure – cut a hole in the deck structure and move staircase in. The other thing I have to do is, that will put me close to the requirement for a special exception but not quite. I also have to take 2' off the decks to get into the realm of the request for the

special exception. So the decks will be a little smaller. I will only run spiral staircase up to 2<sup>nd</sup> deck, won't go up to 3<sup>rd</sup>.

- The Office of Planning does not like the roof on the top deck, so I have to take the roof off. They suggested a trellis, so I'm going to put a trellis on the top deck.
- When we do these things, we're getting ready to submit to VZA to get approval for a special exception.
- Question
  - You said you're going to remove the staircase from the top? Is there any issue with fire safety?
    - No, the inside has a stairwell leading straight to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.
    - Also, for security reasons, the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor deck goes to the bedroom so we don't want the stairs to go up there.
  - How do you get to the bottom level?
    - We're rebuilding the berm so there will be a little walkway between the berm, so you'll be able to walk around it.
  - You've also had the house fully inspected several times since you identified errors with the prior developers, right?
    - Yes. We've cut holes in just about every wall, inspected wiring, plumbing, everything. Fortunately we did not have to replace any wiring and lighting.
  - And you also had conversations with a lot of the neighbors and incorporated their feedback?
    - Yes. Particularly the people across the street, they were very glad we were putting the berm back.
    - Rose: It looks better with the berm and the shrubbery.
  - Q – you said you had 2 parking spaces. Will that still be the case?
    - Yes, still have 1 for each unit. And with moving the staircase, the parking spaces are a little bigger.
  - So do you still need special exceptions?
    - Yes, because it will be over 60% lot occupancy. It will be 69%, which is just below the 70% rule.

- o If you get the exception, other houses may use the precedent to request exceptions for their homes. There's a lot of other construction on that block.
  - When I take my decks back in, I'll actually be further in than the other houses on my block.
- o Was the planning committee ok with the changes?
  - Yes. To me, the biggest thing was that he had letters of support from the neighbors, and incorporated their feedback. It seems like you've stress-tested your plan and are being thorough about feedback.
  - Ed: Yes, everyone I asked to sign a letter of support signed it.
- o And you closed the sides on the deck?
  - Yes. I have to replace materials so that they meet fire safety, but I have closed them in.
- o And the neighbors on either side have not complained about impact to light and air?
  - No they have not.
- o Thanks for showing up. Last month we had a developer who sent his lawyer and didn't come himself. So thank you for being here.
- o If this goes through, when are you going to put it on the market?
  - Ed – I've learned never to predict. I had hoped to have it in by the new administration, but it won't be done that quickly. My latest prediction is 5 months.
  - Ed – when they were on the market before, they both sold within a few days.
    - Randy – A little background, they both sold but could not go to settlement because the necessary paperwork had not been filed to get a certificate of occupancy.
- o Hannah Powell – my only reservation is, it looks really closed off because you've closed in the sides. Some of the blocks in Bloomingdale, when you walk down the alley, you can tell that some have gone way over lot occupancy because one did it, and so many others did. So I'd caution the civic association about supporting special exceptions. Your decks are taller and the sides are closed off.

- No, it's not going to change. There's a wrought iron railing on top, and the lower levels will be closed off, but they were before – they were a brick wall.
  - o Clarification about the process:
    - VZA wants community input sooner.
- Motion to support the preliminary plans.
  - o Seconded
  - o In Favor: 14
  - o Opposed: 1
  - o Abstention: 1

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## 9. OTHER ITEMS FROM THE COMMUNITY

- Nov 16<sup>th</sup>, 10am – Councilmember McDuffie is having a hearing on the DC Fair Elections bill, which the ECA voted in support of. It's a program to support small donors to help elect more people who pay attention to the people of DC.
- If there's no objections, I plan to do the decorations on the island near Lincoln Road on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, if anyone wants to come help.
- Ruben: Public Safety rep, sent something on Listserv and NextDoor. As of 2 weeks ago, there's still \$ in the security camera reimbursement program. The website is very useable, and the forms are very accessible and easy to turn in. Please get requests in sooner rather than later.
  - o Sterling: that's for residential? The cost of installation is astronomical.
  - o Mayor's office: Some are very easy to install
  - o Ruben: Nest is very easy to install.
  - o Ed: There was an article that there's over 1000 cameras up now.
  - o Resident; Sent a question to dc about the cameras and got a response within an hour. Another resident confirmed that one guy is running it and doing a fantastic job.

**Annual membership dues are \$10 (per person), \$7 for senior citizens (65 years plus).**

The Eckington Civic Association meets on the first Monday of every month at 7pm.

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