

ECKINGTON CIVIC ASSOCIATION

CARING FOR THE COMMUNITY WE LIVE IN

MEETING MINUTES – JANUARY 4, 2016

Randy Nolan, President of ECA, welcomed everyone

1. PRESIDENT AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **President:**
 - Randy briefly discusses the existence of the Federation of DC Civic Associations, explains that Eckington is not a member because Edgewood is and claims to subsume Eckington; may be worth exploring further in the future.
 - Randy notes upcoming events include the January 11th Historic Designation town hall meeting and next month's ECA meeting, which the developers of the new Flower Market project will attend.
- **Events Committee:** Adam reports that the first annual progressive party was a success. Approximately 35 people attended, and people donated about 50 gifts for the children's hospital. He hopes to hold a similar event in the spring. Also, Ward 5 is holding a happy hour on Thursday, Jan 7th, at Crisp.
- **Beautification Committee:**
 - Vernon reports that a bulb planting in December went well, although the warm start to the winter caused some plants to bloom early. Hopefully the flowers at the 4th & S st NE planters will still blossom in the spring.
 - If anyone is interested in taking over leadership of the Beautification Committee, please contact Vernon.
- **Historic Preservation Committee:**
 - Randy read report emailed in by committee chair Walt cain. Walt reports that fliers about the upcoming town hall were distributed to half of Eckington homes, and he plans to distribute the rest this week.
 - He is also exploring organizing an oral history project to record the history of people who have been long-time residents of Eckington. If anyone is interested in this project, let Walt know.
 - A Historic Designation Town Hall will be held on Monday, January 11th.

2. REPORTS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS

- **Malik Williams, from Mayor Bowser's office (malik.williams@dc.gov)**
 - Malik will be covering the ECA meetings moving forward.

- The Snow Team, helping seniors and people with disabilities remove snow, is still looking for volunteers.
- The mayor is encouraging city council members to vote on Safer Stronger, which aims to reduce crime and violence in DC. Malik encourages people to reach out to their council members.
- The mayor's office has a homelessness initiative, and is coordinating with local shelters. If anyone sees a homeless person who needs to go to a shelter, contact the hypothermia hotline. (202-399-7093)
- Malik distributed a flier about a reward offered for getting guns off the street.
- **ANC Commissioner Pinkney**
 - Commissioner Pinkney provided every senior in her district with a book of resources from the Office on Aging, and signed up seniors for the Snow Shoveling program.
 - Pinkney reports that the PUD for 50 Florida Ave NE is about to expire. They will likely start construction soon. If the PUD expires, they will need to return to the community for approval.
 - The McMillan Advisory Group requested that DoT perform a traffic study in our area. Instead, they plan to do an "across-town" study.
 - On Dec 17, McMillan presented renderings of Parcel 2; the zoning commission required some revisions for this mixed-use, multi-family building.
 - Council Member Anita Bonds is pushing to strengthen the recognition of the "great weight" consideration given to ANCs.
 - A joint single-member-districts group comprised of commissioners Pinkney, Quinn, and Thomas, met about addressing homelessness issues along North Capitol st. They plan to pull in social service agencies to meet with people, do a needs assessment, and make further plans.
 - A resident noted an empty property on 134-136 U st. Pinkney is working on getting the property cited as vacant. She will also look into several other vacant properties (e.g., the building at the corner Summit & U st, 27 Quincy Place). Malik said he would also look into these.
 - A resident asked what to do when people don't scoop their dog droppings. Pinkney suggested taking a picture.
 - Pinkney asked who purchased 1717 & 1719 Lincoln Road. Randy said he would look into it.

3. PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATE, MPD

Sergeant Ellis reported on crime in Eckington.

- In December, there were about 500 reports, 150 of which were crime. Most notable where:
 - Theft from auto
 - Stolen autos
 - Burglaries

- Robberies
- Shootings (the one at 4th & Rhode Island Ave resulted in an arrest; On at 200 block of V st open)
- Package thefts
- Srgt throwing more manpower on the MBT trail whenever possible.
- Commissioner Pinkney asked the MPD to check the Gray Chevy Impala on the unit block of Q Street, where several men have been sleeping.
- A resident noted that the renovation to the large blue building on the island on Rhode Island Ave was left open; the MDS will check it out and contact the construction company.
- A resident noted that some people around North Capitol st & Florida Ave have been acting recklessly and walking into traffic after presumably using drugs. The Sargent noted that pedestrians can be held responsible for causing traffic accidents.
- A resident asked what to do in the event of witnessing an event like the recent brutal attack on the Red Line. The officer said that it's a personal decision whether to get involved or not, and witnesses should weigh the risks. However, sometimes being a witness after the fact or taking a picture is the most useful role a person can play.
- A resident asked about the dirt bike problem. The MPD have a plan, have made arrests, levied fines and jail time. If a vehicle is impounded but the person has proof of ownership, the bike is returned. It is not illegal to own a dirt bike in DC, just to drive one.

***4. REQUEST FOR ZONING VARIANCE FOR 133 U ST NE, ***

- Applicant requests third story addition and above garage deck. BZA Case no 19191
- Presentation from Tahani Share, Landis Architects/Builders
- The Architect, Tahani Share, explained that the proposed renovations to the home include adding a 3rd floor pop-up, a deck on top of the garage, and reconfiguring the stairs in back of the home so that they connect to the roof deck. Because the home has a mansard roof which provides several feet of attic space above the 2nd floor, adding the 3rd floor will add roughly 4' of height above the current roofline. The third floor will be for the family's use and will not add additional units to the home.
- Share explained that this renovation would normally be considered "matter of right," but because the existing structure takes up more than 60% of the property it is considered "non-conforming" and so needs to get zoning approval.
- Several residents on the street raised concerns that the renovation would add additional height, detracting from the original look of the home and the street and taking away from the historic nature of the property.
- Share noted that the street has a pop-up already which does detract from the look of the street, and they are trying to make sure their renovation does not have the same effect.
- ANC Commissioner Pinkney clarified that the owners cannot make the change by matter of right, and asked if they would proceed without the ECA's support. The owner and Share noted that community support is important to them.

- A resident asked if the structure would take up more space or block the alley. The architect explained that the renovations would not change the footprint of the structure and would not block the alley.
- A resident noted that renovating a home to better accommodate a family is more palatable than developers renovating homes to break them into multiple units.
- Another resident noted that the plans look thoughtfully done, and appreciated that the architect is using building materials that look original to the property.
- The ECA voted in support of a variance to allow 133 U st NE to add a 3rd story, a deck above the garage, and to change the path of the stairs.
 - In support: 12
 - Opposed: 7
 - Opposed by residents who live within 200 ft of the home: 2

5. DISCUSSION OF THE FLOWER MARKET PROJECT

- JBG/Boundary Companies will present at the February ECA meeting. In preparation, the ECA discussed a proposed Community Benefits Agreement. Vernon had drafted the agreement and distributed it at the meeting.
- A resident asked if the developers have been communicative.
 - Mike A, who is the president of the condo association which will adjoin the development, said the developers have communicated, though it's unclear if they will address all of residents' concerns.
- A resident suggested trying to bring back the Truxton Circle fountain, which currently resides in a junk yard in MD.
- Commissioner Pinkney explained the role that ECA input plays in the zoning board's decision. If the ECA opposes the project, the ANC would also oppose. The zoning board would take that opposition into consideration.
- Commissioner Pinkney noted that projects try not to offer more in their CBA than other developments offer. There is nothing written anywhere that CBAs should be a certain percentage of the project.
- Mike encouraged ECA members to familiarize themselves with the CBA prior to the next ECA meeting.