ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3E

TENLEYTOWN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PARK FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS
CHEVY CHASE WAKEFIELD FORT GAINES

c/o Lisner-Louise-Dickson-Hurt Home 5425 Western Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20015
https://anc3e.org

Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2021, 7:30 pm

The meeting convened via Zoom at 7:33 PM. Commissioners Bender, Cohen, McHugh and Quinn were in attendance.

Announcements / Open Forum– opportunity for members of the community to raise issues of concern or importance to the 3E neighborhood

A resident of ANC3D stated that the Chancellor of DC Public Schools announced the old GDS campus in the Palisades will be used for a new secondary school. She asked if one of our Commissioners would be interested in attending a meeting with Councilmember Mendelson to discuss a more centrally-located HS. She also asked the Commission to adopt a resolution that states we would prefer a more centrally located secondary school. Commissioner Bender suggested she contact Commissioner Hall.

An attendee asked the Commission to request a sidewalk shelter for the project at 4620 Wisconsin Ave. He also asked if the trailers near the Steak and Egg are permanent. Another attendee seconded a request for a sidewalk shelter and added that construction trucks for 4620 Wisconsin Ave are coming up Chesapeake St instead of using Wisconsin Ave as agreed to in their MOU.

Eva Gunasekera, Co-Chair of the Janney 5K and Fun Run announced they will host a live race on November 20th at 9 am. The race will follow the same route as they have in previous years and they have preliminary approval from the Mayor's special events office. Registration is live and they are seeking more sponsors. More information can be found at www.janney5k.org.

Emir Gur-Ravantab, the Ward 3 Liaison to the Mayor's Office of Community Relations, could not attend the meeting but asked for the following to be announced:

- DC will be giving away gifts and an opportunity to win a scholarship to residents aged 12-17 who get their first shot at Brookland MS, Sousa MS, or Johnson MS through September.
- Residents who need to be vaccinated at home can call 1-855-363-0333 to schedule an at home vaccination visit.
- DC has set up a self-testing system. In Ward 3, the test kits can be found at the Chevy Chase, Cleveland, and Tenley- Friendship Libraries, and at the Palisades Rec Center.
- DC public schools are open with upgraded HVAC systems and HEPA filters in every classroom. Unvaccinated school staff and a random sample of students are tested weekly. Families can complete the testing consent form at bit.ly/COVIDtestform.
- The Stay DC program offers help to those unable to make rent payments because of Covid. Further questions of eligibility requirements can be found at stay.dc.gov

He can be contacted at emir.gur-ravantab@dc.gov with any questions or concerns

Linda Greenan, External Affairs Manager with Pepco, announced that the Harrison Street Substation Window Gallery (5210 Wisconsin Ave) will be dedicated on Saturday September 18, at 10am.

Maria Barry, Director of Community Relations at AU, stated all AU students and staff are required to be vaccinated, masks are required indoors on campus, and while academic buildings are not open to the public, their libraries are open to the public provided users sign in and show proof of vaccination. Community members can sign up for a newsletter at http://american.edu/communityrelations. She can be reached at 202-885-2146 or email mariab@american.edu with any questions or concerns.

An attendee asked about the status of the development at the old Superfresh. The project is under appeal.

An attendee asked if any Commissioner is responsible for working with developers before and during construction to ensure they are complying with construction agreements. He cited the City Ridge development which is not in our ANC but the workers are parking in our neighborhood. Commissioner Bender stated that we negotiate construction agreements for PUDs but we have no leverage over matter-of-right projects, such as City Ridge. He stated that residents should call 311 for parking enforcement and then contact the SMD Commissioner for ongoing issues.

Presentation by 2nd District Police

Lt Beistline provided an update on crime in PSA 202, stating in the past 60 days, there has been just one violent crime (an assault with a dangerous weapon between two people that were known to each other) and two motor vehicle thefts (one was left running and one left the key in the vehicle). The overall crime rate is down 47% this year in PSA 202. She stated that the homicides on Western Ave and Connecticut Ave are both active and detectives hope they can close both crimes.

An attendee asked for stop sign and speeding enforcement at Turtle Park on Van Ness. Commissioners asked about the status of the alleged self-defense homicide that occurred at the Friendship Heights Metro Station about three years ago and about the undercover arrest at the Smoke Island Vape Shop (MPD is working with DCRA for enforcement).

Lt Beistline can be reached at iris.beistline@dc.gov or at 202-779-2854with any additional comments or questions.

Discussion of and possible vote on revision to settlement agreement with Le Kavacha restaurant to permit live music at the establishment with certain restrictions

Commissioner Bender stated that when Le Kevacha originally sought their alcohol license they said the only live music they would have was karaoke. Since they opened, they had a few events with music (they did not realize they were out of compliance), have not had any noise complaints from residents, and once they were made aware they were out of compliance they asked to amend their alcohol license to allow for such events. Commissioner Cohen stated that he negotiated an amendment to the settlement agreement that would allow for music on the outdoor patio Sunday through Thursday from 4 to 9 pm and on Friday and Saturday from noon to 10 pm. One attendee stated that he was in favor of the amendment.

Commissioner Cohen moved and Commissioner Bender seconded a motion to approve the amended settlement agreement. The motion was approved by a vote of 4-0-0

Discussion of and possible vote on resolution regarding application for a special exception at 4606 Brandywine Street

This item was tabled to a future meeting.

Discussion of and possible vote on resolution regarding proposal to create bike lanes on Western Avenue

George Branyan from DDOT stated they would like to install a bike lane from Westmoreland Circle to Harrison St. They proposal would remove parking on the Maryland side of the street, allow for parking on the DC side of the street, have a bike lane on the south side (DC side) of the street, have two travel lanes for cars (one in each direction), and a bike lane on the Maryland side of the road. He stated the street is not wide enough to install protected bike lanes. The notice of intent (NOI) has not been issued yet and estimate construction taking place next spring. While studying the area, they realized they could change the timing of the lights to modestly reduce traffic backups at River Rd and Western Ave, improve safety, and can extend the eastbound bike lane (going toward Friendship Heights) to Harrison St. DDOT would have to remove overnight parking in front of the homes between River Rd and Harrison St to accomplish this and DDOT has not reached out to those homeowners yet.

Gilberto Solano with DDOT stated that the travel lanes are currently 12-feet wide. Under the proposal the lanes would be reduced to 11-feet wide and that should help reduce the speeds on Western Ave. He hopes that the Western Ave bike lanes can be linked with bike lanes that might be eventually be installed on Dalecarlia Pkwy. He stated that on average 50% of the parking spaces on DC side are occupied while 33% of the spaces on the Maryland side are occupied so there should not be any problems eliminating parking on one side of the street.

Attendees:

- Asked DDOT to consider installing a protected bike lane. DDOT replied that the street doesn't meet the standards to allow for a protected lane buy they would study installing protection in the narrow buffer.
- Asked if bicyclists are bound by road rules. DDOT replied that they are.
- Would like DDOT to look into conduct a traffic study of Westmoreland circle to improve safety there.
- Would like DDOT to remove parking on both sides of the street to allow for a protected lane.
- Asked about safety of moving the centerline on the road away from the crown of the road. DDOT replied that it has not been found to be unsafe.

Commissioners:

- Thinks DDOT can put down a narrow, protected bike lane and asked if the residents on the Maryland side of the street are eligible to get residential parking permits (RPP).

Update from River School regarding the special exception it seeks to be permitted to move its school, pre-school, and clinic to estate grounds at Van Ness and Nebraska Avenues

Allison Prince, attorney representing the River School, stated they had many meetings this summer with interested parties and their transportation plan has been a major focus of their recent analysis. They changed two parking spaces from overflow spaces to queueing spaces at the request of DC Forestry to provide protection for a heritage tree. Schools opened this week and while traffic always increases until parents get used to routines, there have been additional negative impacts of traffic because of Covid.

Jamie Milanovich, traffic engineer for the River School, stated their original Transportation Demand Management Plan (TDM) that they presented to the community provided a 15% reduction in vehicles entering and exiting the school during drop-off, pick-up and afternoon rush hours. They are proposing additional measures that would reduce the traffic entering and exiting the school during the morning drop off an additional 30%, providing a 45% reduction if they had no TDM plan. Those measures could include shuttling elementary grade children to the campus from offsite parking lots via buses, increasing the carpooling requirement to three students per car and providing incentives to parents who walk, bike or use Metro to get to the campus. She described the monitoring they would undertake to ensure compliance with their TDM plan. If they are out of compliance the school could reduce the number of pick-up and drop-off permits, lease spaces in nearby parking lots, convert staff parking in their garage to use for pick-up and drop-off, and/or increase the minimum number of students in cars for carpools. She explained their queueing model and that using existing data and projections for the new location, they would not exceed their queueing capacity on campus during the drop-off and pick-up hours.

They are currently recommending the following mitigation measures: modifying the traffic signal at Van Ness and Nebraska to allow for a left turn signal for cars traveling westbound on Van Ness, removing parking between 7 am and 7 pm on the north side of Van Ness between 41st St and Nebraska and on Nebraska from Warren to 42nd St, and the installation of a HAWK signal at Nebraska and Warren. They will be submitting their Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) to DDOT on September 10 and their hearing with the BZA will be on October 27th.

Attendees:

- Stated they are trying to put too many people on the property and did not think neighbors had a sense of how much public transportation would be utilized.
- Had concerns about the size of the main school building and its placement along Nebraska Ave on top of a ridge and thought the River School would end up using Nebraska Ave and Warren St as queueing lanes.
- Stated that residents are coming away from meetings with as many questions as they came in with and would like a better understand the underlying data the traffic engineers are using.
- Asked if cars exiting the driveway will be blocked by cars traveling on Nebraska Ave. Milanovich stated that there were breaks in traffic flow that would allow cars to exit out of the driveway and they will have two traffic control officers to help people exiting the property.
- Asked what commercial properties they are looking at for the shuttle and if they had signed agreements with the property owners. They do not have an agreement with any properties yet.
- Did not think the neighborhood could handle more traffic.
- Thought the River School might be massaging the data to please the Commission and noted that NPS has a large driveway and traffic backs up onto surrounding streets. River replied that they are proposing a traffic management plan while NPS does not have one.

Commissioners:

- Asked if they could postpone their hearing with BZA. River School said they could not, and Commissioners suggested we schedule a special meeting to discuss their CTR.
- Is happy that they have reduced trips and thought but they could and should do more to reduce trips such as using busses for the preschoolers and their parents.
- Asked to see a comparison of traffic against a matter-of-right project.
- Stated that someone in the chat said that they would rather have a mixed-use project on the site but noted that no one has proposal on the table for a mixed-use project and a mixed-use development would require more relief.
- Asked why they have not signed an agreement with a property for the shuttle bus. Their analysis shows they have enough space on campus to not require it and they are proposing to rent the space if their analysis is wrong.
- Is happy with the size of the building and with the reduction in trips but would like to see more improvements as they did not think adding a turning lane and removing parking would solve the traffic problems at Nebraska and Van Ness.
- Would like to see more consequences if they are not meeting their vehicle count goals.
- Noted that other schools, such as NPS, do not have a TMP imposed on them and using those traffic problems as a reason not to allow the River School to build their project is not valid.

Discussion of and possible vote on resolution regarding apparent major changes to DDOT's traffic calming policy made without public notice or opportunity to comment

Commissioner Bender stated that DDOT is responsible for policy for traffic calming. They do comprehensive neighborhood studies from time to time but make many of their traffic calming decisions on a block-by-block basis. In the past when residents requested traffic calming on their street, DDOT would measure traffic volumes and speed at the site, would make recommendations and go to the ANC for input. Commissioner Bender recently received notice that DDOT wanted to install speed bumps on a few blocks in our neighborhood. When he asked for the analysis replied that they are no longer doing analyses to see what the average traffic speed is or calculate any spill-over effects. No public notice was made about the changes in their policy.

Commissioner Bender drafted a resolution addressing significant problems with this approach.

One attendee stated that many times a traffic analysis confirms people's gut feelings. Another said they support the resolution. Commissioners:

- Noted that DDOT has not provided their rationale for the change in policy and suspects that traffic bumps are a low-cost traffic calming measure whereas studies are expensive, and their implementations can be controversial.
- Would like DDOT to provide a policy that is rational, transparent, and based on safety outcomes.
- Thought this policy will have perverse incentives similar to what happened with RPP.
- Noted that speed bumps are not always the right solution as people speed up after they pass the bumps and would rather have raised cross walks and/or bulbouts at the intersections.

Commissioner Bender moved and Commissioner McHugh seconded a motion to approve the resolution. The motion was approved by a vote of 4-0-0

ANC Business

- Approval of July 2021 Meeting Minutes - Commissioner Bender moved, and Commissioner McHugh seconded a motion to approve the Draft July 2021 Meeting Minutes. The motion was approved by a vote of 4-0-0.
- Approval of expenditures - Commissioner Quinn moved, and Commissioner Bender seconded a motion to approve a payment for $495.00 to Sherry Cohen for administrative support. The expenditures were approved by a vote of 4-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned by acclimation at 11:30 PM.