

Government of the District of Columbia
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3F
North Cleveland Park • Forest Hills • Tenleytown

3F01 – Adam Tope, Chair
3F02 – Karen L. Perry, Vice Chair
3F03 – Mary Beth Ray
3F04 – Sally Gresham
3F05 – Andrea Molod, Secretary
3F06 – Malachy Nugent, Treasurer
3F07 – Patrick Jakopchek



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Public Meeting – July 21, 2015

Forest Hills of DC
4901 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20008

MINUTES

ANC 3F convened its regular public meeting on Tuesday, July 21, 2015 at Forest Hills of DC, 4901 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20008. The meeting was duly advertised and open to the public.

Copies of resolutions approved are available at www.anc3f.us, and the livestream recording of the meeting is available at <http://new.livestream.com/anc-3f>. Times listed in parentheses indicate the point in the recording at which that item is discussed.

Commissioners Present: Tope
 Nugent
 Molod
 Ray
 Gresham
 Jakopchek

ITEM	VOTE	KEYWORDS
Motion to approve the agenda as amended	6-0-0	
Motion to approve the consent agenda	6-0-0	
Resolution honoring the legacy of Tom Whitley	6-0-0	
Motion to support historic designation of 3020 Albemarle St. NW	tabled	

Motion to approve the grant request from Forest Hills Connection	6-0-0	
Resolution to support the reappointment of Sandra Mattevous-Frye	6-0-0	
Motion to approve expenditure of up to \$3000 on web site development	6-0-0	
Motion to adjourn	6-0-0	

Financial Status: \$126,403.00
Call to Order: 7:35 pm
Adjournment: 09:52 pm

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Consent Agenda

- Approval of minutes of May, 26, 2015 meeting
- Approval of minutes of June, 16, 2015 meeting
- Approval of letter HPRB to support the proposed minor renovations at 3520 Springland Lane, NW

2. Elections for ANC Representative from SMD 3F02

The election will be held at a special meeting of ANC3F on August 6, 2015, to be held at 4301 Connecticut Avenue, NW at the entrance from Veazey Terrace, NW. The election will be held from 7:05 PM to 7:55 PM, and the vote counting and ANC meeting will follow. There are two candidates for the seat, Shirley Adelstein and David Donaldson. Shirley Adelstein was present and spoke about her advocacy for liveability, affordability and sustainability, and the need to listen to people. Her web site: www.shirleyadelstein.com, email:shirleyforanc@gmail.com.

3. Commissioner Announcements

Ray:

- A leak in a sewer pipe found near the Soapstone Valley Trail was halted by temporarily re-routing the sewage. Higher than usual ecoli counts were found near the head of the trail, and DNA testing will take place to determine source (human/canine/feline/avian).
- A public meeting will be held to hear a presentation about options being considered by DC water to repair and upgrade the sewage pipes currently on National Park Service land near Soapstone Valley Trail. The two current options are a complete removal of the pipes from the park (“Reroute”) or a lining of the current pipes (“CCIP” or “Cured In Place Pipe”). Meeting will be held on July 28, 2015 at 7:30 PM at Forest Hills of DC, 4901 Connecticut Avenue, NW.

- There is a homeless man who is occupying an area of the sidewalk near the closed entrance to the Van Ness Metro station. There are medical issues, health and safety issues, and possible economic impact for the area. Government and volunteer organizations are exploring options.
- DC Council approved the allocation of \$200,000 for Van Ness Main Street plan
- DC Office of Planning is working on a final draft of the Van Ness commercial action plan

Nugent:

- Options are being explored for extending several sidewalks, in particular extending the sidewalk on Yuma St. NW all the way to Connecticut Avenue NW. It presently ends in the middle of the block.
- The tree space at corner of Connecticut Avenue NW and Appleton St. NW is currently concrete covered, and there are plans for DDOT to repair the sidewalk and take out the concrete and replace with plants.
- Due to the pedestrian problems related to the closing of the west entrance to the Van Ness metro, DDOT has installed timers at crossing. The next step would be to increase the time allotted to cross (ANC3F had asked for that) within 30 days. Barbara Klein was instrumental in this plan.
- Working with DDOT to get signs on the 3600 blocks of Fessenden St. NW and Everett St. NW. The danger stems from the use of those streets by commuters and children walking to school.
- Would like to acknowledge councilwoman Cheh for extending the Connecticut Avenue NW retail priority area up to the 5000 block, which facilitates the acquisition of grants and the ability to secure funding for the Clean Team program.

Jakopchek:

- Participated in a Soapstone Trail walk with the Potomac Appalachian trail club and members of the Hillwood Estate and Museum. Issues related to the park and trail were discussed, including steps Hillwood Museum will take to maintain the trail.
- Exploring the re-establishment of the Soapstone ANC Committee

Gresham:

- Park Van Ness construction update: Ongoing concrete work in penthouses, work on the precast panels is beginning, work on setting the windows in front and the public utility work in front are both ongoing. The work on the electrical vaults will be done at night. The interior work is also beginning. There prelease of apartments will begin in August, and this will be conducted from an office space near the closed Van Ness Metro station. The sidewalk continues to be closed, and plans are for the closure to last until December. Work with WMATA and DDOT to ensure pedestrian safety continues.
- Forest Hills Park update: Concert series continues, next concert is July 31.
- New restaurant, Thai Pad, has opened for business.

Molod:

- Citizen request for sidewalks near the intersection of Fessenden St. NW and Broad Branch Ave, NW is being facilitated by Molod and Ray (intersection of two SMDs).

Residents are gathering signatures on a petition, and a resolution will be considered at the next meeting of ANC3F.

4. Announcements / Open Forum

David Bardin announced:

- University of the District of Columbia has a new president, Ronald Mason, and that he dedicated a new green roof building on Connecticut Ave., NW on July 6, 2015.
- Historic Preservation board is considering a matter involving the Rock Creek Park Historic district. The national capital office of the National Park Service has raised the issue of expanding the district to include Soapstone and Melvin Hazen Valley parks. This was presented last year and the board recommended approval in principle, but were looking for input from ANC3F. Mr. Bardin would like us to consider this issue, and perhaps invite a representative from the National Park Service to discuss the matter.

Bianca Black (office of councilwoman Cheh): There will be meeting on the 28th of July to examine the issue of the homeless man who resides on Connecticut Avenue. The space will be cleaned up on August 3. (Ray: more complicated than that)

Bartley O'Hara: Resides at 4901 Connecticut Ave., NW and takes Metro bus. He is concerned about the danger presented by the southbound L buses in morning combined with frequent jaywalking near the Van Ness Metro station. He believes that the situation will worsen after Labor day. Commissioner Ray added that she sees the jaywalking every morning and has raised the issue with the Metropolitan Police Department and asked them to enforce jaywalking rules. Commissioner Gresham added the possibility that the west entrance may re-open in September.

5. Resolution

Commissioner Ray proposed a resolution honoring the legacy of Tom Whitley, former ANC Commissioner, who passed away recently. Resolution was approved with 6 voting in favor, 0 voting against, and 0 abstaining (6-0-0).

6. Howard University Law School Campus Plan

Cynthia Giordano, Mabel Taylor Bennet and Derrek Niec-Williams presented the ongoing plans for the Howard University campus. Ms. Giordano asked how ANC3F would like to participate in process. She said that the plan is to keep the campus in status quo, with no new buildings, since enrollment is declining. She announced that there will be a relocation of Divinity School faculty and students to the west campus (from east campus), including 140 students in the graduate program, 22 faculty, and 25 staff. The building they occupy on the east campus needs repair and so they will be relocated. The assumption is that Divinity School will be on west campus in the long term. According to Ms. Giordano, the core value of social justice held by Howard University Law School makes it fitting for the Divinity School to be housed on the west campus. She said that there is room in the existing buildings, that the Law School is generally active during the day and the Divinity School at night, so the existing parking should also be adequate. The Law School will study the transportation management to make sure that shuttle will serve The Divinity School, and will conduct a traffic study in the fall. Although there are no plans for any new construction, the option still exists from previous campus plans for a president's house

to be built – this is the only remaining provision in the previous plans that has been approved but not built. The new dean of the school is Holly Daniel Walker, who anticipates working with the ANC and the community. Commissioner Tope said he has met with the new dean and will introduce the ANC3F02 electee to her. In answer to a question about the timing of the plan, Ms. Giordano replied that at the end of August the plan will be filed, and the hearings are generally 2-3 months hence. The transportation element is scheduled to be filed in the fall. At the request of the commissioners, Ms. Giordano agreed to present the plan to ANC3F when it is filed. Commissioner Jakopcheck requested that the commission also see the sustainability part of plan. At present there is a lot of rain runoff, and also an infestation of kudzu (near Rock Creek Park). From the public: David Bardin said that the Divinity School could be an enrichment to our neighborhood, and asked that the campus plan include plans to protect an unnamed tributary of Soapstone Creek that runs behind the parking lot and next to the campus property, as it leads to grove of oldest trees in park. David Donaldson expressed his concern about traffic.

7. Motion to support historic designation of 3020 Albemarle St., NW

Commissioner Ray made a motion to send a letter to the Historic Preservation Board in support of the historic designation of 3020 Albemarle St., NW.

Discussion: Commissioner Ray presented the case for supporting the historic designation of 3020 Albemarle St. NW. She noted that the house appears on page 53 of Forest Hills, a book written Margery L. Elfin and Paul K. Williams about the history of Forest Hills, and was built in 1924 by Horace Peaslee. The house sits at the entrance to Soapstone Park, and is important to the community. The home is featured on the Fire Department call box at the intersection of Ellicot St. NW and 32nd St. NW.

The historic designation was filed by members of the Forest Hills Neighborhood Alliance, and Barbara Bates spoke about the rationale for the filing. She said that this was the second filing for a historic designation by the Forest Hills Alliance (the first was the Owl's Nest). She said that the former owner was delighted that her house was on a fire call box. Ms. Bates said that the house is one of 10 houses designed by the master architect Horace Peaslee, and is the only house that stands at the entrance to the Soapstone trail. She said that a number of Forest Hills residents have approved this designation, including the author of Forest Hills. The motivation for the filing, according to Ms. Bates, was that the house was threatened because it was advertised for sale as "build your own dream house". She said that in her view it meets the historic designation criteria based on: 1) Sitting 2) Built by Peaslee 3) Typical of popular style of the time, as Peaslee was in the forefront in the United States of a style popular in Europe.

The current owner, Peter Gordon, spoke in opposition to the designation and gave a history of the house. He said that he grew up in house with his brother, John (co-owner). That his mother lived there until she died in November, 2014, and that his mother's caregiver is living there and is the caretaker of the house. He is opposed to designation because he believes that the house does not meet the criteria needed for designation, and that historic designation would impair the house greatly. Mr. Gordon said that architects are divided about what is special about the house, if anything. He said that he cannot afford to keep the house and so put it on the market for sale. He has no plans to raze the house, has not sought a permit to raze. He said that although Peaslee is a recognized master, that is not sufficient for designation. He said that the

house must be a notable example of his work, and that it is not since it is not one of houses that merited one of his awards. He said that the fact that it is unique, odd or eccentric is part of the problem, and also not sufficient for historic designation.

Mr. Gordon pointed out that some aspects of the architecture that are noted in the historic nomination were not designed by Peaslee:

- 1) His parents constructed the wall – his father was a psychiatrist with his office downstairs and needed the wall for privacy of patients. The modification made by his parents, therefore, clearly does not detract from house.
- 2) His parents also had the porch glassed in, which was a significant change to house.
- 3) His parents put in the plantings,
- 4) His parents put in the walkway

Mr. Gordon stated clearly that his mother would have opposed historic designation. He said that at present the house is 2300 square feet, with no downstairs bathroom and no duct work. He said that whoever buys the house will want to renovate substantially, which will be difficult given the need to meet Historic Preservation Board approval. He also expressed concern about the manner in which the nomination was conducted. He said that the filing includes photos of the interior taken without the knowledge/presence of owners. He asked that ANC3F not endorse the filing, because it does not merit designation based on the facts.

In answer to a question about whether the main motivation for opposing the historic designation is the resale value of house, Mr. Gordon replied that the house has challenges and does not meet needs of most buyers. He agrees that advertising the house as a “possible teardown” was mistake. Commissioner Nugent asked if he would be willing to change the advertisement, and Mr. Gordon replied that he would. In answer to a question as to whether the historic designation wouldn’t help sell the house because of the possible cache, Mr Gordon said it probably would not.

David Bardin - filed a supporting document for the historic designation and included photos from soapstone trail. He felt that the proponents (Forest Hills Alliance) made solid case. He recalled the rancor that surrounded the historic designation of the Owl’s Nest.

Mark Stuckart spoke about the designation. He studied architecture at Williams College and works at OPIC and his job is to protect property rights in other countries. He said that countries exercising eminent domain or nationalizing property must provide fair and equitable compensation. He likes the architectural diversity in Forest Hills, but to him the historical designation process seems unfair

Commissioner Molod asked Commissioner Ray if she would consider tabling her motion until this historic designation can be considered as part of a survey of historic landmark designations in the community. Commissioner Ray agreed to table the motion.

Motion was tabled.

8. Motion to approve the grant to Forest Hills Connection

Commissioner Tope made a motion to approve the \$850 grant request from the Forest Hills Connection to upgrade the web site to make it more easily accessible. To meet the necessary criterion for an ANC grant, several steps were taken by the Commission:

- Vote that the ANC meeting is a public meeting – approved 6-0-0.
- Vote that the website update will aid the public – approved 6-0-0.
- Vote that the grant was submitted in writing – approved 6-0-0.
- Vote that the legal requirements were met – approved 6-0-0.

The motion to approve the grant was approved with 6 voting in favor, 0 voting against, and 0 abstaining (6-0-0).

9. Resolution to support reappointment of Sandra Mattevous-Frye

Commissioner Molod presented a resolution to the Commission to support the reappointment of Sandra Mattevous-Frye as the People’s Counsel. Resolution was approved with 6 voting in favor, 0 voting against, and 0 abstaining (6-0-0).

10. Miscellaneous

Financial Update

Commissioner Nugent gave a Financial Update, noting a balance in the ANC 3F account of \$126,403.00.

Technology Committee Update

Web site update: The vote on the final design will take place soon, different designs still being considered.

Motion to authorize spending up to \$3000 on web site development.

Discussion:

Commissioner Gresham asked if the different designs can be combined. Commissioner Jakopcheck answered that they could not be, because the design was conducted as a contest. From the public, Tracy Johnke from Forest Hills Connection advised the committee to make sure the final design is easy to update. Commissioner Ray inquired as to whether Rachel Huhn can attend a web design/WordPress class, and was told by Commissioner Jakopchek that either he or Tracy Johnke could instruct Rachel in the use of WordPress.

The motion was approved with 6 voting in favor, 0 voting against, and 0 abstaining (6-0-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 09:52 PM
