

**Minutes for the Meeting of
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2E**

December 3, 2012

Georgetown Visitation School, 35th and Volta Place, Heritage Room

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Commissioner Lewis, Chair, with Commissioners Solomon, Jones, Sticka, and Birch present, constituting a quorum. Commissioners Eason and Starrels joined after the call to order.

Administrative

Approval of December 3rd, 2012 Agenda

The agenda for the December 3rd, 2012 ANC 2E public meeting was approved on a motion by Commissioner Solomon (Commissioner Sticka seconded) by a vote of 5-0.

Approval of the October 31st, 2012 Minutes

The minutes for the October 31st, 2012 ANC 2E public meeting were approved on a motion by Commissioner Solomon (Commissioner Sticka seconded) by a vote of 5-0.

Financial Report

Commissioner Solomon reported that ANC 2E's savings and checking accounts remain secure.

Public Safety Report

Commissioner Solomon introduced Lieutenant Hedgecock, who offered a public safety report. Lt. Hedgecock reported an increase in shoplifting and theft as is fairly typical for the holiday season. Lt. Hedgecock encouraged community members to continue to protect their belongings. Lt. Hedgecock also reported there would be an increase in enforcement on panhandling and traffic enforcement following the questions of Commissioners Starrels and Jones, respectively.

Transportation Report

Commissioner Lewis reported that the G-2 bus route will be restored in mid-December with smaller 37-foot hybrid buses during non-peak times. During peak times, the traditional 42-foot buses will continue to be used. Commissioner Lewis also reported that work continues to be done on the Glover Park streetscape project.

Commissioner Lewis mentioned that the District Department of Transportation has recently been installing non-conforming, tall tree box fences. Despite an understanding that these should not be installed in Georgetown, they have recently been added. ANC 2E has brought this issue to DDOT's attention. Commissioner Lewis reported that parking availability remains a problem in the community and that DDOT is exploring options for improving parking in Georgetown. In January, DDOT will host a forum with ANC 2E, the Citizens

Association of Georgetown, and the Burleith Citizens Association on parking issues in Georgetown and Burleith.

Department of Public Works Report

Commissioner Jones reported that recycling and trash conditions in Georgetown and Burleith have been improving. Commissioner Jones praised the community and Georgetown University on this improvement but said that there is still work to be done on this issue. Commissioner Jones mentioned that the second round of leaf collection is underway and recommended that community members rake them to avoid safety issues.

Community Comment

Commissioner Lewis introduced Lauralyn Lee from Georgetown University. Together, they reported that the Zoning Commission process with regards to the Campus Plan had ended. The implementation stage on the plan has now begun and Commissioner Lewis reported that he believed that so far the new relationship between the community and the university was moving in an appropriate direction. Ms. Lee agreed with Commissioner Lewis' comments and said she felt as though this new collegial relationship was already yielding the results desired by all parties.

Commissioner Lewis introduced Comcast's Regional Vice President of Governmental Affairs. Commissioner Lewis thanked Comcast for quickly responding to ANC 2E's request to remove utility pedestals placed throughout Georgetown that were inconsistent with the historic nature of the community. They have now been reinstalled as vaults. Commissioner Birch also thanked Comcast for working to remedy this issue so quickly.

Commissioner Lewis passed on updates from Ruth Werner from Councilmember Jack Evans' office. Commissioner Lewis reported on her behalf that a community meeting and Twitter townhall on the DC budget are upcoming. On April 23rd there will be a special election to fulfill the at-large City Council seat vacated by Phil Mendelson's accession to the Council Chairmanship.

A community member raised the issue of a planned water tunnel by WASA that would begin at the Key Bridge. Another community member thanked DDOT for extending bike lanes through 34th Street.

New Business

Proposed DDOT regulations on commercial signage

Commissioner Birch discussed DDOT's new proposed regulations that are currently open to public comment. Commissioner Birch went through the highlights of the comments that ANC 2E is offering. After Commissioner Lewis made a friendly amendment, Commissioner Birch then made the following resolution (Commissioner Eason seconded), which passed on a vote of 6-0:

ANC 2E appreciates the opportunity to comment on the District of Columbia's proposed regulations issued with the intent to adopt a new title 13 (Sign Regulations) of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations. The proposed regulations will contribute significantly to providing clarity and certainty governing outdoor signs.

In a historic district such as Georgetown, outdoor signs add to the character, vitality and identity of a neighborhood. At the same time, it is important to avoid the visual clutter that distracts and hides the architectural features and historic interest of that district. ANC 2E

recognizes and appreciates the singular treatment afforded the Georgetown Historic District under these under these proposed rules. In view of our interest in preserving the unique character of this historic neighborhood, ANC 2E is pleased to offer the following comments addressing those provisions in the proposed regulations.

1. Sec. 306.1, PROHIBITED SIGNS, EXCEPTIONS: ANC 2E supports the listing of prohibited signs in the Georgetown Historic District. We read the prohibition of “electronic” signs to include LED and similar signs, and we support that prohibition. If clarification is needed, we support including a specific prohibition on “electronic signs, including LED and similar signs.” We support a prohibition on flashing neon signs. We also support a prohibition on non-flashing neon signs except as follows: we support an exception in the regulations regarding “non-flashing” neon signs to be permitted under the same rules for all other signage and must comport with the D.C. Historic Preservation Office guidelines followed and the Old Georgetown Board (OGB) guidelines and practices, i.e. identify the business and serve as the single sign for the business, and meet the requirements and review process of placement, size, design, and color applied to any other type of sign. Such a requirement would then prohibit the proliferation of multiple neon signs at a single business and eliminate all but those neon signs serving the single purpose of identifying the business.

2. Sec. 305.1(a) PERMITTED SIGNS AND REQUIREMENTS/Projecting Signs: ANC 2E urges DDOT to adopt in these regulations the standards applied by ANC 2E on proposed projecting signs, which have been developed and are imposed in the interest of minimizing visual clutter in the Georgetown historic district: Projecting signs (or “blade” signs) are only permitted 1) on the principal commercial streets Wisconsin Avenue NW, M Street NW, and K Street/Water Street NW) in the case of identifying a business located above another business on the street level, or 2) to identify a business located on a side street off one of the principal commercial streets.

3. Sec.305.1(c) PERMITTED SIGNS AND REQUIREMENTS/Show Window Signs: ANC 2E supports the provisions in Section 305.1(c) limiting the size of signs in windows to the lesser of 25 square feet or 20 percent of the window area. The District’s building code requires that signs painted onto glass storefront windows not cover more than 10 percent of the total window surface and that signs hung inside display windows not cover more than 15 percent of the window. ANC 2E recommends that DDOT incorporate these provisions into the regulations proposed here rather than increasing the allowed window area to 20 percent as stated in the proposed regulations.

Support of this provision recognizes concern over the proliferation of large signs (including enlarged photographs and colored light panels) covering all or nearly all of a window area of commercial establishments in the Georgetown Historic District, again creating undesirable visual clutter on the commercial streets. In fact, this provision should be expanded to apply to all signs visible from the street, including those signs set back from the window face, providing transparency between the street and the commercial establishment and promoting greater interaction between the interior and exterior spaces.

4. Sec.404.1 MASTER PLANS FOR SIGNS: ANC 2E recommends that the D.C. government stipulate clearly in the regulations the permissive and not mandatory nature of a requirement for the development of a coordinated master plan for signs where a complex houses multiple tenants requiring several signs. A goal of the signage program in the Georgetown historic district should not necessarily be to promote a single “look” which might be appropriate to a suburban shopping district but inappropriate to a historic district. We believe the overall policy driving these regulations should promote the individuality and even the eccentricities that identify the character and spirit of the historic district, encouraging diverse yet compatible signage in the commercial districts. Such decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis through the review process, including those concerning signs to be installed on multiple properties that are historically or architecturally related.

5. Sec.606 FREESTANDING SIGNS ON PUBLIC SPACE: ANC 2E urges that freestanding sidewalk signs be prohibited in the Georgetown Historic District with the three limited exceptions described below. Our opposition to freestanding sidewalk signs is based on our interest in ensuring pedestrian safety and encouraging the free flow of foot traffic and commerce on the principal commercial streets in the historic district. Georgetown's narrow, brick sidewalks are challenging enough for pedestrians to navigate without the addition of freestanding signs. With some 10 million visitors a year, the sidewalks in Georgetown, especially on the principal commercial streets, are often filled to capacity for all pedestrians and even more challenging for people with strollers, in wheelchairs, or walking bicycles. The extensive streetscape design implemented by the District of Columbia on M Street and Wisconsin Avenue several years ago included the goal of reducing street furniture and visual clutter on those streets. The imposition of freestanding signs on the sidewalks of those streets is oppositional to that approach and defeats one of the principal goals of the streetscape project.

We support exceptions only for (1) valet parking signs within the Georgetown BID boundaries, (2) the provision Sec.606.7 in the proposed regulations permitting freestanding sidewalk signs indicating the location of a public market during the market's house of operation, and (3) signs pertaining to a business located on a side street within one block of any of the principal commercial streets, or located on a corner away from the principal commercial streets, with a daily changing message related to the commercial nature of the business and determined to contribute to the individual character and spirit of Georgetown. Signs meeting these exceptions must also comply with all other provisions of these regulations, including available sidewalk width.

6. CHAPTER 3: SIGNS SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS/ CHAPTER 4: SIGNS SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD: We urge that the regulations clarify the roles of the Commission of Fine Arts and the Historic Preservation Review Board with regard to signage in the Georgetown Historic District. Specifically, we recommend:

A. Primary review by the CFA. As written, the provisions of Chapter 3 (CFA) and Chapter 4 (HPRB) seem to overlap, suggesting that both CFA and HPRB will review each permit application for the Georgetown Historic District. This would be inefficient for all concerned, and we believe it is not necessary. Instead, the regulations should be clarified to provide that CFA has primary jurisdiction and applications will not also be reviewed by HPRB (except, perhaps, in rare cases of unusual importance).

B. Clarification of CFA's role. The regulations should make clear that CFA, in reviewing individual cases, may be more restrictive than the signage regulations might otherwise allow. That is how CFA needs to operate and it generally works well. For example, zoning regulations may permit a certain height limit or lot-coverage limit, but CFA considers the particular context of the applicant property and frequently applies a more restrictive standard than the more general regulations establish. CFA focuses on specific properties and specific visual context, and that role needs to be preserved clearly in these regulations.

C. Timetable for CFA action. Sections 303.3 and 303.4 of the proposed regulations require that CFA act within 45 days of receiving an application. In practice, that deadline would not give CFA time to review cases it should be reviewing. Because of the two-stage review process (OGB and CFA) that applies to Georgetown, combined with CFA's cut-off time for putting applications on an upcoming agenda, review within a 45-day timetable could often be impossible. The CFA process requires applicants to submit a week to 10 days before an OGB meeting; then the OGB meets; then around two weeks later the CFA meets; then the CFA report is prepared and distributed. An application received after the submission cut-off for a meeting in month one would be heard in month two, and the process would take more than 45 days to complete. Also, neither OGB nor CFA meets in August, and a 45-day limit could have the perverse effect of encouraging some applicants to game the system. We suggest that Section 303.3 refer to the Commission's normal schedule and provide that review be conducted within the time frame of the next available meetings, including post-meeting reports, following receipt of an application, taking into account cut-

off periods for hearing applications at a particular meeting.

TEMPORARY SIGNS: We have some concerns about the proposed duration, size and review process for temporary signs in the Georgetown Historic District. We would appreciate the opportunity to work with the D.C. government on refining these aspects of the proposed regulations as they apply to the Georgetown Historic District.

Lawyers Have Heart 10K Run and Fun Walk – Saturday, June 8, 2013

Two representatives from Pacers presented on the proposed Lawyers Have Heart 10K and Fun Walk route and plan. One representative shared the details of their route's use of K Street/Water Street between 30th Street and Wisconsin Avenue, the Whitehurst Freeway, M Street between Whitehurst and Foxhall Road, Canal Road between Foxhall and Reservoir Road, and Foxhall Road between Macarthur Boulevard and Canal Road. Commissioner Starrels reminded the planners to minimize noise in set-up. Commissioner Lewis asked for a guarantee regarding when the streets would reopen and was told that reopening would occur at 9:30am. Commissioner Birch asked about the \$800,000 that would be raised by the race and was told that all of this would go to the American Heart Association.

Commissioner Starrels then made the following resolution (Commissioner Jones seconded), which passed on a vote of 6-0:

ANC 2E once again supports the Lawyers Have Heart 10K and Fun Walk for Saturday, June 8, 2013. We would like the organizers to pay attention to the following items: strict adherence to the planned reopening times for affected streets, effective communication with nearby condominiums including Washington Harbor, and quiet set-up around the Washington Harbor area. ANC 2E also stresses that Canal Road westbound should remain open during the race for emergency purposes as necessary. ANC 2E also understands that residents in the Water Street and K Street will be assisted in moving through the area as needed for the duration of the race.

ABC

3401 K Street, NW, Gypsy Sally's Acoustic Tavern, LCC, License No. ABRA-090582, application for license, consideration of possible Voluntary Agreement

Commissioner Starrels presented a Voluntary Agreement negotiated between ANC 2E and Gypsy Sally's Acoustic Tavern. After the presentation, Commissioner Lewis asked several questions about the agreement, with a slight wording change being made to the Voluntary Agreement.

Following this discussion, Commissioner Starrels made the following motion (Commissioner Birch seconded), which passed by a vote of 6-0:

ANC 2E lifts its protest with the agreed upon Voluntary Agreement in place with the addition of "for special occasions" being inserted into paragraph 2.

Old Georgetown Board

Commissioner Birch chaired the meeting for consideration of the following OGB-related matters. Commissioner Lewis did not participate in the consideration or vote with regard to any of these matters.

Regular Calendar

Private Projects

With regard to 3050 K Street, NW, OG 13-032 (HPA-052)

A representative from the property spoke about their proposed mixed-use complex with an enclosure at the terrace and sign scheme for “Fiola Mare.”

Commissioner Starrels made the following resolution (Commissioner Jones seconded), which passed by a vote of 5-0:

ANC 2E appreciates the concept as presented and has no objection.

With regard to 1079 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, OG 13-021 (HPA 13-039):

A representative from the property spoke about their proposed alterations to the storefront. After discussion, Commissioner Starrels made the following motion (Commissioner Birch seconded), which passed by a vote of 5-0:

ANC 2E would like the Old Georgetown Board to ensure that the name of the establishment not be repeated on both the awning and building. Our preference is that the name be only on the building. ANC 2E would also like the Old Georgetown Board to consider the framing of the glass front to ensure that it does not appear department store-like.

With regard to 3102 P Street, NW, OG 13-037 (HPA 13-057):

A representative from the property presented on the proposed rear addition at the third floor. Commissioner Birch made the following motion (Commissioner Sticka seconded), which passed by a vote of 5-0:

ANC 2E supports the concept of an addition at the rear of 3102 P Street, NW with the reservation that we ask the Old Georgetown Board to be mindful of the impact that this addition would have on the neighbor to the west. Additionally, we would not have approved the deck that currently exists on this property and would be happy to see some change made so that this deck is no longer available.

With regard to 1718 34th Street, NW, OG 12-024 (HPA 13-044):

A representative from the property spoke about their proposed 2-story rear addition plus basement and replacement windows. Commissioner Birch made the following motion (Commissioner Starrels seconded), which passed by a vote of 5-0:

ANC 2E has no objection to the restoration of a porch feature at the rear of 1718 34th Street, NW. We do, however, have reservations to the extent that the proposed plan interferes with the historic pattern of sleeping porches at the rear.

With regard to 3321 N Street, NW OG 12-358 (HPA 12-593):

A representative from the property spoke about their proposal for one- and two-story rear additions and new window wells on the front façade. After discussion, Commissioner Jones made the following motion (Commissioner Starrels seconded), which passed by a vote of 5-0:

ANC 2E opposes the proposal for underground parking at this property finding it unnecessary for the single-family home that exists. ANC 2E, in keeping with previous resolutions taken by this Commission, remains concerned about the change in character that this would bring to historical property and neighborhood.

At 9:26 p.m., with no further matters on the agenda, Commissioner Lewis moved (Commissioner Sticka seconded) to adjourn this public session of ANC 2E. The motion passed unanimously.

Submitted for the approval of ANC 2E,

Jake Sticka
Secretary, ANC 2E

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