

Minutes for the Meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2E

June 3, 2008
Georgetown Visitation School, 35th and Volta Place, Heritage Room

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. by Commissioner Solomon, Chair, with Commissioners Solomon, Lewis, Lowenstein, Starrels, Birch and Eason present, constituting a quorum. Before the first vote was taken in the New Business agenda, Commissioner Skelsey joined the meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Public Safety and Police Report

Commissioner Lewis introduced MPD Lieutenant Michelle Milam to the community. Lt. Milam has recently been appointed the lieutenant in charge of PSA 206. Lt. Milam spoke about her previous experience in MPD, shared some observations on recent crimes in PSA 206, and responded to questions from Commissioners and community members. Statistics on recent public safety incidents are available at <http://crimemap.dc.gov/presentation/query.asp>. There is also a Second District web site including crime information at 2D_mpd@yahoo.com.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the meeting of ANC 2E held on April 29, 2008 were approved on a motion by Commissioner Eason (Solomon second) by a vote of 6-0.

Financial Report

Commissioner Lowenstein reported that ANC 2E has been notified that a periodic audit of the Commission's financial records will be undertaken soon by staff of the D.C. Auditor's office.

Commissioner Lewis reported that the Commission would like to obtain the consulting services of Dwane Starlin, a professional with experience in accounting, to assist the Commission with financial accounting matters including preparation of periodic financial statements and reports. This work will be in addition to Mr. Starlin's previously authorized, ongoing work consulting with the Commission on employment tax matters. Commissioner Lewis moved (Solomon second) to adopt the following resolution, which passed by a vote of 6-0:

ANC 2E is authorized to retain Dwane Starlin as an independent consultant to assist the Commission, in addition to previously authorized work, with financial accounting matters, including preparation of periodic financial statements and reports, on an hourly basis as needed, at a rate of compensation of \$25 per hour up to a maximum of \$750 per calendar year for such additional work.

Transportation Report

Commissioner Starrels reminded the community that the ANC Transportation Committee, chaired by Commissioners Starrels and Lewis, meets and confers regularly with the District Department of Transportation and other District government officials about transportation-related issues of interest within ANC 2E and that community input and suggestions are welcome and encouraged. Commissioner Starrels reported that at the Commission's urging, DDOT has now assigned Traffic Control Officers (TCO's) to the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and M Street NW during certain rush hours. Commissioners Starrels and Lewis noted that the Commission will continue to urge DDOT to expand the use of TCO's along M Street from Wisconsin Avenue to Key Bridge.

COMMUNITY COMMENT

Mimsy Lindner, president of the Friends of Volta Park, advised the community that a Volta Park fundraising celebration and silent auction will be held on Friday, June 6 at Georgetown Visitation School from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.; that a community tennis tournament will be held on Saturday and Sunday, June 5 and 6; that community softball games will be held on Sunday, June 6; and that a picnic, games and a bake sale will celebrate Volta Park weekend on Sunday, June 6 beginning at noon in Volta Park.

Doug Smith, Interim Executive Director of the Georgetown BID, reported on the BID's plans for Christmas decorations for the holidays. Commissioners recommended to Mr. Smith that the BID contact the Old Georgetown Board and ask if they would like to review the new ornament design for the intersection of Wisconsin and M Streets, NW.

Tony Robinson, Director of Communications, Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization, reported on plans for pruning weeds and restoring the playing field at Ellington Field.

Later in the meeting, Councilmember Jack Evans reported to the community on recent matters pertaining to the District of Columbia Council and responded to questions from Commissioners and community members.

NEW BUSINESS

Special Items

Hyde/Addison Elementary School construction. Representatives of D.C. Public Schools discussed revised plans for driveways, landscape and exterior upgrades for the Hyde and Addison school property. Because this matter is going before the Old Georgetown Board, Commissioners agreed by consensus to consider the matter to be part of the Zoning and Planning agenda. After discussion by Commissioners and community members, Commissioner Skelsey moved (Starrels second) to adopt the following resolution, which passed by a vote of 7-0

ANC 2E strongly supports the renovation of the southern edge of the Hyde-Addison schoolyard project in accordance with the plans as presented.

Zoning and Planning

No Action: Commissioners suggested at this point and later in the meeting that the following projects be removed from the agenda and treated as items for which no review is being undertaken by the Commission:

2815 M Street (Birch)

3024 Q Street (2 projects) (Birch)

3422 N Street (Skelsey)

3268 P Street (Skelsey)

There were no objections and the items were so removed from the agenda.

1312 33rd Street, NW, Residence, O.G. 08-201 (H.P.A. 08-298):

Concept plans were presented for a rear addition and to replace damaged wood siding (in progress). After discussion by Commissioners and community members, Commissioner Skelsey moved (Solomon second) to adopt the following resolution, which passed by a vote of 6-0 (Starrels not present):

ANC 2E takes no position on the exterior addition but encourages the owners to inform the adjacent neighbors promptly of the work that is proposed.

1500 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Retail, O.G. 08-160 (H.P.A. 08-253):

Permit plans were presented for window replacements, repair of a cornice and alterations to a storefront. After discussion by Commissioners and community members, Commissioner Skelsey moved (Solomon second) to adopt the following resolution, which passed by a vote of 7-0:

ANC 2E supports the plans as presented.

1611 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Commerce Bank, O.G. 08-131 (H.P.A. 08-214):

Public space permit plans were presented for a temporary construction fence and two banners. After discussion by Commissioners and community members, Commissioner Lewis moved (Starrels second) to adopt the following resolution, which passed by a vote of 7-0

ANC 2E is not opposed to some discreet identifying signage on portions of the construction-fence screening during construction of the Commerce Bank building. We support making any signage integral to the screening rather than in the form of separate banners. We urge the Old Georgetown board to consider –

whether the screening should be a more customary green rather than the proposed blue color;

whether there should be less signage, no commercial slogans, and more plain screening than is proposed; and

whether the logo should be permitted, as proposed, to exceed the usual 12 inch height limit for lettering.

1611 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Commerce Bank, O.G. 08-133 (H.P.A. 08-216):

Public space permit plans were presented to replace a retaining wall along Suter's Lane. After discussion by Commissioners and community members, Commissioner Lewis moved (Solomon second) to adopt the following resolution, which passed by a vote of 7-0:

ANC 2E appreciates that Commerce Bank recognizes the need to rebuild its portion of the retaining wall at the rear of the property. We have no objection to facing the proposed retaining wall with bricks matching the bricks used by the Suter's Lane houses.

We continue to urge the District government and other affected parties to move forward with a solution toward rebuilding the retaining wall as needed to the north and south of the Commerce Bank property as well.

1645 31st Street, NW, Residence (Williams Addison, Oak Crest, Friendly Estate), O.G. 08-179 (H.P.A. 08-267):

The owner did not appear to present permit plans for a new two-car garage. After discussion by Commissioners and community members, Commissioner Eason moved (Birch second) to adopt the following resolution, which passed by a vote of 7-0:

Resolved by Advisory Commission 2E that –

1. We continue to fail to see the justification for an additional two-car garage on this historic property which already has a two-car parking pad and multiple garages to service the single-family dwelling.

2. We further fear that the construction of the proposed new garage will adversely impact the significant tree despite the modifications proposed by the applicant in its current application.
3. We recommend that the Old Georgetown Board oppose the application for the new garage.

1855 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Safeway, O.G. 08-205 (H.P.A. 08-303):

Concept plans were presented for razing a building and for a new structure. After discussion by Commissioners and community members, Commissioner Eason moved (Skelsey second) to adopt the following resolution, which passed by a vote of 6-0: (Solomon not present):

Resolved by ANC 2E, that –

We appreciate the proposed interest by the applicant in creating a modern grocery store to serve our community. However, the magnitude of the proposal is significant: an increase in retail square footage from 45,000 square feet to 74,000 square feet – a 64 per cent increase – and from 200 parking spaces to 264. The impact on the community, including the visual impact and the impact of traffic, will be significant.

Due to this, we have reservations about the preliminary concept as presented by the applicant, including:

While we support moving the bulk of the store west so that it fronts on Wisconsin Avenue, we are concerned generally about the height and mass of the proposed building along Wisconsin Avenue, including the design and configuration of the tower and the commercial logo at the south end.

We are concerned that the depictions do not show the immediately adjacent single-story buildings and we are concerned about the relationship to the surrounding built environment, including the Jelleff Boys and Girls Club.

Given the awkward location of the existing curb cuts and the congestion along Wisconsin Avenue, we are concerned about the impact of traffic and parking on the neighboring community.

We encourage further and continuing community input, including an opportunity to review the traffic report.

2807-2809 M Street, NW, Taj of India, O.G. 08-189:

Public space permit plans were presented for a sidewalk café. After discussion by Commissioners and community members, Commissioner Birch moved (Eason second) to adopt the following resolution, which passed by a vote of 6-0 (Solomon not present):

ANC 2E has no objection in principle to the proposal for three outdoor tables for a total of 10 seats as presented. However, we are unable to give complete approval because of the lack of information regarding dimensions and regarding the construction and design of a perimeter barrier.

3045 N Street, NW, Residential - multi-family, O.G. 08-135 (H.P.A. 08-218):

Concept plans were presented for window replacements, enlarging an areaway, raising roofs, and skylights. After discussion by Commissioners and community members, Commissioner Birch moved (Lowenstein second) to adopt the following resolution, which passed by a vote of 6-0 (Solomon not present):

ANC 2E encourages continuing dialogue between the owner and the neighbors on the development of this property, which has included proposals which this Commission supports as presented:

1. The placement of the mechanicals on the roof and with two below grade;
2. The proposed slope of the roof lines on the east and the north with standing seam metal construction;
3. The proposed smaller windows on the north façade and the absence of railings; and
4. The proposal to improve and repair the retaining wall to the north and the garden wall to the east.

ANC 2E continues to have concern with the stack of three-window groupings on the east façade because of issues of privacy and concerns with fire and safety codes. ANC 2E suggests that the Old Georgetown Board require the removal of those windows in order to address those concerns.

ANC 2E presents this resolution with the expectation that the appropriate government agencies of the District of Columbia will enforce applicable fines and penalties in the event of violations to the building plans.

1061 (Rear) Wisconsin Avenue, NW (a.k.a. Blues Alley), Blues Alley Jazz Club, O.G. 08-200 (H.P.A. 08-297):

Concept plans were presented for alterations; side, rear and roof additions; a roof terrace; and a four story addition. After discussion by Commissioners and community members, Commissioner Starrels moved (Lewis second) to adopt the following resolution, which passed by a vote of 6-0 (Solomon not present):

ANC 2E does not approve of the concept as presented. We are concerned about the roof deck and its negative effects on the area. We believe the scale of the new building is too large for the area and overpowers the existing building and the alley. In addition, the effort to create an industrial aspect should be more in keeping with the local vernacular.

At 10:40 p.m., with no further matters on the agenda, Commissioner Starrels moved (Lewis second) to adjourn this public session of ANC 2E. The motion passed unanimously.

Submitted for the approval of ANC 2E,

Ron Lewis
Secretary, ANC 2E