

Minutes for the Meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2E

January 31, 2006

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 PM by the Chair, Commissioner Solomon, with Commissioners Starrels, Eason, Skelsey, Lever, Moore, and Clements present, constituting a quorum.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Minutes: The minutes of the January 3, 2006 meeting were unanimously approved as distributed by Commissioner Clements.

Revised Budget for FY 2006: Commissioner Lever, the treasurer, presented a revised budget for FY 2006, reflecting new DC allotment estimates. He explained that the DC Auditor provided the ANC with estimates throughout the District budget process, but the final amount would not be known for another month. Commissioner Lever also said that the ANC would end the fiscal year with approximately \$27,000. Commissioner Solomon moved (Starrels Second) to approve the revised budget for FY 2006 as distributed by Commissioner Lever, which passed by a vote of 7-0.

ANC Grant Program: Commissioner Moore announced that ANC 2E would begin accepting applications for grants. The ANC would lengthen the application period from thirty days to sixty days, to increase the number of applicants. A total of \$5,000 in grants would be awarded, with no single grant exceeding \$1,000. The application would be available on the ANC website.

COMMUNITY COMMENT

Announcement by Commissioner Starrels: Commissioner Starrels congratulated Commissioner Lever on the birth of his son, Ian. He also presented Commissioner Lever with a framed picture of the family taken at the hospital.

Police Report: Lt. Felicia Lucas of the Metropolitan Police Department delivered the police report for the month of January. She stated that overall crime was down 42%. She said much of this was due to better reporting from the community. Later in the evening MPD would be concentrating its efforts on the State of the Union address at the Capitol. A resident of 3251 Q Street stated that graffiti had become a problem at the bus stop near 33rd and Q. Lt. Lucas said that graffiti issues need to be reported to MPD through the 311 (non-emergency) dispatcher. Commissioner Starrels thanked Lt. Lucas for increased rush hour enforcement. He said that it had made a noticeable difference over the last month.

Community Commendation for Dan Tangherlini: Commissioner Starrels read a commendation (attached) for outgoing DDOT Director, Dan Tangherlini, which was approved by a unanimous vote of ANC 2E.

Update, Georgetown University SafeRides Shuttle Program: Commissioner Clements stated that the SafeRides Shuttle was now in operation from 10:00 PM to 3:00 AM, Thursday through Saturday. He said that Dave Morrell, University Vice President for Safety, continued to gather statistics about use of the shuttles to create the most effective program. Additionally, Commissioner Clements said that students he talked to seemed very appreciative of the program. Commissioner Solomon said that a group of residents and administrators met to discuss neighborhood concerns about the program. He said the conversation was very useful and that the group would meet again in the coming month.

DDOT Updates: Karyn Leblanc of DDOT updated the ANC on several issues of interest in the Georgetown area. She said that work was going more slowly than expected on the bridges (five vehicular and three pedestrian) that span the canal. Pepco utility lines had caused some problems on the project. She said that the entire project should be completed in the next six to ten months. DDOT would be working closely with the community to plan a schedule that would create the least amount of traffic congestion, particularly with continued work on the Wisconsin Avenue bridge. Ms. Leblanc also updated the community on the trolley track issue. DDOT was continuing a new feasibility study on the project and would be announcing final plans in the near future. Commissioner Moore asked if work was being considered to improve pedestrian safety at the intersection of 28th Street, M Street, and Pennsylvania Avenue. Ms. Leblanc replied that DDOT traffic services had been working with the Georgetown BID to alleviate the problem. Commissioner Eason asked if DDOT could try to control “no parking” signage near construction projects. John Deatruck of DDOT said that many companies abused the system and that the DC Council had recently been discussing the issue. Finally, it was announced that DDOT would be implementing versions of the Community Relations Team, used on the Georgetown Project, on other projects in the District.

NEW BUSINESS

Zoning and Planning

Kesher Israel Child Development Center (BZA No. 17407): Steve Gell, the attorney for Kesher Israel, made a brief presentation indicating that the synagogue had been attempting to assuage neighbor concerns with several concessions. These included reducing: the number of student from twenty-four to twelve, the number of teachers from six or eight to three, the number of buildings used from two to one, and the hours of operation from 7:00 am – 6:00 pm to 8:00 am – 6:00 pm. When asked if the synagogue wished to postpone the issue with the OGB, Mr. Gell stated that he would not be opposed to the idea. Commissioner Eason expressed concerns over the application submitted to the ANC by Mr. Gell. He said that it did not contain all of the detailed information that was being promised in the presentation. Neighbors, including Mrs. Isaacson, Terry

Collins, Gordon Joiner, Michael Sullivan, and Mrs. Oliver, expressed serious concerns regarding noise, trash, the character of the neighborhood, and traffic. Tom Birch said that the conversion of the property from residential to non-profit would reduce the amount of tax paid to the District. He said this was becoming a problem across the city.

Commissioner Skelsey said he was concerned about many of the same issues as the neighbors, but that he recognized a great need in the Georgetown community for additional preschools. He said that a mix of residential, business, and educational institutions is what makes Georgetown a desirable area. Commissioner Moore moved (Skelsey Second) for the following which passed by a vote of 6-0 (Clements abstaining):

ANC 2E respects and is concerned for the residential character of the neighborhood surrounding the properties listed above. ANC 2E also appreciates the Keshet Israel Congregation's interest in providing daycare for two to five year olds in a religious setting. However, ANC 2E does not support the revised application, as submitted by Keshet Israel to the BZA on January 11, 2006.

Serious neighborhood issues regarding the impact of a daycare center operating on 28th Street, NW from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday, twelve months a year have not been fully addressed by Keshet Israel Congregation in meetings with the surrounding residents. The congregation, since submitting its first application to the BZA on August 2, 2005, has held two meetings with neighbors as of January 31, 2006. ANC 2E suggests that continued dialogue between the congregation and neighbors needs to be established.

Issues that need to be addressed include traffic flow and child drop-off flow on already crowded and highly traveled streets; increased activities commercial in nature, including trash pick-up, daily cleaning staff, and delivery of supplies; and the impact a daycare center will have on homes immediately adjacent. ANC 2E believes that with working diligently on conditions that keep the integrity of the neighborhood, an agreement can be reached and urges Keshet Israel Congregation to increase its outreach to the community and BZA to not grant the special exception as requested.

If Keshet Israel requests of the BZA a postponement of at least 60 days from the February 21, 2006 BZA hearing, ANC 2E will support the postponement if it is for the reason of additional community dialogue.

Consent Calendar for ABC: Commissioner Clements moved (Lever Second) to accept the consent calendar which passed by a vote of 6-0 (Eason absent). The consent calendar contained the following business:

Sheele's Market, 1331 29th Street

3509 M Street (OGB 06-07): Lorenzo DeSilva, the architect for the project, presented plans for a mixed-use facility containing residential space and a medical office for spinal injections. The property was originally built in 1890 and housed trolley workers. The overall project would add 60% to the site. At least 50% of the proposed building would be for residential purposes. Neighbors and Commissioners raised concerns about the historic nature of the building, additional traffic at the Key Bridge intersection,

inadequate parking, and a failure to notify affected neighbors. Commissioner Starrels moved (Clements Second) for the following which passed by a vote of 7-0:

Whereas it is one of the greatest responsibilities of this Commission and this Commissioner to help preserve the historic nature of Georgetown.

Whereas the heights of the buildings give M Street the historic character that Georgetown is known for, severely altering this site would destroy not only a historic house but would destroy the historic scale of the block.

Whereas there is not a more congested area in Georgetown, and the adjacent intersection at Key Bridge ranks an "F" by DDOT. The idea of adding a building that would add to the volume of cars would be irresponsible and ill rational.

Whereas there are town houses located north of the subject property. The proposed structure would have the following negative impact on the residents of the town homes:

- Views would be blocked
- Light would be replaced by shadows and darkness
- The present airy and openness of the town homes and their back decks would be closed in
- The added traffic would exasperate the noise and pollution by the grid locked traffic.

Therefore, ANC 2E urges the Old Georgetown Board to deny this proposed application for a medical center/residential mixed use at 3509 M Street in historic Georgetown.

1557 33rd Street (OGB 06-082): Plans were presented for a two car garage on the site of a former two car garage. Commissioner Lever and several neighbors expressed concerns about the project as a whole, stating that old plans that the ANC reviewed were changed after the OGB process. A proposed half-bath was actually built as a full bath. Commissioner Lever worried that the owners planned to rent the rear structure as a second dwelling. Commissioner Lever moved (Moore Second) for the following which passed by a vote of 7-0:

ANC 2E cannot support the proposed project as presented as it does not keep in character of its historic surroundings and obstructs views from Jones Court and other neighbors.

Commissioner Lever departed at this time.

1514 34th Street (OGB 06-078): Commissioner Skelsey noted that the ANC could not approve this project. The adjoining neighbors, including Commissioner Skelsey, had not

been notified or been given the plans to review. The applicant decided to withdraw the project from consideration.

3214 O Street (OGB 06-079): Plans were presented to increase the size of the building. The original 19th century portion of the structure would be retained, while a newer, fifty or sixty year-old addition, would be removed and replaced with a larger addition. The building would be used for retail or office space, not residential. The architect stated that the owner wished to lease the property to an antique store, to match other use on the block. Commissioner Skelsey expressed some concern over the increasing size of many of the buildings on this block. He also asked that particular attention be paid to regulations prohibiting the removal of trees over a certain diameter. Commissioner Skelsey moved (Solomon Second) for the following which passed by a cote of 6-0:

ANC 2E is very concerned about the size and scale of the addition as proposed and encourages the Old Georgetown Board to look very closely at this project.

3245 M Street (OGB 06-076): Plans were presented to update the signage and awning on the Georgetown Bagelry property. Commissioner Starrels moved (Clements second) for the following which passed by a vote of 6-0:

ANC 2E has no objection to the alteration to the front façade and dormers, and to the proposed awning but we do object to the logo on the slope of the awning.

3139 M Street (OGB 06-076): Plans were presented for an operable pergola system to be installed at the rear of the property. The design would include temporary windows on the pergola. The proposed material was vinyl, which troubled several Commissioners. Commissioner Moore moved (Solomon Second) for the following which passed by a vote of 6-0:

ANC 2E is not opposed to the design to enclose the outdoor dining area but takes issue with the proposed material.

1525 31st Street (OGB 06-085): Dale Overmyer, the architect for the project, presentd plans for a rear addition to the property. He stated that he was friends with the owners, as well as many of the neighbors. He also said that he would be an affected neighbor. Mr. Overmyer stated that the house was a small house on a block of much larger houses. He wished to increase the footprint of the house by five feet. Additionally, a porch on the second level would be replaced by a more permanent structure on the second and third levels. Neighbors expressed concerns about the overall massing of the project, stating that a solid addition would change significantly the current situation with the porch. They also worried about privacy and the stairs that extended out from the addition. Commissioner Moore moved (Solomon Second) for the following which passed by a vote of 5-0 (Clements abstaining):

ANC 2E encourages continual discussion between the applicant and the neighbors to modify the proposed rear addition in size and scale because of their issues dealing with loss of light, privacy, and the open garden views which the immediate neighbors now enjoy.

At 9:50 PM, with no further matters on the agenda, Commissioner Clements moved (Solomon Second) to adjourn this public session of ANC 2E. The motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

Submitted for the Approval of ANC 2E,

Brett F. Clements
Secretary, ANC 2E