

# **ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 1B**

## **Government of the District of Columbia**

**Columbia Heights / LeDroit Park / Pleasant Plains / Shaw / University Heights**

**2 June 2005, True Reformer Building**

Attending: Commissioners Moss, Spalding, Hunter, M. Smith, Stephens, Akinmboni, T. Smith, Mathews

Absent: Commissioners Hammonds, Parker, Wright

Quorum was achieved just after 7PM. In the Secretary's Report Commissioner Spalding reviewed items from the past month. BZA approved case 17323 First African New Church development. Public Space approved amended café seating applications for Alero and U Turn. Groundbreaking for the PN Hoffman PUD was held during the past month, and a topping ceremony for the Rhapsody will be held tomorrow. Langston Lofts is currently being occupied, and 2020 Lofts should be occupied later this summer. Following the guidance of HPRB the project in the 1900 block of 12<sup>th</sup> will feature two larger retail spaces rather than the proposed four smaller spaces. Planning is beginning for redevelopment of the parcel behind the Lincoln Theatre, and we are expecting the announcement of an extensive PUD application for redevelopment of the Atlantic Plumbing properties. In ABRA related matters, the Club U revocation decision should happen in the next week, Collage Café remains in negotiations, Kili's is still in fact finding, Mocha Lounge is serving their suspension of license, Republic Gardens failed to show for a show cause hearing on an assault charge, Shop Express is finally at approval stage of a voluntary agreement, and Delicatessen Judy is in fact finding hearings resulting from an assault charge. Minutes of the May 2005 meeting were moved, seconded and adopted (8-0-0). In the Treasurer's Report Commissioner Stephen's requested that the Commission review and approve the past six monthly reports since he had failed to include a quarterly distribution from the DC Government. The sole activity in the current monthly report is a reimbursement for secretarial expenses of \$292.00. Commissioner Spalding moved adoption of the revised January, February, March, April, May, and June monthly Treasurer's Reports, and it was seconded and adopted (8-0-0). The 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter report, adopted at our May meeting, was moved with the inclusion of the previously unrecorded distribution, and now shows a balance as of March 31, 2005 of \$73,850.54, and it was seconded and adopted (8-0-0). Treasurer Stephens explained that he was in receipt of information from HUCA in regard to the grant for the "Big Clean Up" in May of 2003, and a statement that they had lost our check. Commissioner Stephens moved that ANC1B reissue a check for this grant to HUCA for \$637.86, and it was seconded and adopted (8-0-0). Commissioner Spalding moved reimbursement of Treasurer's expenses

from January through May of 2005 as detailed for ink, stamps, copying in the amount of \$86.35, and it was seconded and adopted (8-0-0). Commissioner Stephens moved reimbursement of secretarial expenses for May including ink and postage of \$147.67, and it was seconded and adopted (8-0-0). Chairman Hunter requested an addition to the end of the agenda to discuss the proposal to rename portions of 9<sup>th</sup> and U Streets as Little Ethiopia.

In Community Announcements Commissioner Moss announced that in conjunction with Broadcast Partners, ANC2B, Manna CDC signed a memorandum of understanding in regard to Parcel 33. Commissioner Spalding announced that the DDOT U Street Transportation Study would be holding the last of their public meetings on June 29<sup>th</sup> at 6PM at the Housing Finance Agency. MPD 3D has announced that they will be holding their annual open house on Saturday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> from 10AM to 4PM at the 3D Station House. Ernest Springs, President of the Meridian Hill Neighborhood Association announced that they had awarded a \$1,600 scholarship to a graduating student at Cardozo High School. Shelore Williams announced that there would be a town hall meeting sponsored by Councilmember Mendelson at Marie Reed on June 16<sup>th</sup> at 7PM. Chairman Hunter announced that Councilmember Graham would be holding a public meeting at the Lincoln Theatre on June 9<sup>th</sup> at 7PM focusing on the smoke free legislation before the Council. Shelore Williams announced that the grand opening of the new Giant grocery store would be held on June 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Chairman Hunter introduced presentation of “View 14” and new PUD application for the property on the east side of 14<sup>th</sup> Street just north of Florida Avenue. The developer is David Franco who is one of our constituents. Mr. Franco stated that their previous development projects have all been in this same neighborhood, and that he is a resident who lives on 15<sup>th</sup> Street and a member of the Meridian Hill Neighborhood Association and a regular attendee of ANC1B’s meetings. Jeff Blum gave the history of the negotiations to secure the property, and went on to describe some of the distinct challenges presented by the site including the satellite dish farm and extensive telecommunications infrastructure. In negotiations with Comcast the developer has agreed to purchase (for approximately one million dollars) new equipment for Comcast in order to allow removal of the dishes and antenna at the 14<sup>th</sup> Street location. SK&I have been retained as the architect. There have also been extensive discussions with Office of Historic Preservation since the site is adjacent to the U Street Historic zone, and the guidance from Steve Callcott and OHP has been incorporated in the current design. The public benefits portion of the PUD package currently includes, affordable housing, the removal of the antenna farm, environmental remediation, releasing five feet from the site to allow widening of the alley, and donations to local neighborhood associations. The building will be nine stories with between 170 and 190 units of housing with a one to one parking allowance. The ground level will include approximately 14,000 square feet of retail with its own dedicated parking. Features of the current design were detailed

including concern for the massing and the materials that will be chosen through the design review process. Mr. Franco stated that they are specifically designing towards neighborhood serving retailers and not destination oriented retailers. We would like to see a Java House or other local coffee shop and perhaps a Yes Organic market. Chairman Hunter asked about the actual number of affordable units that will result from the PUD, and Mr. Franco responded that though the design process may allow more units the current projection is twelve to fifteen units. Commissioner T. Smith commented on the narrow sidewalks on the Florida Avenue façade, and Mr. Blum responded that they are narrow and that they are working with OHP to minimize the massing along these sidewalks. Removing the current mid block entry on 14<sup>th</sup> will help with the pedestrian activity along the main façade. Commissioner T. Smith requested that they pay attention to the problems with the WASA infrastructure that has been problematic for the community recently. Commissioner Mathews asked for details on the affordable units, and Mr. Franco responded that it was controlled through the negotiations of the PUD and the formulas presented by Office of Planning. They are also working with Office of Planning to add additional low-income units on Belmont St. Commissioner Stephens asked for the timeline for the project, and Mr. Franco estimated that the PUD process and permitting could take eighteen months. Commissioner Spalding indicated that he is working with Office of Planning to develop PUD explanatory packages for the Commissioners since we are going to be working with a number of applications over the next few years. OP has also offered to hold an educational meeting with the Commission. Mr. Franco asked for support from the Commission to aid in their negotiations with Comcast. Chairman Hunter moved that ANC1B supports the effort to submit a PUD application from this developer for this site, and ANC1B supports negotiations to remove the Comcast antenna farm as a part of the PUD process, and it was seconded and adopted (8-0-0).

Commissioner Spalding introduced review of the Traffic Control Plan for the Beauregard development at 11<sup>th</sup> and V Streets. This has been before the Commission a number of times, and is a matter of right development. This project is already in process, and the developer has held community meetings to discuss the impact of the development and the TCP. Paul Robertson stated that they already have a DDOT approved TCP, but need the Commissions approval. Mr. Robertson introduced the supervisors for the construction team who were present. Mr. Robertson detailed the traffic problems presented by the site, and their accommodation of community concerns including access to the mid block alley and the positioning of the crane and washout area. This is a forty-five unit building with only one deck of below grade parking, so the duration of the construction should be shorter than the larger projects in the neighborhood. They will be using the empty lot across the street (First African New Church development) for some of their staging and equipment. During the current sheeting and shoring the alley is not accessible, but this should be accomplished quickly and allow access again to the alley. Chairman Hunter asked for the projected completion date, and Mr. Robertson indicated that they were projecting fourteen and a half months. Chairman Hunter asked about the sales of the units, and Mr. Robertson responded that twenty-two of the units are already sold, and that

they are holding the remaining units until nearer completion. Commissioner Spalding moved support of the TCP for the Beauregard, and it was seconded and adopted (8-0-0).

Commissioner Spalding introduced review of BZA 17341 which is for an inside row building on Westminster Street. They do have support letters from abutting neighbors, and also support from the Westminster Neighborhood Association, which is very careful in their consideration of these applications. The existing condition includes a number of non-conforming features on the rear façade that are to be removed and replaced with a more functional design. The new structure will occupy a smaller lot occupancy; however, the current condition is well beyond the normal allowable lot coverage, which has triggered all of the variances indicated in the application. John Roegner, one of the property owners, described the changes and the history of the property. The lot occupancy would be reduced from 83% to 78%. The dilapidated rear two story porch and privy would be replaced with space for parking and a rear deck. Commissioner Akinmboni asked why they had not gotten letters from the other residents on the block, and Mr. Roegner stated that they knew of no opposition from any neighbors. Commissioner Spalding responded that they are required to get letters from the abutting property owners for BZA, and that the WNA is a very active and representative group on this block. Commissioner Spalding moved support for BZA 17341 for zoning variances to 223.1, 403.2, 404.1, 406.1 and 2001 for property located at 919 Westminster Street, and it was seconded and adopted (8-0-0).

Chairman Hunter introduced BZA 17336 requesting an area variance from 3104.1 for an end row house located at 1428 Florida Avenue. Mrs. Lois Keys, applicant, was present to answer any questions. Commissioner Spalding indicated that the existing condition on Mrs. Keys rear façade is an above ground deck, and that she is proposing a very modest one-story addition to allow a first floor bathroom. This should have very limited impact on the light and air of the abutting property owner to the west, and little or no impact on properties to the south on W Street. Chairman Hunter moved support of BZA 17336 for area variance at property located at 1428 Florida Avenue, and it was seconded and adopted (8-0-0).

Commissioner Spalding introduced reconsideration of Zoning Commission Case 05-14, which the Commission previously supported as an application to BZA and is located at 2750 14<sup>th</sup> Street. This is NPCDC's project that features fifty percent affordable component and requested additional height for the retail section, which put them above the allowable height restriction. I represented the Commission at the BZA hearing, and it did secure a vote of approval from the Board. Following this decision, the Zoning Commission requested sua sponte review, and at that hearing, it was decided to represent this request as an 'expedited' PUD application. It is important that the Commission reiterate our support for this project, and designate Commissioners to appear before the Zoning Commission on this revised application. Commissioner Spalding moved that

ANC1B reiterate support for this application, and designate Commissioners Parker, Spalding and T. Smith to represent the Commission at the Zoning Commission Hearing, and it was seconded and adopted (8-0-0).

Chairman Hunter expressed concern with the DDOT Public Space decisions allowing café seating on 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Streets. ANC1B had opposed these applications based on concerns raised by residential constituents on these streets, and in the case of Alero's request the commitment from the developers of the Ellington that they would not use the public space fronting on 13<sup>th</sup> Street. Chairman Hunter asked for the terms of the amended approvals, and Commissioner Spalding responded that he has not seen the printed decision, but that Alero would be serving lunches on 13<sup>th</sup> Street six days a week, and that U Turn would be using 11<sup>th</sup> Street until 11PM on weekdays and midnight on weekends. Chairman Hunter reiterated the concerns with U Turn that there has been an ongoing problem with noise, that they have been operating after hours, and that there was a shooting tied to the establishment less than a year ago. There is also a pending application to extend their hours to 6AM in order to serve breakfast between 3AM and 6AM. Despite ANC1B's recommendations, Public Space granted these requests for extended use of public space. Chairman Hunter asked to request a meeting with Councilmember Graham, the Director of DDOT and the head of DDOT's Public Space Division to review the weight accorded the ANC's recommendations. Commissioner T. Smith stated that he was in attendance at the hearing, and that it was in a bargaining style between the applicant, the ANC and the Committee. Commissioner T. Smith stated that it was his recommendation that reducing the hours might be a solution. Chairman Hunter reminded the Commission that when the Commission takes a position on a matter, it is not the expectation that individual Commissioners will attend and proffer compromises. When the Commission votes and position and designates representatives, they should be representing the Commission's position.

Commissioner T. Smith introduced DC Caribbean Carnival's grant request for \$2,000 as part of supplying trash receptacles and cleaning services along Georgia Avenue. Mr. Loughton Sargean explained the arrangements for sani johns and trash control. Commissioner Moss asked about control of the trash during the event, and Mr. Sargean described the relationship with DPW and volunteers to remove the trash. Commissioner Spalding asked if the grant applications to the other three Commissions had been submitted, and whether copies were being provided to the Treasurer. Mr. Sargean stated that he would provide copies of the applications to 1A, 4C and 4D to the Treasurer. Commissioner from 1A08 was present to monitor our debate, and stated that they would be reviewing the application at their meeting next week. Chairman Hunter questioned the amount of the grant in excess of our suggested \$1,000, but in this case was willing to support the request. Commissioner Stephens compared the request to Jam on U, and asked where else they were receiving funds from. Mr. Sargean responded that Industrial Bank, Washington Gas and BET Jazz were supporting. They also have an arrangement

with Parks and Rec to collect a five-dollar admission to help defray costs. Treasurer Stephens suggested that we recommend the full request, but ask the organization to remember our \$1,000 limit, and if there are, funds left after the event that the organization gives back up to \$1,000. Commissioner T. Smith moved that we grant the request for \$2,000 with the stipulation that if the full amount is not used the balance be returned to the Commission, and it was seconded and adopted (7-1-0) with Commissioner Spalding voting against the request.

Chairman Hunter introduced a grant request for \$1,000 from the Anthony Bowen YMCA for purchase of band uniforms. Donnie Shaw, Director of Community Relations for the Y, introduced one of the band members who were wearing one of the uniforms. They are raising \$4,500 towards purchase of uniforms, and they are asking us for \$1,000. Mr. Shaw explained that he had asked Councilmember Graham for funds, and that his office had suggested ANC1B. Mr. Shaw further explained that the Councilmember promised to help with the Y's redevelopment effort. Commissioner Spalding reminded Mr. Shaw that these uniforms would have to remain property of the Y and not be given to the kids, and Mr. Shaw said that they fully understood the terms. Chairman Hunter moved support of the application of a \$1,000 grant to provide uniforms to the Anthony Bowen YMCA, and it was seconded and adopted (8-0-0).

Grant application from Kili's boxing was not represented. Commissioner present from ANC1A stated that they have talked to Kili's but have not acted on a grant application to date. Commissioner Spalding moved to table, and it was seconded and adopted (8-0-0). Chairman Hunter asked that the record show that Commissioner Parker is on work related travel.

Commissioner Spalding introduced For Love of Children's request for ANC support for their application to DHCD for funding. This organization has been active in our community working with children and affordable housing for over forty years. They are currently reorganizing their non-profit structure and are applying with Manna for a grant. Mike Young explained that they are managing existing affordable housing, and the grant proceeds would be used to add to, keep and maintain affordable projects. Commissioner Mathews stated that from his reading of the annual DHCD report indicates that the gap between rich and poor residents in DC is growing, and that the work of FLOC is important and truly appreciated. Commissioner Spalding moved support of the FLOC/Manna letter of support towards DHCD funding, and it was seconded and adopted (8-0-0).

Chairman Hunter introduced a discussion of the reports that consideration is being given to renaming a portion of 9<sup>th</sup> Street and possibly part of U Street as Little Ethiopia. I read in the City Paper that a restaurateur on 9<sup>th</sup> Street had approached Councilmember Graham to facilitate this name change. Last month Commissioner Moss indicated that she had received a call from Ted Loza on Councilmember Graham's staff, and I have also heard that Commissioner Spalding has been asked for his opinion of the request. Tonight I heard from a constituent that a local newspaper there was reference to this name change, and that there was no opposition to it whatsoever. Chairman Hunter requested that ANC1B write Councilmember Graham a letter asking him to extend the courtesy of submitting any official action on changing the name of any street in our territory, and to hear our voice prior to taking any action on these requests. A constituent stated that his reading was that they just wanted to call the area Little Ethiopia without actually changing the names of any streets. Commissioner Spalding responded that he had suggested to the head of one of the local Ethiopian Associations that it would be preferable to treat this as a promotional or marketing tool rather than asking for any legal changes. A lot of us are confused by the reports that we are hearing, are they asking for an official change or is this just a promotional or marketing tool that does not need any official sanction? I have not been assured with the answers that I have received, and I do think that if this is going to appear in any fashion before the Council that the ANC's voice should be heard. Chairman Hunter moved that ANC1B write Councilmember Graham requesting that prior to acting on this request that it be submitted to ANC1B for comment. Constituent Tonya Rutherford voiced concern that ours is an historic African American neighborhood. Traditionally before a neighborhood is named for any particular community, it is because the people live in the neighborhood. Chinatowns were so named because of the makeup of the residents, not simply a collection of restaurants. Meaning no disrespect, but having restaurants in a community is not reason enough to change the name of the community where they are located. Commissioner Moss echoed Ms. Rutherford's remarks, and stated that this territory is included in her single member district. LeDroit Park is one of the birthplaces of black intelligentsia. These are entrepreneurs in our community but they do not vest here by way of living here. Commissioner Moss stated that it is her understanding that they have indeed approached Councilmember Graham with the request to rename a street, and I am adamantly opposed to that. Chairman Hunter's motion was seconded and adopted (8-0-0).

Meeting adjourned 9:05PM.

