

ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 1B

Government of the District of Columbia

MINUTES

4 August 2005, True Reformer Building, 1200 U Street NW

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

Absent: Commissioner Wright

Quorum was achieved just after 7PM. Secretary Spalding reviewed BZA, ABRA and DDOT activities during the past month. Minutes of the July 2005 meeting were moved, seconded and adopted (8-0-0). Commissioner Stephens stated that there is no prepared Treasurer's report. The statement from the bank has not yet arrived, and will submit the July report at the September meeting. We have received an opinion from the District Auditor's office on the sixty day ruling. Copies of this report will be sent to Commissioners. Essentially the report indicates that the sixty day report should detail grantee expenses; however, it is not necessarily a final accounting of expenditure of the grant monies. Treasurer Stephens said that he will write further language detailing the expectations of the Commission in regard to grant accountability, and will present it at our next meeting. Commissioner Parker asked if the outstanding grants were holding up our reporting to the Auditor's Office, and Treasurer Stephens indicated that they are not. Treasurer Stephens indicated that the second quarter report would be submitted late. Secretarial expenses for July for paper, ink, postage and quarterly web site rental in the amount of \$252.85 were moved, seconded and adopted (9-0-0).

In Community Events and Announcements Commissioner Parker announced that Amerigroup would be holding a health fair on August 20th at McFarlane Middle School. Commissioner T. Smith announced that on August 27th there would be a cleaning and preparation for the school year of local public schools, and urged people to volunteer. Commissioner Spalding announced that the Mid City Business Association would be holding their annual Dog Days sale and celebration this weekend on U and 14th Streets, and that he would be passing out Commission information along with CSNA on the 1800 block of 14th. Destination U, which is Kenny Barnes new clothing store located in the Ellington, is having their opening party tonight. The DC Council has passed a ceremonial resolution declaring this Saturday, August 6th as "Marion and Clyde Howard Day" in celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary, and in recognition of their

contributions to the community and the city. We also note that Clyde is a past Commission 1B member and has continued to be an active participant in Commission discussions. Commissioner Moss announced that there would be a job fair at the Embassy Suites Hotel in conjunction with DOES and is currently underway. Chairman Hunter announced that he had held a meeting with residents in the 1400 block of W Street to discuss crime and safety issues in this block. It was decided to develop an orange hat patrol, and there will be a follow up meeting on August 18th to discuss the patrol and the possible installation of cameras. Commissioner Stephens reported that there has been no response to the Commission's resolution calling for removal of parking meters in residential zones, and asked that DDOT official be present at our next meeting to address this question. Commissioner Moss stated that on August 8th PSA representatives will be meeting with the Howard University Police to develop collaborative working mechanisms. Roland Roebuck announced work that is being done to prepare for Fiesta DC on September 18th. This is the second year for the festival which takes place at Cardozo High School. Mr. Roebuck indicated that it would be his responsibility to make sure that surrounding neighbors are informed of the Festival and its effect on the surrounding community.

Commissioner Spalding reported that HPRB had reviewed the application for 2001 14th Street late this afternoon, and that it was given conceptual approval. The approval was given with a large number of caveats, and essentially gave approval to the basic massing. This will be back before both the ANC and HPRB this fall with further details on the façade and final design elements.

Commissioner T. Smith introduced consideration of support for a community generated request to construct a green median along Sherman Avenue. Marcus Popetz described the community involvement and interaction with DDOT to date. DDOT has been agreeable to the idea of constructing the median when they resurface Sherman Ave. next spring providing the plantable median similar to the one recently done on Vermont Ave. Currently they are working with DDOT and local businesses to refine the design. Commissioner Spalding asked if the group had any objection to extending the project from Euclid down to Barry Place, and Mr. Popetz responded that their only concern was finding a way to assure that the plantings would be watered and tended. Commissioner Spalding responded that the prepared median north of U on Vermont was prepared by DDOT but has remained fallow temporarily awaiting community participation for the planting and tending. Commissioner Moss asked if Parks and Rec or Urban Forestry about helping in the maintenance, and Mr. Popetz said that to date they have been unwilling to commit to participation. Commissioner Moss asked about the sourcing of the water, and Mr. Popetz responded that it is currently similar to the situation on Vermont where community member run a hose from their homes out to get the watering done. Commissioner T. Smith moved that ANC1B support this effort, and delegate him

to continue the outreach and coordination involved, and that this include the extension of the project from Euclid south to Barry Place, and it was seconded and adopted (9-0-0).

Commissioner Spalding stated that he is preparing the requested DDOT street and alley five year prioritizing list, and has received specific locations from Commissioners Stephens and Mathews that will be part of the response. Commissioners Akinmboni and T. Smith indicated that they have some suggestions to add, and it was decided to get these details after the meeting. Commissioner Spalding stated that in his discussions with DDOT they do expect us to offer balancing changes, so if we suggest work that is not on the schedule we indicate scheduled work that can be delayed, and since many of the scheduled changes in 1B02 are in areas where construction work is currently planned we have some flexibility. Commissioner Stephens stated that he has had a hard time getting a response from DDOT in regard to the construction work in the Chapin and Belmont Street areas. Callistus Nwadike, Ward 1 Transportation Planner for DDOT, stated that he did not have an answer available tonight, and that he would address the question after the meeting.

Chairman Hunter moved that the Commission request that stop signs be placed at the intersections of 12th Street with V and W Streets, and it was seconded. Commissioner M. Smith asked that a friendly amendment add a stop sign at the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and V Street, and it was accepted as a friendly amendment, and it was adopted (9-0-0).

Commissioner T. Smith stated that the long block of the 700 block of Gresham has experienced a lot of speeding on this narrow one way street, and the residents have presented a petition to ask DDOT to install speed humps. Commissioner Mathews asked if they were seeking rumble strips or speed bumps, and that it was his understanding was that DDOT would not do speed bumps. Commissioner T. Smith responded that they want speed humps. Commissioner Spalding added that DDOT needs the ANC's resolution and the resident's petitions to initiate a study of the targeted area, and that they would suggest calming methods appropriate once their study was complete. Commissioner T. Smith moved that the ANC support the resident's petition for installation of speed humps in the 700 block of Gresham Place, and it was seconded and adopted (9-0-0).

Commissioner Spalding introduced consideration of substantial changes to the CR restaurant license for Café Nema in the 1300 block of U Street. This is a Somalian restaurant that has occupied the below grade space, and which is expanding to include the

space previously occupied by a Ghanaian restaurant on the upper floors. This has been a responsible license owner and good neighbor. There are no known violations of ABRA regulations. Owner Ibrahim Ader was present and stated that they are simply expanding the current restaurant into the upper floors. Chairman Hunter asked about the change in occupancy, and Mr. Ader responded that it would expand from 50 to 90. Commissioner Parker asked if they would be retaining the second kitchen upstairs, and Mr. Ader responded that they would keep the separate kitchens. Commissioner Spalding moved support for the substantial changes proposed to the CR license of Café Nema, and it was seconded and adopted (9-0-0).

No one was present to speak to the grant application for Keely's District Boxing, and Treasurer Stephens indicated that the current request is now for \$2,500. Commissioner Parker responded that she has spoken with the applicant a few days ago, and that they are willing to amend the application to \$1,000, but she had not received the amended application at this time. Secretary Spalding asked if this should be tabled and moved to the September agenda, and Chairman Hunter responded that we should wait and see if they actually want to pursue the grant application.

Brendan Meyer from Cultural Tourism DC described the Art on Call Program. This is the program that is rescuing the historic call boxes, and involving community members and local artists to adaptively reuse the call boxes. Cultural Tourism is sponsoring this project as part of their effort to move tourism beyond the traditional mall attractions into the city's neighborhoods. Commissioner Parker asked about the necessity for having ten call boxes adopted in one area, and Mr. Meyer responded that LeDroit Park had identified three boxes, and that they would be called on to add all additional boxes in their area. Mr. Meyer agreed to provide maps and information on locations in 1B's area. Commissioner Stephens reported on a lost call box and asked if there would be any replacement, and Mr. Meyer responded that the agreement with DDOT and the city is that only existing call boxes would be part of the program. Commissioner Parker asked about the cost per box of the restoration and art, and Mr. Meyer responded that Cultural Tourism provides \$250 per box and that the restoration and art installation has meant that the boxes have cost anywhere from \$500 to \$2500 dependant on the cost of the art installed. Chairman Hunter asked if this had been presented to neighborhood associations like CSNA, and Commissioner Spalding responded that the originator of this program is Paul Kelsey Williams from our community, and that he had presented both to CSNA and 1B previously.

Erik Wesley presented information on a new mentoring program sponsored by the Center for Child Protection and Family Support. The Masey mentoring program targets youth in grades 4-8. They have currently established relationships with three schools in South

East, and are hoping to establish relations with schools city wide. They are looking for a commitment of one to two hours a week for a one year relationship with one child. More information is available at the organizations site at www.stopchildabuse.org.

Chairman Hunter suggested that this pitch also be given to ministerial groups that may be very effective. Commissioner Moss asked about training for potential mentors, and Mr. Wesley responded that orientation and training are provided to both mentors and to the children participating in the program. Commissioner Parker asked if they had established relationships with any Ward 1 schools, and Mr. Wesley responded that they are just expanding from their pilot program, and that as soon as he can he will establish relations with every Ward 1 school that he can. Commissioner Akinboni asked if parents would be included, and Mr. Wesley indicated that they would be.

Claudia Malloy from Center for Science in the Public Interest, a national non profit health and consumer organization, asked for support for Councilmember Mendelson's resubmitted bill menu education and labeling act. The MEAL Act would require chain restaurants to list calories and other key nutritional information on menus and menu boards. Ms. Malloy stated that the legislation failed to make it to a vote in the past session, but that Councilmember Mendelson would be presenting it again to the current session. Councilmember Graham is an unknown vote on this legislation that last year was co sponsored by six members. Chairman Hunter asked when the bill would be introduced, and Ms. Malloy responded October, and Chairman Hunter suggested that once the bill had been introduced ANC1B could review and weigh in on it.

John Snellgrove introduced the Mid City Business Association which is taking up a number of the initiatives started by the now dissolved 14th and U Main Streets Alliance. The new MBCA will combine the previous U Street Business and Arts Coalition with portions of the Main Streets program in a more business centered format. The promotions will continue including this weekends Dog Days celebration. They will also be carrying forward the work with the Responsible Hospitality Initiative in designing a program to deal with local entertainment district conflicts. There is also ongoing work to assure the reestablishment of the Green Team program. Chairman Hunter asked them to provide the Commission with more information on the make up of the MBCA.

Commissioner Spalding introduced DC Administrative Hearing OP-I-T100015, which concerns an ongoing case participated in by ANC1B dealing with historic window replacement violations in the Greater U Street Historic District. This case was last considered by ANC1B in February of 2004, at which time the ANC voted 8-0-0 to support the decision of the Mayor's Agent in requiring replacement of windows at 1817 10th Street NW. Commissioner Spalding read the transcript of the February 2004 ANC consideration, and moved that the Commission reaffirm our support for the HPRB and

Mayor's Agent decisions requiring replacement of these windows, and it was seconded and adopted (10-0-0).

Commissioner Spalding stated that he had received notification from the Board for the Condemnation of Insanitary Buildings this morning announcing consideration of 2015 Vermont Avenue in his SMD at an August 24th hearing. This is an inside two story row house that has been vacant and abandoned for some time, and I took a picture this morning so that you can see its condition. Commissioner Spalding explained the working of the Board, which will initially attempt to force the owner to remediate the insanitary conditions present in the building, and failing the owner's willingness to do so will initiate actions to remediate by the city and bill to the owner. This may eventually lead to the city moving to take the property, but it is a long process. I have not had time to discuss this with the abutting owners, and I ask the Commission to delegate me to attend the hearing and represent the Commission. Chairman Hunter asked that Commissioner Spalding tell the Board that the lack of notification in a timely fashion should be expressed at the hearing. There is no way they should give us notice on the day of our meeting and expect us to be able to consider and report prior to their hearing. Commissioner Spalding agreed that he would express this sentiment to the Board. Eartha Clark from this block stated that this is not an abandoned property. The owner died, and someone has been mowing the grass and tending to it and paying the taxes. Chairman Hunter asked Ms. Clark to speak with Commissioner Spalding after the meeting.

Chairman Hunter stated that Office of Planning wrote to the Commission asking for our comments on inconsistencies between the Comprehensive Plan and existing zoning districts. We have asked them to extend the deadline for comments, and we have arranged for a meeting on August 25th at the Reeves Center to review these issues. Secretary Spalding indicated that he had put together a package of materials including maps in each Commissioner's packet in preparation for the meeting. Commissioner Stephens reminded the Commission that at the last meeting he had suggested organizing meetings to educate members in these issues. While I think it's laudable that we're meeting with OP, I think there's a need for a larger community dialogue. We have until September 8th to make a decision on the proposed Inclusionary Zoning decision before the Zoning Commission.

Chairman Hunter stated that one of the Commission's greatest weaknesses is our inability to draw new people into our meetings, and our inability to inform our constituents on our activities. One suggestion previously suggest was to provide a newsletter. I suggest that we designate a committee to develop an RFP for a newsletter. Commissioner Parker volunteered, Commissioner T. Smith, Commissioner Hunter, and Commissioner Spalding will work on this issue.

Chairman Hunter introduced the need to get word out on specific issues and meetings that require the Commission to do mailings. I suggest that we allot \$500 per single member district per year for this purpose. Chairman Hunter moved that ANC1B appropriate the amount \$500 per SMD for the purpose of mailing, flyers and other expenditures required for publicizing within the SMD's, and it was seconded. Treasurer Stephens asked for review by the Auditor's Office. Chairman Hunter responded that it would not be given to individual Commissioners, but would be a reimbursement for up to the proposed amount for expenditures on mailing and printing. In a roll call vote: Moss, Hunter, M. Smith, Parker, Akinmboni, T. Smith, Mathews voted yea; Spalding, Hammonds, Stephens voted nay, and Wright was absent. Motion carried (7-3-0).

Commissioner T. Smith described an illegal mural in the 700 block of Fairmont Street, and passed around a letter from Howard University requesting that the mural be removed from their property. Commissioner T. Smith moved that ANC1B support Howard University's request for removal of the mural, and it was seconded. Chairman Hunter asked who the letter from Howard University was addressed to, and Commissioner T. Smith responded that the letter was addressed to Mr. Sinclair Skinner. Commissioner Mathews stated that you're not telling the whole thing. Commissioner T. Smith stated that to his knowledge the parties involved decided to paint this mural without consulting either the community or the property owner. Commissioner Moss asked if permits from the city are required to paint a mural, and a constituent answered that it is on private property and permits are not required. Commissioner Mathews stated that this mural did not get approvals before it began happening, however, it's not graffiti. It portrays Marion Barry and Dave Chappell, and I don't know who else. What happened was some people in the community got up in arms that there was a picture of Marion Barry that had his name in the neighborhood. They erased the name and so it was just a picture of a guy next to a sign that said Precinct 37. That wasn't enough for these people, so they went to Howard University and complained. I don't even see why this is before the Commission since this has already been resolved. It's going to be resolved by Howard University. Chairman Hunter asked in whose SMD this mural is located, and Commissioner T. Smith indicated that it was in his SMD. Commissioner Akinmboni stated that if this is a youth project, and we encourage our youth to give back to our community, we should write to Howard University and ask them if they want to destroy the work of our youths. Commissioner Moss stated that this Commission cannot sanction any mural that hasn't gone through a vetting process, nor one that does not have the permission of the owner. Commissioner Parker proposed a friendly amendment that the alleged artists be invited to meet with Howard University to discuss a mutually acceptable arrangement. Commissioner T. Smith did not accept the friendly amendment. In a roll call Commissioners Moss, Spalding, Hammonds, Hunter, M. Smith, Stephens, Parker, T. Smith voted yea, and Commissioners Akinmboni and Mathews voted nay, with a resulting vote and the motion prevailing (8-2-0).

Commissioner Spalding introduced consideration of ABRA application 60997 Tri-X LLC doing business as Cue Bar applying for a new CT tavern license for 1115-A U Street. This will occupy the space previously occupied by Between Friends which was a CN nightclub license. While the Commission suffered from problems with the previous tenant, this application appears to be a much more appropriate use of a large below grade commercial space along the corridor. Scott Wandling presented a floor plan for the proposed tavern, and gave a prepared statement. The proposed business will offer billiards, darts, shuffleboard and ping pong, and will sponsor group team activities. They will also offer sports video program mining, and occasional music. Mr. Wandling explained that he has been running Georgetown Bar and Billiards for a number of years, and has done so in a manner that has been both trouble free and successful. Chairman Hunter indicated the problems created by the previous tenant in regard to noise and its impact on the other business located in the building, and Mr. Wandling responded that he has met with the owners of the Dry Cleaners and the 7-11, and that he had reassured them that his business would not negatively impact their businesses. Chairman Hunter explained to Mr. Wandling that the Commission had considered the possibility of writing a voluntary agreement to address the impact of the noise on the co-located businesses, however, the lack of the SMD Commissioner's request and the absence of the other business owners from this meeting makes me wonder if this is needed. Mr. Wandling stated that music would be for ambiance in his establishment and not the reason for people to enter his business. The similar business in Georgetown has not had any noise effect on abutting neighbors. Commissioner Moss asked how long the Georgetown business had been going, and Mr. Wandling responded about nine years, but that he had been in the bar business in DC for eighteen years. Commissioner Spalding moved support for a new CT tavern license for Tri-X LLC doing business as Cue Bar to be located at 1115-A U Street, and it was seconded and adopted (10-0-0).

Motion to adjourn was seconded and passed unanimously at approximately 9:10PM.