

ANC 6A

The End of An Era

BY TANYA SNYDER

After seven years of service to Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A, Chair Joe Fengler stepped down – not just as chair, but as a commissioner. He recently bought a new house and is now a resident of ANC 6B.

Fengler turned the ANC from a commission known for funny business with the checkbooks to one of the best-run ANCs in the District. Fengler also was instrumental in opening up ANC committees to being chaired by non-commissioners – the first in the area to do so – and he says it’s made all the difference. “We added 35 more people to the ANC to get things done,” he says. “Everything else flows from that.”

Fengler made an appearance at the January ANC meeting, but he sat in the audience this time. He made a brief statement, trying to stick to his own two-minute rule.

“Seventy-five meetings and a few hundred letters later,” he said, “we changed zoning codes, addressed longstanding public space violations, banned single sales of beer, ruled with many organizations to secure the renovation of H Street and, in that process, became an effective voice of change.”

One commissioner after another spoke of Fengler’s outstanding leadership.

Fengler had affectionately referred to Commissioner Nick Alberti as “a barking dog,” a keeper of truth and as Fengler’s own conscience. But this barking dog was all whimpers at Fengler’s last ANC 6A meeting.

Alberti choked up immediately and delivered an emotional farewell. “Joe, I know I’m hard to listen to,” he said. “Thank you for your patience.” He remarked that the whole neighborhood would miss him and that he was “really sorry to see you go. ... You know I mean it.”

Still, Fengler sees a lot of work left undone. He’s proud of his work bringing the streetcar to H Street but says, “While the city is laying the tracks, a lot of community involvement will be needed to make that a reality.” He also says H Street needs a new round of development, “beyond the restaurants and taverns,” which are “the first phase of any development.” He says parking will continue to be a challenge, “not just on H Street but in other parts of the

city as density increases.” And he says the ANC’s Public Safety Committee will be key in working with police to address a spike in carjackings and other street crimes.

Don’t expect Fengler to dazzle ANC 6B with his talents just yet – he says he’s planning to “enjoy spending time with my wife, who has shown a tremendous amount of patience and perseverance over the last seven years to indulge me,” and he wants to make up for lost time.

Elections Reveal Rift in ANC

The election confirmed a rift between two factions of the commission. There were two nominees for the chairmanship: David Holmes, who was supported by Bill Schultheiss and Nick Alberti; and Kelvin Robinson, a relative newcomer to the commission, but one with a long history of service to the city – and if unconfirmed rumors are true, a potential contender for the Ward 6 Councilmember seat in the not-too-distant future. Robinson prevailed in the election for ANC chair with the support of Commissioners Raphael Marshall, Gladys Mack and Mary Beatty.

The commission has split in the same way on two previous issues. One was the location of a charter school in the neighborhood. In that instance, though the ANC had repeatedly taken a position against the location of the school, Robinson and one other commissioner spoke publicly in support of it. Some community members worried that an ANC commissioner who defied the majority vote of his commission would continue to do so as chair. Another time the commission split down the same lines was a very confusing fight over an application by the Rosedale Citizens’ Alliance and the Rosedale Youth Institute to be a “Friends of” park partner to the Rosedale Recreation Center.

In other election news, Alberti began another term as treasurer, and Beatty was easily elected vice-chair. Beatty nominated Holmes to be secretary, but Holmes declined the nomination. This set off a chain of refusals: Marshall and Mack both declined to serve as well, when nominated by Holmes. However, when Robinson asked Marshall to be secretary, his opposition was a little less decisive. Marshall refused to give any statement in support of his own candidacy, and he was the only commissioner who didn’t vote yea. But he didn’t vote no, either.

All committees kept their chairs, except that Robinson will no longer co-chair the Public Safety Committee with Rebecca Sibia – Sibia will chair the committee alone.

As for the election to replace Joe Fengler as the representative of 6A-02, two candidates will face off

ANC 6A02 holds Special Election

BY PETER J WALDRON

Long-time chair of ANC6A Joe Fengler resigned from his office because he had moved out of his district to another part of the Hill. Thus a special election to fill the ANC6A02 seat is scheduled for February 11.

With this resignation, the Fengler era has come to an end, a history of significant change being its legacy. Among the achievements Fengler points to are the “creation of an ANC where residents participate.” For example, there are 25 to 30 citizen volunteers working on issues or committees that are ordinarily the prerogatives of ANC commissioners. Fengler also points to a crowning achievement for the community on his watch -- the full “revitalization of H Street” which he attributes to persistence in dealing with the District government. Yet another of his significant legacies is his leadership on both the adoption of the ban on single sales of beer and spirits and its strict enforcement and policy of no exceptions by the full ANC, adding, many feel, to the improved safety of the community.

Two residents have announced their candidacy for the open seat, both with previous experience on ANCs: Robert Pittman, a transplanted former commissioner from ANC 1C, the Adams Morgan area, and Drew Ronneberg who has worked as a volunteer resident on ANC6A zoning matters. ANC Commissioners are generally elected every two years and represent Single Member Districts which are made up of roughly 2000 residents. ANC commissioners are unpaid public officials whose collective decisions must be given “great weight” by all city agencies and departments.

Drew Ronneberg

From Fengler’s deep bench of citizen participants, Drew Ronneberg, a Hill resident since 2001, has been Chair of ANC6A’s Economic Development and Zoning Committee for five years. Although appointed residents are allowed to play a role in ANC business, this is rare and one of the significant contributions of ANC 6A is that they have encouraged citizen involvement. In many ways Ronneberg has acted as a de facto commissioner and has consid-

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Drew Ronneberg has been endorsed by former ANC6A Chair Joe Fengler. Photo by Andrew Lightman

erable experience and knowledge of the issues facing ANC6A with a great deal of his work having been in cooperation with the District's Office of Planning from zoning overlays to commercial uses of the newly revitalized H Street including its impending new trolley line.

Asked why he is running Ronneberg replied, "I have been involved with the ANCs intensely for six years. I like the changes ANC6A has brought to the community. I want to see that progress continue" especially concerning the continued revival of H Street and another project which involves the identification of vacant properties in the area. Ronneberg anticipates future challenges such as growing parking issues for residents that have come with the success of H Street.

Ronneberg, with a PhD from Princeton in Chemistry, thinks the work of Fengler and the presently constituted ANC should continue and he fully supports the ban on single sales of alcohol and notes "there are still significant crime issues." Ronneberg sees the upcoming challenges to the community "to make the community safer, to attract more retail to H Street and attracting people from other neighborhoods" at the same time protecting parking for residents. In an email to the community, former

Chair Fengler has resoundingly endorsed Ronneberg.

Robert Pittman

Robert Pittman served on ANC1C until 1996. For the past two years Pittman has been the Citizen Coordinator for PSA 102 which works with the MPD in coordinating and monitoring crime in his neighborhood. Pittman is also President of the Linden Place Association.

Some controversy surrounds Pittman who ironically was discovered to be no longer living in his ANC district but allowed to serve out his term in 1996. According to news accounts at the time, when his term of office ended he refused to give up the keys to the ANC office to new commissioners and the police had to be called in to mediate.

Multiple efforts to reach Pittman for an interview to provide the community a sense of his views on issues that are important to ANC6A and the community were unsuccessful.

All registered voters of ANC6A02 (see boundary map on www.anc6a.org) are eligible to vote. Voting will take place on Feb. 11, at Miner ES, 601 15th St. NE, between 7:15 PM and 8:15 PM with the winner declared during a regularly scheduled ANC meeting. ★

ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 6A Kelvin Robinson, Chair, Vice-Chair, 251-7079



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ANC 6A meets the second Thursday (February 11), 7 pm, at Miner Elementary School, 601 15th Street, NE.

www.anc6a.org

Alcohol Beverage Licensing Committee

3rd Tuesday, February 16
Sherwood Recreation Center
Corner of 10th & G Streets, NE
Chair, Mary Beatty, 546-4196

Transportation & Public Space Committee

Monday, February 22
Community Room of the Capitol Hill Towers
900 G St. NE
Chair, Omar Mahmud, 546-1520

Economic Development & Zoning Committee

3rd Wednesday, February 17
Sherwood Recreation Center
Corner of 10th & G Streets, NE
Chair, Drew Ronneberg, 431-4305

Community Outreach Committee

3rd Monday, February 15
Church of the Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith Annex
1235 C Street, NE
Chair, Elizabeth Nelson, 543-3512

Public Safety Committee

3rd Thursday, February 18
Sherwood Recreation Center
Corner of 10th & G Streets, NE
CoChairs, Kelvin Robinson, 744-0379 and Rebecca Sibilis, 386-2089

Please check the Community Calendar on the website for cancellations and changes of venue.

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in a special election at the next ANC meeting. Robert Pittman is co-coordinator of PSA 102 and served on an ANC in Adams Morgan. Drew Ronneberg chairs the ANC 6A Economic Development and Zoning Committee and attends every ANC meeting. Fenger has endorsed Ronneberg, saying he has a “great record of volunteering and working with the ANC over the last five years.” He says Ronneberg filling his seat would be a “seamless transition.”

Both candidates will speak at the meeting before the vote, which will take place Feb. 11 at Miner Elementary School, 601 15th St. NE. Voting will run from 7:10 p.m. to 8:10 p.m. and is open only to residents of 6A-02.

ANC 6A meets the second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m., at Miner Elementary School, 601 15th St. NE. Visit www.anc6a.org for more information. ★

ANC 6B

For Third Year Running, SunTrust National Marathon Comes Up Behind

BY HUNTER GORINSON

A yearly thorn in Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6B’s side, the SunTrust National Marathon once again raised the commission’s ire during 6B’s first meeting of the New Year. Diane Thomas, director of community relations for Greater Washington Sports Alliance (GWSA), was on hand to combat a recommendation from the ANC’s Planning and Zoning Committee to “strongly oppose the holding of the race as proposed.”

Earlier in the month, the race’s organizers at the GWSA failed to turn up for a scheduled hearing to answer questions regarding traffic management at the event. Last year’s marathon shut down large portions of the neighborhood surrounding its staging area at RFK Stadium, effectively locking residents – many of whom were completely unaware that the marathon would be coming – into their homes on a Saturday morning.

All of 6B’s commissioners were flummoxed to hear that few measures were being taken to prevent a repeat of the traffic disaster that ensued – especially Planning & Zoning Chair Francis Campbell, whose single member district includes the southern face of East Capitol Street SE where 12,000 runners will begin their miles-long trek on March 20.

“I used enjoy running in my youth, so I understand the mentality ... but I also understand the mentality and anger that my constituents, my neighbors and myself feel when we [try to leave], and one more time we can’t get out, or we can’t get back in,” said Campbell.

In the end, the commission found that the number of possible problems with the race – including miscommunication within the Metropolitan Police Department regarding traffic direction, the disruption of bus routes, the ever-growing size of the race and the sidelong nature of its double loop course, which brings runners back for a second pass into RFK – far outweighed its benefits.

“We’ve been told every year that we’re going to deal with the problem of cross traffic, that we’re going to get the streets opened up,” said Commissioner Kenan Jarboe. “Fool me once, fool me twice, fool me five times – it’s getting really tired. Frankly, if this doesn’t work this time, I will shut you down next year.”

With Chairman David Garrison citing the need to “send a strong signal” to the GWSA, the ANC unanimously adopted their committee’s recommendation against the race and passed an additional amendment to confer with the MPD’s Special Operations Division regarding traffic concerns at the earliest possible date.

Old Vendors Still Waiting on New Leases

Picking up on a thread left hanging at last month’s meeting, Commissioner Jarboe reported that a possible engineer has been identified to improve lighting conditions within Eastern Market and will provide an estimate for the lowering of window cases that have caused food spoilage at some vendors’ booths.

The real cause célèbre, however, was the matter of leases for merchants inside the South Hall. After Eastern Market’s grand reopening last summer, the Department of Real Estate Services (DRES) had planned on instituting 18-month leases for vendors – a plan that has to yet to come to fruition. With everyone now paying month-to-month rent, said Jarboe, several vendors are pushing for extremely long-term leases of up to 20 or 30 years.

As DRES recently reversed a prior decision to issue an RFP for a new market manager, the Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee is still in the process of deciding whether the matter of leases “should wait until the management issues are settled.”

Similarly, outdoor weekend vendors remain without subleases, and their rents have yet to return to “pre-fire levels.” Debate over a jury selection process for new vendors at the outdoor market were also said to have cropped up at the Tenants Council, as many would-be sellers will not disclose proprietary information on the grounds that it would be tantamount to divulging a trade secret. Jarboe cited candle makers as a prime example.

In the meantime, it was reported, DRES has been authorized to now cover the market’s operational expenses with funds drawn for the District’s Enterprise Fund, clearing at least one substantial “roadblock” that has hovered over the market since its renovation.

Marines Marching South of Barracks Row?

Despite several pieces of frustrating news, the evening did manage to end on an up note as Bruce Jackson, community planning and liaison manager for the US Marine Corps,

stopped by to announce a new “community integrated master plan” for Barracks Row and areas southward. It’s an initiative that looks to be much more exciting than its jargonistic title might otherwise imply.

According to Jackson, the USMC has exhausted buildable space within Eighth Street SE’s 200-year-old Marine Barracks complex. As such, they hope to partner with the DC government and school system, Capitol Riverfront BID and their fellow servicemen at the Navy Yard for area building projects that, while providing additional space for the military, would also host an extensive array of public use components.

While Jackson stressed that the proposal is still in the planning stages, he did say that possible new building projects could include a fire station, a child development center, family housing, a gym or new retail space – including a new post exchange that would be open to members of the public and military alike.

“This is not about us,” said Jackson. “We’re looking primarily at facilities that are community accessible, that could be shared and can be multi-use.”

He did, however, concede that any new projects would “have certain requirements that would have to be met in order for the mission of the Marine Barracks to continue in the future.”

Jackson stated that a meeting with the mayor, DC Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton and Ward 6 Councilmember Tommy Wells had been tentatively scheduled for the coming week, and that the first public forum on the matter would be held at Eastern Market’s North Hall on Jan. 27. Four workshops will follow over the coming months, so that the “community and partners can develop a plan ... that can hopefully be taken forward.”

ANC 6B regularly meets at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at 921 Pennsylvania Ave. SE (the Old Naval Hospital). Call 202-543-3344 or visit www.anc6b.org for more information.

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ANC 6C

Commission Meets Halfway with Contested Liquor Store, Restaurant

BY HUNTER L. GORINSON

Despite nearly two years spent battling the re-opening of Oasis Liquor at 1179 Third St. NE, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6C announced that the shop has indeed been cleared to resume business after a pair of approvals from the District's Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) and Zoning Commission.

Still, Commissioner Anne Phelps – acting on behalf of the ANC and a group of 56 residents opposed to the project – and the Capitol Hill North Neighborhood Association were successful in negotiating a voluntary agreement (VA) with Oasis's new management. Per the terms of the new VA, the store will be renamed the Oasis Market and drop its old tagline (“The Coldest Beer in Town”) while adding a “variety of other things,” including increased lighting and security.

“Looking at the way the [BZA] has decided protests in the past, we really weren't going to win ... because it's a transfer to a new license holder. We couldn't use the proximity to schools or any of the other avenues you can use for a new license, even though we tried to have it considered [as such],” said Phelps.

Due to the condition of the property, the newly rebranded

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Oasis still has no timeline for opening – in spite of its management’s assertion before the BZA that they had already poured some \$30,000 dollars into rehabilitating the structure.

Meanwhile, word also came down that another liquor license-related problem had been resolved – this time with the soon-to-open Ethiopic restaurant at 401 H St. NE. Following a vote against the “high-end authentic” Ethiopian restaurant’s license application at the ANC’s December’s meeting, Commissioner M. Tony Richardson reported that he, too, had been successful in executing a new VA with Ethiopic’s management and would be withdrawing the commission’s letter of protest.

The ANC is currently awaiting a final approval of Ethiopic’s liquor license and a copy of the VA from the Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration. The restaurant is currently projecting a “mid-to-late February” opening.

New Guidelines Coming for Community Grants

After reporting earlier in the meeting that the ANC would not be reimbursed by the Office of the DC Auditor for a \$1,000 grant due to inadequate recordkeeping, the ANC’s treasurer, Commissioner Richardson, suggested a review of 6C’s policy towards such matters.

“I did want the community to know that we will be revising our grant policy, just so we don’t have the issues we’ve had in the past. ... Up to this point, everything is up to par. There’s just a few things here and there we need to tweak,” he said.

To that end, the commissioners resolved to conference via e-mail in late January and return in February with “consistent guidelines for every grant.” Some, however, were skeptical that such reforms – originally proposed and subsequently shelved last year – could be achieved so speedily.

“The suggestion that this has been going on for a long time is obviously true, but the idea that we can solve the issue now over e-mail, I find unlikely ... but we’ll try,” said Commissioner Tom Hamilton.

Headhunting for Community Parents, Teachers

The only news of the month from the 6C’s Youth & Education Committee came from the committee’s own founder and chairman, Commissioner Hamilton, who announced that he would be stepping down as chair, effective immediately.

“Although this committee was my idea, I haven’t been able to turn it into something that I think is valuable for the whole community. ... Therefore, it really isn’t fair to the committee or to the people who we ask to come to speak to continue,” he said.

Hamilton stated that, although the committee has managed to draw many “fascinating people” from the chancellor’s office and Board of Education to make presentations, he was frustrated by its inability to attract community stakeholders or gain leverage with the city government.

At the suggestion of Commissioner Lena Brown, the ANC decided that rather than conduct an internal search, they would instead begin a flyer and e-mail campaign amongst various area parents, educators and PTA groups. The ANC is currently reviewing expressions of interest from volunteers willing to fill the seat left by Hamilton. More information can be found at www.anc6c.org/committees.org.

WMATA: No Weekend Metro for NoMa

Following a presentation from the ANC’s Transportation Committee, commission members were universally chagrined to hear of the Washington Metro Area Transit Authority’s (WMATA) plans to close the southern entrance of the New York Avenue Metro every weekend in order to help bridge their \$40 million budget gap.

“This serves my residents and is their primary entrance,” said Phelps. “Also, that’s the neighborhood Metro for the NoMa (North of Massachusetts Avenue) BID (Business Improvement District) ... and they have 750 rental units coming online in the first half of this year. That’s some 1,300 residents that would be using that entrance.”

At present, two large-scale residential developments in NoMa – the Cohen Companies’ 212-unit Loree Grand

building at 250 K St. NE and StonebridgeCarras’s 440-unit Constitution Square project just a block away from the Metro – are scheduled to be completed during 2010. A student housing complex for interns visiting Washington is also currently under construction directly across the street from the Loree site.

Phelps said that “now is not the time to be cutting service” and noted that commuters and residents alike are increasingly opting for Metro when traveling to, from or within the District. WMATA did not provide a specific date for when the weekend closures may begin.

The ANC unanimously adopted a motion to directly contact WMATA General Manager John Cato with a letter outlining the commission’s grievances. Cato, however, tendered his resignation the following day, leaving the status of any such letter an open question that will have to be resolved at next month’s meeting.

ANC 6C meets the second Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Ave. NE. Call 202-547-7168 or visit www.anc6c.org for more information and meeting agenda. ★

ANC 6D Corcoran Seeking Delay in Development; Construction Begins on Forensic Lab

BY ROBERTA WEINER

After a period of inactivity and questions on its future development, the Corcoran Gal-

lery’s plans to move its school to the Randall School site in Southwest and develop housing on part of the site may be moving forward. David Julian, the gallery’s general counsel, appeared before Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6D to report on the status of the project and request support for a two-year delay in implementing their Zoning Commission-approved Planned Unit Development (PUD). The delay is required because the original PUD was granted in March 2008 and expires in March 2010.

Julyan outlined the history of the project, going back to 2006, and talked about the withdrawal of Monument Realty as the gallery’s development partner as a result of the economic collapse. He also reported that the Corcoran is currently in the final stages of negotiation with a potential new partner, the result of an aggressive and successful search. He announced that they hoped to reach an agreement before the Zoning Commission hearing on Feb. 8 to request the PUD delay.

Julyan addressed several questions that Southwest residents and commissioners have raised, including longstanding rumors that the Corcoran was trying to sell the Randall School building. Julian said that the building was purchased by the gallery in 2006 for \$6.2 million, and if specific milestones are not reached by 2016, only the city will have the right to repurchase the building for \$6.2 million. He said that because of the current delays, that date might also have to be renegotiated, but otherwise the building will not be sold. He also responded to questions about the project having tax abatements by saying that the Corcoran is a not-for-profit entity (a 501(c)(3)) and therefore tax exempt, but that any commercial or residential development on the site is subject to all taxes.

Several commissioners raised questions about the status of the extensive community benefits agreement that the ANC negotiated with the Corcoran. Commissioner David Sobelsohn reminded Julian that it was necessary to appeal proposed changes in the agreement to the courts for enforcement of the original document, and Commissioner Andy Litsky said that support for the delay would be on blind faith without specific guarantees about the agreement.

Julyan assured the commission that an agreement would be included in any modifications to the PUD that would be made as a result of the new developer's plans and pointed out that there is difference between the extension they were requesting, which just extends the existing PUD, and modifications, which will require approval of the ANC. However, the commission voted to make its support of the extension contingent on the inclusion of the community benefits agreement in the extension request, which it voted unanimously to support.

Ground Broken on Consolidated Forensic Lab, Support Requested for Leafy Treescape

Saying that a now-resolved challenge from another developer had caused an eight-month delay in the start of construction of the Consolidated Forensic Lab, Bill Vosberg of HOK Architects reported that the old District 1 Metropolitan Police Department headquarters was finally being leveled so that construction could begin at the site.

The construction team, with representatives from the City Department of Real Estate Services and Office of Planning, asked the ANC to support a public space permit application for the removal of five trees at the site and the addition of 19 oak trees surrounding the building. This is part of the developer's plan to seek a LEED Gold (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) designation for the building. The plan has been approved by the city arborist, and the tree boxes will be connected to the storm-water runoff cisterns. Litsky expressed his appreciation for the development's contribution to Southwest's tree canopy, which has suffered major losses in the recent past. The public space request was approved 5-2, with Commissioner Roger Moffatt and Hamilton in opposition.

New Bistro, Justin's Café, Seeks Liquor License

Justin Ross, owner of the soon-to-open Justin's Café at First and L streets SE in the Velocity apartment building, presented his request for a Class C Restaurant license and a

stipulated license to the commission. The stipulated license will allow him to operate until his permanent license is approved.

Several neighbors of the establishment hailed its imminent opening as providing an impetus for an expanding choice of restaurants and café offerings in the still somewhat bare Southeast neighborhood. Alcoholic Beverage Control Committee Chair Coralie Farlee pointed out that a voluntary agreement between the ANC and the café had been negotiated. Moffatt was concerned about supporting the final license before the stipulated license went into effect, and he provided the one vote in opposition to supporting the license.

New Chair for ANC, Other Officers Reelected

Commissioner Ron McBee, who represents the Capitol Park 3 development as well as the easternmost area of Southwest, west of South Capitol Street, was elected unanimously as chair of ANC 6D. Former Chair Andy Litsky chose not to run for reelection. The other three officers, Vice Chair Bob Siegel, Secretary David Sobelsohn, and Treasurer Jane Jorgensen, were all reelected for 2010. McBee has been active in many important community issues, including the local schools, community relations with the Nationals baseball team, and parking and traffic issues.

Other Actions:

- The ANC also:
- Voted unanimously to approve the revised and strengthened renewals of voluntary agreements for Friendly's Market, Shulman's Liquors and CAP Liquors, containing a waiver from the ban on sales of single cans of alcoholic beverages. The waivers had been granted last year for a year.
 - Voted unanimously to accept the community benefits agreement negotiated with Potbelly Sandwich Works but agreed to review at its next meeting the store's distribution of donated sandwiches.

The next meeting of the ANC will be held Feb. 8 at St. Augustine's Church, Sixth Street and Maine Avenue SW, at 7 p.m. Visit www.anc6d.org for more information. ★

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