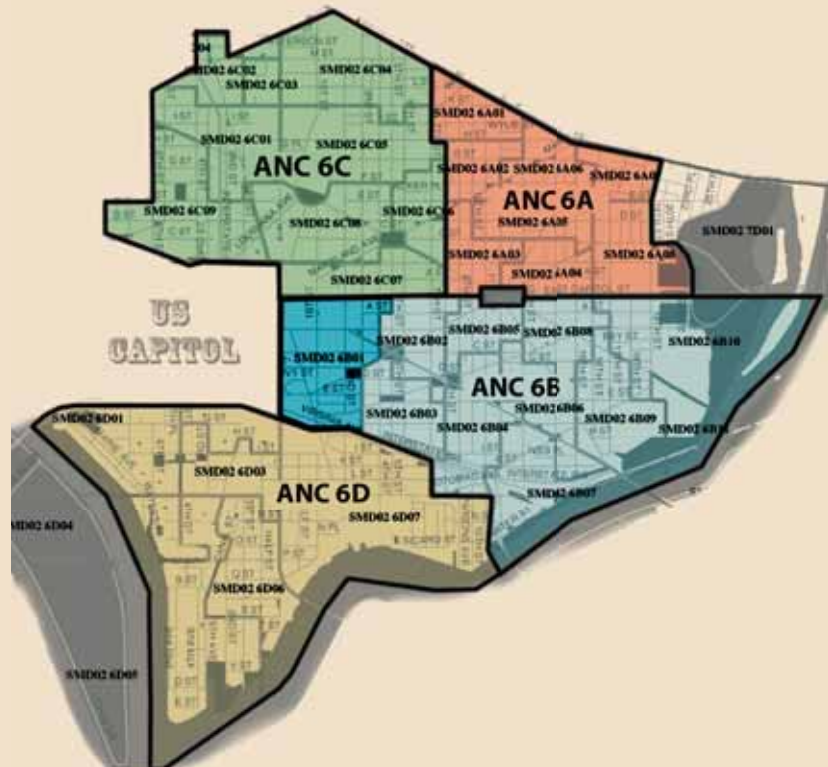


NEWS



ANC 6A Restorations Old Institutions Become New Condos

BY TANYA SNYDER

Two city treasures will be transformed into “loft-like” condominiums over the next couple of years. The police station at 525 Ninth St. NE and the firehouse at 1341 Maryland Ave. NE will keep the basic lines of their old exteriors while they experience a complete overhaul of their interiors. Nine households will live in the two buildings.

Last year, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development awarded the \$3.3 million development contract for the two buildings to the Argos Group, a local real estate development firm headed by Gilberto Cárdenas. Cárdenas appeared at the September meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A with Troy Urman, an architect from SORG Architects, which Argos commissioned to design the buildings.

Urman told the ANC that the

new designs don’t “violate the envelope of either building.” He says they’ll keep their same size and shape, and they’ll be restoring them “to their original beautiful details.” Both two-story buildings are currently vacant.

Police Precinct Number 9 was built in 1932 on Ninth Street. SORG plans to replace all windows and doors, reopening several bricked-up windows to build big bay windows, letting in the sunlight. They’ll also remove chipping white paint to expose the natural brick underneath. And they’ll landscape the adjacent alleyway with a sunken garden and walking path.

Old Engine House 10 goes back even further. It was originally built in 1895 and enjoys DC Historic Landmark status. In addition to replacement of doors and windows, architects also plan to replace the firehouse garage doors with a partially glazed wall that simulates the original configuration. They plan to add garden areas and a privacy wall on the side yard. Residents of both buildings will have off-street parking spaces.

Developers are hoping to begin construction before their target date of April 2010. They’ll be working on both buildings simultaneously and expect construction to take a year.

The ANC initially supported the Argos plan partly because they liked

that Argos was keeping the units large, to accommodate families. Each building will have two units reserved as “affordable.”

The ANC spoke unanimously in favor of the removal of the curb cuts in front of the building, so that those spaces would be open for street parking. Commissioner Bill Schultheiss emphasized that he represents all his residents in asking for the curb cuts to be removed. Cárdenas said that some people on the Historic Preservation Review Board would like to keep the cuts as they are, to preserve the historic vehicle entrance.

Cárdenas and Urman also announced that schoolchildren from Prospect Learning Center (920 F St. NE) and Miner Elementary (601 15th St. NE) would shadow the entire process to learn about building and design. Prospect students will focus on the police station, while Miner students will participate in the firehouse process.

Though the developer didn’t ask them to take any action, the ANC voted to support their application before the HPRB – with strong encouragement to close the curb cuts.

The ANC Wants a Say on Valet

The ANC dropped its protest of a liquor license for a new restaurant about to open on H Street. The com-

missioners decided instead to sign a voluntary agreement with Drew, a new Afro-Latino fusion restaurant, about noise mitigation. Drew will be opening at 1245 H St. NE, in the space formerly occupied by Hills Instant Carpet Service.

The second floor will have a rear deck, and the total capacity is 96 people on three floors. So the ANC was concerned about noise.

At a recent meeting of the Alcohol Beverage and Licensing Committee, ANC commissioners and community members asked Drew owner Andrew Alak and his colleague, Nate Bush, a few questions, and some of their concerns were alleviated.

The new establishment has an entertainment endorsement, but they’re planning only to have “light jazz, background music and an occasional soloist.” They’ve insulated and sound-proofed the sections of the building that would be close to residential properties, and they’re not planning to have entertainment on the back deck. They say they don’t plan to have speakers on the back deck either.

Drew also plans to have valet parking, using U Street Parking, the same valet company used by several other establishments along H Street. However, the ANC has some concerns about how valet parking is handled along the corridor.

The District Department of Transportation started issuing valet parking permits in August to businesses that offer valet service four or more days a week. Some regulations and procedures accompanied the new permits – including a rule that valet companies cannot park in public space, including on-street parking. Neighbors often complain that valet parkers do take up street parking. Commissioner David Holmes says some of his residents' biggest complaints revolve around inappropriate valet parking.

The ABL Committee set off a debate within the ANC about interagency jurisdiction with its recommendation that the ANC add compliance with the new DDOT valet parking requirements to its standard voluntary agreement that it negotiates with area establishments.

Commissioner Nick Alberti, who sits on the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board, was concerned that it was inappropriate to add parking regulations to a voluntary agreement. The voluntary agreements with liquor licensees are enforced by the Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration – and Alberti argued that ABRA was not trained to recognize valet parking violations. He said ABRA would only know of a violation if DDOT or

another city agency first enforced the regulation and informed ABRA of the violation.

Besides, he said, DDOT is the “big stick.” ABRA is only able to mete out penalties of \$250 for the first offense and \$500 for the second. He said some establishments would happily consider such small fines the cost of doing business.

Schultheiss said he liked putting valet parking in the VA as an expression of the ANC's wishes. He said it would be easier to negotiate that way than in a separate agreement.

Chair Joe Fengler said he was sensitive to the concern that “ABRA cannot be the master of all DC law” but also supported putting the item in the voluntary agreements. He said it's a demonstration upfront of the ANC's expectations.

Voluntary agreements normally exist to negotiate concerns between establishments serving alcohol and neighbors concerned about either traffic impacts or disturbance of “peace, order and quiet.”

Over Alberti's objections, the ANC voted to include valet rules in the agreements.

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

Opposition to Marine's Security Improvement Plan

Doesn't Match Neighborhood's Feel,
Makes Barracks 'Inaccessible'

BY KYLE JOHNSON

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6B voted to oppose the Marine Corps' proposed security upgrades near the Commandant's House, putting up a speed bump that could delay or derail the project as planned.

The Marine Corps has been planning for several years to upgrade

ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 6A

Chair, Joseph Fengler, 423-8868



Serving the Kingman Park, Linden, Near Northeast, North Lincoln Park, Rosedale, and Stanton Park communities



ANC 6A meets the second Thursday (October 8), 7 pm, at Miner Elementary School, 601 15th Street, NE.

www.anc6a.org

Alcohol Beverage Licensing Committee

3rd Tuesday, October 20
Sherwood Recreation Center
Corner of 10th & G Streets, NE
Chair, Mary Beatty, 546-4196

Transportation & Public Space Committee

3rd Monday, October 19
Capitol Hill Towers, 900 G Street, NE
Chair, Omar Mahmud, 546-1520

Economic Development & Zoning Committee

3rd Wednesday, October 21
Sherwood Recreation Center
Corner of 10th & G Streets, NE
Chair, Drew Ronneberg, 431-4305

Community Outreach Committee

3rd Monday, October 19
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, October 15
Sherwood Recreation Center
Corner of 10th & G Streets, NE
CoChairs, Kelvin Robinson, 744-0379
and Rebecca Sibilia, 386-2089

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

Attend a meeting! Volunteer for a committee! It's your ANC!



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“Some residents living near the areas where changes are planned asked the commission to oppose the project, questioning the need for increased security and saying the Marine Corps hadn’t done enough to find a solution acceptable to the community.”

security in front of the house by increasing the height of a fence and installing cement bollards to prevent vehicles from reaching the house. The Marine Corps also plans to add guard houses, install concrete planter boxes to serve as another barrier and enlarge existing tree boxes.

The project is scheduled to go before the District Historic Preservation Office this month. Before the ANC voted to oppose the project, ANC 6B Chair David Garrison urged barracks officials to hold off on their application for one month so that community members had an expanded opportunity to voice their concerns.

The Marine Corps officials at the meeting were not interested in waiting, and Garrison told them “best of luck” after the vote was tallied.

Commissioner Neil Glick said the proposal makes the barracks “really inaccessible,” particularly because of the use of cement bollards. He suggested working to strengthen the existing fence rather than using the bollards.

“We need to keep the character of the neighborhood ... and you could do a better job on a better fence, I think,” he said.

Capt. Lisa Lawrence, public affairs director of the barracks, said they were sympathetic to neighborhood concerns, but that the increased security was needed to better protect the commandant. She also spoke about the difficulty of finding a plan that would be acceptable to everyone and asked neighbors opposed to the plans to come up with alternatives. “Just to be clear, no one said this process wasn’t messy,” Garrison countered, adding that it is not the responsibility of community members to figure out how to improve security without harming the

community.

The Marine Corps held a public meeting discussing the issue in late September.

From Shotgun House to Mansion

A lengthy debate ensued when Mary Quillian Helms and husband Paxton Helms sought ANC support for their plans for a lot at 1229 E St. SE. A shotgun house built in the 1850s, with additions from the 1880s and 1930s, is currently on the land.

The couple proposed to tear down the additions and then add two- and three-story additions to the back of the shotgun house. The finished product would be more than 5,000 square feet, with a 43-foot driveway leading to a garage slated for the first floor of the three-story addition.

Many of the residents living on the block attended the ANC meeting to oppose many aspects of the proposal. They said the house would be too big to fit the neighborhood – Rosemary Hoffman, owner of a shotgun house down the street, said her house was only 800 square feet.

“They’d make good neighbors. I just wish their house was much smaller,” said Peter Field.

Neighbors also said they preferred to have the entire existing structure razed rather than remodel the original shotgun house, which has become a “rat-trap fire hazard,” according to 1241 E St. SE resident Mark Segraves.

The ANC considered two applications for the project. The first application was to authorize tearing down the parts of the old house, and the second application would approve construction of the new structure.

Commissioners echoed many of

the neighbors’ concerns, with Garrison calling the project a “suburban house model.” Commissioners also opposed the planned driveway, in part because the ANC had previously asked the city to get rid of the curb cut that would enable a driveway to be built. The ANC determined that that curb cut was illegal in 2003.

The commission voted to oppose the raze permit for the old house on the grounds that the application did not have the “special merit” needed to tear down the historical structure. They also voted to oppose the application itself.

The Importance of a Good Agreement

An ownership change at the establishment at 735 Eighth St. SE, formerly known as Jiggs, underscored the pitfalls that can pop up when dealing with liquor licenses. The ANC negotiated a new voluntary agreement with the new owners, who will call the restaurant Zest Bistro.

When a building with a liquor license is sold, that license and the accompanying voluntary agreement is transferred to the new owner. The new owner does not have to negotiate a new agreement, but in the case of Zest, they agreed to do so anyway.

The negotiated agreement did not limit the days the restaurant could have live entertainment, and Commissioner Carol Green said this was unacceptable. However, as Commissioner Kenan Jarboe pointed out, the ANC didn’t have much leverage in the case. If they pushed too hard, Zest’s owners could decide not to make a new agreement and stick with the existing, and more lenient, agreement.

The commission voted 5-2 to ap-

prove the new voluntary agreement.

In Brief

The ANC sent a letter to District Department of Transportation Director Gabe Klein in August in support of a transportation enhancement grant application for the Old Naval Hospital building, 921 Pennsylvania Ave. SE. The ANC’s letter said the grant would be used to help pay for landscaping, the creation of fully accessible walkways, installation of bike racks and land improvements to control storm-water runoff.

The commission currently operates out of the building.

Caroline Ellis of DDOT told commissioners that her agency has “decided to take a step back” on changes proposed at the intersection of Pennsylvania and Potomac avenues SE. Earlier this year, the agency’s plans to build a traffic circle of sorts at the intersection were met with criticism from the commission.

Ellis said DDOT is conducting a more in-depth transportation analysis on the intersection, and the agency will host community meetings this fall to gather more feedback from area residents before moving forward on the project. A community meeting is planned for October, but Ellis did not know the date of that meeting when she spoke at the ANC meeting.

Capitol Canines, a group working to get a dog park built on part of the open land at Virginia Avenue Park, received preliminary ANC approval for their project. Capitol Canines representatives said they had met with the leaders of the community gardens operating at the park, and there were no major concerns from that group about placing a dog park nearby.

The ANC urged Capitol Canines to continue working with the community garden as planning moves forward, and also asked them to work with the Capitol Hill groups that have proposed building a child activity center on the site.

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.

★

ANC 6C

Lounge Discussions Spark Debate

Commission Considers Hiring a Sound Expert

BY KYLE JOHNSON

A nonvoting item on the Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6C agenda turned into a discussion of the limits of the ANC's authority and whether it is "un-American" to place restrictions on businesses.

The commission discussed the ongoing tavern license application for Level, a three-story lounge planned for H Street NW. The ANC moved to oppose the application earlier this year due to neighbor concerns about noise and safety, among other issues.

Kris Thompson, executive director of Calvary Women's Services, which houses several women in the building next door to the proposed lounge, told the ANC that license applicant Pouya Yousefi hasn't adequately shared his plans with the commission or the neighbors who would be affected by the establishment.

"We haven't had that opportunity, and the business owner who intends to go into the space has not been able to provide that," she said.

Commissioner Charles Docter, who is leading the discussions with Yousefi to draft a voluntary agreement and get a liquor license application approved, said that the agreement is moving forward, and the only major issues left to consider are the occupancy of the lounge and what can be done to soundproof the building. Docter proposed hiring an "expert sound auditor" to look at the second issue, although he was unsure of the price of retaining such an expert.

Commissioner Tom Hamilton opposed hiring a sound expert, questioning the legality of such a move, and Commissioner Mark Dixon was worried about the precedence of hiring an expert to help research a case.

"What is our role here? What are we actually doing here?" Hamilton asked. "I just find this absurd. I'm sorry."

Yousefi also questioned such a move. He said he has contacted sound engineers who have told him that the all-brick building will minimize sound traveling outside the building.

"I think for the ANC this will be an unnecessary expense, and if I partake in it, it will be an unnecessary expense as well," he said.

Level's application is scheduled to be considered by the city in mid-October. Docter's suggestion, that the ANC approve hiring a sound auditor and then figure out the price before the hearing with the city, was dropped, but the ANC unanimously approved a separate motion asking the city to delay its hearing to give the commission a chance to look into hiring a sound expert.

The ANC also spoke about the other remaining issue regarding Level's application: its capacity. The architectural renderings for the lounge are not finished yet, and an occupancy number won't be negotiated until after that time. Yousefi, however, spoke out against lowering the occupancy in a voluntary agreement or liquor license, calling such a move "un-American" because it would limit the earnings he could make off the establishment.

"Isn't it up to the fire marshall to determine what the occupancy is?" he said.

Commissioner Anne Phelps dismissed the argument, saying that limiting the occupancy of a place is a common practice and is "perfectly allowable by law."

"Whether it's American, I can't speak to it," she said.

Oasis Discussions Continue

Another longtime source of liquor license controversy was mentioned briefly at the September meeting. The

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ANC asked the city to block Oasis Liquors' attempt to reopen at 1179 Third St. NE. The city has granted Oasis a new certificate of occupancy, and their liquor license renewal request will be considered this month.

"Much to my chagrin," Phelps said.

The commission and neighbors of the store have attempted to block the reopening of the store because of concerns about the impact it will have on the community.

The ANC supported an application for Bistro Cacao, a French bistro planned for 318-320 Massachusetts Ave. NE, pending signature of the drafted voluntary agreement. The owners of Bistro Cacao agreed to not receive deliveries at the restaurant before 7 a.m., and the restaurant will close at 11 p.m. on weekdays and midnight on weekends.

The commission also approved Momiji's request to extend their operating hours to 2 a.m. every day of the week. Momiji is located at 503 H St. NW, and the request was approved without any concerns by the commission.

Two public space applications were approved unanimously by the ANC. Absolute Thai, located at 521 G St. NW, requested the use of sidewalk space for an outdoor café. The tables will be placed on both Sixth Street NW and G Street NW.

A request to place a flag and guard station outside 145 N St. NE was also accepted without much discussion. The building will house the Department of Justice.

Stalled Development

The economic downturn has pushed back the timeline for Capital Place, a Louis Dreyfus Property Group development at H and Second streets NE. The ANC approved Dreyfus's request to delay Capital Place by up to two years, as long as they take safeguards to keep the site secure and control rodents on the location.

The sole controversy of the request had to do with a rowhouse at 222 G St. NE. Dreyfus purchased the house when it was planning for the development because it wants to use some of the property's land to expand a nearby alley. Dreyfus

plans to refurbish the house and sell it after the alley project is complete, company representatives said at the meeting.

Area resident Drew Talent asked the ANC to encourage Dreyfus to sell the property sooner because of its state of disrepair and the negative effect that has on neighboring properties. Talent said trees were overgrown in the yard, among other problems.

"There's no real reason why [they] can't dispose of this property and sell it," he said.

Phelps agreed that something needs to be done with the house.

"Regardless of whether or not the finances exist to improve a rowhouse, Dreyfus is a pretty big company. They can get the trees out of the back that are growing out of the house and any other things that are considered code violations," she said. "I don't think there's much excuse for leaving a vacant property in any kind of condition that makes it clear that it's vacant from the street."

Phelps also warned Dreyfus representatives about the increased property tax that will be levied on the site if it remains vacant.

The passed motion approving the delay of the Capital Place project called on Dreyfus to continue to maintain the site and look into selling the rowhouse.

Taking off the Cap

The ANC approved a \$1,500 grant to Southern Baptist Church (134 L St. NW) for its program that help adults get a high school diploma. The initial grant request was for one-third that amount, but the commissioners decided to award the maximum grant amount.

Hamilton said that the grant restrictions are foolish," and that grant amounts should be determined by an application's merit, not an arbitrary cap set by the ANC.

Phelps agreed and said that the ANC should reexamine its grant restrictions.

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

Southwest at Greater Risk of Flooding?

FEMA and US Army Corps of Engineers Explain Findings

BY ROBERTA WEINER

Parts of Southwest may be at increased risk of flooding, according to studies now underway by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) and the US Army Corps of Engineers. This information, and steps that residents can take to save money on potential increases in flood insurance, was discussed by Mary Wiedorfer of KCI consultants to the DC Department of the Environment at Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6D's September meeting.

The Potomac Park Levee extends from 23rd Street NW to a new levee that will be completed in December at the Washington Monument grounds at 17th Street NW. Wiedorfer said that while this levee will protect the District from river flooding, the risk of flooding from interior drainage such as excessive rainfall has increased in the Federal Triangle district, parts of the National Mall and portions of Southwest, going south from the Capitol grounds and including about 2,000 households in Capitol Park and other residential areas. In January 2010, the District will release new maps for this flood plane, which will show these areas as a Special Flood Hazard Area (Zone A), up from low to moderate risk (Zone X) and, for

property owners, requiring the purchase of flood insurance.

Next May the new Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) will go into effect. However, the maps detailing the risk for each property will be available in January 2010. Flood insurance rates are set by FEMA and vary depending on the features of each property. If a homeowner purchases flood insurance prior to the date the FIRMs go into effect, it will be available at reduced rates. The reduced rates will be continued once the FIRMs are effective, and will convey with property when it is sold.

More information is available at the District Department of the Environment (DDOE) website at www.ddoe.dc.gov/floodplainmap, and www.floodsmart.gov, or from Tim Karikari at DDOE, 202-535-2248.

Southwest Safeway Commits to Improvements

More than 200 people attended a community meeting on the deteriorated conditions at the Southwest Safeway, according to Commissioner David Sobelsohn. The community's motivation was the store's application to sell beer and wine at their new 55,000-square-foot store, which will be located in the new building at Waterfront Station located directly behind the current store.

The meeting was attended by several Safeway executives, Lt. Nick Gallucci of MPD's First District, and David Smith, representing the developers.

Sobelsohn reported that Safeway representatives said several issues troubling the community had been resolved, including the reopening of the restrooms to the public, the hiring of new managers and additional baggers, and an improvement in the produce department. Safeway will hire 75 new employees and have a camera to monitor wine and beer sales.

Community comments at the meeting focused on the lack of stock, staffing problems, inadequate signage on stock and sale items, and the general cleanliness of the store. Questions were also raised about loiterers outside the store. Sobelsohn said that the Safeway Task Force would be meeting with Safeway staff within the week after the

ANC meeting to follow up.

The ANC subsequently voted unanimously to support the granting of a Class B liquor license to the new Safeway for the sale of wine and beer.

Waterfront Station Construction Schedule

David Smith reported on progress on the construction at Waterfront Station and announced that the reopened section of Fourth Street going from M Street to I Street will be completed in February, and the two buildings will be completed in March. He also said that they will be announcing some retail establishments in the near future.

Support for Amendment to Affordable Housing Legislation

Nina Albert of the Deputy Mayor's Office on Economic Development requested the support of the ANC for an amendment to the Affordable Housing Act (Bill no. 18-304) that will correct a technical problem that arose as a result of the absorption of the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation (AWC) into the Office of Economic Development that affects the flexibility in building affordable housing in projects at the Southwest Waterfront, Hill East and Poplar Point. The legislation will re-establish the same regulations for housing at both 30 percent and 60 percent of the AMI (Average Mean Income) that was included in the original AWC mandate. She also emphasized the fact that there was a strong provision providing a 20-year covenant on condo units and a 50-year covenant on rental units, making it a long-term provision.

A question was raised about the lack of workforce housing, which is at 80 percent to 120 percent of AMI, and would provide housing opportunities for people like teachers, police and firefighters. Albert said that it would be worthwhile to have a debate on workforce housing, but this legislation is focused on an aggressive push for affordable housing.

The commission voted to send a letter to the DC Council supporting the legislation.

In Brief, the ANC

- heard a report from Commissioner Jane Jorgensen about the pond at the park at Sixth and I streets SW, which, because of a broken pump, has an erratically bubbling fountain causing mosquitoes and an excess of algae in the pond. The District Department of Parks and Recreation says it will cost \$17,000 for a new pump, but their plumbers are keeping the pond clean with tablets and keeping the fountain running with a makeshift fix. A motion to send a letter to DPR was tabled when Commissioner Ron McBee reported that the Rev. Brian Hamilton, of Westminster Presbyterian Church, thought he knew how to repair the fountain.
- voted unanimously to research and comment on a provision in the current draft of the new District Comprehensive Plan that proposes the implementation of an Inter-modal Transportation Center at the Banneker Overlook at the Southwest Waterfront.
- supported an amendment to the Southeast Federal Center Zoning Overlay that will permit the Trapeze School to move to The Yards in Southeast from its current location at the old Convention Center site.
- agreed unanimously to write letters of support for three walks: the Help the Homeless Walkathon on Nov. 20, the Walk to Fight Diabetes on Oct. 24, and the finale of the Komen Breast Cancer 3-Day Walk, which will use only sidewalks, on Oct. 9.
- agreed unanimously, because of recent legislation discouraging the use of plastic bags, to eliminate a requirement that liquor store owner use clear bags for single sales.

Because of the Columbus Day holiday, the next regular business meeting of the ANC will be on the third Monday in the month, Oct. 19, 7 p.m., at St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, Sixth Street and Maine Avenue SW. ★

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