

June report to constituents

Here is news of the June ANC meeting, and notes of other events in the neighborhood.

The ANC met on June 7. As I noted last month, Jenny Babcock, 1D04 commissioner, has resigned, because she is moving to Capitol Hill. The Board of Elections and Ethics has certified the petitions of two candidates for the vacant post, Matt Silverman and Gregg Edwards. Now we must hold a **“special election”** at the July ANC meeting. I know both of these candidates, and I think they’re both well qualified for the task. I’ll readily work with whichever one prevails, but I’ll miss Jenny, who was an exceptionally compassionate Commissioner.

Commissioner Grant introduced a resolution in support of the **police foot patrols** that have become a part of life on Mount Pleasant Street. I think the patrols are effective at promoting good relations between police and community, at developing intimate knowledge of the neighborhood by a few officers, and at reducing disorderly behavior on Mount Pleasant Street. Officers Faucett, Garrison, Gauck, and Henderson have made themselves part of the Mount Pleasant community, and the MPD assures me that these officers are here to stay.

Residents of the side streets, especially between Mount Pleasant Street and 16th, would like to see more of these foot patrols on their own blocks. Commissioner Grant called for an extension of the foot patrols into the neighborhood. I proposed that that request be limited to the immediately adjacent blocks, because foot patrols will do little good deep in the residential parts of Mount Pleasant, where the officers will encounter few people. Mr Grant agreed to modify his resolution to call for foot patrols “in the high foot traffic areas” of Mount Pleasant, and it was passed in that form.

Lately there has been an explosion of **paper posters** stuck onto lampposts. These posters are almost never removed, and deteriorate in place, leaving a shabby, unkempt appearance. Tape is commonly used for posters. This is explicitly illegal: posters may not be put up with anything that leaves a residue (i.e., no tape), or may

Live music? A complaint was filed against Alberto Ferufino’s Don Juan Restaurant for offering **karaoke**. I attended the ABC Board hearing on this complaint, partly to offer support to Alberto, and partly to show the Board that this ANC objects to the blanket ban on live music in Mount Pleasant restaurants. The Board noted my presence, and said that they are well aware of agitation for relaxing such restrictions. However, they chose to rule on only the very narrow question of whether karaoke was “live music” or not.

Because the restaurant provides only recorded music and a disk jockey for karaoke, and those would be permitted under the “live music” ban, the Board decided that karaoke was not prohibited by the voluntary agreement, and cheerfully told Alberto that he was free to offer that entertainment. Perhaps this is a small victory for our restaurants.

ANC 1D03 NEWSLETTER

Jack McKay, June 30, 2004

Opinions expressed here are those of Dr. McKay alone, speaking for himself, not for the Mount Pleasant ANC.

This filling of the 1D04 vacancy illustrates the difficulty we have in achieving an ANC that is fully representative of the community. **No Latinos, no African Americans, no Asians petitioned for the vacancy.** Hence, the ANC after the July election will be no more reflective of our multicultural community than before.

No doubt we all do our best to represent everyone, but that’s not sufficient. Members of our various cultural groups really must step up and compete for ANC seats, so that we can have an ANC that truly represents everyone. We can’t have a multicultural ANC if we don’t have multicultural candidates.

On June 16, I testified to the City Council Committee on Public Works and the Environment concerning the recommendations of **the Mayor’s Parking Task Force Report**. My points:

- (1) The existing Residential Permit Parking system, with its block-by-block zoning, is ineffective, merely shifting any non-permit cars onto unzoned blocks, and then penalizing the residents of those blocks by denying them residential parking permits.
- (2) Most of our residents work full-time, and many depend on nannies and babysitters and housekeepers who come to our neighborhood to service our homes. Any reformed RPP system must permit these people to come here and park on our streets, as the current RPP system does not.
- (3) Roughly half of the working people of Mount Pleasant commute to work in their personal automobiles, so there is plenty of curbside parking here during the day. Our parking problem is not during the day, but in the evening, when all these commuting residents come home.
- (4) Neighborhood institutions, such as our schools, need on-street parking, having little or none of their own. Given that there is no shortage of parking during the day, schoolteachers and others should be allowed to purchase daytime-only parking permits.

This testimony, as well as all of my past newsletters, is available on my Web site: <http://jackmckay.smcwebhosting.com/>

Some time ago, a Lamont Street resident was socked with a \$1000 fine (yes, one thousand dollars) for **“illegal trash dumping” in her alley**. She protested that very little of the mound of trash in the alley was hers, the bulk of it having been put there by departing residents, now long gone. No matter. DCRA held her fully responsible, and held her to that monstrous fine.

Trash accumulation problems have appeared elsewhere in the neighborhood, for example, in the alley off 18th Street, between Monroe and Newton. Residents be warned: the fines for improper trash deposits in the alley are fierce, and DCRA will cite and fine any neighbor they deem even partially responsible. That little of the trash is yours will not be accepted as an excuse.

damage the underlying surface; and posters must be removed after 60 days. Furthermore, posters on lampposts may not advertise “goods or services”.

Commissioner Grant introduced a resolution calling for the District to “enforce the existing regulations” concerning such posters. I objected, because I think it’s preferable to handle problems in a more neighborly fashion: let’s first speak to offenders, tell them what the rules are, and encourage them to abide by the rules and help keep our neighborhood clean. I suspect that few people know the rules. My “kinder, gentler” approach to the problem prevailed, and Mr Grant’s motion was tabled, while we prepare an educational campaign.

Last month City Council passed its new liquor-license law, which includes a provision giving ANC **standing to protest liquor licenses in nearby jurisdictions**, that is, within 600 feet of their ANC boundary. This is to allow an ANC to deal with problems caused in their area by a nearby liquor establishment, even if that is in another ANC. In our case, this means that the Columbia Heights ANC would have standing to protest some liquor licenses on Mount Pleasant Street. Commissioner Sale objects to this, and offered a resolution calling on City Council to rescind this provision.

I know the Columbia Heights ANC people well, and I don’t think they are concerned about our restaurants and other liquor establishments, and I do not believe that they would ever abuse this power. I was able to get the phrasing moderated, eliminating the direct reference to ANC 1A, perhaps reducing the insult to our neighbors. Nonetheless, I voted “no”, because I see no point in expressing such distrust and disrespect of our neighboring ANCs. The resolution passed, over my objection.

Out of space! -- Jack

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The July ANC meeting will be on July 12, 7:30 pm, La Casa Community Center. An election will be held at the meeting to fill the 1D04 vacancy. Other possible topics: Don Jaime’s liquor license; racks in front of Best Way; posters on lampposts.

Shortly before this monthly meeting the **Adam Express** had put up **advertising posters** all along Lamont Street, and some other places. I stopped by the Express to advise the owners, a wonderful couple, that their posters were not legal. They apologized profusely for their posters, and agreed to stop putting them up immediately. They had no idea that this was illegal.

That’s how to handle this problem: a friendly reminder to offenders about the rules for posters.

Incredibly, the organizers of the **Mount Pleasant Festival** face a fine of \$48,000 for failing to get permits for the Festival booths. I understand that Robert Frazier simply arrived at DCRA too late in the day, and they refused to issue the permits. The Festival went on, but now we’ve got a big problem. I hope DCRA can be persuaded to be merciful. There is no point to punishing the Mount Pleasant festival organizers with such a huge fine.

The residents of the **3400 block of Mount Pleasant Street** (adjacent to Bancroft, as Mount Pleasant Street does a jog to the west above Park Road) have long sought improvements to their steep, narrow street. The sidewalks of their street are in especially poor condition, because residents are forced to park with wheels on the sidewalk in order to leave enough space for the occasional delivery truck to pass through.

The work was promised in 2002, but was not done, and was apparently forgotten by DDOT. I have been able to restore this project to the DDOT schedule, the work to be done in conjunction with the streetlight upgrade (which is proceeding apace). It didn’t make sense to do the streetlight work, and repave the street, without doing the widening of the road at the same time. This block will get better sidewalks, gutters, and curbs, and road base and surface, as well as greater width, permitting residents to park on both sides without parking with wheels on the curb or the sidewalk.

The **youth shelter at 1855 Lamont** has occasionally been troublesome to the neighbors. Nothing serious has been reported, but the young men housed there sometimes behave like, well, unruly young men.

The supervisor of this and other facilities in the District wants to be notified promptly of any misbehavior by these youths. Reports of bad behavior should be addressed to Phil Stephenson, Director of Programs, Bureau of Rehabilitation, stephensonp@borlan.org. Please notify me as well. We do not object to this youth shelter in our neighborhood – this is a modest burden that we must bear as a civic responsibility – but of course the young men must respect the rights of their neighbors.