

16th Street Neighborhood Association
Final General Meeting Minutes
February 7, 2017

Attendance: Board members attending the meeting were sworn-in for 2017 by Councilmembers Todd and White. Over forty people, neighbors and city officials, attended the meeting at Simpson-Hamline Church.

The meeting consisted of short presentations, followed by questions and answers, by our local elected officials, Councilman Brandon Todd, Councilman White, and ANC representative Ulysses Campbell.

Councilman Todd

Councilman Todd is a member of several Council Committees including Transportation and the Environment, Health Services, and Human Services. Very recently, he introduced emergency legislation, called Extreme Weather Protection for Animals, which protects dogs by requiring owners to provide them with shelter during cold emergency alerts. The shelter may be outdoors but must meet certain conditions relating to size, its placement must be at least four inches from the ground, and it must contain a heat retaining, moisture wicking substance and wind block. Owners who do not meet these requirements can be fined \$250.

Other legislation introduced by Councilman Todd includes a new law that created a taskforce that includes representatives from DCRA, the ANC and community which will work on redeveloping the Kennedy Street (near Georgia Avenue) corridor with retail and mixed-income housing. Additionally, Councilman Todd is seeking seed money to help pay for a feasibility study on making upper 14th Street NW and Kennedy Street NW eligible for D.C. Main Street grants, which fund efforts to revitalize business districts. He plugged several new restaurants on upper 14th Street, Las Placitas and Athena Grill, and will support efforts to organize a Clean-Team for maintaining 14th Street between Spring and Colorado Streets NW.

Councilman Todd reminded neighbors that the Council is beginning to conduct Oversight Hearings for city agencies and encouraged neighbors to participate by expressing their concerns and interests to Council members. He is seeking more funding for West Elementary and continues to maintain a close relationship with the Fourth District. Overall, the crime rate in our police district has decreased. To improve block safety, he encouraged neighbors to participate in a block captain program which appoints a neighbor as a point of contact to facilitate communications with the police.

Councilman Todd shared that Mayor Bowser is committed to protecting the city's values and home rule status. Since the Inauguration of President Trump, she has met with D.C. agency officials to identify any budget vulnerabilities the city may face if the federal government cuts back on funding. A key vulnerability is the potential loss of health care subsidies under the Affordable Care Act. Many D.C. residents have obtained health coverage under this law. He urged us to lobby Congress directly and to persuade friends and family living in Congressional Districts to lobby their representatives on D.C. issues.

Many residents have been calling Representative Jason Chaffetz to complain about his interest in overturning D.C. laws.

Councilman Todd answered some questions about legislation introduced but not passed by the council last year. These bills would need to be reintroduced again this year to be reconsidered for a council vote.

Finally, Councilman Todd described the development plans for former Walter-Reed campus between Georgia Avenue and 16th Street NW. Over an eighteen-month period, the hospital buildings will be razed. New developments planned for the site include the International School, a Veteran Services Center, market rate residential housing, and a recreational (pool) center. The recreation center will likely take pressure off Upshur Park. Councilman Todd would like to see a combo library/recreational center developed for this norther section of Ward 4. A neighbor suggested a recreational center with a track that can convert to a roller rink during the winter.

Councilman White

This is Councilman White's first term and he provided us with information on his background. He and his family live near 8th and Madison Streets NW and his uncle lives in our neighborhood. His key interests on the Council, and the reason he ran, include increasing the inventory of affordable housing, improve the quality of the public schools and increase the number of middle class job opportunities for residents. The middle class is shrinking in D.C. and most residents are either wealthy or poor. He has put together a team of forty people, both D.C. insiders and others with unique expertise, to vet policy ideas on these topics and issue written recommendations. This report will be available in a few more weeks.

Councilman White expressed interest in improving the oversight of D.C. agencies. Although there are existing legislative solutions to problems like affordable housing, enforcement is often lacking. One problem at affordable properties is deteriorating living conditions because the landlord does not sufficiently maintain or reinvest in the properties. During the discussion on affordable housing, neighbors suggested that the city require more transparency on the developers receiving zoning and other benefits for building affordable units and developing repercussions for developers who are not fulfilling their promises. Finally, Councilman White commented that the affordable rent level needs to be lowered, especially in neighborhoods like Deanwood where median incomes are relatively high.

Ulysses Campbell

Ulysses Campbell introduced himself to us and shared his support for responsible development in the neighborhood and his preference for single family homes. He described the ANC's plan to develop committees to cover i) public safety and education; ii) alcohol licensing; iii) DCRA and other government agencies interacting with residents. The hope is to get more neighbors involved in the ANC through these committees.

Ulysses encouraged neighbors to contact him about their issues by email at 403@anc.dc.gov or by telephone (202) 792-8258.

Other Announcements

Jasmine Benab of the Mayor's office invited neighbors to attend Mayor Bowser's forums on the 2017 Budget. These forums are on several dates: Thursday, February 23, 2017, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM, at Wilson High School (3950 Chesapeake St. NW) and Monday, February 27, 2017, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM, at Columbia Heights Educational Campus (3101 -16th St. NW).

Audrey Nwanze, Chair of Community Alliance for Upper Fourteenth Street (CAUFS), described plans for obtaining seed money for a feasibility study to qualify to Main Street grants. In the next few months, the merchants and neighbors need to raise \$40,000 and participate in a community project that improves the neighborhood. Because Kennedy Street is participating in the feasibility study, our neighborhood (upper 14th Street NW) is only responsible for raising \$20,000. Any money contributed is tax deductible. One planned fund-raising event is a community soup. Audrey is looking for other fund-raising ideas from neighbors

The planned community project will be a Springtime clean-up event along 14th Street NW.

Treasurer's Report

Susie submitted a report on the Association's finances. As of the February meeting, we had a total balance of \$2,589.32 in our checking and savings accounts. One household submitted dues in January 2017.