

16th Street Neighborhood Association
Final Meeting Minutes
February 2, 2016

The meeting at Simpson-Hamline Church was well-attended with about 21 neighbors. The minutes from the December meeting were approved by attendees with no corrections.

Old Business

- Pursuant to the membership vote at the December meeting, we have reinstated the non-profit status of the 16th Street Neighborhood Association with the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA). Additionally, we are submitting a claim with D.C.'s Office of Finance and Treasury to recover the funds in the association's past bank account which were sent to the city when the account became inactive.
- There was a discussion about the incomplete resurfacing of the 4300 block of 15th Street NW. Jack and Elisa have contacted Department of Public Works about this problem and were told that the asphalt paving of the block cannot be done until Spring. Ms. Blackwell of Councilman Todd's office promised to look into the delay in completing this project.

New Business

- The membership discussed the recent snow storm and snow removal in the neighborhood. Although most sidewalks were cleared after the storm within 24 hours, the commercial businesses on 14th Street NW and several churches were slow in clearing their sidewalks. Also, the bus stops on 16th Street NW were not cleared of snow even though the buses were running. Finally, the curb cuts at corners were not cleared of snow and this made crossing streets treacherous. The city organized volunteers to clear snow for seniors and others requiring assistance but there were not enough volunteers.

Members discussed several solutions to these snow removal problems including i) organizing neighbors using the Listserv to clear sidewalks, bus-stops and curb cuts that remain full of snow more than one day after the storm; and ii) reminding business owners and churches of their responsibility to clear their sidewalks of snow. (It was suggested by Jack that we work with the Civic Association of Upper Fourteenth Street to convey this message to businesses).

- Senior and Special Needs Committee: Jack introduced the Co-chairs of this committee, Dot and Sandra. Sandra asked that neighbors, particularly block captains, assist her and Dot in identifying the seniors that may be interested in receiving assistance from neighbors (e.g., snow removal, help attending association events, etc.).
- Crime Committee Update: Carrie has organized another Neighborhood Watch Training, scheduled for February 17, 2016 (Wednesday) at 7:00 PM at Simpson-Hamline School Cafeteria. This training has received good reviews from attendees. Carrie also described the Security Camera Initiative by the city which involves tax subsidies for homeowners in specific neighborhoods who install security cameras

on their homes. Carrie will keep neighbors informed about this initiative as it becomes finalized by the Council.

- Jack proposed an Association Event Calendar and Budget for 2016. The proposed events include the following:
 - Monthly Meetings on the first Tuesday of each month except for July 5, 2016;
 - Monthly Happy Hours to be announced;
 - Winter Potluck;
 - Spring Outdoor Game Event, possibly soccer, in Upshur Park for families;
 - Easter Egg Hunt in Upshur Park sponsored by the association and the Department of Parks & Recreation (tentative date is March 18, 2016);
 - Summer Block Party;
 - Neighborhood Movie Night (possibly in the grassy area behind 4300 15th Street NW); and
 - Halloween Party.

The proposed 2016 budget includes the following expenses:

- \$5600 - Social Event Costs (Potluck, Game Event, Easter Egg Hunt, Block Party, Movie Night, and Halloween Party)
- \$600 - Web Services (Develop a Web Site for 16th Street Neighborhood Association);
- \$200 - Bank Account Fees
- \$800 - Quarterly Newsletters
- Total - \$7,200

There was a short discussion of the need to develop a vision statement for the Association. Jack suggested that the Bylaws Committee, responsible for reviewing and revising the bylaws develop such a statement. Additionally, ideas for collecting dues from members were shared. The current bylaws specify a household membership fee of \$30. It was noted that the Bylaws Committee plans to present its proposed revisions to the bylaws to the Executive Committee for feedback. The final proposal will be presented to the membership for consideration and a vote.

- **Update on 1521 Varnum Street**

John Stokes, the neighbor living next to this planned 7-unit apartment building, shared that DCRA has issued a stop-work order and intends to revoke the building permit for the project due to numerous building code violations. A hearing with the Office of Administrative Hearings is scheduled in March 2016. The written BZA decision approving the zoning permit has not issued yet. Once this decision is issued, John and his attorney will consider whether to appeal the decision.

John and Stop-the-Pop, a coalition interested in greater regulation of row home conversions, are pressing the Zoning Commission to revise the recent new regulations for R-4 buildings which limit the size of additions (*i.e.*, 10 foot limit beyond neighboring property) on commercial buildings but

not residential buildings. John and other neighbors want this limit to additionally apply to residential buildings.

- **Other Discussions:** Several neighbors discussed problems in mail delivery in the days following the snow storm.
- **Presentation by Audrey Nwance on the Civic Association of Upper Fourteenth Street (CAUFS)**

CAUFS is a D.C. non-profit partner with D.C.'s Office of Planning that advocates for the Strategic Area Plan for the upper 14th Street NW corridor, which runs from Spring Road to Missouri and from Georgia Ave. to Rock Creek Park. (The 16th Street Neighborhood Association is located in Node 2 of this corridor.) CAUFS' priorities include enlivening the retail businesses, improving street safety, creating continuity between the various neighborhoods along the corridor, and increasing green spaces in the commercial areas. These goals benefit residents by improving job opportunities and local shopping opportunities.

Throughout the year, CAUFS sponsors the following activities:

- Clean-up Days several times each year that focus on 14th Street NW;
- Assisting local businesses (*e.g.*, Dance Loft and four other businesses) to obtain various business grants;
- Sponsoring art projects including the painting of murals on local buildings;
- Community Soup potluck and fundraisers at the Sorority on the 4400 block of 14th Street NW. These social events benefit local neighborhood projects (chosen by the attendees).
- Monthly meetings located in the Community Room of the Bus Barn (14th St. NW at Decatur St.). The next meeting is February 24, 2016.
- Advocacy relating to zoning issues and the Comprehensive Plan.

Audrey described activities proposed for our neighborhood in April, 2016 which will be funded by a private art grant administered by the city's Office of Planning. Activities include a community history exhibit of photos and other items; dance performances sponsored by the Dance Loft; a work-shop on developing vibrant retail; a community porch activity that encourages residences to engage in discussions with each other along 14th Street; and a street art gallery. Audrey encouraged neighbors interested in the April activities or any other CAUFS events to attend the monthly meetings or contact her through the Listserv.

OFFICIAL MINUTES APPROVED AT MARCH 1, 2016 MEETING



Cecelia Waldeck
Secretary

16th Street Neighborhood Association
Draft Meeting Minutes
March 1, 2016

The meeting at Simpson-Hamline Church was attended by 15 neighbors. The minutes from the February meeting were approved by attendees with no corrections.

Old Business:

- According to the DC Department of Transportation, the paving of the 4300 block of 15th Street will be completed in the Spring.
- Security Camera Subsidy Program: Unfortunately, PSA 404 is not included under this program because our crime level is relatively low.

Crime Report by Lieutenant Figueras (PSA 404):

- The number one crime in the neighborhood (*i.e.*, PSA 404) at this time is robbery. Robbery means the taking of property from a person or from the person's possession. The greatest number of these robberies are occurring around the Petworth/Georgia Avenue Metro and the nearby Safeway. So far this year, there have been 29 robberies in the PSA (lower than last year's 48 robberies in the same period of time).
- In our more immediate neighborhood, robberies often victimize single people walking on the sidewalk. The perpetrator(s) either walk up from behind the victim or jump out of a car. In the latter case, after taking the victim's property, the perpetrator(s) jump back into the car and drive away. Most of these robberies occur at night, after 7-8 PM, and more so on weekends.
- Recently, a business at Allison and Georgia Ave. was robbed at gunpoint by an apparent juvenile. Many of the robberies in the PSA involve juvenile perpetrators who live outside the neighborhood.
- The other frequent crime in the neighborhood is assault with a deadly weapon. Typically, the victim and the perpetrator know each other and many involve domestic disputes. There have been seven ADWs in our PSA since the beginning of the year and arrests may occur soon for six of these cases.
- Overall, relative to the turn of the century (*i.e.*, 1999-2000), our neighborhood is much safer today. There was only one burglary in the last sixty days in PSA 404.
- Nuisance Behavior Discussion: DC Code makes it illegal to drink in public or smoke marijuana in public. Additionally, the noise statute enforces quiet from 10 PM to 10 AM daily.
- Police Staffing: Lieutenant Figueras said that PSA 404 is fully staffed at this time. Currently, there are more civilian employees working for the department and most of the officers are on patrol or working in specialized units. For example, there is only one officer covering the 4D station because civilian employees are hired for most jobs. There are going to be many officer retirements in the

future simply because there was such a large class of new police officers hired in 1990. Many of these officers will begin to retire in the next few years because it is common to retire after 25 years of service.

- Neighbors can help police by turning in unused license plates and reporting their lost license plates. Auto thieves will commonly replace the license plates on a stolen car with other plates to avoid the police.
- Neighbors can follow crime reports through the MPD listserv at MPD-4d@yahoogroups.com.

New Business

- **Easter Egg Hunt Planning (Carrie)**: The Easter Egg hunt will take place at Upshur Park on March 19, 2016 and begin at 11:00 AM, ending at about Noon. There will be three separate hunts for candy-filled plastic Easter eggs. Carrie is asking neighbors to provide candy for the eggs; you can get empty eggs from Carrie if needed. Carrie can pick up your filled Easter eggs from your home. Please use candy that is wrapped and does not contain nut products. In the past, about 100 children have participated in this event. We encourage neighbors with children to attend this year.
- **Bus Barn Exhaust (Jack)**: Jack provided neighbors with background on the buses using the nearby bus barn on 14th Street (near Decatur). Most of the 153 buses at the location use diesel and hybrid/diesel engines which emit toxic substances that can pollute the air. For this reason, drivers are supposed to limit the idling times of these buses. There was a discussion about whether WMATA is enforcing these idling time limits.

About fifteen years ago, in response to pressure from our neighborhood association, WMATA conducted an air quality study around the bus barn. There was a discussion about whether there are any mandates today for WMATA to conduct air quality studies in our neighborhood and report on the findings. One attendee shared that some residents living near the bus barn experience respiratory problems. Apparently, the air inside the bus barn is filtered in the bus barn chimney before it is vented to the outdoors; but no one had information on the quality of the vented air.

Michelle Blackwell (Councilman Todd's Office) shared that switching to electrical or natural gas fueled buses may be the long term solution to air quality near the bus barn. Engaging with WMATA on their procurement decisions for new buses may be a good strategy. Jack suggested that WMATA could more actively monitor bus drivers (through the bus GPS) to enforce idling time limitations for diesel buses.

- Michelle Blackwell from Councilman Todd's office shared information on the recent oversight hearing for the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs ("DCRA"). This oversight hearing took over ten hours and many citizens testified on a variety of issues including, but not limited to, permitting practices and building code enforcement. Michele invited neighbors who have problems with DCRA to contact her at mblackwell@dccouncil.us.gov.

- Oversight Hearings: Cecelia submitted comments for the DCRA oversight hearing and announced that she would testify at the Zoning Commission oversight hearing relating to popup/popback conversion issues. Other oversight hearings for District Agencies this month include Education, the Office of Planning and the Metropolitan Police Department.
- Elisa announced the agenda items for the upcoming ANC meeting.
- The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 5, 2016, at 7:15 – 8:30 PM.