

## Jack's December report

At the November meeting, having no scheduled business, the ANC dealt with some routine business and adjourned, after a record-short 11 minutes.

The vote counts I reported last month were preliminary, as absentee and provisional ballots had not yet been counted. The certified vote totals for ANC are (incumbents):

1D01: Jon Stewart, 754 votes (unopposed)

1D02: Robin Sandenburgh, 416 votes (Paul Karrer did not run)

1D03: Jack McKay, 564 votes; Leila Corcoran, 417

1D04: Yasmin Romero-Latin, 389 votes; Janina Olarte Quilacio, 159

1D05: Chelsea Allinger, 443 votes; Stuart Karaffa, 340.

I've written that **street robberies** in Mount Pleasant have decreased markedly in recent years. But the count is not zero, and on December 5, a group of youths perpetrated two robberies, one on the 1900 block of Park Road, and one on Ingleside Terrace, at around 10 in the morning. Residents provided good "lookout" details, and two young men were located, identified by the victims, and put under arrest, at 18th and Monroe.

Ordinarily the youths perpetrating robberies around here are juveniles. These two were 19-year-olds, and are now in serious trouble, charged as adults with felony robbery. They're DC residents, but not from this neighborhood nor anywhere nearby.

It's reported that a third member of this group escaped into the woods behind Ingleside. I expect that he'll be identified, with information obtained from his two partners in crime.

For many years, residents of Mount Pleasant north of Lamont **voted at Bancroft Elementary**. Due to the construction project at Bancroft, that voting location was moved to the Mount Pleasant Library. Bancroft would be more centrally located in this voting precinct, and the Board of Elections tells me that the voting location for this part of Mount Pleasant, will, for the 2020 election, again be Bancroft.

**It's dark early these days.** With the end of daylight saving time in October, sunset began coming during the evening rush hour. The earliest sunset was on December 8, the sun going down at 4:45 pm. We won't see a 6 pm sunset until early March. Daylight saving time, and 7 pm sunsets, won't return until March 10, 2019.

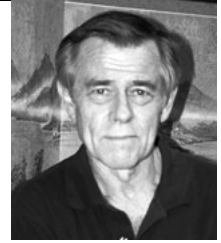
Early darkness correlates with a sharp rise in pedestrian deaths in automobile collisions. *Three-quarters of pedestrian fatalities occur in darkness*, for the obvious reason that drivers simply fail to see the pedestrian. Limited visibility in darkness is exacerbated by the typically dark colors of winter clothing. Pedestrians on the street sometimes are visible to drivers only as dark shadows silhouetted by lights behind them.

Here's what one analysis reports: "The purpose of enhancing conspicuity for pedestrians is to increase the opportunity for drivers to see and avoid pedestrians, particularly when it is dark, since this is when 74% of pedestrian fatalities occur

## ANC 1D03 NEWSLETTER #187

Jack McKay, December 10, 2018

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nationally. Pedestrians who are more visible are less likely to be struck.

Retroreflective materials (that is materials that reflect light – such as from car headlights – back toward the source) are built into many shoes, including children's and athletic shoes. Other accessories, such as arm or leg bands, gloves, vests, and caps are available from sporting goods stores and other vendors. . . . The difficulty with most of these devices is that the user must decide in advance to take and use them. Due to the extra step and the appearance of the conspicuity enhancements not looking like 'normal' clothing, they are very much underused. Pedestrians also tend to overestimate their own visibility, wrongly assuming if they can see vehicles, vehicles must see them".

Sure, drivers have to be extra careful on city streets in darkness. But we pedestrians should, for our own safety, make some effort to be visible despite the darkness, by wearing light-colored clothing instead of the usual wintertime dark. And put reflective strips on your children's jackets, such as highway workers wear, if they're going to out after dark. Don't be one of those seventy-four percent statistics!

Residents of the **2000 block of Park Road** petitioned last February for safety enhancements for that block, which has an unfortunate combination of curve-limited visibility and fast-moving traffic. In November, the road was stripped and repaved, being in very poor condition. That work entailed repainting the road striping, and DDOT took this opportunity to implement some safety measures, in paint only, it being too late in the year for concrete work.

The first plan offered by DDOT in response to the residents' petition entailed the loss of 14 parking spaces. I thought that the small gains in safety obtained didn't warrant the loss of so much parking. In particular, the modification of the Pierce Mill Road merge appeared to me to be of little benefit, at significant cost in parking. Similarly, the crosswalk proposed for the Rock Creek Park end of the block, which entailed some new sidewalk, and the elimination of all parking around that little island at the bottom of the hill, cost too much parking, for too little safety benefit.

In September, DDOT offered a reduced plan, accepting our revisions, but still losing seven parking spaces. This plan was approved by the ANC at the September meeting.

Four of those lost parking spots, now posted "no parking", are at the edge of the Piney Branch overpass, on the parkland side of the road. One of the safety hazards identified by the DDOT study, and addressed by their plan, was the awkward termination of the bike lane on the Piney Branch Parkway



overpass. That bike lane directs bicyclists right into any cars parked at the edge of the overpass. Bicyclists have to dodge out into the traffic lane to pass parked cars and reach the bike lane going up the hill.

DDOT dealt with this problem by eliminating about 90 feet of parking on the park side of the road, allowing the bike lane

on the overpass to connect to the bike lane going up the hill.

The only way to recover those lost parking spaces would be to eliminate the bike lane on the Piney Branch overpass. One could argue that there aren't enough bicyclists using that route to warrant the bike lane, and now there's a much safer bike route across Rock Creek Park on Klinge, so bike lanes aren't needed here. But, having seen these bike lanes come into being (2006), I believe it would be difficult to have that bike lane across the bridge removed. There's strong political support for bike lanes in DC.

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Much in dispute about the September DDOT plan was **the bike lane alongside the parked cars in the outbound, downhill direction.** DDOT proposed elimination of that bike lane, because it was too narrow, and too close to the cars, to be safe for bicyclists, rolling at speed due to the downhill slope. The space would instead be a three-foot-wide median, intended to force traffic up close to the parked cars, and theoretically persuading drivers to slow down a bit.

This, I vehemently argued, was a mistake, because that bit of width was needed as a pedestrian safety zone alongside the parked cars. An unfortunate characteristic of this block is the absence of street-level sidewalks, and residents must walk in the street to get to and from their parked cars. Pushing traffic up close to the parked cars only increases the chances of a resident being hit alongside the parked cars.

DDOT evidently decided that I had a good case, and indeed eliminated the median, instead using the available width to create a pedestrian space – a bit of “sidewalk” – adjacent to the parked cars. I'm sure residents will appreciate this bit of (relatively) safe space, just as the bike lane on the uphill side of the street provides safe pedestrian space alongside those parked cars.

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This block has in fact a relatively generous amount of curbside parking, because there are residences on only one side of the street, but curbside parking on both. However, despite having twice as much curbside parking per residence as most of Mount Pleasant, **residents of the block still find difficulty in parking in the evening**, and worry that the loss of any parking spaces will make that problem worse.

The parking problem here is due to the number of resident-owned cars without RPP (Residential Permit Parking) permits parked here because this block is unzoned. An unfortunate number of residents, perhaps only temporarily resident in DC, fail to get their cars registered in the District, and so cannot obtain RPP permits. So, if they live on an RPP-zoned block, they find unzoned blocks on which to park, and walk to their homes, perhaps blocks away.

Some years ago I observed that the 1800 blocks of Monroe, Newton, and Ingleside Terrace, then not zoned for RPP, were afflicted with numerous non-permit cars, taking up as much as one-third of the curbside parking. In 2009 we got those blocks zoned for RPP, not because of the commuter parking problem that RPP is intended to address, but to deal with this non-permit parking problem. That's what's needed here.

But RPP zoning doesn't solve the problem of non-permit cars owned by neighborhood residents; those cars don't leave the neighborhood, but are simply moved to whatever blocks remain unzoned. As the number of unzoned blocks shrinks, the concentration of these non-permit cars on the unzoned blocks increases. That's what's happened here.

A petition for RPP for this Park Road block was submitted to DDOT in September. It evidently is proceeding in the system, and I expect RPP zoning for this block very soon. Of course, other unzoned blocks are then likely to see more non-permit cars clogging up their blocks. In my opinion, RPP zoning should be neighborhood-wide, not block-by-block, as the Parking Task Force (on which I served) recommended in 2003. The District Council has ignored that recommendation.

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A particular problem on this block is **the crosswalk across Park Road at the Klinge/Walbridge intersection.** The geometry of this intersection makes that crosswalk hazardous, and the ANC has advised concrete curb extensions and elevated pavement to improve this crosswalk. But those will have to come next year.

One way to combat the early darkness of this time of year is with **porch lights.** A dark street is much enhanced by a string of well-lit front porches. A 60-watt-equivalent light using compact fluorescent technology will consume only 13 watts, while an LED equivalent will consume only 10. Such a light can be operated 24 hours a day for about a dollar per month.

A lit front porch gives the impression, of course, that somebody's home. A porch light that is kept on only when somebody's home is a cue, when the light is off, that nobody's home, inviting burglary. Better to leave that light on, all day.

The DPW **leaf collection** crews came through the neighborhood in early November. Their first pass is always too early in the season, as the leaves have only just begun to fall. They'll be back the week of December 17. By then, of course, the leaves will be soggy wet piles, hard to vacuum up. But this is the way leaf collection has always been scheduled here in Ward One.

The next meeting of the ANC will be on Tuesday, December 18, 7:00 pm, at the Mount Pleasant Library. This will also be a PSA 408 meeting.