

January report to constituents

Here is news of the **January 10 ANC meeting**, and notes of other events in the neighborhood.

This being the first meeting of the year, we elected officers (see box). I'm now the senior member of the Commission, having been a Commissioner for all of two years, and that seemed to be grounds for making me chairperson. This means only that I run, as best I can, our monthly meetings. It does not mean that I tell the ANC what to do. On the contrary, my task is to determine what the commissioners want, and obey that direction.

We had hoped to have a fifth Commissioner, Devenia Roberts, taking Will Grant's seat in 1D02. Unfortunately "Dee", who had run only as a spur-of-the-moment thing upon discovering that there was no candidate for 1D02, has decided that she cannot do her own job and perform her ANC duties adequately too. She did not appear at the January 2 swearing-in ceremonies, and did not appear at the monthly meeting. I believe that she is going to resign, but no letter of resignation has been received, so I cannot say when this seat will be officially declared vacant and available for a replacement.

Dominic Sale, elected to 1D06, had turned in his letter of resignation in November, setting into motion the procedures for the selection of a replacement. We should hear from the Board of Elections and Ethics in early February, advising us what individuals have been certified as candidates for this seat. If there is only one candidate, then that person is named to the seat at our February meeting. If there are two or more, then we must conduct a special election at our March meeting. (If we don't hear from the Board by February 1, then these dates get pushed on a month.)

We considered the matter of **reserved curbside parking spaces for Zipcar and Flexcar**. I said last month that I am opposed to this scheme. These companies can function adequately with parking spots on private property, and we have no curbside parking space to spare. Everyone knows how congested Mount Pleasant Street is, with trucks and shoppers double-parked. Taking away any metered spots, the ones intended for customers, will only make congestion worse, as well as taking away spots usable by residents for overnight parking.

However, other commissioners were unwilling to deny Zipcar and Flexcar totally, and the ANC passed a resolution specifying (1) no more than three spots, (2) a 15-month trial period only, (3) compensation to the neighborhood in the form of sidewalk-cleaning labor, and (4) no disabled-driver parking privileges. I suspect that Zipcar/Flexcar will decline those conditions.

I also perceive increasing resistance to this proposal in other parts of Ward One, as well as fierce resistance from our own business community, and I think this DDOT proposal will come to nothing.

There's a Zipcar parked now behind 1853 Lamont. We're happy to encourage such private rental of parking spots to these companies. This makes the car accessible,

ANC 1D03 NEWSLETTER #29

Jack McKay, January 25, 2005

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

ANC Officers for 2005:

Chair: Jack McKay
Vice Chair: Gregg Edwards
Secretary: Wayne Kahn
Treasurer: Rich Wysocki

It's January, the month of ice. Residents should know that they are responsible for **removing ice and snow from the sidewalks** in front of their homes. This means renters, not just owners: whoever is "in charge or control of any building . . . whether as owner, tenant, occupant, lessee, or otherwise" must clear away the snow "within the first 8 hours of daylight after the ceasing to fall of any snow or sleet" (DC Code § 9-601).

In mid-December, the MPNA announced that the ABC Board, after a "fact-finding" hearing on December 1, extended the **prohibition on sales of single containers of alcoholic beverages in Mount Pleasant** for another four years. This came as a great surprise to the ANC, which is supposed to be given 30-day advance notice of any such DC Government actions. (They hadn't told the MPNA about the hearings either, but the MPNA found out through other channels.)

Without judging the single-sales issue at all – we have not discussed it, and currently have no intention to – we object to being left out of any such decision. We are the elected representatives of the people of this neighborhood, and we insist on being consulted, and heard, prior to any such decision.

With ANC approval, I sent off a sharp letter to the ABC Board protesting their action, and calling on them to "rescind its action and reconsider it at a public hearing for which the proper, legally required, timely notification is given to all parties concerned".

Well, much to my surprise, they have agreed to do exactly that. A new hearing is set for March 2. We do not intend to contest the extension of the single-sales prohibition; we do insist on being included in the making of the decision.

<p>We now have our public address and audio recording system fully operational. The value of this is not only to help with the audibility of the ANC meetings, but to produce a high-grade audio record of each meeting. Those recordings are now available to anyone who wants to know what was said at a missed meeting, or who simply wants to check the details of a discussion. Anyone with a Windows PC (or anything else that plays MP3 CDs) can have their very own CD of the meeting audio, and listen to us talk.</p>	<p>“Gang attacks girl with machetes in Mt. Pleasant” is the scary headline to one report of an incident close to my home, on 19th Street near the Lamont intersection. This was portrayed further as a Latino gang initiation.</p> <p>But in fact, there was no machete, there was no Latino gang, and the incident, while no doubt frightening, was way short of a Mara Salvatrucha gang taking over the neighborhood. Inspector Groomes later posted this report: “At approximately 2130 hours [on January 11], police received a call to investigate trouble in the 3200 blk of 19th Street, upon Officer Quiles’ arrival he found a female victim bleeding from the facial area. She reported that three-four youths (and NOW we have info it was Black males NOT HISPANIC) approached her in black coats and struck her with a pole (NOT MACHETE)- they did not say anything or attempted to take anything from her for her neighbors heard her screams and they ran off.” The victim was not seriously hurt, and declined medical treatment.</p> <p>As I’ve noted before – in this neighborhood, people rush to the street at any cry for help. That’s our best defense against any such assault.</p> <p>I have observed, and removed, Latino gang graffiti from the mailbox and the stop sign at the intersection of Lamont and 19th (not to mention my garage door). We do have to worry about these gangs, and they are seriously troublesome around Mount Pleasant Street. But the incident of January 11 was merely some very badly behaved teenagers, not the much more serious problem of Latino gangs armed with deadly weapons.</p>
<p>An unhappy Monroe Street resident called to complain that I had arranged for his car, a relic Jaguar that he plans to restore, to be towed away as “abandoned”. No, I didn’t. I checked with the impound folks, and they said that this had been done at the instigation of “a concerned citizen”. The ANC reference on the tow papers is only to indicate location. No one on the ANC knew of this tow-away, and none of us had anything to do with bringing it about.</p>	
<p>Robberies are a never-ending problem here, adjacent to neighborhoods with large poverty populations. Recently a couple of teenagers with a gun appear have been “working” Mount Pleasant:</p> <p>1/17/2005 2200 Hours 3400 Block Brown St 1/18/2005 2200 Hours 1700 Block Kilbourne Pl 1/21/2005 2054 Hours 1700 Block Kenyon St “2 young B/M (14-16) approach citizens from behind - one pulls gun and they demand money and/or cell phones” – Inspector Groomes</p>	

provides a bit of income to the property owner, and doesn’t deprive anyone else of a parking space.

We passed a resolution calling for **the DC Water and Sewer Authority (WASA) to be put under the authority of the Public Service Commission**. The fiasco of lead in our drinking water illustrated the need for better oversight of WASA. A current issue is the mandate by the EPA to stop DC’s overflows of raw sewage into our streams and rivers, and PSC oversight will help make sure that the corrective measures chosen are the most suitable (I’ll have more on this complicated problem in a future newsletter).

The possibility of a special ANC election led us to pass two resolutions promoting giving legal residents the right to vote, even if they have not yet achieved U.S. citizenship. One resolution called on District Council to permit legal-resident noncitizens the right to vote in ANC elections. The second calls for a “symbolic vote” by Mount Pleasant noncitizen residents in the upcoming ANC special election. The ANC is already on the record in favor of local-election voting rights for legal-resident noncitizens. These actions propose that voting rights be conferred for the lowest scale of DC elections, namely for our own ANC.

Our monthly meetings **will henceforth be on the first Tuesday of the month, instead of the first Monday**. People seem to prefer a day not so close to the weekend, and the Monday meetings frequently collide with holidays. Radio CPR was kind enough to swap days with us. We also **moved the start time up to 7:00 pm**, so people can get home earlier.

A resident at 17th and Lamont complained **about late-night noise from Don Juan’s Restaurant**. Rather than calling in the authorities with a formal complaint, I spoke to the owner of Don Juan’s, Alberto Ferufino, and he immediately put a stop to the excessively loud music. The resident reports back that “the noise at Don Juan’s has subsided greatly. . . It is nice to again sleep soundly on Friday and Saturday nights. Please pass my thanks on to Alberto as well.” That’s how I like to handle neighborhood problems.

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The February 2005 ANC meeting will be on **Tuesday, February 1, 7:00 pm**, La Casa Community Center, 3166 Mount Pleasant Street. On the agenda: Open Resource Web site, Long Range Planning, ABRA hearing on single sales, Community Meetings, Specialty Forums, House numbers in alleys.