

Jack's June report

At the May meeting, the ANC did the following:

- Advised the Office of Planning to provide staff reports at least five days ahead of a corresponding zoning hearing;
- Advised ABRA to approve the request by Sportsman's Liquors for termination of its "voluntary agreement"; and
- Advised the BZA to approve a Special Exception for the Bancroft Elementary contractor, concerning the required setback for screens around rooftop mechanical equipment.

The construction of a new **Bancroft Elementary** facility continues, looking quite impressive now. The school complex includes five rooftop air conditioner units, enclosed by screens. Zoning regulations require that such rooftop systems be set back from roof edges by at least the height of the screen, presumably to minimize the visibility of these structures from the street.

Of the five Bancroft rooftop units, three could not be set back the required distance, so a "Special Exception" was required. Special exceptions are somewhat like zoning variances, but considerably less demanding, requiring in particular that the granting of the exception "not tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property".

Two of the three rooftop units are enclosed in the Bancroft complex, and won't be visible to any neighbors. One is right along the 3400 block of Mount Pleasant Street, so one has to ask, how might this rooftop unit, with an eight-foot-tall screen, set back "only" six feet four inches from the roof edge, affect the residents across the street from the school? In fact, it's hard to see how it could, and certainly there's nothing that would be gained by having it the regulation eight feet from the roof edge.

Above all, the Mount Pleasant Street residents want the job finished, so we'll have our school back, and they'll no longer be subject to incessant construction activity and noise. So the ANC readily passed my resolution advising that the Special Exception be granted "expeditiously".

Some years ago, so-called "**voluntary agreements**" were being imposed on all of our restaurants and shops offering alcoholic beverages. These VAs were tools for, among other things, banning live music in Mount Pleasant restaurants.

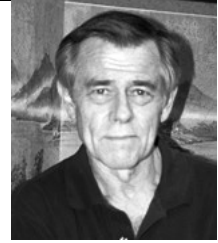
These "voluntary" agreements weren't at all voluntary. (The District ceased calling them "voluntary" some time ago, substituting the term "settlement agreements".) The restaurant or retailer in question needed a liquor license to operate, and so was under great pressure to sign such an agreement, while the proponents of the VA, having no financial stake in the matter, could wait forever.

Most of those VAs are gone, and the neighborhood is none the worse for it. The ANC endorsed, 5 to 0, my effort to terminate the Sportsman's Liquors VA, which consists of little more than an agreement to respect the liquor laws, and nuisance provisions such as this: "*The licensee . . . shall promote the positiveness of having reached this agreement and licensee's compliance thereto within the Mount Pleasant community*". Not only is the proprietor, Arun Mody, forced to sign this agreement, he's supposed to say that he likes it!

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Jack McKay, June 17, 2018

Jack McKay
3200 19th St, Tel. 462-8692
e-mail: jack@dcjack.org
<http://DCJack.org>



It's an election year, and this means that **all five of our ANC seats will be on the November ballot.** (Being nonpartisan, we're not involved in the primary election.) Yes, I plan to run for re-election, for what would be a ninth term; and I would be happy to see opposition again, as in 2016, to give voters a real choice.

Filing to be an ANC candidate on the November ballot requires obtaining 25 signatures on a petition. The petition forms will be available on July 9, and must be turned in by August 8. A map showing the boundaries of the five single-member districts can be found on our website: <http://anc1d.org/map/>.

The **crosswalk across Park Road just west of the Klingle/-Walbridge intersection** has been a trouble spot for years. The only time pedestrians have a "walk" at that crosswalk is when Park-to-Klingle traffic has a green, while a red arrow forbids the turn from Park to eastbound Park. Unfortunately, too many drivers think that the solid green overrules the red arrow, or maybe they're doing a "right on red", and never mind that "on green arrow only" sign. So they rush on through, at precisely the moment that pedestrians have the "walk" signal and are stepping out into that crosswalk.

I've been getting complaints about this crosswalk for years. One example: "rarely a week goes by when my wife or I don't personally witness someone that runs the red light going west on Park road while the pedestrians have the right of way in the crosswalk. This is in the few minutes a day we walk through that intersection, so I suspect it's rampant."

My ANC resolution of March 20 is an effort to enhance pedestrian safety at that location. A curb extension is requested, to enhance the visibility to drivers of pedestrians about to step into that crosswalk, and "elevation" of the crosswalk to enhance its visibility to drivers. We're pressing this matter independently of any measures concerning Park Road traffic, to avoid complicating, and delaying, the issue.

Some DDOT personnel visited the location on June 4, in conjunction with the Park Road traffic problem. (I wasn't there for that encounter, being in Pennsylvania at the time.) They raised concerns about the "elevated" crosswalk, complaining that drivers rounding that curve and hitting the elevation could fly out of control and crash into oncoming traffic. (How fast do they think drivers are going?) I object that what's being proposed is not a speed hump, but a slight elevation, like that across Park Road at 19th Street.

Okay, they viewed that, and objected, complaining that it must have been done by some contractor, DDOT couldn't have done such a nonstandard thing. Well, I point out that DDOT did bring about that slightly elevated crosswalk at 19th Street, on June 3, 2009. And there's no reason why they can't do a similar thing at the Klingle/Walbridge intersection. It would make that awkwardly located crosswalk more visible, and might therefore enhance pedestrian safety. No way is that little inch-high elevation going to cause any driver to lose control of his car and crash.

Another change I'm requesting is for the solid green light to be replaced with an arrow light, indicating that it's green for Park Road to Klingle, and Park Road to Walbridge, but not for Park Road to Park Road. It's the solid green that confuses some drivers.

A fight broke out on Irving Street on the evening of June 14 – two bands of youths having a dispute about something. One pulled a gun and four or five shots were fired, wounding a bystander caught in between the two groups. This is reminiscent of October 2003, when a teenager on a bicycle was shot dead on Irving at 16th (and a stray bullet went through the windshield of a #42 bus).

Young men have had manhood fights since forever. These petty disputes become lethal when guns are involved. Unfortunately, guns beget guns – as anyone worrying about such a confrontation gets his own gun, “just in case” his opponent shows up with one. Current politics makes effective gun control impossible, so the authorities have to do all they can to persuade these young men to settle their disputes without guns, before this vicious cycle begins.

There's an admirable effort here to have residents buy **mosquito traps**. This is surely a fine way to control the annoying little beasts, with no harm to the environment.

The “GAT” traps being purchased target our nasty little Asian Tiger mosquitoes, which are very aggressive, and active all day long, not just at dusk and dawn. These traps are similar to the Trap'N'Kill traps I recommended last year. (I've just put out five of those around my yard.) Both work on the principle of attracting females looking for a place to lay their eggs. (The “G” in GAT is for “gravid”.) This does mean that these traps capture only mosquitoes that have already bitten somebody.

Asian Tigers breed in natural “cups”, laying their eggs on the dry walls of natural cups, eggs which hatch when rain fills the cup with water. The other mosquitoes that bother us breed in stagnant water, a very different reproductive cycle. Thorough mosquito control requires dealing with both.

Besides putting out such traps, we've all got to be diligent about cleaning up after any rain, emptying any water-collecting containers, natural or artificial. Mosquitoes do not fly far from where they're hatched, so if you and your neighbors work at mosquito breeding reduction, you'll see fewer mosquitoes this summer.

Some years ago I happened to see a person **dumping a dog-poop bag into my Supercan**. I objected, insisting that she take her dog's doo to her own trash bin. There was, I thought,

something very un-neighborly about having dog excrement, however bagged in plastic, dumped into my Supercan.

Was I being unreasonable? There's been considerable on-line discussion of this behavior recently, and evidently many residents likewise object to their trash cans being used as public dog poop dumps. One resident noted that frequently the garbage collection crews “empty” our Supercans by merely lifting out the big bags, leaving everything else, so any dog poop in the Supercan is left there for another week.

DPW offers this explicit advice: *“Please be kind to your neighbors and avoid putting your bagged poop into a public litter can or your neighbor's trash container.”* In short, take it home to your own trash container.

Water those young trees! If you've got a sapling street tree in front of your house, it's up to you to keep it watered through the heat of midsummer. The District won't do it, and nature isn't dependable. So, especially if it's got an “alligator bag”, please, water it! I have seen too many young street trees die for lack of water, the adjacent resident apparently oblivious to the responsibility.

Many residents have complained that **the bike track on Klingle Road** has been rendered treacherous by leaves. CM Nadeau has persuaded DPW to take responsibility for clearing the bike track of leaves, once every two weeks. That bike track has proven very useful to bicyclists, runners, and dog walkers, for safe access to the Rock Creek Park bike path.

A Monroe Street resident is in **historic preservation hot water**, for replacement of a window without a permit. He reports that the window installer assured him that they had the permit – “it's back at the office” – but in fact they had not. This is not the first time I've seen a homeowner put in a bad situation by an irresponsible window contractor. We'll do what we can to resolve this situation.

Mount Desert Island Ice Cream, at 3110 Mount Pleasant Street, expects to open for business next week. We've offered encouragement to the people responsible for this new shop, though the ANC has no role to play in the matter.

The ANC is **not, as is sometimes thought, a neighborhood “government”**. We have no authority over any resident, nor any business, in Mount Pleasant. We are not elected to enforce DC government regulations. We're intended to be the voice of the neighborhood concerning proposed DC agency actions. District agencies are supposed to give us advance notice of their plans for Mount Pleasant, and we respond with “advice” about those plans.

Yes, we can also propose DC agency actions – see my efforts to enhance a crosswalk at Park Road/Walbridge/Klingle intersection – but that is a secondary role. Agency actions of any great substance (i.e., cost) have to come via the District Council. And if I get those improvements to the Park Road crosswalk, it will be due to support from Councilmember Nadeau's office. That's the way the system works.

The next meeting of the ANC will be on <u>Tuesday, June 26</u> , 7:00 pm, at the Mount Pleasant Library.
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