

Jack's November report

At the October meeting, the ANC did the following:

- Advised HPRB approval of an application for concrete pavers alongside a residence on 17th Street.

The resolution concerning “**pavers**” – concrete blocks, employed to “pave” a bit of yard along 17th Street, illustrates the complexities that residents, and the ANC, have to deal with. The HPRB was supposed to decide if the “pavers” were historically “compatible” or not. But the issue was confused by the area being “public space”, not within the property owner's lot (a very common situation in Mount Pleasant), with a whole set of legal restrictions having nothing to do with historic preservation. So, was the HPRB to judge the matter for historic compatibility, or public space compliance?

The HPRB was clearly confused, but decided in the end to reject the resident's permit application, despite the 5 to 0 vote by the ANC in support of the application.

November 6, was, of course, **Election Day**. This included the selection of ANC commissioners for the 2019-2020 session. The results (the incumbent underlined):

- 1D01: Jon Stewart, 730 votes (unopposed)
1D02: Robin Sandenburgh, 398 votes (Paul Karrer did not run)
1D03: Jack McKay, 517 votes; Leila Corcoran, 395
1D04: Yasmin Romero-Latin, 382 votes; Janina Olarte Quilacio, 153
1D05: Chelsea Allinger, 429 votes; Stuart Karaffa, 318

So in January we'll have two brand-new commissioners, Robin Sandenburgh, resident of Newton Street, and Chelsea Allinger, resident of Lamont. Yes, the women on this commission will outnumber us males. This won't be the first time for this ANC, as in 2011 we had four women, two men.

And **how did Mount Pleasant vote** in the Ward One and citywide elections? Adding precincts 39 and 40 (the latter including a portion of Columbia Heights):

- At-large Councilmember (two):
Elissa Silverman, 3057 votes
Anita Bonds, 2745
Donna Reeder, 768
David Schwartzman, 899
Ralph Chittams, 175
Rustin Lewis, 169

- Ward One Councilmember:
Brienne Nadeau, 3934 votes
Jamie Sycamore, 1005

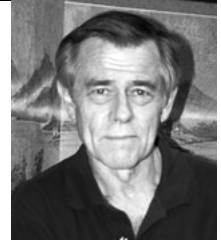
- Ward One member, State Board of Education:
Emily Gasoi, 2947 votes
Jason Andrian, 1165
Callie Koziak, 556

The October meeting of the ANC was also our **quarterly PSA 408 meeting**, and MPD Officer Orlando Torres engaged in a dialog with residents concerning two recent problems. One problem is the mentally ill Canadian fellow who camps out in the woods of Rock Creek Park, and makes his way daily to and from 14th Street, where he spends his days with

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Jack McKay, November 12, 2018

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his placards at the fountain at 14th and Kenyon. The man is troublesome, and occasionally violent. The advice from Officer Torres was for victims of violence to press charges. Other than that, there's not much that can be done about his behavior. The police are watching him closely, even following him as he walks through the neighborhood, ready to intervene if he causes trouble.

The matter of **gunshots on Lamont Street** in October received some attention. The police seem to know who the principal troublemakers are. I arranged for a presentation by the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, a recently formed agency assigned the task of identifying residents at risk of perpetrating, or being the victim of, violence, and persuading them to modify their lifestyles to avoid such problems. The goal is to *prevent* violence in neighborhoods before it happens. Deterrence with the threat of criminal punishment is not sufficient, for the youths who turn to guns.

This agency has been working as close to Mount Pleasant as Columbia Heights, as they naturally focus on neighborhoods afflicted with much more violence than ours.

Some years ago, before my block of 19th Street was zoned RPP (**Residential Permit Parking**), I recall seeing a young couple park their car, with non-DC tags, in front of my house, then walk up Lamont towards Mount Pleasant Street. Following them, I saw them disappear into a basement apartment on 17th Street – which was RPP-zoned. They evidently did not care to register their car in DC, and so could not get an RPP permit. So they parked on our unzoned block, and walked home.

That's all too common here. Transient residents keep their cars registered in their home states, and seek out unzoned blocks for parking. This is burdensome for the residents of those unzoned blocks, as their curbside parking is taken up by residents who live blocks away. As the number of unzoned blocks decreases, the congestion of such vehicles on those few remaining blocks increases. A problem that would be tolerable if spread uniformly around the neighborhood, becomes intolerable when concentrated on a few blocks.

Residents of unzoned blocks then get their blocks RPP-zoned in self defense, not to deal with a commuter parking problem, but to avoid having their blocks become crowded with cars that belong to neighborhood residents, but don't have DC tags.

This comes up now because the 2000 block of Park Road has petitioned for RPP, fearing that a loss of parking spaces, due to the proposed revisions to their block, will make overnight parking even more difficult than it is now.

But RPP is not intended to solve the non-DC-tag parking problem. It's intended only to prevent commuter parking in residential neighborhoods. Hence, there's a provision in the regulations requiring that, in order to qualify for RPP, parking on the block must be more than seventy percent occupied during the workday. Block residents asserted that that criterion was met, so I signed off on the petition, and I expect that the block will be RPP-zoned before long.

Of course, what we residents are mainly concerned about is parking at night, when we come home from work. Those resident-owned, non-RPP cars remain overnight, of course, so they're a worse problem for residents than is commuter parking. Commuter cars parked here during the day by nonresidents do go away at the end of the workday. Resident-owned, non-DC-tag cars don't.

A consequence of RPP expanded to this block is that those non-registered cars belonging to Mount Pleasant residents will be moved to nearby unzoned blocks, e.g., Pierce Mill Road and Walbridge Place. So perhaps those residents too will feel compelled to petition for RPP, not because they've got a commuter parking problem, but because they've got a nonregistered-car parking problem. Thus does the problem migrate further and further west in the neighborhood, as more blocks become RPP-zoned.

It would make sense for RPP zoning to be neighborhood-wide, rather than block by block. Way back in 2003, I participated in a DDOT Parking Task Force study which criticized the District's block-by-block zoning policy, which "was cited by the Taskforce as one of the major flaws in the current system. . . . If one lives in the area with the generally restrictive parking conditions, but does not live on an RPP block, one cannot get a parking sticker and is effectively treated in the same way as a visitor or commuter". But the District Council has done nothing with our advice.

There is, of course, an enforcement program aimed at **residents who fail to register their cars in the District** (required, within 30 days of becoming residents). The ROSA (Registration of Out of State Automobiles) officers patrol at night, looking for cars without DC tags, on the assumption that the owner of a car parked on the street late at night is sleeping nearby, and could be a scofflaw resident. But that program isn't terribly effective.

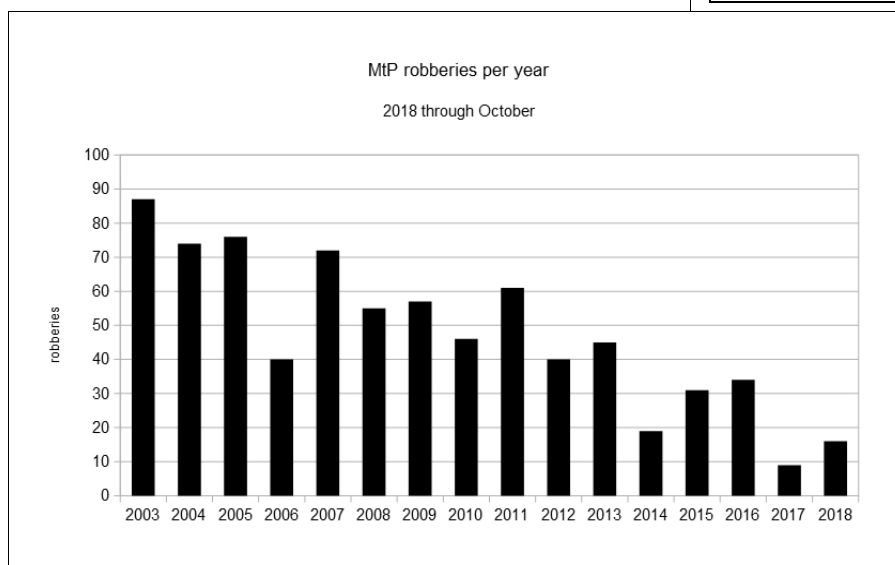
I mentioned last month that a Monroe Street resident was issued a "Notice of Violation" for **leaving her Supercan in the alley between collections**. In fact, several Monroe Street residents received such citation warnings. The problem is that on the far side of their alley is the very large parking pad built for the new Park Road condos. The alley is very narrow – 14 feet – and the Supercans in the alley make it still narrower, so it's hard for people to back their cars out of that parking pad.

That's a legitimate concern, certainly. But it's also a legitimate concern that, for these Monroe Street residents, like many others in Mount Pleasant, it's just not practical to haul those Supercans and recycling bins onto their own lots, due to the steep drop from their back yards to the alley. Furthermore, there's a general principle here: if any resident can be compelled to remove his Supercan from the alley between collections, despite the physical difficulty in doing so, then a whole lot of Mount Pleasant residents are going to have a problem.

I recommend a neighborly, live-and-let-live policy, here and on other alleys, and those of us who park cars in alleys simply cope with obstructions. We all get to be practiced at navigating tight spots in the city.

That said, perhaps there's a way to arrange the Supercans to minimize the difficulty caused to the residents with cars parked on that pad. I'm sure the Monroe Street neighbors would be happy to cooperate.

The next meetings of the ANC will be on Tuesday, November 13, and Tuesday, December 18, 7:00 pm, at the Mount Pleasant Library. Both these meetings are held a week earlier than the normal schedule, to avoid conflicts with holidays.



This is the inner city, and crime happens. But Mount Pleasant is definitely not a high-crime area, and the crime rates here have been decreasing in recent years. Especially striking is the decrease in robberies (the forcible taking of property from you, in person) over the past 15 years. The robbery count this year will be higher than last year, but last year was exceptional. This year's count is a continuation of the long-term trend.