

Jack's October report

At the September ANCID business meeting, the ANC did the following:

- Approved an expenditure of \$509 for the purchase of hand-washing sinks for Lamont Plaza;
- Approved an ANC budget for FY2021;
- Advised the Board of Zoning Adjustment to approve special exception relief for 3215 Mount Pleasant NW;
- Advised ABRA to renew the Class B Retail plus Grocery liquor license for Each Peach;
- Approved an expansion of the “streatery” in front of the Purple Patch Restaurant, at the expense of a few residential parking spots on Mount Pleasant Street;
- Asked DDOT to conduct a traffic safety assessment for the intersection of Klingle Road and Adams Mill Road, specifically the right turn for eastbound Klingle traffic.

The covid-19 pandemic continues to guide much of the ANC work. The handwashing sinks for Lamont Plaza are to encourage handwashing, as a virus control measure. The “streateries” on Mount Pleasant Street are to provide outdoor dining areas for our restaurants, now severely limited in indoor seating due to the pandemic. Our monthly meeting continues to be “remote”, held via Zoom, as we cannot have our conventional public meetings.

We are pleased to have been able to spend over \$40,000 in support of virus control measures, and in assistance to pandemic-harmed families, with more to come. The pandemic shows no sign of coming to an end, and the long-promised vaccine is not expected until sometime next year. The public health state of emergency, due to expire October 9, is sure to be extended to December 31. So our funds will continue to be employed to help the Mount Pleasant neighborhood deal with this catastrophe.

The ANC budget approved at the September meeting indicated that the commission should run a funding surplus of about \$10,000 a year. The District allots the commission about \$13,000 a year, of which we spend only about \$3,000, mostly for simultaneous-interpretation services at our monthly meetings. The commission has no office, so there's no office rent, and no employees, so there are no wages to be paid. Hence, our normal expenditures are quite modest.

Still, this is a small commission, just five commissioners, so our funding – proportional to the number of commissioners – is not a lot. The money spent this year to help the neighborhood deal with the pandemic amounts to about five years of accumulated surplus. The additional funds that will be spent during the coming months will amount to another four or five years of our accumulated surplus. In sum, a decade's worth of our surplus funds will, by early next year, have been spent on this crisis.

Klingle Road (the Mount Pleasant end of Porter Street) is a minor arterial connecting Mount Pleasant to Cleveland Park. Eastbound traffic encounters a peculiar traffic light at the Adams Mill intersection, where the light may be solid-green for traffic continuing on Klingle, while a red arrow prohibits the right turn onto Adams Mill Road.

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Jack McKay, October 11, 2020

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



There is a sign there stating “right turn on green arrow only”, an instruction which seems to be too complicated for some motorists, who insist on doing a “right turn on red” against that red arrow.

That's a hazard to pedestrians attempting to cross Adams Mill Road on foot, of course. We've received complaints about that situation. Hence, the request by the ANC to DDOT to look into this intersection.

I think a “no right turn on red arrow” sign would be more easily understood, and more effective. We'll see what DDOT recommends.

The “**special exception**” for 3215 Mount Pleasant Street has to do with the conversion of that site – currently a laundromat – to combined residential and retail. The ANC thinks this development of the site is, overall, a benefit to the neighborhood, and endorsed the application for “special exceptions”, allowing a top floor to be added without setback from the building front, and deleting the zoning requirement for a couple of off-street parking spaces.

On Sunday, November 1, we go off **Daylight Saving Time** and onto EST. Immediately after that date, sunset will come a few minutes after 5 pm. Having the evening rush hour in darkness leads to an immediate increase in the number of pedestrian fatalities, for the obvious reason.

It's advisable for all of us, if we're walking anywhere after dark, to enhance our nighttime visibility. The style of winter clothing is, unfortunately, to favor dark colors. So the pedestrian fatality rate goes up, every fall, as soon as we go off DST, simply because drivers fail to see pedestrians in the dark. Don't be part of that – look for light-colored winter clothing, especially for your children. Even better, there are small, bright LED lamps that can be clipped to clothing, providing excellent visibility in the dark.

There's a very convenient **drop box for election ballots** at the Mount Pleasant Library. Given the coronavirus pandemic, voting absentee is an attractive alternative to in-person voting. Every registered voter has been mailed a ballot, so it's now a simple matter of filling it out, repackaging it according to the (slightly confusing) instructions, and dropping it off at the Library. (Do NOT tape the envelopes shut. Some residents have been doing that, thinking the adhesive wasn't adequate. This causes serious problems at the Board of Elections.)

There is a signature confirmation procedure to confirm that the sender is indeed the named registered voter. I asked about the signature comparison process – our signatures change

over the years, will a ballot be rejected because a signature doesn't match the signature on file, obtained years ago? Director Alice Miller replies "If there is a question about a signature not matching it will be reviewed a second time on a senior level, and finally should there still be a question we will reach out to the voter and request a signature to be provided, on a prepared "cure" letter with a signature line."

Voters can check on-line (dcboe.org) to confirm that their ballot has been received.

There was a **truly horrific incident on 18th Street**, just south of Newton, on September 15. A DoorDash driver double-parked on 18th to make a delivery, not noticing that he was being followed by a car carrying youths intent on stealing his car. He left his car running, and right after he stepped out to drop off his delivery, a youth got out of the other car and into his car, about to drive away. The DoorDash driver, seeing what was happening, leapt onto the side of his car – the driver's side window was open, I think – and wrestled with the thief for control. The fight caused the car to leave the road, knocking down a no-parking signpost, crossing the sidewalk and crashing into a masonry wall. This caused the driver to fall to the ground, seriously injured.

This was all bad enough, but the thief then committed a truly terrible crime: in his hurry to escape, he *drove directly up the sidewalk*, towards Newton Street. There were three people on the sidewalk, a Mount Pleasant nanny, and her two charges, a seven-year-old boy and, in a stroller, a two-year-old girl. This cretinous car thief crashed right into them – and kept going, leaving them on the sidewalk, seriously injured.

At Newton Street, still on the sidewalk, the car grazed a tree, and then hit the masonry wall lining the sidewalk, causing so much damage to the car that it came to a stop, across the Newton Street intersection, next to a fire hydrant.

The thief then jumped from the car and ran away. Surveillance cameras caught some photos of him, on Newton Street, and on 19th, but no one has, to my knowledge, called the MPD with a recognition. This sort of crime leaves few clues, so I doubt that this despicable youth will ever be found.

Behind him, the three pedestrians lay injured. The little girl was the least seriously injured, and was sent home after treatment at a hospital. The boy suffered, I believe, a broken pelvis, and remains in the hospital. The nanny – I remember her well, from the days when my Canela was a little girl on Monroe Street, going to school at Bancroft – suffered multiple broken bones. The DoorDash driver also suffered serious injuries. Both will be out of work for half a year.

GoFundMe pages have been set up for both of the adult victims. The site for the nanny, Marina Fuentes, has raised over \$30,000, while the site for the driver, Denis Miranda, is close to \$20,000. That will help, I'm sure, but both these people will still be facing some hard times.

There was some mention of this as a traffic "accident", suggesting that it could have been prevented with, say, speed humps on 18th. But plainly this was not an accident; it was a crime, beginning with the attempted theft of a stationary car. Measures to control traffic speed in that area, adjacent to

Bancroft Elementary, may be warranted, but would not have prevented this terrible incident.

The **Brown Street Market** (now the Pan-Am Fresh Supermarket, but everybody knows it by the old name) finally opened, in early September, and was promptly hit with a smash-and-grab theft, on September 25. As happens so often with thefts from auto, the thieves caused more financial damage in the break-in, busting through a plate-glass window, than they got in stolen goods – "cigarettes and lighters".

I am told that the broken window will be covered by insurance. Still, this is an awful welcome to this little shop. Nearby residents should please patronize the shop. Besides a variety of retail goods, the shop offers carry-out Indian and Ethiopian food.

The infernal **coronavirus pandemic** continues, disrupting all our lives. The District is actually doing quite well in controlling the plague, in comparison to the rest of the country. Until very recently, the daily count of test positives in DC has been just above 5 per 100,000 residents. The national average is about 17, and in Wisconsin, the current "hot spot" state, the count is over 100 per 100,000 residents.

Lately the count has been increasing in the northeast, as close to DC as Pennsylvania and Delaware, and the count here has increased sharply as well, to 9 per 100,000 residents. The next phase of relaxation of the pandemic mitigation efforts requires that this count be below 5 per 100,000. There's no indication at this time that we'll get there anytime soon.

It must be noted that the recent outbreak of infections in the White House is not included in the DC test-positive count. The White House is not sharing its test results with the District. Why do I find that unsurprising?

There are two **permit applications for garages with roll-up steel doors**. The Historic Preservation Office (HPO) has sent those to the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) for evaluation. I believe this is a request by the HPO staff for guidance in the judgment of the historic district compatibility of such garage doors.

I looked around and found numerous such doors already in place. Does that make them "compatible"? No, it does not. Yes, I favor allowing such doors, historically correct or not.

Fall leaf collection will begin soon, the first collection here to begin the week of November 9. There's been one very important change to the procedure: "Residents that receive trash and recycling services in households serviced by DPW must bag their leaves in paper bags." Not loose, piled in the treebox space, as was required in past years; and definitely not plastic. DPW will provide residents with 20 paper bags, free, shortly before that first collection.

The October meeting of the ANC will take place at 7 pm, October 20. Due to the ban on gatherings of more than 50 persons, and the closing of the Library meeting room, it will have to be a "virtual" meeting, accessible via the internet, using Zoom software. See the ANC1D website, anc1d.org, for details.