

## Jack's September report

At the July ANC1D business meeting (there was no meeting in August) the ANC did the following:

- Approved an emergency grant of \$15,000 to the Food For All DC organization, to provide food for Mount Pleasant residents who cannot, because of the coronavirus pandemic, afford to feed their families;
- Agreed to ask DDOT to consider speed humps for Newton Street (in front of Bancroft), and for Ingleside Terrace;
- Advised the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) concerning the development on Oakwood Terrace;
- Advised the Deputy Mayor for Education, and other DC school officials, concerning school activities during the pandemic state of emergency;
- Authorized up to \$3000 of ANC funds for tables, chairs, string lights, and sanitizing items to enable use of Lamont Plaza for outdoor dining during the warm months.

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The Covid-19 state of emergency in the District continues, and consequently the ANC cannot hold its usual public meeting at the Mount Pleasant Library. As has been the case since April, the July meeting was, and the September meeting will be, **held on the internet, employing Zoom technology.**

This has actually worked out well, allowing commissioners, speakers, and residents to participate from home, without having to go to and from the Library for the meeting. Numerous residents generally “attend”, and can of course come and go as they please. Residents have commented that it's very convenient for them to log into the meeting as suits them, without having to go to the Library.

I expect the DC state of emergency to be extended, for many months to come, and our ANC meetings will continue to be held via the internet. Instructions for accessing the ANC meeting via the internet will be posted on the ANC1D website, <http://anc1d.org/>.

The current shift of public schools to online teaching, compelled by the Covid-19 pandemic, has made obvious the need for good internet access for all residents. We ponder what the ANC could do to facilitate that.

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A neighbor called with a problem: a homeless woman taking up residence in his back yard. He doesn't want her there, certainly, but he doesn't want to cause her great difficulty, either. I think we've all learned in recent months that the police are not very good at handling such situations, especially if the person involved is mentally troubled.

There is a DC body suitable for dealing with such problems: the **Department of Behavioral Health Community Response Team**. From their website: “The DBH Community Response Team (CRT) is a 24-7 multidisciplinary direct service team that expands our community based direct service efforts—including homeless outreach, mobile crisis, and pre-arrest diversion. Our [team] supports adults who are experiencing emotional, psychiatric or substance use vulnerabilities to promote service engagement and overall behavioral health and wellness.”

## ANC 1D03 NEWSLETTER #206

Jack McKay, September 14, 2020

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So, if you should encounter such a troublesome situation, these are the people to call, at 202-673-6495.

There's a patch of dirt between the sidewalk and the curb, where street trees may be planted, hence the name “treebox” for this space. A neighbor complained that a treebox near his house has been permitted to grow a batch of big, ugly, waist-high weeds, and hoped that the ANC would know what to do about it.

Well, whose responsibility is it to **keep a treebox space from becoming such a weed patch**? In fact, it's ours. It's city property, certainly. But the city does not provide maintenance for these treebox spaces, and instead assigns the abutting property owner, or occupant, the responsibility. Here's the law:

*DCMR 21,702.2 Each owner, tenant, or lessee (or the agent of that person) who has control of or occupies any building that contains three (3) or fewer dwelling units within the District shall maintain in clean condition the public space between the curb line (or lateral lines of the roadway) and the property line of that building.*

“In clean condition” implies “no weed overgrowth”. If you've got a weed-choked treebox space, well, please deal with it. The city isn't going to do it. I find that I have to take a weed-whacker to my treebox space a few times each summer.

What about buildings with more than three units? The above text applies, with the addition “*extending eighteen inches (18 in.) from the curb line (or the lateral lines of the roadway) into the abutting roadway*”. Yes, keeping the gutter clear of trash is up to the adjacent apartment and condo residents.

Residents are welcome, of course, to improve their treebox spaces with garden vegetation, but no taller than 18 inches. Treeboxes can be fenced, too, but not on the street side, and no more than 12 inches tall.

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The ANC is concerned about a report that, upon arresting a man in front of the Mount Pleasant Library, **the MPD notified immigration – ICE – of the arrest**, and the man is now being held for deportation.

The DC police are not supposed to do that. In order that undocumented immigrants, and families with undocumented immigrants, can cooperate with the police without fearing exposure to ICE, the MPD is prohibited from any such collaboration with ICE.

We're looking into this matter. The immigrant community, documented and not, has to be confident that they, or their family members, will not be turned over to immigration by

the Metropolitan Police. This is explicit MPD policy, so we want to know what happened with this individual at the Library.

**When will this miserable coronavirus pandemic, and the DC state of emergency, end?** I've been keeping close track of the daily count of covid-test positives, hoping to see a decline to "safe" levels. Well, there's no hint of that yet.

A good indicator of the state of the pandemic is the ratio of daily test positives to the population. The levels, in terms of daily cases per 100,000 population, are:

- (1) Unchecked community spread: more than 25.
- (2) Escalating community spread: 10 to 24.
- (3) Potential community spread: 1 to 9.
- (4) Close to containment: less than 1.

OK, where's DC? Right now, it's about 6 per day per 100,000 population, and decreasing, but very slowly. It's been worse – as high as 27 – but it's not yet "close to containment".

It's clear from the chart below that the lockdown imposed in April knocked the infection spread way down, below 5 by mid-June. On June 22 the District relaxed the isolation measures, allowing some social interaction, and the spreading rate promptly increased to about 10. Since July the rate has been slowly declining, perhaps due to more people accepting the need for masks and "social distancing".

The District does plan a further relaxation of the pandemic restrictions, needing mainly a steady decline in the daily infection test rate. I anticipate that this will be coming before long, and we could then see another increase, as happened after the June 22 relaxation. There's simply a cost associated with any loosening of the pandemic mitigation measures.

So, when might we see a rate as low as one per 100K population per day? That is, I'm afraid, many months from now. I hate the many inconveniences imposed on us to control the spread of the virus. But this is the way we're going to be living for a long time to come.

The daily infection rate in Toronto, Canada, for comparison, amounts to a little over 1 per 100,000 population. Canada is succeeding with containment, whereas we are not, an

indication of how badly the US has done, compared to our northern neighbor.

Ordinarily we visit Canada a few times every summer. Well, not this summer! The border's been closed to Americans since March, and there's no hint that it's going to be opened anytime soon.

The ANC has a modest yearly funds surplus, about \$7000 a year, after paying our regular expenses. We've had great difficulty finding ways to put this surplus to work for the neighborhood because of the very stringent legal restrictions on the use of ANC funds. So our bank account has grown over the years to over \$100,000.

That accumulation of cash has now been put to good use. The District Council passed emergency legislation allowing ANC's to use their funds for buying food, something that was, until this emergency step, prohibited. In June and July the ANC provided Catholic Charities with \$10,000, and Food for All DC with \$15,000, in support of their food handouts.

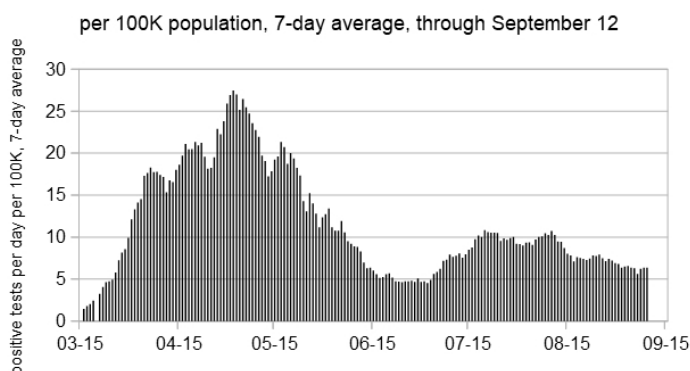
The ANC has also spent about \$29,000 for face masks and hand sanitizer, for free distribution by neighborhood organizations. Thus we've **spent about \$54,000 of our savings to help needy Mount Pleasant families** deal with the Covid-19 crisis.

It's fortunate that the ANC had accumulated so much unspent cash over the years. Had we not done that, we would not have been able to provide nearly so much financial assistance now to families facing great hardships due to the pandemic's financial devastation.

Commissioners Chelsea Allinger and Robin Sandenburgh deserve the credit for this extraordinary and outstanding use of our ANC funds.

The 2020 election is imminent; the DC Board of Elections will be mailing ballots to all registered voters in early October. **All five ANC seats are on the ballot**, and it happens that there is, at this time, only one candidate for each position. Yes, I'm on the ballot for another two-year term. So are incumbents Chelsea Allinger and Robin Sandenburgh. Two of the five commissioners, Jon Stewart (1D01) and Yasmin Romero-Latin (1D04), chose not to run for reelection. Jason Hamacher is on the ballot for 1D01, and Matthew Brandenburg is on the ballot for 1D04.

DC test positives



**The September meeting of the ANC will take place at 7 pm, September 22. 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.**