

## May report to constituents

Here is news of the May Advisory Neighborhood Commission meeting, what we plan for the June meeting, and notes about other events in our part of Mount Pleasant.

## ANC 1D03 NEWSLETTER

Jack McKay, May 23, 2003

### **Highlights of the May ANC meeting**

**Katie Palm**, of the U.S. Botanic Gardens, described the garden project now under way at Bancroft Elementary. The pavement has been torn up, and the area between 18th Street and the playground, and between the playground and the teachers' parking lot, will become garden. This should greatly enhance the appearance of our excellent neighborhood school.

**Iris Rothman** brought us up to date on her PlayStart project, to provide a playground for the Head Start and kindergarten kids at Bancroft. This has been a horrendously challenging task, because of the numerous District and Federal agencies that have to be satisfied. Storm water runoff has been a troublesome issue, because of the proximity of Rock Creek Park. Meeting all safety requirements has been challenging. The "fire truck" that the kids wanted, and which has been very popular at the Walter Peirce playground, became acceptable only after the manufacturer agreed to modify the design. This project will succeed only due to Iris Rothman's bulldog tenacity.

The playground should be in operation in October. By that time my little girl at Bancroft will be a 6-year-old first-grader, and will probably have outgrown the PlayStart playground. Oh well.

**Len Sullivan**, of NARPAC, provided a thought-provoking discussion of the fiscal realities of inner-city District communities, such as ours. He noted that the large population of poor people in this area (Cluster 2, including Columbia Heights and Park View) caused it to be a net drain on District funds, and that achieving fiscal solvency would require the growth of neighborhood businesses, which produce much District income while consuming relatively few resources.

**Patricia Bitondo** described the Babe Ruth Baseball League, for boys and girls aged 6 to 12. The league has 700 kids on 34 teams, including the Sacred Heart Angels from Mount Pleasant.

Pertinent to the discussion last month of the need for recreational areas for Mount Pleasant youth, it was noted that the Bancroft basketball court may be turned into a soccer field, in which case it would also be useable also by the Babe Ruth League for T-ball. Given the rapidly changing demographics of Mount Pleasant, this transition from basketball to soccer and baseball seems to me to be appropriate. The Bell-Lincoln basketball courts will remain available, and our mid-teens and older young people, the ones who currently use the Bancroft basketball court, can be encouraged to go there.

The **Mount Pleasant Festival** is set for June 1. The ANC offered a formal endorsement of this event, and agreed to pay for an ANC booth at the Festival.

There will be changes made to the boundaries of the District's **Police Service Areas (PSAs)**. The PSAs are intended to promote "community policing", that is, areas small enough that the officers come to know the community well, and the people of the community come to

### **Street lights**

Whole blocks of Mount Pleasant street lights were out in early May, and again last week. This happens because our lights are on an obsolete series-wired circuit. A circuit failure on Brown Street takes out lights blocks away, on Lamont, Kilbourne, 19th, and even as far as Hobart Street.

This wiring is supposed to be changed, so that such a local fault will not black out blocks of street lights. DDOT claims that this work should start by midsummer. We're going to pressure them to make this happen, and put a stop to these wide-area blackouts.

### **Klinge Road**

Councilmember Linda Cropp succeeded in making the Klinge Road issue a line item in the District budget bill, thus becoming impossible for Mayor Williams to veto. By a vote of 8 to 5, City Council approved this tactic. The Mayor says that he won't simply decline to act on the appropriation, but it remains to be seen how energetically DDOT will push the Klinge Road project. The National Park Service remains firmly opposed to the rebuilding of the road, refusing to permit the use of federal parkland, "either temporarily or permanently" (A. Coleman, Park Superintendent, March 2003).

In my opinion, this City Council measure will lead only to years more of stalemate and paralysis, the roadway useless for virtually any activity, and continuing to deteriorate.

**Bill Panici** described his project to inject the elms of Adams Mill with a fungicide to protect them against Dutch Elm Disease. That's an admirable project, to which I have contributed personally, and I trust that he will obtain the \$4400 he needs.

The ANC offered a grant of \$500 to support this project. I worry only that we are favoring one part of Mount Pleasant and neglecting elms elsewhere in the neighborhood. In addition to street trees, we have numbers of sizable elms scattered about the neighborhood, and the ANC should be treating all parts of the neighborhood equally. I know of no accounting of Mount Pleasant elms other than the street trees. How many other large elms in the neighborhood need the fungicide treatment?

#### PSA meetings

The monthly Police Service Area meetings are your chance to talk over neighborhood problems with your neighborhood police. The idea is to arrive at ways for us to work together to solve neighborhood problems. Our PSA meetings are on the first Wednesday of every month, at 7 pm, in the Mount Pleasant library basement. Come to the June 4 meeting and meet our new Lieutenant, Brian Grogan, who is trying very hard to make this "community policing" concept work.

The **Mount Pleasant Farmers' Market** opens this Saturday, May 31, at Lamont and Mount Pleasant Streets, 8 a.m. until noon. We hope that this local-foods market will attract people to the Mount Pleasant Street business district, people who don't ordinarily spend time there, to discover for themselves how much the area has improved.

know their officers well. The officers thus can spot suspicious deviations from normal activity, and the people can inform the police of developing problems. It has become clear, however, that there are too many PSAs (83), and a more practical system will divide the District into a smaller number of larger PSAs.

Commissioner Grant proposed a resolution objecting to any proposed changes in Mount Pleasant's PSA (Police Service Area) boundaries, in particular the suggestion that Mount Pleasant might be merged into a Columbia Heights PSA. I objected to the resolution because it suggested that we want to keep our assigned officers here, even if at the expense of more serious crime in Columbia Heights. Mr Grant agreed to withdraw the resolution for rephrasing.

In fact, **the proposed new PSA boundaries leave Mount Pleasant intact**, so the matter is moot.

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

#### Rock Creek Park, and Beach Drive closing

The National Park Service is developing General Management Plans for Rock Creek Park. The principal effect on us is the proposed changes to traffic management on Rock Creek Parkway and Beach Drive. Nobody ever intended Beach Drive to be a commuter highway, and the NPS insists on considering Rock Creek Park to be parkland, for enjoyment and recreation, not merely to be the host for an automobile thoroughfare.

Public comment is being sought on four management options:

- (A) Improved Management: encourage lower traffic speeds, implement HOV-2 during rush hour, upgrade bike trail and improve Beach Drive intersection
- (B) No Action: continue operations as at present (an option required by law)
- (C) Recreation Emphasis: close Beach Drive north of Broad Branch to automobiles, end rush-hour traffic reversals on Rock Creek Parkway (this option is not to be taken seriously)
- (D) Recreation Enhancement: close Beach Drive north of Broad Branch to automobiles between rush hours, encourage lower speeds and fewer non-recreational vehicles.

The NPS is worrying that traffic on Beach Drive, already some 9000 vehicles per day, may double by 2020, resulting in a "park" that is an all-day, bumper-to-bumper traffic jam. They favor option (D), promoting recreational uses over midday automobile use, while conceding the use of Beach Drive as a heavily trafficked commuter route.

What do you think? Let me know.

#### Tentative agenda for the June 2 ANC meeting

- 7:30 Call to order
- 7:45 Treasurer's report
- 8:00 Guest presentations:
  - Herbert Estes, Lamont Street Youth Home
  - Ken Setter, Shaw II Residence
  - Marsha Boveja, Plans for the Rosemount Center
  - Andrea Broaddus, Rabaut ("Pigeon") Park
- 9:00 Community Forum
- 9:30 Committee reports
- 10:15 Unfinished business: ANC budget, PSA changes
- 10:30 New business: Rosemount Center (expansion), Mount Pleasant Main Street (ANC appointments), street light outages, Rock Creek Park Management Plans (Beach Drive closing)
- 11:00 Adjournment