

## January report to constituents

Here is news of the **January 8 and 22 meetings**, and other happenings in Mount Pleasant. The ANC:

- Confirmed Oliver Tunda to fill the vacancy in 1D02;
- Elected officers for 2008;
- Agreed that no ANC “voluntary agreement” (VA) would be forced on any unwilling restaurant owner;
- Called on all Mount Pleasant groups with VAs, existing or proposed, to publish the contents of those VAs for all to see;
- Advised the ABC Board to permit termination of all VAs entered into before 2007, and to replace those VAs with agreements revised to reflect present conditions in Mount Pleasant;
- Advised the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) to widen narrow sidewalks to wheelchair width, wherever feasible;
- Advised DDOT to use permeable pavement or pavers in newly rebuilt sidewalks, for the benefit of the environment and our street trees;
- Advised the Historic Preservation Review Board to approve permits for 1709 and 1714 Irving Street.

ANC officers for 2008: “Stormy” Scott, chair; Gregg Edwards, vice-chair; Jane Zara, treasurer; and me, secretary. Stormy promises to run our meetings with a tight hand.

The ANC voted to “**withdraw any ANC1D protest** of any Mt Pleasant liquor license application, liquor license renewal or entertainment endorsement if the business owner does not voluntarily accept the Voluntary Agreement.” I voted “no”, because the essence of these agreements is for residents to put limits on restaurants to minimize problems, and no business is going to sign up to any such agreement if he doesn't have to. Current practice is to call these agreements “Cooperative Agreements”, not “Voluntary Agreements”, because everyone knows that they're not the least bit “voluntary”. What's in it for the business owner? But the resolution passed, three votes to two, so that's that. I confirmed that Joe Corado (Corado's Guatemalan Restaurant) wanted our protest withdrawn, and I'm happy to take care of that.

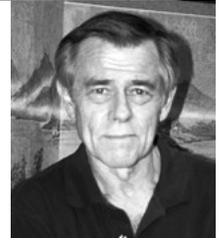
The ANC protests have, curiously, brought about benefits for our restaurants. The MPNA is now attempting to portray itself as the friend of Mount Pleasant businesses, versus that nasty old ANC, and so has been willing to relax some of the restrictions of their VAs. Tonic now has permission to offer live music, Marx will offer weekly live music, and Joe Corado is no longer required by his VA to try to sell his restaurant to an alcohol-free business (an outrageous demand of the MPNA, greatly reducing the value of his restaurant). I am pleased that the MPNA has finally been forced to relax, even if just a bit, its grip on Mount Pleasant restaurants.

The MPNA Board crowed triumphantly over the ANC “voluntary voluntary agreements” resolution, issuing a statement on January 15 agreeing with the proposition that “Voluntary Agreements between business owners and

## ANC 1D03 NEWSLETTER #65

Jack McKay, January 28, 2008

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neighborhood residents and groups should truly be voluntary”. Hey, does that mean that any restaurant that wants his MPNA VA terminated will be released by the MPNA? Nope, no way.

The MPNA press release said that “When Ward 1 Councilmember Jim Graham heard, he, too expressed his support with the ANC’s decision to drop the protest”. Mr. Graham objected, writing “I never made this statement and I would appreciate that it not be used.” The MPNA promised a retraction, but none has yet appeared.

I've long fought for permission for residents to **park as close as 25 feet from an intersection**, versus the 40 feet required by DC law (and where the signposts are put). Now the law says that we can, but our MPD officers and Parking Enforcement aides have difficulty understanding that cars can be parked beyond a “no parking” sign, yet be legally parked. So we get tickets for perfectly legal parking.

Fighting such a bogus ticket may take months. I promptly sent in my denial, and explanation, after such a ticket last August. Here it is almost half a year later, and there's no reply. My complaints about this “black hole” for parking ticket denials got Councilmember Graham's attention, and the topic of lengthy delays for resolution of our parking-ticket denials will come up at his DMV oversight hearings on February 26. If you have such a story, please send it to Mr Graham (or to me, and I'll pass it on).

On the evening of January 18, residents were startled by the sight of **heavily armed police blocking Park Road and battering their way through the front door of a residence**. Lt. Vines confirms that this was a drug raid. Cmdr McCoy provided this account:

“At about 7:10 PM on January 19 (sic), 2008 the Fourth District Auto Theft Unit executed a search warrant at 1818 Park Rd., NW. As a result of the search, a black High Point .9mm semi-automatic handgun model-C9, serial number obliterated, with nine rounds of ammunition was recovered.

“This search warrant was obtained as a result of an earlier traffic stop in the Fourth District which resulted in the seizure of drugs from a vehicle. An arrest is pending in the reference to the gun recovery.”

**Oliver Tunda, our newest commissioner**, is a resident of the Woodner (as was his predecessor, Joe Esparza). Oliver, a Sudanese refugee, roamed through the Central African Republic, Cameroon, Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Liberia, seeking refuge. In 1995 he came to the

U.S., and achieved citizenship in 2001. Oliver knows something about the hardships faced by refugees and immigrants.

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Well-known Park Road resident **Jim Barnett** died on January 3, the victim of an automobile accident on I-95 in Maryland. He was a vigorous 75, and his sudden loss is a shock. I'm sure this is dreadfully hard on his family, and I wish I had words that could help. But all I can think of is, how terribly sad.

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I, and this ANC, have long insisted on **police foot patrols for Mount Pleasant Street** and nearby. This is not to prevent crime – patrol officers do not prevent burglaries and robberies, whether on foot or in cars – but to reduce the disorderly conduct that can seriously degrade the quality of life in the city. Barbara Cameron, proprietor of Boveda, reports on one such case:

“There was a flasher on Mt Pleasant Street recently. He would zip down his pants, take his private parts out and walk up behind unsuspecting women. This was in broad daylight. It went on all day long.

“The [MPD] response time was 3 hours. When a police officer came, he was in a car, did not enter the establishment that initiated the call to ask details, and drove around a four block radius once, at a speed that did not allow anyone to even get his attention. The man remained on the street for the rest of the day going through the same exercise.

“The next day the same perp, (or should i say perv) was on the street doing the same thing. Officer Reginald Henderson, a foot patrol officer who had been off duty the day before, was told where the guy was. Henderson immediately confronted the man, contacted a squad patrol, instructed them to take the man home, and had them instruct the people whose care the man is in, to watch him and get help for him. He told them he does not want to see him on the street doing what he was doing again.

“That was two months ago; *we have not seen the man since.*”

Now that's why we want foot patrol officers! They know the people on the street, and they know how to deal with such problems resourcefully and effectively, without an unthinking “arrest” which just puts the perpetrator back on the street in a few hours. Kudos to Officer Reggie, whom you will frequently see cruising the neighborhood on his Segway.

Our Police Service Area (PSA) has been working out of the Park Road substation, along with Columbia Heights (PSA 302). Because our problems seem to be similar to those occurring in Adams Morgan (PSA 303), our PSA is now working out of the main police station at 17th and V, in hopes of improved communication and collaboration. This will not, we are told, change any of our neighborhood patrol officers.

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**The new Target in Columbia Heights** will open on March 9. Perhaps this will end those awful traffic jams on Irving Street at 14th, where construction equipment has blocked traffic lanes for many months.

There's worry that there will be heavy traffic from west of Rock Creek Park across Mount Pleasant to the new Target. I think not; few west-of-the-Park residents are willing to go to Columbia Heights for anything. They'll prefer to drive out to

suburban shopping areas. DDOT's projections of traffic increases through Mount Pleasant due to the Columbia Heights developments are modest. I believe that Council-member Graham is realizing that there's no need for major changes to Mount Pleasant traffic patterns to handle this additional traffic.

The **Mount Pleasant Traffic Study** proceeds at a glacial pace. I understand that the third and final community meeting, at which the contractor and DDOT will actually present recommendations, may take place in late February. No, I haven't any idea what they're going to recommend.

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Thanks to Tony Grillo, Lina Bahn, and Jeff Logan, for helping in the **beer-can cleanup** behind Bancroft Elementary on December 31. We hauled away 22 pounds of cans and bottles, which I'm gradually putting in my recycling bin. The collection crew must think that I'm having titanic parties.

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On December 20, the **Historic Preservation Review Board** (HPRB) considered the plans for the addition of a third floor to 1823 Newton, which is being converted into condos. The ANC (at my request) supported the developer's plans for this top floor to be set back by 10 feet, as the developer wanted, versus the 30 feet specified by Historic to keep this top floor invisible from the street. Historic Mount Pleasant also supported the smaller setback, with recommendations for the design so that what was visible would look good. The HPRB ignored both of us and insisted not only on the 30-foot setback, but that any terrace be such that furniture and plants on that terrace would never be visible from the street, as if the sight of a potted plant from the sidewalk would grievously harm our precious “historic” architecture.

The developer is exploring ways to make the five-car garage behind the building large enough to handle eight or ten cars, at my request. The last thing Newton Street needs is more cars parked on the street.

The same developer is working on 1663 Newton Street (at the corner of 17th). This building was a neighborhood nuisance when it stood empty and was targeted by vagrants, and it's a relief to see it being remodeled and prepared for occupancy. Behind the building is – was -- a shabby little masonry garage. The developer reports that a DCRA inspector ordered them “to take down the garage because it was a safety hazard”, which they did. Then Historic showed up and hit them with a “Stop Work” order, because this demolition was done without their permit. So the whole project has come to a halt, as one DC bureaucracy punishes the contractor for doing something that another DC bureaucracy ordered them to do.

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**Ingleside Terrace resident Neil Richardson** resigned from his post as deputy chief of staff for Mayor Fenty early in January, citing “growing disenchantment with the mayor's governing style”. Neil has long been active in city government, and has set a high standard for honorable public service. His abrupt departure is dismaying, as was head librarian Ellen Kardy's dismissal in December. Mayor Fenty is losing good people.

The next ANC meeting will be on <b>February 5</b> , 7:00 pm, La Casa Community Center, 3166 Mount Pleasant Street.
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