

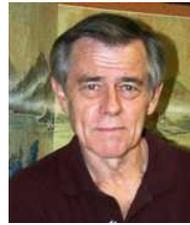
## July report to constituents

Here is news of the **July 11 ANC meeting**, and other happenings in Mount Pleasant. At the July 11 meeting, the ANC:

- Advised DDOT Public Space to refrain from any official actions concerning the Bestway Market until discussions with the Mayor's Office are complete;
- Advised Historic Preservation to issue a permit for the demolition of a front porch at 1816 Ingleside Terrace (my resolution; see box);
- Advised the ABC Board to accept petitions by Mount Pleasant restaurants for termination of their "voluntary agreements".

## ANC 1D03 NEWSLETTER #59

Jack McKay, July 31, 2007



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The **next ANC meeting** is on Tuesday, August 7, 7:00 pm, La Casa Community Center, 3166 Mt Pleasant Street. For an agenda, see [anc1d.org](http://anc1d.org).

The matter of an elderly couple **confined by disability to their Walbridge Place basement, and wanting a handicapped-accessible front exit**, continues. The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) has heard our protests, and has offered to allow a wheelchair lift for the front exit. This would still require excavation and exterior-wall modification in front, but the HPRB recognizes the need for a second emergency exit, should the back-door exit be blocked. This is a fire code requirement.

At the HPRB meeting on July 26, the residents declined this offer, asking instead for a smaller wheelchair lift and an adjacent staircase. Relman & Dane, a law office that specializes in fair housing issues and is representing the Lucases, argued for "aging in place", that is, the right of longtime residents to modify their homes as necessary to cope with the vicissitudes of old age. Robert Coward, a prominent representative of the disabled, testified that the goal was not merely "access" for the disabled, but "full inclusion" of the disabled in life activities. The wheelchair lift alone would be useless for arriving able-bodied visitors, including emergency personnel, and would leave the residents isolated from the outside world, but for their back door (awkward to get to, through an alley that is steep, potholed, and treacherous).

The HPRB was sympathetic, but unyielding, allowing only a larger-capacity wheelchair lift (big enough to handle an assistant, as well as the wheelchair), and adding the requirement that the residents keep any bricks or stones removed for installation of that lift, so that the place could be fully restored, once the Lucases pass on. They're not offering to pay for this, of course.

For many months we've been trying to solve the problem of **inattentive drivers running the red-arrow light on Park Road westbound at the Klingle-Walbridge intersection**. The great majority of drivers now understand that the red arrow means "don't go", even if the light for the Klingle direction is green. But still, about once every ten minutes, somebody blows right through the light, and if you're a pedestrian in the crosswalk, look out.

Councilmember Graham requested a red-light camera for this intersection last February. In March, the ANC unanimously passed a resolution advising the MPD to install this red-light camera. It is the only way to educate drivers who don't understand the significance of the red arrow.

The MPD objects that the red-light camera can't be done without removing the tree at the corner of the Park Road bend. That's highly undesirable, for sure. I noted that one could detect and record red-light runners through the elementary expedient of a person posted at the corner of Park Road and Walbridge Place, ready to trigger a camera manually when someone runs the light. I even provided an example of this, showing that the car could be seen, and the intersection lights as well, proving that the driver was violating the light. The MPD reply to my proposed technique was, however, blunt: "The below listed are not a part of our policy or procedures for implementation of your request." No explanation; just basically "we're not gonna do it". So much for pedestrian safety.

"A Burglary occurred in the 3400 block of 17th St. NW at approximately 5:30pm (7/10). The complainant reports that unknown suspects entered through the front window. Stolen is a laptop and powercord. Two suspects were arrested."

On Tuesday, July 10, US Postal Service employee Sherrill Morton, who delivers the mail in the northern portions of Mount Pleasant, observed what appeared to be a **burglary in progress on 17th Street**. She called the police, and halted her mail delivery to wait for their arrival. Evidently a neighbor also saw this going on, and called the police as well. Officers appeared, and the burglars fled, only to be nabbed by plainclothes officers coming in the opposite direction. Two of the three were caught on the spot, and the third captured later, and positively identified by the witnesses.

This is what it takes to catch thieves in the act: alert observation, and firm action, by people in the neighborhood during the day. We've got to be the eyes for the police, because random patrols are far too unlikely to come across a crime in progress. Congratulations to mail-lady Morton, and the unidentified neighbor, for spotting this activity, and doing something about it.

The long-awaited **Mount Pleasant traffic study** is on hold, because we emphasized that our traffic patterns change substantially when school is in session, so it would be futile to do traffic studies during summer vacation. The study will get under way seriously in September, during which month there will be a public meeting to talk about traffic concerns.

At every opportunity, I tell the traffic study contractor that we want Mount Pleasant to be more pedestrian-friendly (and bicycle-friendly, too). For the commercial strip, we're suggesting taking out one lane of traffic and widening the sidewalks, for more pedestrian space, for sidewalk cafes, and for shorter street crossing. Elsewhere in the neighborhood, the main concern is traffic speed on our "minor arterial" roads, Park Road, Klingle, Walbridge, Adams Mill, and Irving. We need "passive" speed control measures, such as road narrowing and pedestrian bulbouts, so that we and our children can safely walk these busy streets.

The residents of the 2000 block of Park Road filed a petition some time ago for traffic calming on their block. This will be done, I am told, by the same contractor, but this study is not to be absorbed into the general traffic study. There's a procedure for doing traffic calming at the request of residents, and I expect that procedure to be followed.

A Web site has been set up by this traffic study contractor: <http://www.dci-projects.com/Pleasant/>

The struggle over **live music in Mount Pleasant restaurants** continues. Popular pressures have evidently caused the MPNA to yield, ever so grudgingly, on live music, allowing only two evening hours per month per restaurant, said music to involve no more than four performers, to be performed "at a volume level that allows patrons to talk at a conversational level", and to cease by 11 pm. Dancing remains banned: the restaurant "shall not provide an atmosphere for dancing, or a dance floor for dancing, or permit the moving of tables and chairs for the purpose of dancing". What, I wonder, is their problem with dancing? I have seen, with my own eyes, young couples dancing happily in a Mount Pleasant restaurant; and why not? Why is this a bother to anybody? Let the young folks dance, I say. I'm way too old for this sort of thing, but I do enjoy seeing young people having a good time in our neighborhood restaurants.

In broad daylight: "A Robbery occurred in the 3200 block of 19th St. NW at approximately 7:40am (Friday, July 20). The complainant reports that two suspects approached her from the rear at which time one suspect **snatched her backpack off her back**. The suspects then fled eastbound on Lamont St. NW. Stolen is a backpack containing \$3.00, cellphone and personal papers and credit cards."

This is the most common pattern of robberies in Mount Pleasant: youths, generally two to four, attack a defenseless victim, then run back to neighborhoods across 16th Street. They don't often make it this far west in our neighborhood.

"Robbery Gun was reported in the 1800 block of Irving St NW (8:30 pm, 7/27). C1 and C2 report that S1 and S2 approached C1 and C2 and stated "give me your money". Stolen was a cellphone, black wallet, credit card, US currency and an IPOD."

"Armed Robbery (knife) was reported in the 3100 block of 17th St NW (2:55 pm, 7/28). C1 reports that while walking through the block S1 and S2 approached C1 asking for money. C1 was attempting to assist them when S1 pulled a knife out and grabbed C1 while S2 went through C1's pocket and stole C1's wallet, \$265 cash, bank card and assorted papers."

The historic-preservation matter of **the Rosemount Avenue windows** has yet to come before the HPRB, appearing on the preliminary agenda, but not on the final meeting agenda, month after month. I intend to press the case that "harmony" of alterations with the architecture of the neighborhood should be judged by the community, not by historic-preservation experts from downtown. The Rosemount Avenue neighbors appear to be content with the new windows, so that should decide the matter. The HPRB does appear to be open to the argument of "community standards" for such judgment.

May and July have had rainfall totals well below normal, June moderately below normal. The summer rainstorms that usually bring so much rain have been largely absent. In July, **NOAA escalated our condition from "abnormally dry" to "moderate drought"**. Potomac River flow is about half the normal for this time of year. Nonetheless, our water supply is not yet seriously threatened: "For now, this drought is affecting agricultural demands but not water supply" (Water Supply Outlook, July 24). This dry weather does keep the mosquito population down.

An Ingleside Terrace homeowner was hit with a **"stop work" order for having removed his roofed front porch**, no matter that this was the last such porch remaining in a row of 16 houses. I arranged for our new Historic Preservation Office inspector, Jonathan Mellon, to visit the site and talk it over with the homeowner. A suitable agreement has been worked out to resolve this problem, without the owner having to rebuild that roofed front porch.

Jonathan strikes me as a good person to work with; an advocate of historic preservation, to be sure, but also aware of human needs. In fact, the chairman of the HPRB, Tersh Boasberg, said clearly at the July 26 meeting that historic preservation does not mean "preserving our neighborhoods in amber", but requires adaptation to current standards and developments. This came up in particular in a discussion of solar panels on a rooftop, hardly "historically correct", but certainly worthy of support, today. (Massachusetts historic preservation law specifically encourages exceptions to promote solar energy; District law does not.)