

## Jack's July report

On June 15, the ANC did the following:

- Supported “Mount Pleasant Main Street . . . in its efforts to improve the streetscape in Mount Pleasant using funds provided by the Transportation Enhancement Grant”;
- Agreed to spend “up to \$2100 for the purchase of equipment that can be used to support non-profit public meetings and events”;
- Advised the ABC Board “that termination of the 'Voluntary Agreements' between the Mount Pleasant Neighborhood Alliance (MPNA) and certain Mount Pleasant restaurants . . . will do no harm”;
- Agreed to a “stipulated license” for Marleny's Restaurant, allowing Marleny's to have the privileges of a CR liquor license during its placard/protest period;
- Advised the DC Department of Housing and Community Development to approve the application by the 3145 Mt. Pleasant Street Tenants' Association, Inc. for acquisition funding.
- Advised the DDOT Public Space Committee to approve an application by Don Juan's Restaurant for later operating hours (ending at 11 pm, instead of the current 8 pm);
- Advised DDOT “to implement as soon as practicable the Mount Pleasant Traffic Study recommendations that the sidewalks on Irving Street, between Mount Pleasant Street and 16th Street, be widened by four feet”.

On July 6, we held an “informal” public meeting, at which the ANC passed a lengthy resolution criticizing the draft Revitalization Plan, and called for a direction sign from the Columbia Heights Metro Station to Mount Pleasant.

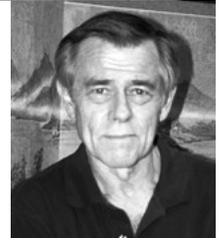
The old **rock wall** at the corner of 19th Street and Park Road has been slowly disintegrating, rocks falling out and leaving gaping holes. Restoration of that wall has been complicated by the enormous oak tree alongside Park Road. In 2008, Parks & Rec (DPR) obtained permission from the Urban Forestry Administration to cut the tree down. Neighbors, warned of the plan to destroy that great old tree, objected, and in 2009, agreement was reached to repair (rather than rebuild) the rock wall, thus avoiding the deep excavation that would have threatened to bring the tree down. In late June, repair of the rock wall was finally begun. In addition to the repairs, “weep holes” are being added to provide rainwater drainage.

There are new and perhaps onerous procedures for obtaining permits for street closing for **neighborhood block parties**. Instructions can be found on the Web site of the District's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA). “Parties may apply for a permit by completing an application with signatures from 51% of the residents and business owners on the block(s) to be closed. . . . An original copy of the completed application should be returned to HSEMA. Completed applications cannot be faxed because original signatures are required. HSEMA will process the application and submit it to the appropriate agencies for approval. Fifteen working days are required to process the application.”

## ANC 1D03 NEWSLETTER #94

Jack McKay, July 14, 2010

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The short block of Irving Street between Mount Pleasant and 16th has **extremely narrow sidewalks**, cluttered with sign-posts and other obstructions. The Mount Pleasant Transportation Study suggested, rather feebly, that those sidewalks be widened by four feet. Since these sidewalks carry very heavy foot traffic, as residents hike to and from the 16th Street bus stops and the Columbia Heights Metro Station, it's really important that these sidewalks be wider. The sidewalk on the south side doesn't even meet disability-act standards, and people in wheelchairs must have a very hard time traversing this important block.

This is in Stormy Scott's district, so in her name, I read a resolution calling for DDOT to widen these sidewalks “as soon as practicable”. A handful of parking spots will be sacrificed, of course, so I anticipate some complaints. But the need for better, wider sidewalks on this block is compelling.

John Craig, a resident at the corner of Irving and Mount Pleasant, has agreed to follow up on this resolution. Passing a resolution alone doesn't accomplish much; somebody's got to keep some pressure on to make things happen. This will be a useful lesson for John, who has announced his candidacy for the ANC (Stormy Scott's district). I linked him up with Councilmember Graham's office, and with the Ward One Planner at DDOT.

Haydee Vanegas has expressed interest in a sidewalk café at her restaurant. Fitting one in is problematical, because of a big treebox, and pitiful little sycamore tree, right in front of the restaurant. In May the ANC passed, by a 3 to 2 vote, a resolution in support of this sidewalk café. I was one of the two “no” votes, protesting that we had not been provided with plans showing where tables and chairs would be, and how much pedestrian clearance there would be between the tables and the treebox.

Well, that situation got very complicated on July 3, when **Haydee arbitrarily removed the tree and the treebox**. Had anyone on the ANC known that she was going to do this, we would certainly have told her not to. But we found out only on July 6, when Haydee attended our “informal” meeting, and cheerfully told us that she had gotten permission to remove that tree and treebox. I expressed my astonishment that anyone could get such permission.

It turned out, of course, that she didn't have that permission. I gather that she was told that the tree was her “responsibility”, a term which she took to mean that she could do with it what she wanted. It seems that there was also a conversation with Jim Graham, in which Haydee took something he said to give

her permission. Of course, Jim never said such a thing. This is all an awful misunderstanding, due, I think, to language and cultural differences.

We're trying to sort this unhappy situation out. I've advised Haydee to offer an apology, to restore the treebox, and to replace the tree, as quickly as possible. As of July 13, I understand that she's agreed to restore the treebox and replace the tree. She'll be lucky to avoid a heavy fine for having removed a street tree, however sickly it was.

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Only five months ago we were coping with record snowfalls. Now, it's record temperatures. Three **record highs for the date** have been set: 100 degrees on June 24, 99 on June 27, 102 on July 7. We haven't even yet reached the normal time of peak summer temperatures, which is around July 20.

Rainfall in June was about half normal, and even after the storms of early July, our rainfall is well below normal. Mount Pleasant's water comes, by the way, from a small reservoir at Van Ness and 44th Streets, the water pressure provided entirely by gravity from that higher elevation. This reservoir is only a small reserve to regulate flow, and is not a long-term storage reservoir. Those are far up the Potomac River.

With the heat, and the shortage of rain, it's important that we residents water any small street trees near our homes. The city won't take care of these trees, and if nature doesn't provide the water they need, then we must, or the trees die.

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I've been asked if I intend to **run for another ANC term**, as our present terms expire at the end of this year. I've been doing this for almost eight years now, which is longer than many commissioners last in this job. All five of the residents who started as ANC commissioners when I did, in January, 2003, have moved on.

The answer is yes, I intend to run for another term.

It would be good to see someone run in opposition, to give residents a real choice. Petitions for getting one's name on the ballot will be available on August 4; those petitions, with 25 signatures, must be filed by September 3.

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The plague of summer is upon us: **Asian Tiger mosquitoes**, obnoxious insects that arrived here in 1987 in a shipment of used tires from Japan. Unlike ordinary mosquitoes, they're active all day long, and they're much quicker and more aggressive than our domestic mosquitoes.

What to do about them? Mainly, eliminate as many as possible of their breeding sites, which are *containers* of water. The females lay their eggs on a dry wall of a container, and the eggs hatch when rain raises the water level and wets them. The lifetime range of an Asian Tiger mosquito is only about 100 yards, so those mosquitos plaguing you in your yard were born within that distance. Empty anything that acts as a container – pots, gutters, drains – within two days after a rainfall, and you'll have fewer Asian Tiger mosquitoes.

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Mount Pleasant Main Street (MPMS) came to the ANC a year ago requesting our endorsement of their proposal for a \$240,000 **“Transportation Enhancement Grant”**. We were reluctant to endorse any proposal without first having had a chance to read and study it, and Gregg Edwards moved at the

time that the matter be tabled for one month. That motion to table failed, because MPMS was insistent on an endorsement on the spot. But the motion to endorse the proposal failed, on a 3 to 3 vote (I was one of the three “no” votes, being unwilling to endorse a proposal I hadn't even read).

Unhappily, MPMS proceeded to claim in its proposal that it had “received ANC support for moving forward with the application at the ANC – 1D meeting of July 21, 2009”, they wrote. No, they hadn't, the ANC having failed to pass the resolution supporting their proposal.

That was almost a year ago, but the desired details of what MPMS proposed have yet to appear. As a Historic Mount Pleasant officer noted, “a line-by-line discussion of the proposal is essential”. The details, such as precisely where trees or benches are to be put, matter. I wanted an opportunity for the ANC to go over the proposal, item by item, so the commissioners could endorse the elements that made sense, and decline to endorse any that might not. For example, painting streetlight poles black seems especially pointless.

Many residents have spoken in support of the proposal, essentially on the grounds that some of the proposed work would be beneficial, and it's “free money”, money that would go to some other neighborhood if we didn't grab it. My possibly idealist position is that, if I can't defend the expenditures as a good use of public funds, then I can't endorse the expenditures. Yes, the money would just go to some other neighborhood, and maybe they're planning things even sillier than painting streetlight poles black. Could be, but that's not sufficient reason for me to endorse an expenditure that I cannot justify.

Well, Main Street got its endorsement at the June meeting, by a three to two vote (Dave Bosserman, Phil Lepanto, and Oliver Tunda voting “yes, Gregg Edwards and I voting “no”, Stormy Scott absent). I'm not unhappy to see the project go forward. I just didn't want to have any responsibility for it.

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**Robberies**, too close to home: June 22, 4:34 AM, 1800 block of Newton Street; June 26, 1:33 AM, 1900 block of Park Road; July 10, 1:03 AM, 1708 Newton Street. The Park Road robbery was a purse snatch.

**Thefts from auto** increase as soon as winter weather ends. Mount Pleasant has seen 51 such thefts over the past three months, compared to 38 during the same three months of 2009 last year, 28 in 2008. These break-ins are scattered all over Mount Pleasant, and are not concentrated in any particular area.

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On June 23, a public hearing was held concerning the Environmental Assessment for the **Klinge Trail**, including several options for the details of that bike/hike trail, e.g., how wide, and whether the surface should be rainwater-permeable or not. It's no longer “Klinge Road”, the 2008 District act having stated that the roadway “shall not be re-opened to the public for motor vehicle traffic”. A few automobile-road diehards showed up to complain, but they're wasting their time. The District Council has eliminated that option.

The next ANC *business* meeting will be on **Tuesday, July 20**, and *the next* informal meeting on **Tuesday, August 3**.