

Jack's March report

At the February 19 meeting, the ANC:

- * Endorsed a prospective public space application for 3224 16th Street; and
- * Advised the ABC Board that it supports requests by Radius Pizza to (1) extend its alcohol-serving operating hours to 1:30 AM on weekdays, 2:30 AM on weekends, and (2) terminate its "voluntary agreement" with the MPNA.

Interesting data concerning **red-light cameras** in the area: during the first six months of 2012, the red-light cameras at 16th and Irving resulted in 718 tickets, an average of only 4 per day. A red-light camera at 16th and Oak produced just 16 tickets, about one every 11 days.

The MPD says that a successful red-light camera is one that, by discouraging red-light running, yields fewer tickets with passing time. But that camera at 16th and Irving produced tickets in 2012 at four times the rate it did in 2011. Similarly, the red-light camera at Connecticut and Porter produced about 18 tickets per week during 2011, but 59 per week in the first half of 2012. If these cameras are supposed to persuade drivers to cease red-light running, they're not working.

By the way, the District defines a red-light violation as *entering* the intersection after the light has gone red, not as *failing to clear* the intersection before the light goes red. Yellow-light durations around here are between three and four seconds. That's supposed to be enough time for an oncoming driver to see that the light is changing, and stop *before* entering the intersection. It may not be enough time for the driver to make it across the intersection, but that's not a violation. That is, I think, the reason for so few tickets being issued.

All too many DC drivers stop for red lights with the front of the car intruding into the crosswalk. That is a red-light violation – entering the intersection on the red light – because the crosswalk is in the intersection.

On February 12 a neighbor e-mailed that a fox was seen running into my backyard, from 19th Street. I thought this was just one of the little benefits of living next to Rock Creek Park. What didn't occur to me at the time was that **the fox was rabid**.

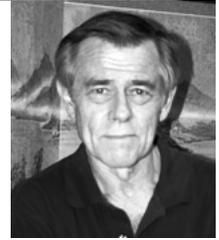
A bit later, this happened, to a Park Road resident waiting at the 19th and Park bus stop: "A young man driving a white van with the DC city logo on it passed by amid a slow stream of traffic. He stopped his van in traffic and spoke to me in a calm but commanding voice. He told me to move slowly off the bench because there was a fox that was inching up behind me. I looked up and looked over my left shoulder. There was a fox about 2 yards away from me. It kept moving slowly toward me. Needless to say, I was frightened out of my mind. And it kept coming until I ran out into traffic. Finally, the fox turned and disappeared into the wooded area on the northeast corner of 19th and Park Road."

I have been unable to find out who this man in the white van was. I discovered later that DC Animal Control was already out here, searching for the possibly rabid fox, but this man in

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the van does not seem to be one of them. They seemed not to know how to send out an emergency warning of the hazard to us residents.

Around 2 pm, an Ingleside Terrace resident was bitten, in the woods adjacent to the Park Road bridge into the park: "I was crossing by the bridge at the end of the little trail down the hill behind Ingleside [Terrace] when a little fox attacked my ankle and wouldn't let go. I had the baby in the carrier in front and couldn't see very much, but I eventually managed to get him off of me just as Animal Control happened by."

The fox was later captured by Animal Control in the woods at the end of Rosemount Avenue. *Testing confirmed rabies*. The Department of Health advises us that the fox was seen in the company of another fox, so the threat of rabies remains.

Dogs are, of course, required to have rabies vaccinations. This policy has virtually eliminated rabies in dogs, and thus human deaths from rabies, in the United States. Most rabies infections in this country are due to rabid bats. Curious fact: about 20,000 people die every year in India due to rabies, close to half the worldwide total. Feral, unvaccinated dogs are widespread in India.

On the evening of February 23, the **Beau Thai** opened for business. Emily and I were there for that first evening, and we can affirm that the food is superb. Others must agree, because the place seems to be a full house, every night!

We had to do a bit of selling of Mount Pleasant to get the Beau Thai here, as they were considering the H Street corridor for their restaurant. I assured them of full support from the ANC, including support for a sidewalk cafe.

The Mount Pleasant Street location is nearly triple the size of the original Beau Thai, in Shaw. Ralph Brabham tells me that he's had to hire two new servers to handle the flood of patrons. I was sure that Mount Pleasant would welcome this fine new restaurant here, but its success far exceeds my estimates. We went there again on March 2, a Sunday evening, and had a half-hour wait for a table.

They do carry-out and delivery, too.

Connections: in charge of food preparation is Ralph's partner in the business, Aschara Vigsittaboot, who is the sister of Taw Vigsittaboot, the proprietor of Thai X-ing, on Florida Avenue, not far from the original Beau Thai, also in Shaw.

That project that has choked traffic flow on **Rock Creek Parkway** for the past two years is supposed to be completed this summer.

I have mentioned that Councilmember Cheh has been leading an effort to revise traffic laws to provide for **motor scooters**, which have been considered the same as motorcycles. This in particular affects the parking of motor scooters. The new law defines scooters as “motor-driven cycles”.

“. . . a motor-driven cycle may be parked on the sidewalk if it:
“(1) Is outside of the Central Business District, as defined by section 9901.1 of Title 18 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (18 DCMR § 9901.1);
“(2) Is not attached to any tree, tree box, or planting area; and
“(3) Does not block the path of pedestrians and maintains an ADA compliant clearance from any other obstruction, as defined in section 4.3 of the ADA Accessibility Guidelines.”

A “motor-driven cycle” is defined as a 2- or 3-wheeled motor vehicle that has “A gas, electric, or hybrid motor with a maximum piston or rotor displacement of fifty cubic centimeters (50 cc), or its equivalent, which will propel the device unassisted at a maximum speed no greater than thirty miles per hour (30 mph).” A motor scooter that can exceed 30 mph is a motorcycle, with all the corresponding regulations.

And yes, a helmet is required, for all ages: “No person shall operate or ride upon a motorcycle or motor-driven cycle unless wearing a protective helmet in the manner for which the helmet was designed and of a type approved by the Director.”

Anyone who has driven or walked up Adams Mill Road from the Beach Drive ramp has noticed the **horrendous concrete barrier** that's gone up in the middle of the road. As late as January, this was supposed to be a simple vertical wall, and that was already a matter of concern. Then it became that great big concrete monster.

The history is complicated. The original design of the road called for both lanes, northbound and southbound, to be raised. Then, “to allay concerns from UFA [Urban Forestry] and the neighborhood about the amount of trees that were impacted and the extent of slope disturbance, the gabion retaining wall was eliminated and the design revised to raise only the eastern side of Adams Mill road, and thus the introduction of the median wall/barrier.” That is, having the roadway in two levels brought about the wall. Then, instead of a clean vertical wall, it was necessary to use Jersey wall barriers, because “in low-speed impacts jersey barriers will allow vehicles to redirect with no sheet metal contact with the face of the concrete wall. If a vertical wall was selected every impact whether at low speed or not will cause significant damage.” Thus did that dreadful concrete barrier between the northbound and southbound lanes come into being.

There's been plenty of complaint about it, but there's no going back on it now. We're looking into methods of painting the jersey wall so it isn't so awful in appearance.

Got a call from an unhappy resident who had been denied a **visitor parking pass**, apparently because Mount Pleasant has “opted out” of “enhanced” RPP (residential permit parking). This set me off on a considerable rant, as I argued vehemently that the Mount Pleasant visitor-pass program was entirely separate from the visitor passes associated with “enhanced” RPP. But a closer investigation revealed that the

visitor pass was denied because DDOT mistakenly thought that Oakwood Terrace wasn't RPP-zoned. I pointed out that it was, and DDOT instantly reversed its decision and provided the visitor pass to the resident.

Two conclusions of note: first, yes, the Mount Pleasant visitor pass system is entirely independent of “enhanced” RPP, so our “opt-out” of that system does not change our visitor passes. Second, Councilmember Graham confirmed that our visitor pass program will be renewed this fall, and new passes will be distributed as the current passes expire (September 30). He's quite proud of having brought this about, and he deserves full credit for it.

The big snowstorm forecast for March 6 turned out to be a big snow-bust. It appears that we'll finish the winter with a grand total of **1.5 inches of snow**, about one-tenth the average. But no, that's not a record low. That was set in the winter of 1997-98, just a tenth of an inch, total for the winter. We have set a record for days since the last snowfall of one inch or more – January 2011 – two years, and counting!

Just three years ago we had a record high total snowfall for the winter, 56 inches. Sorry to be a spoilsport for the kids, but I much prefer a mere inch and a half for the winter.

Last fall I reported on a **Robbery with Knife** at Adams Mill Road and Walbridge Place. On March 7, one Anthony Butler, 51, of the District, was convicted of armed robbery, and other offenses. From the U.S. Attorney's report:

“The attack took place about 8 p.m. on Oct. 27, 2012, near the National Zoo. The victim was walking alone near Adams Mills Road and Walbridge Place NW, headed to a friend's house for a dinner party, when Butler saw her. He got out of a large red pick-up truck that was blocking her path and pretended to ask for directions.

“Butler quickly grabbed the woman's arm, thrust a knife up to her stomach, and demanded her phone and purse. After he got those items, he demanded her necklace. When she couldn't get her necklace off fast enough, Butler yelled at her to take it off or he would kill her. After robbing her, he told her to run in the opposite direction and again threatened her if she didn't comply.

“Butler then took off in the pick-up truck. The victim flagged down a motorist who called 911. About 10 minutes later, officers with the Metropolitan Police Department's Robbery Intervention Program spotted a truck matching the description of the one Butler was using near a gas station at Georgia and Missouri Avenues NW. Officers found the victim's belongings spread around the truck; Butler had a knife. The victim identified Butler and he was arrested.”

On March 7, Butler was found guilty “of one count each of armed robbery, carrying a dangerous weapon, and possession of an open container of alcohol, as well as two counts of felony threats. He is to be sentenced on May 17, 2013 Butler, who has previous convictions for robbery, carjacking and other offenses, faces enhanced penalties that could lead to a life prison sentence.”

The next meeting of the ANC will be on Tuesday, March 19, 2013, 7:00 pm.
