

## May report to constituents

Here is news of the **May 3 ANC meeting**, and notes of other events in the neighborhood. At this meeting, we clarified our position on the extension of the single sales moratorium in Mount Pleasant; endorsed the Mount Pleasant Festival, now featuring guidance by Mount Pleasant Main Street, which should put an end to some of the problems of past Festivals; formed a Commercial Corridor Committee, consisting of Commissioners Edwards and Scott; requested that DDOT provide better markings of the boundaries of legal curbside parking; asked District Council to reduce

## ANC 1D03 NEWSLETTER #33

Jack McKay, May 24, 2005

A very aggressive Parking Enforcement officer has issued countless tickets here lately, much to the distress of residents hard-pressed for overnight parking spots. The District requires that **parked cars be at least 40 feet from an intersection**. I have researched this rule, and I've found that no other jurisdiction in the United States demands so much. Maryland, like most states, specifies 20 feet from a cross-walk, which amounts to 32 feet from the intersection. Virginia specifies 25 feet from the intersection. Why does the District, so very short of parking space, demand 40?

Even more puzzling, the District cuts this minimum distance to 25 feet at night (on RPP blocks only). If 25 feet is enough at night, why is it not enough during the day as well?

The ANC passed my resolution calling on the District Council to change this law, and permit parking within 25 feet of an intersection in residential neighborhoods, day and night, RPP or not. Aside from this resolution, I will continue to push the District Council personally for this change. Forty feet is an unreasonable distance, and costs us much-needed parking space.

The **Mount Pleasant Festival** will take place on June 5. We provided an endorsement of the Festival, to help a bit in their obtaining permits, but the endorsement came with a number of conditions. We stipulated a substantial role for Mount Pleasant Main Street in managing the Festival, now and in the future, and "that the Festival will be maintained and perpetuated in a manner that promotes the positive assets of the Mount Pleasant neighborhood and commercial corridor".

Many of us are concerned that the Festival, in recent years, has been something that was put on *in* Mount Pleasant, but was not really *of* Mount Pleasant. The music was imported, the vendors were imported, the entertainment was imported. The Festival has not been successful at promoting Mount Pleasant.

Little change will be evident this year, because the insertion of Mount Pleasant Main Street came too late to make much difference. But next year, we expect to see more use of the Festival to advertise the offerings of Mount Pleasant, including Mount Pleasant restaurants and other businesses, and Mount Pleasant musicians. We certainly respect and appreciate the hard work of the volunteers who have put on the Festival for a dozen years. But it's time for a Festival that is not merely *in* Mount Pleasant, but which is *about* Mount Pleasant.

the minimum distance of a parked car to an intersection from 40 to 25 feet; asked DDOT to remove the parking meters on the 1600 block of Lamont Street; requested DDOT to perform a thorough study of traffic in and through Mount Pleasant; advised DDOT to improve its conflict of interest policy; called for improved procedures for

**Radius Pizza** is doing a grand business in what was the Red Bean, and we're happy to see that. One of the owners told me that business was "wild".

Someone noticed that there are lots of pitchers on shelves at Radius, and wondered if one could go there with a group and get a pizza and a pitcher of beer. Well, no, of course you can't, courtesy of the Radius "voluntary agreement", which forbids pitchers, worrying that they would "encourage excessive drinking".

I have more confidence in the patrons of Radius than do the authors of the pitcher ban. Yes, I truly believe that the residents of Mount Pleasant can be trusted with a whole pitcher of beer. If a bunch of folks want to share a pizza and a pitcher in the Radius, then let 'em do it.

In April, the ANC passed a resolution calling for an **extension of the four-year moratorium on the sale of single containers of alcoholic beverages**, "and" a study of the dynamics of that ban. The ABC Board asked me if this meant two separate recommendations, or an inseparable combination of the two. I had to return to the ANC for clarification.

The ANC agreed, by four to one (Rich Wysocki dissenting) that the two recommendations were linked: the study was indispensable, if we were to support the extension of the moratorium. The law requires that advocates of the extension show that present conditions justify the continuation of the moratorium: "the Board in rendering its decision on a moratorium request is required to determine whether the present conditions in the moratorium area . . . justify an extension of the moratorium, *notwithstanding any perceived failures or successes of the previous moratorium*." How does one prove that the ban remains necessary today, when so many things have changed? We have police foot patrols, improved MPD methods for dealing with drunks, and a huge displacement of low-income and homeless people out of Mount Pleasant. Without a study, how can anyone say that those changes haven't made the ban unnecessary?

dealing with ANC vacancies; authorized funds to seek out all past ANC records; and voted to rescind any ANC policy statements not found by August 1. The latter measures are necessary because the ANC departing at the end of 2002 left almost no records (“we didn’t keep much paper,” one outgoing Commissioner apologized), and we simply don’t know what might be out there, and might turn up at an awkward time.

<p>Two years ago Mount Pleasant was promised a <b>traffic study</b>, which we hoped would give us some help in dealing with the problems of traffic speeding through our neighborhood. But DDOT merged our study into the Columbia Heights traffic study, and we got very little out of it. (One good outcome was a recommendation that the Kenyon-Adams Mill intersection be rebuilt to permit the left turn onto Adams Mill from westbound Kenyon.)</p> <p>The ANC passed unanimously my resolution calling for a new Mount Pleasant traffic study, now addressing not only the problem of fast-moving through traffic, but local traffic flow in the commercial strip – a “holistic” study, to develop a traffic plan that replaces the mishmash of one-way streets, residential streets, minor arterials, bus routes, truck loading zones, and parking restrictions that has grown up haphazardly through the years.</p>	<p>Jack McKay 3200 19th St NW, DC 20010 462-8692 jack.mckay@verizon.net</p>	<p>Almost everyone agrees that the District’s <b>Residential Permit Parking</b> system is awful. The block-by-block RPP zoning, which merely pushes any non-permit cars onto whatever hapless non-RPP blocks remain, and which denies RPP parking privileges to residents of unzoned blocks, must end.</p> <p>Councilmember Carol Schwarz will hold hearings in July, and I understand that the Mayor will finally have his recommendations out by then. So this fall there will be serious work done at creating a whole new District parking system.</p> <p>One outcome is certain: all of Mount Pleasant will be RPP-zoned, and all residents will qualify for RPP stickers.</p>
<p>We’re discovering a problem of <b>high-density condominium development in Mount Pleasant</b>. Rental units abound, of course, but now we’re seeing row houses split into multiple, independently owned dwelling units. Current zoning regulations allow the division of an ordinary single-family row house into three condos, with only one off-street parking spot provided for the three. If many row houses go condo this way, this could have a substantial effect on our already excruciating parking problem.</p> <p>The immediate reason for our investigating this problem is the conversion of <b>1636 Irving Street</b>, a row house originally consisting of three apartments, into seven – yes, seven! – condominiums. The neighbors, seeing this huge building going up beside their houses, are outraged. Worse, the developers never, to our knowledge, sought approval for a zoning change to allow such a density. I hear that they claim that no zoning variance was required, even though current rules would limit development on that site to three condos, well short of seven. The posted work permit says clearly, “subject to zoning approval of number of units in zone”. No application for zoning approval came to the ANC, that’s for sure.</p>	 <p><b>MPD Officer Scott Faucett</b>, on hot-dog-roasting duty at the Bancroft Fair. Scott has bonded wonderfully with Mount Pleasant, and especially with the children and parents at Bancroft. He frequently does crossing-guard duty after school, and you should see him cheerfully joshing with the kids and their parents, in Spanish as well as English.</p>	<p>The next <b>ANC monthly meeting</b> will be on June 7, 7 pm, La Casa Community Center, 3166 Mt Pleasant Street. On the agenda: zoning regulations and the Irving Street condo, residential parking policy, the Harvard Towers slope, the Affordable Housing Forum.</p>
<p>I understand that one single-family house on 19th Street, currently undergoing renovation, is planned to be made into three or four condominiums. There’s money to be made, plainly, and one could argue that this is a way to bring down the appallingly high cost of homes in Mount Pleasant (now averaging \$640K). But the consequences for us are increased density, and ever greater competition for scarce curbside parking space. Given the increasing ownership of automobiles – 75% of homeowners here have cars, and many families have more than one – the rule of one off-street parking space for every three dwelling units is a prescription for increasingly severe parking problems. We need to worry about where the current zoning regulations allow developers to take us.</p>	<p><b>Bancroft Elementary</b> held its annual parade and fair on May 21. As always, this is a wonderful show, putting the ethnic variety and cheerful spirit of our neighborhood school on display. The parade this year was led by Officer Reggie Henderson on his Segway. Inspector Groomes and Commander McCoy came to clear the streets for the kids. At the fair, Officer Scott Faucett had hot-dog grilling duty, while Keenan Keller worked the cotton candy machine. Bancroft’s Vietnamese students put on a show of traditional costumes of Southeast Asia. Bancroft, which has the largest immigrant population of any school in DC, teaches its children to respect and appreciate all the varied cultures that make up its student body. As Councilmember Catania said, some time ago: Bancroft’s a fine school, and we’re lucky to have it.</p>	