

Jack's May report to residents

Here is news of the **May 6 meeting**, and other happenings in Mount Pleasant. The ANC:

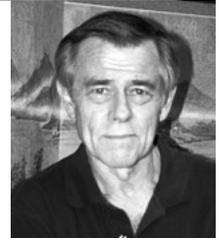
- ◆ Advised DDOT “to provide clear pavement markings at the intersection of Park Road, 17th Street, and Mount Pleasant Street, . . . showing explicitly the automobile lanes for straight-through and turning vehicles for westbound Park Road traffic”;
- ◆ Advised DDOT “to eliminate the handicapped-only parking spot at 3166 Mount Pleasant Street.”, this spot having been made unnecessary by the departure of Life Skills from the La Casa Community Center;
- ◆ Advised the Council “to approve the expenditure of \$2 million in federal funds for environmental remediation of Klingle Valley and construction of a recreation trail”;
- ◆ Advised the ABC Board that ANC1D “supports karaoke at Don Juan's Restaurant without limitations on days or hours”;
- ◆ Authorized contracting with Web developers and programmers for the ANC1D Web site;
- ◆ Defined a policy for working with Neil Richardson, ANC1D's new executive director;
- ◆ Advised “a one-time funds enhancement from the Dept. of Public Works to be granted to the Responsible Hospitality Association of Mt Pleasant”;
- ◆ Called for an increase in “parking enforcement on the east side of Mount Pleasant, in the area between 16th and 17th Streets”;
- ◆ Advised DDOT to “consolidate the RPP zones in Mt Pleasant between 16th and 17th Streets, into a uniform RPP zone”;
- ◆ Advised various District agencies to require their contractors “to accord ANC 1D the same legal requirements of notice, acknowledgment, and great weight that would apply to the actions of the agency itself”;
- ◆ Observed that “the current tools for assuring economic and ethnic diversity in Mount Pleasant and nearby areas through low-cost housing and the production of good local jobs with a future are not working”;
- ◆ Advised the Council to delete the provision in the budget bill that would eliminate the public budget hearings currently required for DC Public Schools.

Events this month have been driven by the DC Council budget process. Council committees put line items in their budget recommendations, which have the effect of formal Acts, but which are not “noticed” to ANCs, nor given dedicated public hearings. Nobody expected, for example, the Public Works and Environment Committee to introduce a critical “act” changing the fate of **Klingle Road**. One finds out what committees have done only if one is watching very

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closely. If something important is discovered after the budget reaches the Council (May 13), it's too late.

On April 30, Councilmember Mary Cheh (Ward 3), on CM Graham's Committee on Public Works and the Environment, offered a motion that a recreation trail be built in Klingle Valley instead of rebuilding Klingle Road. This proposal was approved in the committee by a three to two vote, Cheh, Kwame Brown (at-large), and Yvette Alexander (Ward 7) voting for the trail, and against the road, over the votes of Jim Graham and Muriel Bowser (Ward 4). This was perhaps the first indication that the political tide has turned against the rebuilding of Klingle Road.

I obtained the text of Cheh's amendment on May 5 (“*the [Klingle Road] right-of-way shall remain closed to motorized vehicular traffic*”), just in time for our May 6 monthly meeting. This ANC then voted *unanimously* in support of Cheh's text, 5 to 0 (Tunda absent). This was a second indication that there is a growing sentiment in favor of green-space and parkland, in favor of pedestrians and bicyclists, and against the historic predominance of the automobile.

On May 8, CM Graham held a public roundtable on Klingle Road, attempting to drum up public support for the road. In fact, supporters of the recreation trail outnumbered supporters of the automobile road at Graham's hearing.

CM Graham speculated that the National Park Service was behind the years of delay caused by the Federal Highway Administration. As I have theorized since 2003, whatever the DC Council did, the Park Service would manage to prevent the reconstruction of Klingle Road through Rock Creek Park. A compromise, half the road for cars (one lane, one way), and half for bikes and pedestrians, might have been permitted. But Klingle Road advocates rejected any compromise, insisting on all of the road, all of the time, and so are likely now to get no road at all.

On May 13, the entire Council undertook its first review of the Fiscal 2009 Budget. CM Graham offered a motion that CM Cheh's amendment be deleted from the budget bill, restoring the Klingle Road project. But he and CM Bowser were supported by only one other Councilmember, Carol Schwartz, and the motion went down to a lopsided defeat, 10 to 3. Even CM David Catania, who had voted for the road in 2003, voted against it this time, observing that this issue had consumed far too much time and energy, and it was time to drop it. This one-sided vote was a third indication that the political tide has turned firmly against Klingle Road.

Another surprise in the budget bill was an “earmark” by CM Graham for **responsible hospitality** (local regulation of alcohol businesses) in Mount Pleasant. I chanced across this on May 3, as I plowed through the draft report of the Committee on Public Works and the Environment, looking for something else. The text: “The Committee recommends a one-time grant, . . . of \$100,000 . . . to the Mt. Pleasant Main Street, to support its efforts to promoting the cultural uniqueness and enhancing the economic health of the Mount Pleasant neighborhood, through a Mt. Pleasant Responsible Hospitality Zone Pilot Program.” The ANC met just three days later. We could not table the matter and take a month to sort it out, because the budget was due for its crucial first vote on May 13, one week after our meeting.

I thought the designation of Main Street to receive this funding was simply a misunderstanding, because I know of no “responsible hospitality” plans from them. RHAMP, the Responsible Hospitality Association of Mount Pleasant, exists, and seemed to be the logical recipient. Hence, Gregg and I offered a resolution to that effect.

In fact, CM Graham wants the money given to Main Street, and I guess they'll come up with a “responsible hospitality” plan. The RHAMP people have agreed to follow Main Street's lead, so that's fine.

The **Mount Pleasant Traffic Study** held a third and final community meeting on May 21. There's a great deal of information to absorb, and there will be plenty of time for further discussion before anything significant happens. The goal is not merely to solve certain traffic problems that afflict the neighborhood, but to create a neighborhood that is much more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly, and less automobile-dominated, than we have today. Plans were shown that would yield wider sidewalks, larger parks, and less traffic. Of course, nothing comes without a cost, usually in convenience for automobile drivers. (Almost half of Mount Pleasant households don't even own cars.)

CM Graham noted that the new development in Columbia Heights is proving to be a “transit-oriented development” success story. The 1000-car garage at the Target is only one-third used, for lack of demand, while the number of people arriving via the Metro stop is booming. The future of Columbia Heights, and of Mount Pleasant, is to appeal to these people arriving on foot, not in cars. We need to have those thousands of visitors to Columbia Heights come also to Mount Pleasant and patronize our shops and restaurants. So we'll do well to yield automobile convenience in favor of wider sidewalks, attractive parks, and a pedestrian-friendly ambience.

05/15/2008 **Robbery Gun** 11:35 pm 1800 block of Ingleside Terrace: “C-1 reports that on the date time and location that S-1 and S-2 approached him on the sidewalk area. S-1 produced a handgun and put it to C-1's neck and demanded his property. C-1 complied and gave them the listed property. Both suspects got into an unidentified vehicle and left the scene in an unknown direction. C-1 was unharmed.”

Through May 26, there have been seven street robberies in Mount Pleasant, close to our average of six in a month. As is

usually the case, most robberies – six of these seven -- occurred east of 17th Street.

While all attention is focused on the prices of gasoline and diesel fuel, the price of **home heating oil** has quietly gone up just as much. Heating season is over, so people may not have noticed that heating oil, like diesel fuel, now costs over \$4 a gallon, compared to \$2.75 a year ago. Natural gas, in contrast, is unchanged, and now costs less than half as much, per unit heat output, as oil.

This promises to be a serious crisis next winter. Almost half the households in Ward One don't own cars, and so may be little affected by the surge in gasoline prices. But everyone needs winter heat, and there will be some grave problems next winter, when the increase in the price of heating oil shows up in home heating bills.

There was a big, deep hole dug in the park in front of **1900 Lamont Street**. This was done to replace the gas line to the apartment house, to increase gas flow. This excavation work pretty much destroyed what little vegetation was left after the abuse of the park by dogs.

Since that transfer of that lot to the Dept of Parks and Recreation in 2002, it's become an ugly mess, trampled by dogs, badly maintained by DPR, and now thoroughly dug up by a gas-line contractor. I'll see if I can find out who, if anybody, will take responsibility for repairing this mess.

Gregg Edwards wants **increased parking enforcement** in the east end of Mount Pleasant, where there evidently are problems of people from outside the neighborhood, e.g., employees of Mount Pleasant Street businesses, taking up parking, which is especially scarce there. I insisted that his resolution *not* call for any increase in parking enforcement on our “west end”, where parking tickets are merely an affliction for residents hard-pressed for legal parking space at night. Residents get too many parking tickets now.

Our problem is not “outsiders” taking up our parking. Our problem is ourselves, residents, owning too many cars, with too little curbside parking space for them. Increased ticketing isn't going to make our own cars disappear. People do complain about cars with non-DC tags taking up parking space, but (1) these cars belong to people living here, or they wouldn't be parked here overnight, and (2) forcing the owners to get DC tags is nice (I've seen several tickets for non-DC tags), but doesn't help with our overnight parking problem.

The **National Zoo** has released its near-final Facilities Master Plan. This may affect us because they plan changes to the route from the Harvard Street bridge to the Beach Drive gate, a popular route for Mount Pleasanters to get to Beach Drive. Will the new layout interfere with that use? The Zoo doesn't pay much attention to our concerns.

The **Kenyon-Adams Mill-Irving intersection** will be rebuilt in 2009 to make the left turn from Kenyon onto southbound Adams Mill Road, a popular route to Beach Drive via the Zoo, safe and legal. At the moment, it is neither.

The next ANC meeting will be on Tuesday, June 3 , 7:00 pm, La Casa Community Center, 3166 Mt. Pleasant St.
