

December report to constituents

As I promised, residents in my Single Member District will be told what their ANC has done and is planning to do, even if you never attend an ANC meeting. Here is what happened at the December meeting, what we plan for the January meeting, and notes about other events in our part of Mount Pleasant.

ANC 1D03 NEWSLETTER

Jack McKay, December 26, 2002

Highlights of the December ANC meeting

Rats and Trash: Mr. Robert Dixon, owner of Dixon's Pest Control and a Newton Street resident since 1969, brought up the problem of rats and trash in the neighborhood. Both seem to be on the increase, the rats flourishing on the scattered trash. Where rats are especially troublesome, poisoning may be requested, but discouraging the rats by keeping garbage cans tightly closed, and possibly treating trash cans with ammonia to repel the rats, is a better solution.

Irving Street traffic calming: Last July the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) agreed to implement a number of measures to slow traffic on Irving Street, especially around the blind curve just beyond the Kenyon Street intersection. Jean McCall of DDOT reported on the things that have been done, including marking a single lane entering this curve, allowing parking on both sides of the street to define a narrower roadway, and adding a bicycle lane to further narrow the road and slow traffic.

In my opinion these steps have largely solved the speeding problem, and I've observed that most drivers entering this narrowed lane proceed at a modest pace. There are always, of course, a few speed demons, for whom only stringent law enforcement is the cure. I've observed also that the bicycle lane is being used as a pedestrian walkway for people going from the Harvard Towers apartments to the bus stop near the Kenyon intersection. On the whole, this stretch of road has been made much safer, calmer, and pedestrian-friendly, though there is no way that this blind curve can be made truly safe.

DDOT will further enhance the road narrowing effect with "quick curb" extensions, and more pavement markings for parked cars will be added, when weather permits.

Minor matters: the ANC renewed the existing Substance Abuse Policy, and endorsed a request by Neighbors' Consejo for a Certificate of Need.

Automobile registration

Many Mount Pleasant residents keep their cars registered in other states. As more and more of our streets are zoned for Residential Permit Parking, this practice becomes increasingly troublesome. These owners cannot get RPP stickers, and so park their cars on the dwindling number of unzoned streets. This causes an unfair burden of congestion for residents of unzoned streets, who are then impelled to get their streets zoned, whereupon the non-DC cars move still further, until they're all crammed into a few unzoned blocks. It appears to me that 19th Street and Irving Street are now especially plagued by residents' cars without DC tags.

The law is clear: people can operate cars in DC for no more than 30 days without making some arrangement for DC registration; a six-month visitor's permit can be obtained, for \$25, and is not renewable; anyone residing here beyond six months *must* obtain DC tags. There are numerous exceptions, e.g., Congressional staff, military personnel, and full-time college students. Even these are required to get reciprocity stickers.

This law has been ignored for years, but the District is said to be stepping up enforcement. I heard plenty of complaint from Mount Pleasant residents about the out-of-state "freeloaders" cluttering our streets, so your ANC will be under pressure also to "do something" about the non-DC tags. If you think there's a good reason for the ANC to do nothing, and leave this problem alone, now is the time to speak up.

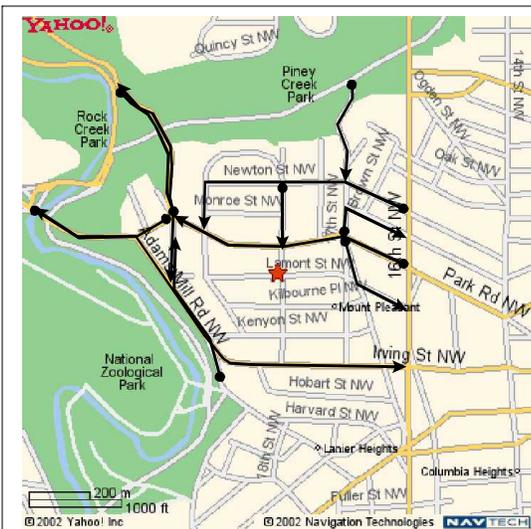
Opinions expressed here are those of Dr. McKay alone, speaking for himself, not for the Mount Pleasant ANC.

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Mount Pleasant Traffic Study:
DDOT described a traffic study planned for Mount Pleasant, one that would look at all the traffic problems of the residential area. The study was to be completed in February.

The proposed study was badly designed, failing to comprehend the main traffic routes through our neighborhood, so I later sent DDOT a thorough description of those routes, the most troublesome cut-throughs, and specific traffic and pedestrian trouble spots that warrant special attention. (See map, below.)

This seems however to have been for naught. Some insisted that the Mt. Pleasant traffic study include the effects of future development in Columbia Heights, even though that development will only increase our traffic, and shouldn't change our traffic patterns and problems. DDOT has merged the Mt. Pleasant study into the Columbia Heights traffic study. This means months of delay, and a much weaker voice for us in the conduct of the study. We will work hard to make sure that, despite this change, our concerns are heard by DDOT.



Mount Pleasant traffic patterns -- these are the routes, and the neighborhood cut-throughs, which I advised DDOT to study in detail. Many of these were absent from their initial study plan.

January ANC meeting

The next ANC meeting will take place Monday evening, January 6, 8:00 pm, at La Casa, 3166 Mount Pleasant Street.

This, the first meeting of the newly elected ANC, will begin with the election of officers. Required business includes the setting of the monthly meeting schedule, and the naming of standing committees. New business will very likely include a revival of the "Orange Hat" citizen crime patrols.

All ANC meetings are open to the public, and all monthly meetings include a "Community Forum" period during which any resident may speak on any issue concerning the Mount Pleasant community.

Lamont Street Permit Parking

A petition by some residents of the 1800 block of Lamont Street for Residential Permit Parking (RPP) on their block was accepted by DDOT, effective December 3. At the request of one unhappy 1800 Lamont resident I examined the petition and found that the petitioners had been badly misled about the requirements. The law is explicit: a majority of *households* must agree. Every separate household (defined by DDOT, roughly, as a "separate family unit"), even the tiniest basement or spare-bedroom rental, gets a vote. The petitioners had been told that the rule was one *house*, one vote, so that a house divided into four separate rental apartments, for example, was allowed just a single vote. That was very bad advice.

Thus the petitioners thought that their total of only 27 signatures was sufficient, though this is well short of a majority of the 84 households in this block. They were very displeased when DDOT rescinded RPP until signatures were obtained from the necessary majority of households. *DDOT has advised me that they now have the additional signatures, and that RPP will be enforced in this block, beginning January 6.* Permit parking tickets issued before that date are not valid, and I've been putting letters on ticketed cars to assist owners in fighting these tickets.

The District's wretched RPP system imposes a burdensome system for obtaining visitor's parking permits, denies parking permits to residents whose blocks are not RPP-zoned, and simply shoves any daytime parking problem from one block onto the nearest unzoned block. The residents of the 35-unit 1900 Lamont apartment house will be particularly hard hit by the 1800 Lamont change, because they have no parking garage, and they cannot get parking permits. The residents of 19th Street might get their blocks RPP-zoned, so that they would qualify for permits, but the apartment house residents would still be denied the permits. What are they to do then?