



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2D

Regular Meeting Minutes

September 21, 2020, 7:00 pm

Online via Zoom

Call to Order

Chair David Bender called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Establishment of Quorum

Commissioners David Bender (2D01) and Jeff Nestler (2D02) were present, establishing a quorum. There were 39 residents and visitors in attendance.

Remarks from Ward 2 Councilmember Brooke Pinto

Genevieve Hulick, the Chief of Staff for Councilmember Brooke Pinto's Office, introduced herself to meeting attendees. She said that Sherri Kimbel, the Director of Constituent Services for the councilmember's office, will soon be retiring and Brian Romanowski will be the new Director of Constituent Services. She said that the councilmember's office is pushing to implement safety enhancements at the intersection of Connecticut Avenue and Florida Avenue NW. She said that the councilmember's office is also working to address sound and noise complaints at Assets.

Ms. Hulick encouraged local businesses to consider applying for DC's Great Streets Small Business Grant Program and the Streatery Winter Ready Grant Program. She also gave an overview of the Councilmember's recent virtual town hall on homelessness.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Nestler moved to approve the ANC's September 21, 2020 meeting agenda. Chair Bender seconded the motion, which was voted on and passed (VOTES: 2-0-0).

Approval of June 15, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Nestler moved to approve the ANC's June 15, 2020 meeting minutes. Chair Bender seconded the motion, which was voted on and passed (VOTES: 2-0-0).

Administrative and Financial Matters

Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Nestler said that he has been advocating to have Decatur Place NW be repaved. He said that the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has stated that the street will be repaved next year.

Commissioner Nestler said that there have been no recent updates regarding opening up access to Belmont Road Park. He said that he has not received any updates from the U.S. Department of State or the Embassy of China regarding the matter.

Don Friedman, the President of the Sheridan-Kalorama Neighborhood Council (SKNC), gave an update regarding the neighborhood's negotiations for a new settlement agreement with Assets. He gave an overview of the stipulations that are included in the new settlement agreement.

Commissioner Nestler moved to support the new settlement agreement with Assets. Chair Bender seconded the motion, which was voted on and passed (VOTES: 2-0-0).

ANC 2D's FY 2020 Quarter 3 Financial Report

Chair Bender moved to approve the ANC's FY 2020 Quarter 3 financial report. Commissioner Nestler seconded the motion, which was voted on and passed (VOTES: 2-0-0).

DC Government Reports

Metropolitan Police Department (Police Service Area 208)

Lt. Jonathan Pongratz, a representative for the Metropolitan Police Department's (MPD) Second District, gave an overview of the recent crime statistics for the neighborhood.

Mayor's Office

Anna Noakes, a Ward 2 representative for the Mayor's Office of Community Relations and Services (MOCRS), encouraged local residents to complete the 2020 census. She said that the DC Government recently updated its list of which states DC requires people traveling from to quarantine after arriving in DC. She said that the list will be updated again on October 5th.

Ms. Noakes said that the DC Government's application to participate in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Lost Wages Assistance Program was accepted. She said that this will allow for additional payments to be made to DC's unemployment recipients. She also gave an overview of where flu shots are now being given.

Old Business

2449 Tracy Place NW, Restoration of Retaining Wall

Rodrigo Valderrama, a representative for the applicant, said that the retaining wall at 2449 Tracy Place NW started to collapse and thus had to be braced. He said that the property owners are now proposing to restore the wall in-kind. He said that a sizable portion of the original stones will be

used as part of the restoration. He added that the restoration is expected to take about a month to a month and a half.

2020 Census Self Response Rates

Chair Bender encouraged local residents to complete the 2020 census.

The Government of the Republic of Zambia Chancery Renovations

Chair Bender said that he has received several emails expressing concerns regarding the Government of the Republic of Zambia's chancery renovation project. He said that the project contractor has been reminded to be careful of pedestrian and vehicular traffic in the adjacent alleyway.

99 Kalorama Circle NW, Fence and Tree Removal

Chair Bender said that the ANC is aware that trees at 99 Kalorama Circle NW have been cut down. He said that the ANC is unaware if the trees are part of the 99 Kalorama Circle NW property or the adjacent French Ambassador's residence. He added that the last the ANC heard was that the trees are part of the French Ambassador's residence.

New Business

Use of Mitchell Park for Early Childhood Music Classes

Commissioner Nestler moved to adopt a proposed resolution regarding the matter. Chair Bender seconded the motion, which was voted on and passed (VOTES: 2-0-0). The resolution reads as follows:

ANC 2D supports the application of Miss Amy's Music Makers, which has been servicing the Sheridan-Kalorama neighborhood and community with classes for children ages 0-5 and their caregivers for the past 13 years, to operate socially distanced outdoor classes at Mitchell Park.

Benin Chancery Solar Panels

Mr. Friedman said that the Sheridan-Kalorama Neighborhood Council (SKNC) has no concerns regarding the Benin Chancery's solar panels.

Initiative 81 "Entheogenic Plants and Fungus Policy Act of 2020"

Lia Kuduk, an organizer with the Campaign to Decriminalize Nature DC, said that Initiative 81, if passed, would effectively decriminalize entheogenic medicines in DC. She gave an overview of what entheogenic medicines are. She said that Initiative 81 is part of a national movement to decriminalize these medicines. She added that several cities across the country have

decriminalized their use and several other ballot initiatives across the country are currently taking place.

Ms. Kuduk said that Initiative 81, if passed, would make the enforcement of DC's laws regarding entheogenic medicines the lowest priority for MPD. She said that the initiative would call on DC's Office of the Attorney General and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia to stop prosecuting the use of entheogenic medicines. She said that additional information regarding Initiative 81 is available at: www.decrimnaturedc.org.

2450 Belmont Road NW, Restoration and Renovation

Commissioner Nestler moved to adopt a proposed resolution regarding the matter. Chair Bender seconded the motion, which was voted on and passed (VOTES: 2-0-0). The resolution reads as follows:

ANC 2D supports the plans as presented for the project at 2450 Belmont Road NW.

2323 Tracy Place NW, Renovations and Restoration

Chair Bender said that the ANC has reviewed the project at 2323 Tracy Place NW several times and has been consistent in its objection to the project. He said that the ANC is concerned that the project does not adhere to historic preservation standards and that excavation work being carried out as part of the project might damage neighboring properties.

A local resident gave an overview of the concerns of neighboring residents regarding the project.

Chair Bender said that the ANC will send a letter to the Historic Preservation Office (HPO) stating that the ANC continues to have concerns regarding the project and plans on reviewing the project again during the ANC's regular October 2020 meeting.

2132 Florida Avenue NW, Annabelle Sidewalk Cafe

Commissioner Nestler moved to adopt a proposed resolution regarding the matter. Chair Bender seconded the motion, which was voted on and passed (VOTES: 2-0-0). The resolution reads as follows:

WHEREAS, Annabelle is located within ANC 2B but is also within 600 feet of ANC 2D and ANC 2D is therefore an adjacent ANC,

WHEREAS, although the balance of the block is primarily residential, beloved Restaurant Nora operated at this location for close to 40 years,

WHEREAS, renowned District restaurateur Ashok Bajaj (owner of Bombay Club, Rasika, and Sababa, among others) has opened Annabelle restaurant at the location,

WHEREAS, ANC 2D desires that Annabelle has the maximum opportunity to succeed at the location, as the successor to Restaurant Nora,

WHEREAS, ANC 2D and ANC 2B worked together with the applicant to enter a mutual settlement agreement, dated December 10th, 2019,

WHEREAS, a sidewalk café, as proposed by Annabelle, will greatly enhance the streetscape and is not inconsistent with the character of the neighborhood,

WHEREAS, ANC 2D supports the excavation of the area bounded by the perimeter wall in front of the building as such excavation is essential for an outdoor café to be located as proposed on the R Street NW side of the building and is not inconsistent with the other buildings on the block, none of which seem to have elevated, landscaped areas,

WHEREAS, ANC 2D is generally supportive of sidewalk cafés because of the recognition that they enhance public safety because patrons and employees represent “eyes on the street” which can be an important deterrent to crime and other nefarious activity in the neighborhood, and

WHEREAS, ANC 2D believes that the interest of a sidewalk café at the location outweigh any concerns which might be raised concerning the consistency of landscaping on the block, or the need to maintain the elevated landscape area within the perimeter of the current brick wall.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, in consideration of the foregoing, ANC 2D supports the application for a sidewalk café at the location.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2D requests that the Public Space Committee give “great weight” and due consideration of the specific concerns raised by the ANC in support of this application as set forth in this resolution as required by law.

Announcements

Chair Bender said that the ANC will be inviting ANC 2D candidates running in the November general election to make brief statements during the ANC’s regular October 2020 meeting.

Holly Sukenik, a board member for Restore Mass Ave, said that the organization has been communicating with DDOT regarding the Massachusetts Avenue Rehabilitation Project. She said that DDOT will soon be awarding the project contract. She said that utility companies are currently doing preliminary work along Massachusetts Avenue NW and that DDOT stated that the project is slated to begin in February. She added that the organization is currently doing advocacy work regarding the lighting plans for the project.

Open Comments

There were not any open comments.

Date of Next Meeting

Chair Bender said that the ANC's next meeting will take place on Monday, October 19th at 7:00 pm.

Motion to Adjourn

Chair Bender adjourned the meeting at 8:40 pm.