

DEITER LEHMANN MORALES, SMD 1A02, Chair
JEREMY SHERMAN, SMD 1A04, Vice-Chair
ANTHONY THOMAS-DAVIS, SMD 1A06, Secretary
BILLY EASLEY, SMD 1A10, Treasurer



JASPAL BHATIA, SMD 1A01
CARLO PERRI, SMD 1A02
STEPHEN COLEMAN KENNY, SMD 1A05
MUKTA GHORPADEY, SMD 1A07
vacant, SMD 1A08
JAMES A. TURNER, SMD 1A09

MARCH 13, 2024

REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

Hybrid - in-person at Harriet Tubman ES and virtual via Zoom Webinar

Chairperson LEHMANN MORALES was present and called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Commissioner THOMAS-DAVIS, Secretary, was present. In accordance with D.C. Official Code §§ 1–309.11(c) and 1–207.42, the meeting was properly noticed in advance and open to the public. The meeting was scheduled from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

The Secretary called the roll. A quorum was established.

PRESENT: Comm’rs BHATIA, EASLEY, GHORPADEY, KENNY, LEHMANN MORALES, PERRI, SHERMAN, THOMAS-DAVIS, TURNER.

ABSENT:

The Chair called for *Approval of the Agenda*, which was moved by Comm’r THOMAS-DAVIS and seconded. Commissioner SHERMAN moved to amend the agenda, which was seconded, to place several measures on the Consent Calendar [LTR24-0009, A Letter to Deputy Mayor for Education Paul Kihn and DC Public Schools Chancellor Dr. Lewis Ferebee Concerning Presentation of Mayor’s FY25 Budget to the Commission; LTR24-0010, A Letter to DC Council Chairman Phil Mendelson Concerning the DC Public Schools Cuts in the FY25 Budget; and LTR24-0011, A Letter to DC Council Chairman Phil Mendelson Concerning Youth Testimony in Upcoming Hearings]. Commissioner SHERMAN’s motion to amend the agenda was approved unanimously by voice vote. The underlying motion to approve the agenda, as amended, was approved unanimously by a voice vote.

The Chair called up the *Reading and Approval of the Minutes* from the previous regular meeting of the Commission on February 12, 2024. The Secretary objected to the approval of the minutes, noting the prior meeting was not recorded and the Secretary’s written records were not sufficient to complete the minutes. Commissioner TURNER moved to suspend the reading of the minutes and to approve the minutes with leave for technical and conforming edits, which was seconded. Commissioner THOMAS-DAVIS raised a parliamentary inquiry regarding Commissioner TURNER’s motion, which was clarified to allow the Secretary to make changes after passage of the minutes. The Treasurer, Comm’r EASLEY, noted his willingness to work with Secretary to correct the prior meeting’s minutes. On Commissioner TURNER’s motion to suspend the reading of the minutes and to approve the minutes with leave for the Secretary to make technical and conforming edits, the Chair called for a voice vote and the motion passed with 8 YEAS, 1 NAYS, 0 PRESENT.



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The Chair called up *Officer Reports*.

The Chair had no report.

The Vice Chair had no report.

The Secretary sought recognition to raise a question of privilege, which the Chair recognized. The Secretary offered a statement regarding the ongoing concerns of Members about the complex nature of the Commission's rules of procedure and the means by which they are implemented and enforced, partly through the office of the Secretary. The Secretary noted his unanimous re-election at the Commission's prior meeting and the desire to work with Members to discharge the duties of the secretariat as best as possible to advance the work of the Commission and Members individually. Furthermore, the Secretary offered that if this service does not satisfy the Commission, it may ask for and accept their resignation from the office at any time.

The Chair then recognized the Treasurer for a report, which included the First Quarterly Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2024, which the Treasurer moved the Commission approve [the measure was placed on the Consent Calendar and assigned docket no. REP03-2024]. The Commission discussed the Treasurer producing a monthly financial report for presentation at meetings separate from the quarterly financial filing due to the Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions ("OANC").

The Chair opened the floor for *Public Comments & Community Announcements*. Speakers were permitted one minute to address the Commission.

The Commission first heard from Comm'r SHERMAN, who shared information about the Board of Election recertifying a vacancy for Commissioner, Single-Member District 1A08.

The Commission then heard from Comm'r EASLEY, regarding the passage Secure DC Omnibus Amendment Act of 2024, and the letter that he transmitted regarding concerns with the legislation. He stressed the need for residents to weigh in on public safety issues across the Commission's geographic boundaries.

The Commission heard next from Comm'r GHORPADEY who announced the Commission's upcoming monthly community clean-ups, the next of which would be on Saturday, March 23. Comm'r SHERMAN joined to add a note about the Commission's upcoming community office hours, which more details were to be shared about in the Commission's monthly newsletter.

The Commission also heard from Vida Rangel, who spoke about March was Women's History Month and Trans Visibility Month. Ms. Rangel announced the Mayor's Women of Excellence Awards, hosted at the Lincoln Theater, and events from the Mayor's Office of LGBTQ+ Affairs for Trans Day of Visibility.



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The Chair opened the floor for *Committee Reports*.

Community member Christine Miller, reported on behalf of the Education, Youth and Family Committee, which she chairs. Ms. Miller noted testimony she offered during the Council's performance oversight hearing, including the deputy mayor for Public Safety and Justice, Department of Parks and Recreation, and the State Board of Education. Ms. Miller noted the committee's focused has been on individual school's budgets, including the need to align them with the needs of schools and students, avoiding potential staff cuts and loss of resources. Ms. Miller noted the need to overhaul schools' budgeting processes, to ensure they can budget with greater confidence and certainty about monies available to them. The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for March 27, 2024, at 7:00 pm.

Reporting on behalf of the Housing Justice and Zoning Committee, community member Max Ewert, who chairs the committee, addressed the Commission to regarding a resolution referred to the Commission for further action regarding social housing legislation, first reading of a resolution to strengthen Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act ("TOPA") rights for tenants, which the committee says has been rolled back over the last five or six years. Mr. Ewert also discussed the committee's review of Board of Zoning ("BZA") case 21088 in SMD 1A07. Mr. Ewert noted that the committee meets on the first Monday of the month and will have a second reading of TOPA resolution and commenting on the Mayor's FY 2025 Proposed Budget, as well as considering a covenant reached under TOPA for a housing development in SMD 1A02. Commissioner GHORPADEY asked Mr. Ewert to explain to the public what TOPA is and how it works.

Comm'rs PERRI and EASLEY reported on behalf of the Public Safety Committee. The committee discussed several updates, including one dealing with the Juvenile Justice Advisory Group ("JJAG"), which Comm'r EASLEY serves on in his personal capacity. He discussed the general composition and focus on the JJAG, including youth rehabilitation. JJAG discussed several provisions of the Secure DC Omnibus Act, namely the pretrial detention provisions of the legislation. Comm'r EASLEY went on to discuss the Youth Services Center and the need to ensure funds are available to support this resource. Comm'r PERRI noted that the committee has indefinitely tabled two items, one being a measure that was pending before the Commission following a referral to committee regarding increased officer patrols from MPD's "Business Beat," as well as an initiative to create a community crime incident tracking system. The committee will also have several officials join its March meeting, including Captain Anderson from Fire and Emergency Medical Services ("FEMS"). Comm'r EASLEY, in responding to a public question about the Secure DC Omnibus letter that select Members of Commission signed on to, noted that it was not endorsed by the committee or the Commission and was not in broad support of Secure DC but rather critical of the legislation across many areas.



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A separate topic of discussion was raised regarding the proposed Stabilization and Sobering Center on Park Rd., which Comm'r PERRI spoke to, noting that he was singularly involved in the process of identifying the proposed location and that the Committee on Public Safety intends to continue to be a part of the discussions regarding the proposed sobering center. Comm'r THOMAS-DAVIS, whose single-member district the proposed project is in, spoke on the matter to outline his reasoning for opposing the proposed project, including the lack of public engagement on the project and lack of information furnished to the Commission and to him as the single-member district Commissioner. Comm'r SHERMAN offered comments as his district directly abuts SMD 1A06 where the proposed sobering center would be located, noting his engagement with Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau on community engagement sessions that are being planned. Comm'r EASLEY while expressing general support for greater transparency and community engagement on this proposed project, noted that the Commission has not done much on the topic of public safety and that seeing this proposed project through will a step towards doing more. Comm'r THOMAS-DAVIS finished the discussion, noting his repeated calls for more information regarding the site selection process over the preceding two and a half years as privately noted by Councilmember Nadeau, as well as calling for more robust community engagement.

In responding to questions on when community engagement sessions might happen, Estelle Kenny, constituent services specialist in Office of Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau, noted that the Councilmember is working to plan community engagement meetings for later in March or early April, and that she would try to locate additional information to share with the Commission.

The Chair, by unanimous consent, move to proceed to *Presentations from the Council and the Executive* to hear from Dr. Oye Owolewa, Shadow U.S. Representative for the District of Columbia. Representative Owolewa talked about his work advocating for DC Statehood, as well as initiatives on returning citizen affairs, namely his Expungement Clinics, and his business literacy seminars, DC Capital Seminars, to prepare entrepreneurs and others to find and apply for grants and get tax preparation support. Representative Owelowa took questions from public about ways to promote these initiatives and collaborate for greater community impact across Columbia Heights and the District.

The Chair returned to *Committee Reports* to hear the readouts from the standing and special committees.

Comm'r SHERMAN, reporting on behalf of the Small Business and Economic Development Committee, which he chairs, shared updates from the committee's February meeting. The committee received a presentation from Shelore Williams, president and executive director of the Development Corporation of Columbia Heights, and Ronal Morales from the Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection regarding street vendor licensing, and from Rita Drayton, community engagement director at Target Corporation. The committee also announced the upcoming release of a small business survey to solicit feedback from residents on



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the types of establishments they want to see in the community. The committee is also considering the first medical retailer license application under the District's new laws regulating medical retail cannabis establishments.

Comm'r KENNY, reporting on behalf of the Transportation, Parks, and Public Spaces Committee, announced that the committee did not meet, but would be meeting again on March 20, 2024, at 7:00 pm. Comm'r KENNY noted that the committee will be focusing on the Clear Lanes program and the District Department of Transportation's automated traffic enforcement technology.

Comm'r THOMAS-DAVIS, reporting for the Special Committee on Public Life in Columbia Heights, which he chairs, shared updates on the committee's administrative meeting. The Special Committee met for the first time to officially constitute itself to conduct its business and considering a draft scope of work and other planning considerations for the next 12-24 months.

The Chair opened the floor for *Community Presentations*.

The Commission heard from Paco Ramos, manager for Columbia Heights/Mt Pleasant Main Street at District Bridges. He presented on the organization's recurring event series, Juernes, which will be monthly on every second Thursday starting in April at the Columbia Heights Civic Plaza. Mr. Ramos also covered the organization's upcoming Columbia Heights Day event, noting it's the 16th anniversary of the event.

The Chair opened the floor again for *Presentations from the Council and the Executive*.

The Commission heard from Estelle McKinney, a constituent service specialist in the office of Ward 1 Councilmember Brienne K. Nadeau, who provided an update about legislation passed by the Council, including amendments to the Secure DC Omnibus Amendment Act sponsored by the Councilmember. Ms. McKinney discussed the conclusions of the performance oversight hearing schedule and upcoming budget oversight hearings. She took questions from the Commission and noted that she would follow up.

The Chair called up the *Consent Agenda*.

Several items were pending before the Commission on the Consent Calendar, including approval of committee reports for February 2024, approval of the First Quarterly Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2024, several letters regarding the Fiscal Year 2025 budget as proposed by the Mayor on education from the Committee on Education, Youth, and Family, and a letter from Single-Member District 1A07 Commissioner Mukta Ghorpadey concurring in the findings of the Committee on Housing Justice and Zoning to endorse the application of residents for Board of Zoning Adjustment relief regarding special exception. The Consent Agenda was approved by a voice vote.



The Chair called up *New Business*.

The first item for consideration was R24-0005, A Resolution Concerning Support for a Green Deal for Housing, as sponsored by Chairperson Dieter Lehmann Morales at the request of Community Chair Max Ewart, Committee on Housing Justice and Zoning. Chair Morales yielded his time for a statement to Mr. Ewart, who briefly discussed the substance of the resolution and the need for this new housing policy in the District of Columbia. Comm’r BHATIA offered an amendment to the resolution, which Chair Morales accepted as friendly:

Bhatia Amendment #1: To add two new paragraphs following the last “Be It Further Resolved” paragraph at line 82:

“WHEREAS, That ANC 1A encourages any entity overseeing the creation and maintenance of social housing collaborate with other agencies across the District to ensure that residents qualifying for and ultimately residing in social housing units are aware of other social programs that could be beneficial to them and their families during lease up and/or recertification.

“WHEREAS, That ANC 1A recognizes that case studies on social housing and the evidence base on social housing in the United States is limited, and encourages the City to partner with a research institution or organization to conduct an evaluation of any social housing model with the express purpose of understanding whether social housing is a scalable, cost-effective, and time-efficient model to address the current housing supply challenges.”.

Several Commissioners raised questions during debate, specifically around presupposing the entity responsible for managing the social housing program, which the resolution does not reference. Comm’r KENNY raised a concern about how social housing would differ from existing affordable dwelling units that the District requires housing developers to set aside, which Mr. Ewart addressed in some detail. Comm’r TURNER expressed significant concern with moving forward with this proposal, given the range of existing housing programs available in the District and noted the importance of development corporations in communities across the city and how their role should be looked at more closely to expand affordable housing and deeply affordable housing options. Furthermore, Comm’r BHATIA expressed that should social housing legislation pass, the Commission should look further at ensuring wraparound services for residents in social housing developments are available and that a study is done to evaluate the effectiveness of these services.

Comm’r SHERMAN offered an amendment, which Chair Morales accepted as friendly:

Sherman Amendment #1: To strike the following phrase, at line 55/56: “Council of the District of Columbia to take bold action by ~~passing the Green New Deal for Housing bill~~ introducing and passing a bill for social housing so the District can build and operate publicly owned, mixed-income affordable.”.



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The Chair called the questions on the underlying measure, as amended, and ordered a roll call vote, which the Secretary took and recorded as 6 YEAS, 1 NAYS, and 2 recorded as PRESENT.

YEAS: BHATIA, GHORPADEY, LEHMANN MORALES, KENNY, PERRI, SHERMAN

NAYS: TURNER

PRESENT: EASLEY, THOMAS-DAVIS

NOT VOTING:

The Chair moved to the next measure for consideration, LTR24-0012, A Letter to DLCP Requesting Information and Updates on Street Vending Licensing Efforts in Columbia Heights, which Comm'r KENNY spoke to. Following limited discussion and debate, the Chair called the question, and ordered a roll call vote, which the Secretary took and recorded as 9 YEAS, 0 NAYS.

YEAS: BHATIA, EASLEY, GHORPADEY, LEHMANN MORALES, KENNY, PERRI, SHERMAN, THOMAS-DAVIS, TURNER

NAYS:

PRESENT:

NOT VOTING:

The Chair turned to a final measure for consideration, a grant application from District Bridges for Columbia Heights Day 2024, requesting \$3,000. The proposed use of the grant funds is on entertainment which is a permissible use. The application listed several potential uses including musicians, amusement equipment rental and face painting. The Commission received a memorandum from the Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions concluding that grant is deemed permissible with several caveats, which the Commission considered. Comm'r SHERMAN moved to call the question, which was seconded. Recognizing no objections, the Chair ordered a roll call vote, which the Secretary took and recorded as 9 YEAS, 0 NAYS.

YEAS: BHATIA, EASLEY, GHORPADEY, LEHMANN MORALES, KENNY, PERRI, SHERMAN, THOMAS-DAVIS, TURNER

NAYS:

PRESENT:

NOT VOTING:

With no further business before the Commission, the Chair called the meeting to a close, noting that the next regular meeting of ANC 1A is Wednesday, April 10, 2024. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:56 p.m.


Anthony Thomas-Davis,
SECRETARY