

Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6A
Minutes
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
April 11, 2024

Present: Commissioners Amber Gove, Keya Chatterjee, Roberta Shapiro, Dave Wethington, Steve Moilanen, and Robb Dooling were present. Commissioner Mike Velasquez was absent.

The meeting convened virtually via Zoom at 7:00 pm.

Commissioner Amber Gove called the meeting to order and noted the presence of a quorum. The minutes for the ANC March 2024 meeting were accepted and the agenda for the April 2024 meeting was accepted by unanimous consent.

Community Presentations

Vacant Properties and the False Claims Act (1000 C Street NE) - Assistant Attorney General Jason Jones and Beth Mellen, Assistant Deputy Beth Mellen, Assistant Deputy in the public advocacy division of the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), noted that this division brings civil enforcement cases across a number of areas including vacant property claims. On public safety, there is split control in DC between the local and federal governments and that extends to the criminal legal system and the courts. OAG's jurisdiction is limited to juvenile offences and a limited set of adult misdemeanors; adult offences are almost all handled by the US Attorney's Office. Assistant Attorney General Jason Jones spoke about a recently completed case on George Papageorge and the house at 1000 C Street NE, which has been sitting vacant for an indeterminate amount of time. Mr. Papageorge took ownership of the building in the late 1980s and it has been vacant since. The property has gone back and forth between 'class 1' or 'class 3' labels 35-55 times. When DOB labels the property as vacant, the owner has the right to appeal during each half-year period, which Mr. Papageorge continued doing for years. He was assessed the tax at the vacant rate and appealed the decision, which got reversed each time. In 2020, the city council amended the district's False Claims Act, making taxes regulated under the Act. OAG's first case against Mr. Papageorge was under the False Claims Act from 2015-2022 and under Tax Claims for 2008-2015, and litigation took about two years, ultimately resulting in Mr. Papageorge being held liable for all the claims in the complaint and owing \$1.8M. Mr. Jones knows that this is just one of thousands of vacant properties across the city and encourages neighbors to notify DOB if they suspect a building is vacant. OAG will get involved if it has been several years and there are false claims and tax avoidance involved. Vacant properties themselves are not illegal, but the taxes are more than five times higher on them than the normal rate, and blighted properties are ten times the normal rate. Collected taxes and penalties go to the general fund and to fund the OAG's work. Ms. Mellen will be reaching out to speak about the Havana Building, which the ANC and neighbors have been flagging as problematic for quite a while.

More information on vacant/blighted buildings: <https://dob.dc.gov/vacantbuildings>
Anyone can report a vacant building through 311 or <https://dob.dc.gov/>

Consent Agenda:

The following items were adopted by unanimous consent:

Community Outreach (COC)

- ANC 6A approve a grant to Miner Elementary School PTO in the amount of \$1,000.00 to fund the renovation of a turtle habitat.

Alcohol Beverage and Cannabis (ABC)

- ANC 6A take no action with respect to the application for renewal of a Class A Retail Liquor License by 7 River Mart at 250 11th Street NE. (ABRA-126841).
- ANC 6A take no action with respect to the application for renewal of a Class A Retail Liquor License by Exotic Wine and Spirits at 801 Maryland Avenue NE. (ABRA-118158).

Economic Development and Zoning (EDZ)

- ANC 6A send a letter of support to the HPRB re: HPA #24-174: new two-story and basement rear addition to an existing two-story rowhouse at 216 11th Street NE (Future Meeting Date: 4/25/2024).
- ANC 6A send a letter of support to the BZA re: BZA #20687A: Request for a Modification of Consequence from Board of Zoning Adjustment Order 20687, pursuant to Subtitle Y § 703 to construct a new detached, two-story, accessory garage with second story dwelling unit to an existing, attached, two-story principal dwelling unit at 1127 G Street NE (Future Meeting Date: 4/24/2024).
- ANC 6A send a letter of support to the BZA re: BZA #21094: Request for a Special Exception from the lot occupancy requirements of Subtitle E § 210.1, pursuant to Subtitle E § 5201.1 and Subtitle X § 901.2 to construct a two-story with cellar, rear addition, to an existing, attached, three-story, principal dwelling unit at 235 10th Street NE (Future Meeting Date: 4/24/2024).

Officer Reports:

1. The April 2024 Treasurer's report by Commissioner Steve Moilanen reviewed the expenditures accrued in March: \$58.29 for Zoom Premium, \$250 for notetaking, \$771.19 for webmaster services, and \$225.63 for printing supplies for the EDZ (checks #2096-#2098, respectively). The opening uncommitted funds available were \$30,250.28. After accounts payable totaling \$2,832.72 the closing available checking balance is \$27,417.56. The savings account opened at \$100.05, gained no interest, and closed at \$100.05, and petty cash remained at \$25. Commissioner Moilanen got the ANC's support for DocuSign, which has streamlined the signature process for the Commission. The Treasurer's report was approved by unanimous consent.

Standing Committee Reports:

Community Outreach (COC)

1. The March 2024 committee report was accepted by unanimous consent.
2. Next meeting: April 22, 2024 (4th Monday)

Alcohol Beverage and Cannabis (ABC)

1. The January and March 2024 committee reports were accepted by unanimous consent.
2. The Committee recommended and Commissioner Roberta Shapiro seconded the motion that ANC 6A send a letter to ABCA to protest the license application of Verg Enterprises LLC at 1230 H Street NE (ABCA-127258).

There was no representation from the establishment at the ABC meeting and the Committee would like to have a conversation with the business to understand the conversion of their current license. Commissioner Keya Chatterjee offered a friendly amendment of protesting unless a settlement agreement is reached prior to the protest deadline. The motion as amended passed 6-0.

3. Next meeting - 7:00 pm, April 23, 2024 (4th Tuesday)

Transportation and Public Space (TPS)

1. The March 2024 committee report was accepted by unanimous consent.
2. Commissioner Chatterjee moved and Commissioner Shapiro seconded the motion that ANC 6A send a letter to DDOT Acting Director Sharon Kershbaum, Ali Shakeri, DDOT Infrastructure Project Management Division and Ward 6 Councilmember Charles Allen requesting that the crosswalk be restored at Florida Avenue and M Street NE so that there is a way for west bound bicycles and pedestrians to access M Street NE and the NOMA/Gallaudet metro station and request that the traffic signal division review and adjust signal timing to further slow driver speeds to the existing speed limit on Florida Avenue NE. The motion passed 6-0.
3. Next meeting - 7:00 pm, April 15, 2024 (3rd Monday)

Economic Development and Zoning (EDZ)

1. The March 2024 committee report was accepted by unanimous consent.
2. Next meeting - 7:00 pm, April 17, 2024 (3rd Wednesday)

Commission Business

Single Member District reports

Commissioner Dave Wethington (6A05) reported that DPR issued a public meeting notice for comment on renovations for Kingsman Dog Park; the meeting will be on April 23rd at Rosedale Recreation Center from 6-8PM. The final report from the Deputy Mayor of Education came out on the assessment of the Maury/Miner pairing, and the recommendation is not to embark on the potential pairing until the 2026-2027 school year. The Anacostia Watershed Society is doing its annual Earth Day cleanup on April 20th.

Commissioner Chatterjee (6A01) rang the opening bell for the H Street Farmer's Market. The Better Bus report is expected to be released soon and the Commissioner attended the Future of Metro event on the mall and learned that within two years,

WMATA expects to have ceased procurement of internal combustion engine buses. The Ward 6 cleanup was great and the Commissioner and neighbors would like to set up an end of school year bingo event. Concrete barriers had been installed along the bike lane on Florida Avenue but were smashed within hours of installation due to fast and reckless driving. 8th and H Streets are not on the table for the restroom pilot - it will likely be installed at Eastern Market. There was a stabbing at 9th and H Streets and quite a lot of crimes committed by young teens or preteens, and in the current budget, all six psychologist and social worker positions have been cut at the schools in this area.

Commissioner Shapiro (6A03) learned that the organization that provides urgent mental health services is having its budget obliterated and the Commissioner would like to take a close look at the budget as a Commission and identify areas that are going to undermine making DC more secure. The Commissioner suggests an elective ANC letter to the City Council listing those issues that have a direct impact on the community and city at large. DDOT has been responsive recently and there are proposals for speed bumps on F Street, which will help protect children walking to schools and the Rec center. The Sherwood renovations have not started but the Commissioner received a phone call from the assistant city manager who asked to compile all the documentation on Sherwood. A classroom had been without lights at SWS for weeks with no response from DGS and they were finally turned on this morning. There was a blind egress from an alley onto 8th Street and DDOT has agreed to put no parking on either side.

Commissioner Moilanen (6A07) reported that Pacci's will likely be allowed to expand into the second floor. The Commissioner commends DDOT on what appears to be a successful launch of the e-bike incentive program, for which the window of applications closes on April 15 month. They will have a presence at the H Street Farmers market this Saturday for community members to learn more.

Commissioner Robb Dooling (6A06) would like to give a shoutout to everyone involved in the H Street Alliance program and thanks Commissioner Chatterjee for advocating for the crosswalk at M Street.

Commissioner Gove (6A04) noted that there was an exchange of gunfire between two people who knew each other at the corner of 14th Street and Constitution and North Carolina Avenues and residents expressed frustration with not being able to get through to 911; in this case residents can anonymously text 50411. The Commissioner is working with Officer Lewis to schedule another movie in Lincoln Park and attended the ANC 7D TPS meeting about a newly single lane at 17th and Potomac. The first district citizen's advisory council continues to host monthly meetings and the Commissioner highly encourages attendance. Saturday, April 27 is the anniversary of Hill Family Biking and there will be a Throne demonstration in the Maury parking lot. The Ward 6 budget forum will be at the Northeast Library on April 29th.

Community Comment

Ms. Jen DeMayo confirmed that the budget town hall will start at 6PM at the Northeast Library on April 29th. Ms. DeMayo is grateful to everyone that participated in the Ward 6 spring clean. The budget found here: budget.dc.gov

This year's Emancipation Day celebration is on Sunday, April 14th at Freedom Plaza on Pennsylvania Avenue NW between 10th and 14th Streets NW. The festivities begin at 2pm with a Parade, followed by the DC Emancipation Day Concert at 3pm, and concludes with Fireworks at 8:30pm.

Community member JoAnn Sparacino noted another round of gunshots fired on 8th and G Streets by someone on a motorcycle; no one was hurt. She will be in touch with Ms. DeMayo about environmental practices.

<https://hsema.dc.gov/page/alert-dc-current-alerts>

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.