

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1C
Adams Morgan
Minutes of May 6, 2020

I. Call to Order and Introduction of the Commissioners

A meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1C was held electronically on May 6, 2020. Commissioner Irani called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. About 22 members of the public joined electronically. In attendance were Commissioners Amir Irani (1C01), Ted Guthrie (1C03), John Zottoli (1C04), Michaela Wright (1C06), Japer Bowles (1C07), and Chris Jackson (1C08).

II. Officers' Reports

A. Chair's Report

Commissioner Irani reported that census returns for Ward 1 has gone up a couple of percentage points to 54%. He also reminded everyone that they can request a mail-in ballot for the June primary at: Vote4dc.com.

B. Secretary's report

Commissioner Wright reported that the minutes from the April meeting had been circulated and are included as part of the consent agenda.

C. Treasurer's report

Commissioner Bowles reported that the Q2 financial report had been circulated and will be part of the consent agenda. He shared the report on the screen and Commissioners discussed how the District Allotment is reflected in the monthly and quarterly reports.

III. Commissioner Announcements/Comments

- Commissioner Guthrie reported that there would be no ABC and Public Safety meeting this month since there were no agenda items.
- Commissioner Irani reported that there were currently no agenda items for the Planning, Zoning, and Transportation Committee, but if items come up the meeting would be held virtually on May 20 and a link would be provided.
- Commissioner Bowles reported that the Public Services and the Environment Committee would hold a virtual meeting on May 27 and agenda items include a presentation by the Fund for Kalorama Park regarding a mural proposal and an update from DC Department of Parks and Recreation on pending projects, repairs, and improvements as well as the use of parks during the corona pandemic. Commissioners discussed the need for an update on improvements to the triangle park named for Ann Hughes Hargrove.
- Commissioner Zottoli reminded everyone about changes in voting for the upcoming primary on June 2. He noted that the Columbia Heights Community Center on Girard Street and the Masonic Temple on U Street will be the only polling stations open for Ward 1 and urged everyone to vote by mail. He also noted that a mail-in ballot request form and postage-paid envelope have been included in voter guides that are arriving by mail. He added that all this information can be found on the DC Board of Elections website.
- Commissioner Wright wished Commissioner Bowles a happy birthday.

IV. Public Announcements / Comments

- Travoris Culpepper with PEPCO gave an update on the Capital Grid project and on a Reliability Project that will take place in ANC 1C in late summer. He said that construction on the Champlain Station will start in 2023 after a 10-mile transmission line is installed, segments of which are

currently being installed in Columbia Heights along 11th Street and in Petworth. He added that transmission lines will also be laid along 16th Street and Florida Avenue starting in July and continuing throughout the rest of the year and that preliminary work on the Champlain substation will involve transfer of customers beginning in March of 2021.

Mr. Culpepper also explained that a Reliability Project in ANC 1C04, 05, and 06 to replace aging cable along 18th Street, Summit Place, Ontario Road, and Columbia Road will start in August or September. He said that PEPCO will hold community meetings on this with the ANC. A member of the public asked Mr. Culpepper to remind PEPCO truck drivers not to park in bus or bike lanes.

- Brian Barrie with the Adams Morgan BID said their website admodc.org lists businesses doing carryout, pick-up, or mail deliveries including Mothers' Day specials, and that their newsletter now comes out 4 or 5 times a week with updates.
- Allie Bobak from Councilmember Nadeau's office provided her contact information (cell phone: 202-531-5186 and email address: abobak@dccouncil.us). She reported that the DC Council has been meeting virtually and that Councilmember Nadeau had introduced foreclosure legislation to protect homeowners during the corona pandemic. She highlighted some of the provisions in the third omnibus emergency act including expansion of ANC grant-making authority; limitations on delivery fees; a ban on fees in rental housing for amenities that are closed; and requirements for regular cleaning of common areas in rental properties. She also reported that there would be a briefing on May 13 on the Mayor's proposed budget and hearings would follow with a variety of ways for the public to participate. Finally, she urged people to sign up for the Councilmember's newsletter for ongoing updates.
- Matt Wexler announced the creation of the Adams Morgan Commercial Development Coalition that will focus on businesses in Adams Morgan as they emerge from the corona virus pandemic. He said that these businesses are being hit hard during this pandemic and urged the ANC to do what they can to support them now so that they can eventually re-open.
- Anthony Moore from Mayor Bowser's office reminded everyone to check the coronavirus.dc.gov website for updates. He also announced that the Mayor is now hiring for contact tracing positions. Mr. Moore provided his email address Anthony.moore@dc.gov and encouraged the public to contact him with problems regarding unemployment services.
- La Toya Davenport from the U.S. Attorney's Office urged the public to contact them with any concerns or about COVID-19 scams. Commissioners asked for examples of scams and for information about the next virtual public meeting of the hate crimes task force.

V. Consent Agenda

Commissioner Irani moved for adoption of the consent agenda which consisted of the [minutes](#) from the April 2020 ANC meeting and the [Q2 FY20 financial report](#). The consent agenda was adopted by a vote of 6 to 0.

VI. Presentation of a tree plan for BB&T plaza

Alit Balk, a landscape architect from DDOT's Urban Forestry Division, presented a [tree planting plan](#) for the BB&T plaza, at the northeast corner of Columbia Road, Adams Mill Road, and 18th Street NW. He said the proposal, which was initiated by the Adams Morgan BID, fits within his division's goal to increase the tree canopy in DC. He said their planning including a meeting with PEPCO because there is a large underground electrical vault under the plaza. Mr. Balk described a plan to add 5 shade trees (single stem crepe myrtles) with porous paving around them; shift the Capital Bikeshare station closer to the curb (adding one or two bays or about 6 bikes); and possibly add two street trees on either end of the plaza. He said that Capital Bikeshare is in agreement with shifting the bike station and that it may discourage pedestrians from crossing outside of the crosswalk. The plan would be to do this in the Fall if the city is ready. Finally, Mr. Balk stressed that they are bringing this before the ANC because they would not want to go ahead with a plan without having the community behind it.

Commissioners and members of the public discussed the benefit of having shade on that corner; concerns from neighboring properties about blocking facades and views; adequate space for pedestrians and gatherings on the plaza; the impact on pedestrian crossing if the bike station is moved towards the curb; how the pedestrian crossing fits with Vision Zero plans; the choice of trees and their ongoing maintenance; how the plan fits with the Adams Morgan Vision Framework; the possibility of adding seating; if there would be space for a farmers market if the SunTrust plaza space is lost; the process involved in developing this plan; and, the lack of notice to owners of abutting properties.

Commissioners agreed to continue to work with all stakeholders so that concerns can be heard and a plan can be developed to use the space in a way that addresses those concerns.

VII. Regular Agenda

A. ABC and Public Safety Committee

1. Consider protest of application by The Game Sports Club/Tiki at 2411 18th Street NW

Commissioner Guthrie announced that the ANC and other neighborhood associations have not been able to come to an agreement with the owners of The Game Sports Club to add an entertainment endorsement and cover charge to their license. He noted that ABRA is pushing protest dates back, but the ANC would still need to file a protest by June.

Commissioner Guthrie then moved that ANC 1C protest The Game Sports Club's application on the basis that it would have an adverse impact on the peace, order, and quiet of the neighborhood. The motion also authorized any Commissioner to act on behalf of ANC 1C in this matter. Commissioner Zottoli seconded the motion. Commissioner Guthrie acknowledged that the current closures are very hard on businesses, but the protest ensures that ANC 1C will be able to negotiate a settle agreement that is fair to the public and the licensee. Denis James of the Kalorama Citizens Association added that it is possible that a settlement agreement will be reached, but not before June.

Matt Wexler of the newly formed Adams Morgan Commercial Development Coalition asked the ANC to consider the position of the owner and expedite any agreement so this business has a chance of surviving. Commissioners discussed doing what they can to help support businesses at this time.

Commissioners then voted to support the motion to protest by a vote 5 to 0 to 1 (Commissioner Bowles abstained).

B. Planning, Zoning, and Transportation Committee

1. Consider areas for sidewalk extensions in Adams Morgan to support social distancing

Commissioner Bowles introduced a [resolution](#) in response to Mayor Bowser's [Sidewalk Extension Plan](#) requesting suggestions for sidewalks that should be extended to facilitate social distancing around essential businesses such as grocery stores or healthcare facilities. He gave an overview of the resolution that proposed temporary sidewalk extensions along certain blocks of Kalorama Road and Columbia Road that contain essential services; a temporary Healthy Streets Loop, a safe route in Adams Morgan to connect those services; and, signs indicating the route.

Commissioners discussed whether the proposed zones meet DDOT's criteria of being near essential services; not being longer than 3 consecutive blocks; and not blocking loading zones or bus stops.

Commissioners also discussed input they had from constituents in favor of expanded sidewalks as well as concerns about fewer parking spaces. Members of the public offered comments on extending sidewalks or even closing roads to vehicles; potential problems with busses getting down streets that

have been narrowed by extended sidewalks; and businesses that rely on parking for take-out and delivery.

Commissioner Irani offered an amendment to add a grocery store on the 2400 block of 18th Street, which was added to the resolution without objection. Commissioners then passed the resolution as amended by a vote of 5 to 1.

C. Public Services and the Environment Committee

1. Grant request from LightHouse

Commissioner Irani announced that he would recuse himself from consideration of the Lighthouse [grant request](#) because of his work as a board member of [Lighthouse](#).

Commissioner Bowles summarized ANC 1C's previous consideration of this grant request and subsequent discussions with the DC Office of ANCs about whether it meets the public purpose requirement. He noted that part of the request was for COVID related funds which fits within the new authorization which ANCs now have in this area. Commissioners discussed approving a grant just for grocery gift cards and PPE gear, provided the uses are adequately specified.

Jingwen Sun from Lighthouse agreed to amend the grant request, but expressed some concern about delaying the process for another month.

Commissioner Bowles moved to table the grant request until the June meeting. Commissioner Guthrie seconded the motion that then passed by a vote of 5 to 0 to 1 (with Commissioner Irani abstaining).

2. Resolution on the Office of the DC Auditor's "Are ANCs Given Great Weight?" report

Commissioner Irani moved to table until the June meeting consideration of a resolution in support of the Office of the DC Auditor's recommendations in the ["Are ANCs Given Great Weight?"](#) report. Commissioner Zottoli seconded the motion to table that then passed by a vote of 6 to 0.

3. Resolution in support of voter access

Commissioner Bowles presented a [resolution](#) urging adoption of measures to implement and encourage a vote-by mail system in DC and other measures to ensure adequate and safe staffing for mail-in ballot verification.

Commissioners discussed technological differences between submitting requests by computer versus phone; and current measures being considered by the DC Council to encourage mail-in voting, including waiving signature requirements.

Commissioners then passed the resolution by a vote of 6 to 0.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at about 10:33 pm.