

080410 MINUTES
CLEVELAND PARK CITIZENS ASSOCIATION (CPCA)
Thursday, April 10, 2008
“The Role of the National Mall in
DC’s new ‘Center City’ Plan”

In the absence of CPCA President Idelson, Vice-president Peter Espenschied convened the meeting of 30 people at 6:30pm and introduced the evening’s speakers: Richard H. Bradley, Executive Director of the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID), Patricia Zingsheim, Program Manager of the DC Center City Action (CCA) Agenda; Judy Scott Feldman, Chair, National Coalition to Save Our Mall; and Peter May, Associate Regional Director for Lands, Resources and Planning, National Capital Regional National Park.

Bradley advised that growing the downtown area is essential to the economic health of the city. The BID is concerned with stimulating real estate and concurrent cultural, residential, and recreational amenities. In 2007, the downtown area generated \$700 million. The BID is seeking ways to keep up this momentum, but there is growing concern is that, within the next two decades, the city will run out of space for development.

Zingsheim advised the CCA Agenda is the Fenty Administration’s economic strategy to redefine central Washington. This is a cooperative effort, involving the Architect of the Capitol, the Commission of Fine Arts, the National Capital Planning Commission, and the Park Service, as well as the DC government. The CCA Agenda has five objectives: to create a welcoming atmosphere; to connect public spaces; to create and/or renew distinctive places; to achieve green and renewable spaces; and to establish flexible, convenient, and coordinated transit systems linking central Washington destinations.

Bradley and Zingsheim said that the Mall lies at the heart of the downtown area and noted that there is a need for better planning and improvement if the area’s economic potential is to be realized.

Feldman advised that there are conflicting visions of the Mall’s future, ranging from a Congressional moratorium on new monuments to expanding the area into new territory. The National Coalition to Save Our Mall has called for an expanded 21st Century Mall that will serve tourists and

residents and stimulate growth. It is envisioned as an urban (not national) park with interactive attractions, a visitors' welcome center, and animated spaces that tell America's story. The Coalition is seeking citizen involvement in this process and, to that end, has established a National Mall Conservancy.

May advised that the Park Service is developing a National Mall Plan that will try to balance improvements and preservation concerns. May also expressed concern for the preservation of green space throughout the city.

Espenschied then opened the floor to questions from the audience. In response to one query about flooding, there was a discussion about the sewer system, levees, and other efforts to divert water from the Mall's flood zone, particularly in the Crescent area.

Espenschied adjourned the meeting at 8:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Buchanan, CPCA Recording Secretary