

CLEVELAND PARK CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

December 5, 2009

A meeting of the Cleveland Park Citizens Association (CPCA) was convened at 10:00 a.m. at the Cleveland Park Library on Saturday, December 5, 2009. A total of 27 people signed in. John Chelen, President, introduced Susie Taylor, First Vice President and the organizer of the meeting, who introduced the two speakers.

Commander Matthew Klein, of the Police Department's 2nd District, spoke about crime in Cleveland Park, and Samantha Nolan, Chair of the 2nd District Citizens Advisory Council, spoke about the establishment of a Neighborhood Watch.

Turning to CPCA business, Ruth Caplan reported on the November 5th membership meeting, on the status of the Membership Survey, and on the work of the Greening Cleveland Park Working group; John Chelen reported on the work of the Governance Committee; and Susie Taylor reported on the work of the Connecticut Coalition Committee. Chelen also reported that he had co-signed a letter to DCRA about their failure to follow proper clearance procedures before granting a building permit in the Cleveland Park Historic District.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Hamilton, Recording Secretary

For more detailed information on the meeting, see below:

Taylor noted that **crime** peaks in the holiday season and that most of the crime in Cleveland Park is preventable. She introduced Matthew Klein, Commander of the 2nd District of the D.C. Police Department, who said that PSA (Police Service Area) 204 - which includes Cleveland Park, Woodley Park, and McLean Gardens - has the third largest volume of police calls in the 2nd District, after Dupont Circle and Georgetown. He described the regular meetings he and his staff hold with citizens, and quoted a number of statistics, indicating that violent crime in the PSA was down 2% in 2009, relative to 2008, with some forms (robberies/ muggings) up and others (assault) down, while property crimes showed similar disparities (burglaries and, especially, theft from vehicles, up; theft down). He was encouraged by the data that showed that in the past 30 days, when crime normally rises, overall crime was down by 31%. He attributed this improvement largely to the fact that people were listening to advice about not leaving valuables visible in their cars.

Turning to community relations, he said he monitored the Cleveland Park listserv regularly. When he didn't reply personally to issues involving the police he forwarded it to the relevant officer. Although they had not achieved (and never would achieve) perfection, each problem represented a training opportunity. Asked by Taylor about recent burglaries on Connecticut Avenue, Cmdr. Klein said the question was one of police visibility, and he had instructed his men to be more present in cars and on foot; he also noted that the businesses had an obligation to help, by calling in crimes and ensuring that security cameras are working. Asked how many officers were on duty, he said there were 25 police and three supervisors in PSA 204, which meant an average of five people on duty at a time; asked about the reason for the recent success, he said that the solution lay in a combination of police presence and community awareness, both of which reduced the number of "crimes of opportunity." For example, his officers had recently started issuing "tickets" when valuables were visible in cars. He urged that people

who saw anything they deemed suspicious call 911 to report it, even at the cost of being accused of being politically incorrect.

Asked if the Metro was a factor in local crime, Cmdr. Klein said it was, because it provided easy "getaway," and that the DC Police were working cooperation with the Metro Police. Asked whether the police provided information on arrests as well as crime, he explained how hard it was to associate arrests with particular crimes and how arrests solved the problem only briefly. In response to a question about non-responsiveness of police to illegal parking in front of an apartment building, he asked for the address and said he would look into it. Asked about the availability of high-tech cameras, Cmdr. Klein described what was available to the D.C. Police.

Taylor then introduced Samantha Nolan, Chair of the 2nd District Citizens Advisory Council. Nolan said her goal was to establish a Neighborhood Watch on every block, so that crime wouldn't simply be moved from an area that had such a Neighborhood Watch to a near-by area. The basic principal was that people's eyes were needed to help the police. This required a Block Captain to be responsible for every block (from one intersection to another, or one group of houses on both sides of the street with the same OOs street number, or one apartment building), whose job was to distribute information and to ensure that close neighbors know each other. She described almost all the crime in the Cleveland Park area as preventable crime - the result of leaving something (strollers, bikes, lawnmowers) on the front lawn, or visible in a car (iPod, GPS, cell phone, laptop), listening to iPods or talking on cell phones while on the street, as well as other examples of carelessness or unawareness.

Nolan described the structure of the D.C. Police Department, which had seven Districts, each of which was divided into several PSAs (the 2nd District has eight). She also described what happens with a 911 call, noting that the operators are trained to listen for key words. The words that trigger a top-priority Code 1, sending the first available car, are, "fire," "gun," and "crime in progress." A fuzzy complaint will yield only a Code 4 or 5 response. She also advised citizens who suspected a burglary not to enter the house and not to touch anything, even an

open door, until the police had taken fingerprints. She showed a PowerPoint presentation of Do's and Don't's about crime prevention, and emphasized the importance of not opening the door to strangers. She can be reached at nolantutor@yahoo.com.

Chelen opened the business portion of the meeting. He said there were no minutes of the **November meeting**, but asked Ruth Caplan to report on the substance of the meeting. Caplan said the full report on the break-out groups was available on the CPCA website (ClevelandParkIsUs.com), broken down into two categories: Cleveland Park as a community and CPCA as an organization. She briefly highlighted top issues of concern under each topic - e.g., development and growth, and CPCA governance, membership, and communications. She next reported on behalf of Barry Winer, who was traveling, about the upcoming **Membership Survey**. The first meeting will be held on the afternoon of January 9, 2010, in the Cleveland Park Library; specifics and the agenda will be posted on the CPCA listserv soon. Volunteers, especially those with expertise in polling or in Cleveland Park, are solicited; interested people should email Barry Winer at darkstar965@yahoo.com. Caplan emphasized that the Survey will be carefully designed, with opportunity for membership review before activating the survey.

Chelen reported on the work of the **Governance Committee**, whose members were Chelen (Chair), Jeff Davis and Jeremy Sher (Co-Vice-Chairs), John Korbel, Anne Large, Mark Rosenman, Jeremy Sher, and Tina Tummonds. He said the objective of the committee was to come up with one integrated set of proposals for revisions to the Articles (Constitution) and Bylaws, a draft of which they hoped to have available in March for review by the Executive Committee. If the Executive Committee approves the draft in March, it will be presented to the membership, perhaps in the form of a Resolution, in April, for discussion and a vote in May. Before March, a series of "white papers" on several topics (e.g., boundaries, voting procedures) - outlining the pros and cons of various alternatives - will be published for comment; some of these might also be the subject of special CPCA membership meetings.

Asked about the relationship between the Survey and the draft Constitution/Bylaws revisions, given the schedules for both, Chelen responded that he hoped they would dovetail. Asked when the white papers would be published, Chelen replied that he hoped the first ones would be as early as January.

In response to questions about the January meeting, Chelen reported that **meeting dates** and agendas through June would be published soon on the CPCA website and listserv, and that a mailing would be sent soon about the January meeting (the date of which would be established shortly). He noted that the next few meetings were likely to be on weekday evenings, for the convenience of those who couldn't make it on Saturday morning. Several people urged that the date be coordinated with the calendar of other local and city-wide organizations.

Taylor reported on the work of the **Connecticut Avenue Committee**. The key work of this committee is to build on the co-dependence between the residents of Cleveland Park and the merchants who operated in the community. In addition to Co-Chairs Taylor and Sean Mullen, the members of the committee are Curt Large, Jane Treacy, Lise Gladstone, Cliff Feldman, Pierre Abushakra, Susan Lihn, Roger Burns, and Leila Afzal; Ruth Pollak serves as the liaison with the Cleveland Park Historical Society. Five subcommittees have been set up, and Taylor asked that anyone interested in serving on any of them contact her at tayfish@aol.com:

*Commercial revitalization (Lise Gladstone) - zoning, overlay, permits, historic district requirements, etc.

*Liaison (Cliff Feldman) - identifying links with CPHS, ANC, city agencies

*Beautification/Infrastructure (Ruth Pollak)

*Public Relations/Outreach (Pierre Abushakra, Curt Large) - e.g., CP Day

* Parking (Jane Treacy)

Taylor said that the long-range goal of this group is to build a lasting coalition to define and pursue the community's objectives, in keeping with the principles of Main Street. Short-term goals include: fact-finding by each of the above

subcommittees, establishing a Cleveland Park Farmers' Market, re-creating Cleveland Park Day, etc.

Caplan reported that the **Greening Cleveland Park Working Group**, under the leadership of MaryAnn Nash and with a membership of some 12 people, was planning to hold its first meeting the week of December 18th. More information would be available at the January meeting.

Other: Anne Loikow explained that every City Council committee holds oversight meetings in January and February on its areas of responsibility, in preparation for budget hearings starting in March. This is the one time of year when citizens have an opportunity to be heard on subjects of interest to them. Judy Hubbard spoke in support of a petition that the city not sell the architecturally- and educationally-valuable Franklin School. Loikow noted that a Public Property Bill was currently before the Council; it would require advance planning and a decision that a property is surplus before it could be sold for development. She also mentioned that the process of confirming the nominee to replace Betty Noel as People's Counsel had slowed down in the face of opposition; this is particularly important in view of the very large rate increase proposed by Pepco on its distribution services and its efforts to transfer some of its economic risk to consumers.

Chelen reported that, with the approval of the Executive Committee, he had co-signed a letter to the Zoning Administrator about a permit issued without proper clearances for a wall built by the developers of the Macklin apartment building, across the street from the library. The question was raised as to whether obtaining membership approval retroactively might further the letter's impact, or whether prior membership approval was required by the Bylaws. Chelen noted that this was exactly the kind of issue that would be addressed by the Governance Committee as they work to revise the Bylaws.