

Cleveland Park Citizens Association
Membership/Community Meeting
September 18, 2014

President Helen Chamberlin called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. She announced that copies of CPCA Board's proposed Work Plan for 2014-15 was available at the back of the room for members to pick up (it will also be posted on the website when the Minutes are posted) and that the 2014-15 Budget will be emailed to members and posted on the association's website. Both will be presented for Members to approve at the Membership meeting on October 16. She added that Minutes of the May and June Board Meetings are also on the website.

The candidates for DC Attorney General were introduced by Bill Taylor, a partner at Zuckerberg & Spaeder and CP resident, who moderated the candidates' forum. Taylor began by describing the role of the DC Attorney General (AG) as defined in 2010: the AG has charge and conduct of all the city's law business and all suits instituted by and against the government; the AG must uphold the public interest, controls litigation and appeals, and has the power to intervene in legal proceedings on behalf of the public interest.

He pointed out that this is the first time that the AG will be elected; in the past the AG was appointed by and served at the discretion of the Mayor. In 2011, citizens voted to elect the AG. The City Council's decision to delay the first election until 2018 was overturned by litigation brought by Paul Zuckerberg.

Taylor introduced the five candidates: Lorie Masters, Karl Racine, Edward "Smitty" Smith, Lateefah Williams, and Paul Zuckerberg. After each made a brief presentation, Taylor asked each to answer his questions. There was time at the end of the forum for a few questions from the audience. This was followed by the candidates' summations.

Almost 80 people attended the forum. Many were surprised to learn that the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) has 700 employees, 300 of whom are lawyers. In addition to representing the city government, OAG handles all juvenile justice cases and all misdemeanors, while adult felony cases are handled by the US Attorney's Office.

Each candidate had opportunities to describe their work in the law and as public servants. All the candidates emphasized that DC residents are the OAG's clients, with an obligation to represent the public interest independent of politics. The AG must work with the City Council, the Mayor's Office, and the US Attorney's Office. Some highlighted the opportunity for the OAG to educate the public about citizens' rights, listen to citizen complaints, reform juvenile justice, advocate for greater DC autonomy, and encourage settlements instead of lengthy litigation where appropriate. Audience questions included a complaint about the failure of local small businesses to get their share of government contracts; how the elected AG will work with existing OAG staff and how internal change will occur; and whether OAG lawyers will be required to be DC residents.

A Podcast of the forum is available on www.cpcadc.org.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Lenzner, Recording Secretary