

**CLEVELAND PARK CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
MINUTES
Membership/Community Meeting, October 20, 2016**

CPCA Business Meeting. Ruth Caplan called the CPCA Business meeting to order at 6:35 pm. She summarized the proposed Work Plan, which had been distributed at the September meeting, and its associated budget. In response to a question, she said CPCA dues had been raised last year, and were now \$25 for an individual membership and \$30 for a household membership. After motion duly made and seconded, the Work Plan and Budget were both unanimously approved.

Pamela Korbel explained the objectives of the Ward 3 Short-term Family Housing Advisory Team, of which she, Ruth Caplan, and Ann Hamilton are members. DC's website on the subject is at mayor.dc.gov/homewarddc; the FAQ sheet for Ward 3 is at <http://dmhhs.dc.gov/node/1194222>.

Ruth described activities taken by the newly formed organization QCDC – Quiet and Clean DC – and bills introduced by CM Mary Cheh since the CPCA meeting on leaf blowers in April.

Ruth announced that the **next Membership/Community meeting** would feature a conversation with Mayor Muriel Bowser on Thursday, November 17, at the Cleveland Park Community Church. She described some of the highlights of CPCA's 115-year history, including the construction of the Fire Station (Engine Co. 28) in 1916 and the Library in the 1950s, and noted that the 100th anniversary of Engine 28 would be celebrated on Sunday, December 4th, with the Mayor, CM Mary Cheh, and the Fire Chief present.

No new business was proposed for discussion, and the business meeting was adjourned at 6:55 pm.

CPCA Community Meeting. Ruth Caplan called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and introduced the moderator, Jerome Akman, who described the history and role of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs). He introduced the candidates for the two contested seats within ANC3C representing parts of Cleveland Park: for Single Member District (SMD) 09 Nancy MacWood, incumbent, and, Robert Ward; and for SMD 05, Margaret Siegel, incumbent, and, Emma Hersh.

Each of the four candidates was given one minute to describe his/her candidacy, including background, experience, and aspirations. The meeting then turned to general questions asked on behalf of CPCA by Mark Rosenman, each of which was addressed by all four candidates. These dealt with (1) the tension between the historic nature of Cleveland Park and the benefits of residential and commercial density, (2) whether ANCs should be the only legitimate voice of the citizenry, or whether there is a formal role for community organizations and closely affected residents, (3) whether neighbors should be able to negotiate limits with aspiring bars and restaurants, (4) the desirability of re-opening issues (such as the Connecticut Ave. service road).

After these questions were addressed, the meeting turned to questions from the audience dealing with specific drainage problems, the overlay, vacant storefronts, the lack of a vibrant restaurant scene on CT Ave, and the need for ANC to reach people who can't come to meetings. There were brief closing statements from each of the candidates:

Hersh: There are many opportunities for increased density in Cleveland Park; a visioning process is needed to identify them. What is needed is proactive outreach to all residents, with new models of communication, including new technology and an improved website as well as meetings, followed by intense focus on the measures identified. We need to change the ANC's reputation, so it is seen as representing all residents, not just the loudest.

Siegel: Described many activities on behalf of residents, including those involving Hearst Park, the Library, and Beach Drive closure. Much of the charm of Cleveland Park lies in its eclectic architecture and its flexibility. It is important that the Connecticut Avenue streetscape be seen as an entity, not as a series of piecemeal projects. Since challenges are monumental and all ANC Commissioners are volunteers, they have to be very strategic in deciding how to spend their time on various issues. Solving the vacant storefront problem requires new legislation and a new approach to the duration of Certificates of Occupancy for food-serving businesses. Good communication requires going where the people are, going to meetings, remaining accessible by phone and email.

MacWood: How to balance historic preservation with urban density is a challenge for Cleveland Park and for the whole city; our city plan is unique and change has implications for the essential tax revenue from visitors. It is necessary to be aware of the difference between contributing and non-contributing structures when considering historic preservation, and to ensure that increased density is part of a coherent planning process. Local groups provide an invaluable service to the ANC in considering legislative and administrative changes. The overlay is not the cause of vacancy problems; the problem lies in exemptions from tax increases for vacant building, and Certificates of Occupancy which last in perpetuity. Other established neighborhoods are also facing vacancy problems; growth is taking place in areas being gentrified. She believes in "retail politics" -- meeting with residents one-on-one, identifying their problems, and going to work on them, thinking creatively, outside the box.

Ward: Focused on the physical, built neighborhood and need for increase in urban density around transit corridors. All interested people should have a voice and be able to testify on official matters, but they should not be given automatic party status. ANCs should be the only legitimate voice of the citizenry, because they are elected and more representative of the community than organizations like CPCA. New approaches have emerged since the Connecticut Avenue service lane was discussed in 2013 which can provide the parking needed by businesses as well as a pedestrian and aesthetic experience benefiting other members of the community. What is needed is to bury parking -- i.e., to put it underground. The zoning overlay isn't responsible for vacancies in the commercial area, but it has aspects, such as height limits, which need a new look. What is needed is a data-driven business plan of the sort being developed in Tenleytown, one that brings in

more people and daytime traffic. We should harness technology to demonstrate that showing up is not a condition of being informed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.

A video of the full meeting is available at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzpZLC7Xet8&feature=youtu.be>.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Hamilton, Acting Recording Secretary