

CLEVELAND PARK CITIZENS ASSOCIATION  
MINUTES  
Membership/Community Meeting  
February 2, 2017

The business meeting was followed by presentations for and against the outdoor swimming pool proposed for Hearst Park that are described below.

**BUSINESS MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 pm by Ruth Caplan, President. Attendance grew to at least 40. The meeting was podcast through CPCA's new audio system.

Ruth said that the final renewal solicitation letter will go out early next week. She said the next Membership meeting that has been scheduled is for March 12, featuring Lynn Cherry of Young Voices for the Planet to attract families around the issue of climate change.

Susie reported on plans for a **farmer's market** on Connecticut Avenue, saying that a previous attempt for this was vetoed by ANC3C. She said the Connecticut Avenue Coalition met last night to strategize. The idea is for a six-month pilot, starting small with about 10 vendors. Susie said that a survey to assess community support will be designed and distributed likely in March before final decisions are made. One member suggested that artisans might be included as vendors.

Ruth commented on the **Ward 3 family homeless shelter**. She said that ANC3C's community meeting on January 31 filled the room to overflowing. Some attendees expressed strong support, while others raised familiar concerns such as impact on schools, property values, parking, and 2<sup>nd</sup> District police operations. Ruth said the Ward 3 Advisory Team meeting planned for February will include MPD Acting Chief Peter Newsham and Homeland Security's DC chief. The meeting in March will discuss school impacts with DPS. She said that neighbors will have input for a "good neighbors' agreement" ANC3C's Planning & Zoning Committee will consider the zoning exception and variances needed for the shelter on February 6, and the ANC will meet on February 21 at 7:30 to make final recommendations. At the Bureau of Zoning Adjustment's hearing scheduled for March 1, anyone can speak. The main zoning issues to be considered are excessive height (six stories), two main functions on the site, less parking than required, and lack of a loading dock.

Susie reported on DDOT's **streetscape improvements for Connecticut Avenue** that were launched in 2010. Some elements, like the mid-block signaled crossing, have been accomplished. CPCA has been pushing DDOT for outstanding elements that have been delayed so they can be packaged with drainage issues. She said that overwhelming water flowing into the Metro station during heavy rains is due to inadequate pipes and catch basins behind streetfront buildings.

Ruth announced that the public is invited to a meeting on the **Mayor's budget** on February 23 at Wilson High School.

The business meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

## **COMMUNITY MEETING ON HEARST POOL**

Ruth introduced representatives of two groups to present on DC's plans for **an outdoor swimming pool at Hearst Park**: Caroline Mehta and Jonathan Sacks of Friends of Hearst Pool; Harry Martin, Sarah Brown and Dan White for Neighbors for Hearst Park; and David Dickinson, commissioner for ANC3F01 which includes Hearst Park.

David Dickinson of **ANC3F** referred to the city's survey results on the website of the Department of General Services (DGS), and on ANC3F's site at: <http://anc3f.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Hearst-Survey-Presentation-at-the-ANC-011717.pdf>. His handout included ANC3F's resolution passed in September asking DGS/DPS to work with Department of Environment (DOEE) to undertake a hydrology and geologic study and to not make any determinations re: renovation of Hearst Park until the resultd of the study are complete and communicated to the public. He said **ANC3F** will likely draft a resolution on the pool after the DGS/DPS community meeting at Hearst gym on February 15 and vote on it at the next ANC meeting.

Caroline Mehta said **Friends of Hearst Pool (FOHP)** is the voice for those who support a public outdoor pool in our neighborhood. She said that good design can mitigate concerns, the pool could "enhance and grow the community", that it could be a "gathering spot for all ages" in a "leafy recreation campus." Jonathan Sacks said that FOHP doesn't have members but communicates via email with about 1000. He said FOHP is agnostic about the three options offered by DGS/DPR for the pool location at Hearst, but he said using the tennis court area (Option I) is the least disruptive of other park functions. He offered a slightly different plan locating the pool in the southwest corner close to 37<sup>th</sup> & Quebec Streets. He asserted characteristics of the location that minimize conflicts: parking would not be a problem, as demonstrated by empty street observed on Sunday, June 12, 2016; no conflicting residential component; no nearby school (Sidwell and Hearst) operations need street parking in summer. He said that a six lane, 25-yard pool can be accommodated with appropriate deck and wade area; the heritage pin oak trees will not be disturbed; and hydrology will not be an issue at this location. Sacks concluded saying that something is going to happen at Hearst, and the community needs to have a voice at the design table.

Speaking for **Neighbors of Hearst Park (NFHP)**, Harry Martin introduced Sarah Brown and Dan White, all longtime CP residents. He said Hearst Park, with 4.2 acres, was established in the 1930's on land still owned by the National Park Service but managed by DC Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR). He said that \$5M for a Ward 3 pool first appeared in DC's FY 2015 budget without specifying a location or notice to the community. Allocation increased to \$6M in the 2016 budget for the pool at Hearst. To date, there has been no feasibility or hydrology study; NFHP's FOIA request to DGS and DPR resulted in nothing – no other sites considered and no feasibility study. Sarah Brown pointed out that a pool at Hearst is inconsistent with DPR's master plan's identification of Hearst as open green space and locates a Ward 3 pool closer to Western

Avenue. She noted that Hearst is used year round for multiple activities and that adding a pool would reduce the size of the soccer field making it too small for games. She presented a map showing 14 potential pool sites on open land – mostly federal property like Francis pool in Rock Creek Park. She said that DPW admitted that the plans on the survey are not to scale, and that DPW said the prototype is the Upshur pool which is 34,000 s.f. although the city plans for Hearst indicate only 12,000 s.f. NFHP’s slide showed how small the proposed Hearst pool space is compared to pools at Volta, Francis and Upshur. Dan White said the Hearst site is not sufficient for the community center that Hearst pool supporters envision. He also pointed out the severe water drainage problems going downhill from the park to Springland Lane. Claiming that the park was built on fill dirt over a ravine, he asserted that pool construction would require excavating to bedrock.

Audience questions and comments included concern for maintaining the soccer field for regulation games, and that Stoddert Soccer opposes the pool if it means reducing the field. Some questioned the city’s ability to properly maintain a pool, mentioning that citizens contribute \$50,000 - \$100,000 annually to maintain Volta pool. A civil engineer said that the city’s plans and pictures are designed to fool people who aren’t trained; she said the city should go back to the Master Plan and choose a location where a pool can be built. A Porter Street resident said he is most concerned about preserving the large heritage willow oaks that he said will be seriously damaged by heavy construction vehicles. (Jonathan Sacks said that FOHP would reconsider its support if building the pool would impact the trees.) A nearby neighbor said she initially supported the pool plan but now realizes the environmental trade-offs necessary for this two and a half months’ use, adding that all the facts are incompatible. Another nearby resident said there is not enough space for both a quality pool and a quality soccer field. She pointed out that park renovation (\$8M in this year’s budget) could be undone by pool construction next year, adding, “If we’re not honest, we’re all going to be disappointed.” Another mentioned that plans calling for a pool at Turtle Park eight years ago were quashed because one softball field would have been lost. He added that girls especially benefit from swimming exercise and that boys dominate recreational parks. Several said the park should be maintained as the city is losing much green space.

## **BUSINESS MEETING RECONVENED for RESOLUTIONS**

At 8:40 pm, Ruth Caplan announced reopening of the business meeting to take resolutions. She said the bylaws require 14 days notice before a vote on a resolution, and that a meeting will be scheduled after Feb. 16 for discussion of and voting on any resolutions presented this evening. At that time, only members in good standing for at least 30 days may vote.

The **first Resolution** was read by Bob Ward on behalf of his wife, member Jennifer Ward urging CPCA to be neutral on the pool issue:

Whereas the District Government is in the planning stages of building a pool at Hearst Park; and

Whereas informal non-scientific surveys and opinions expressed at community meetings have demonstrated that there are differing opinions surrounding the siting of a pool at Hearst Park; and

Whereas the Cleveland Park Citizens Association (CPCA) has been asked to take a position to oppose the siting of a pool at Hearst Park; and

Whereas every member of the CPCA and every resident of Cleveland Park has access to express their personal views about whether siting a pool at Hearst Park is a good or bad decision to the ANC, the Council, the Mayor, DGS and DPR; and

Whereas the CPCA can play a unique and needed role as community forum promoting the free exchange of opinions, facts and information, providing space to listen to the concerns and views of neighbors, building consensus where possible;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the CPCA remain neutral on the policy of whether a pool should be sited at Hearst Park; and

Be It Further Resolved that the CPCA continue to be a place where competing sides on controversial issues such as a Hearst Park pool can be debated and where information and facts can be exchanged, and where members can discuss how to express their views to policy makers and the DC Government.

The **second Resolution** was read by Harry Martin of **Neighbors for Hearst Park** asking that the Hearst earmark be removed from DPR's budget:

Whereas, the Cleveland Park Citizens Association (CPCA) has represented the interests of the Cleveland Park neighborhood since 1911; and

Whereas, Hearst Recreational Center (Hearst Park) is a 4.2-acre park located at 37<sup>th</sup> and Quebec Streets, NW, within CPCA's jurisdictional boundaries; and

Whereas the park is owned by the National Park Service and by agreement is managed by the District of Columbia's (DC's) Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR); and

Whereas, in DC's Fiscal Year 2015 budget the sum of \$5,000,000 was allocated to DPR for the construction of an outdoor swimming pool in Ward 3, but without a pool site being specified; and

Whereas, in the corresponding section of the Fiscal Year 2016 budget, Hearst Park was identified as the site for a Ward 3 outdoor swimming pool (the "Hearst Earmark") and the pool allocation was increased to \$6,000,000; and

Whereas, no advance notice of the plan to select Hearst Park as a pool site was given to neighborhood residents, to CPCA or to the affected Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs 3C and ANC 3F); and

Whereas, the selection of Hearst Park as the pool site is inconsistent with PlayDC, DPR's master plan for development of recreational facilities, in that Hearst Park is designated in PlayDC to be preserved as green space, with the site of a Ward 3 outdoor pool to be located closer to Western Avenue; and

Whereas, DC did not study any alternative locations for a pool in Ward 3, or seek public input about alternative sites, or about the suitability of Hearst Park as a pool location, before determining that Hearst Park would if fact be the site for the pool; and

Whereas, Hearst Park is the largest green space in Cleveland Park, contains 15 heritage oak trees, is shady during the warm weather months and currently is dark at night; and

Whereas, DC's published plans for the swimming pool, as admitted by DC's architect in the public meeting where the plans were unveiled, are not to scale and thus do

not accurately render the sizes and designs of the planned pool deck or pool house, and do not depict at all the chemical storage building, fencing or all-night security lighting that a swimming pool requires; and

Whereas, due to space considerations at Hearst Park, the pool would be too small to adequately serve Ward 3's population of 77,000, and there would be no children's pool; and

Whereas, Hearst Park, first developed in the early 1930's, accommodates multi-seasonal recreational activities, including soccer, softball, sledding, tennis and dog walking; and

Whereas, the planned outdoor pool would have a negative impact these year-round existing uses for the sake of a facility used for a maximum of three months per year; and

Whereas, Hearst Park, was built on up to 30 feet of fill dirt and is prone to flooding; nevertheless, DC has not prepared a hydrology study addressing pool construction on what may be unsettled ground, and has not otherwise prepared an environmental impact statement for the pool project; nor has DC conducted traffic, parking or use studies regarding the impact of a pool at Hearst Park.

Therefore, be it resolved that CPCA (1) requests that the Mayor and City Council remove the Hearst Earmark from the budget for DPR, thereby freeing DPR and sister agencies to identify and study the suitability of alternative Ward 3 pool sites; (2) requests that such suitability studies be open to the input of affected ANCs, neighborhood organizations and citizens; and (3) directs CPCA's president or her designee to transmit a copy of this resolution to Mayor Muriel Bowser and City Council Chairman Phil Mendelson for their consideration in the formulation of DC's Fiscal Year 2018 budget.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Margaret Lenzner, Recording Secretary