

Community Liaison Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 15, 2017
American University – School of International Service – Abramson Family Founders Room
7 p.m.

Introductions & Opening Remarks

The meeting of the Community Liaison Committee (CLC) was opened by AU Vice President of Campus Life Gail Hanson, who convenes and leads the meetings for American University. She opened the meeting at 7 p.m. by welcoming neighbors, representatives of neighborhood organizations, and local Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs).

Attendees introduced themselves and stated their affiliations.

New Business & Neighborhood Issues

Gail Hanson introduced Don Edwards and Ashley Blackwell of Justice and Sustainability Associates (JSA) to attendees and advised that they will be working with AU on neighborhood engagement and collaboration.

Don Edwards stated that he and Ashley were engaged by the university to assist in delivering a promise of collaboration. He added that JSA works on process, reducing conflict, and promoting collaborative decision making.

Gail Hanson asked Bill Krebs of the Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association if he would like to pose his recently emailed questions regarding AU's Good Neighbor parking policy.

Bill Krebs stated that there was a specific incident in Spring Valley that raised questions for him regarding how AU tracks and records parking tickets.

Dan Nichols, AU's Vice President of Risk, Safety, and Transportation Programs, reviewed the university's Good Neighbor parking policy (available at <http://www.american.edu/finance/publicsafety/parking/neighbor.cfm>).

He stated that the goal of the policy is compliance and that AU affiliates coming to university property must take public transit, buy a parking pass, or pay the hourly rate at garage pay stations. He also shared with the CLC an image of the back of a ticket with instruction on how to handle a ticket issued in error (available at <http://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/upload/Sample-Parking-Ticket-03-15-17.pdf>). He added that neighbors who receive tickets erroneously should request to be added to AU's "do not ticket" list.

Tom Smith, of the Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association, asked when the text on the back of the ticket was changed.

Dan Nichols replied approximately four years ago in an effort to encourage recipients to contact AU should they be issued a ticket.

Gail Hanson stated that it would be helpful if neighborhood leaders could share this information via their neighborhood newsletters and other communications.

Beth Marcus, of Sutton Place Condominiums, asked for the phone number of the AU Parking office. It is 885-3111.

Judy Chesser, of the Tenleytown Neighbors Association, asked if students are required to submit their vehicle information when they come to AU.

Dan Nichols replied that only students, faculty, and staff who apply for AU parking permits are required to submit this information to the university.

Beth Marcus stated that when she registered for classes via the AU Community Audit program she was asked for her vehicle information.

Dan Nichols replied that he was not aware of this and did not know why this information would be requested.

[Note: It was later confirmed that this information is not requested as part of the Community Audit registration process. Rather, residents are required to submit proof of residency, usually in the form of a driver's license.]

Dan Nichols said that changes to fine structure from flat to escalating fines have helped with compliance – the ultimate goal.

Dennis Paul, of Neighbors for a Livable Community, asked why no one from AU notifies the ticket recipient when the level of fines reaches into the thousands of dollars.

Dan Nichols replied that the onus is on the violator to contact the university.

Hunt LaCascia, of the Fort Gaines Citizens Association, asked what if you live in the community and attend AU part time.

Dan Nichols replied that residents of the neighborhood can be placed on the AU “do not ticket” list upon request.

Hunt LaCascia then asked how the policy applies to Zone 3 permit holders.

Dan Nichols replied that even Zone 3 permit holders are required to adhere to the policy.

David Taylor, Chief of Staff to the AU President thanked Gail Hanson for her service to AU and the CLC and invited attendees to stay after the meeting for cake and conversation in honor of Gail. [Note: Dr. Hanson will retire from AU on March 31, 2017.]

Update on the Proposed Neighborhood Collaborative

Linda Argo, AU's Assistant Vice President for External Relations & Auxiliary Services, reported on the soon-to-be-launched AU Neighborhood Collaborative. She stated that the group grew out of discussion with the D.C. Zoning Commission and neighbors back in July, 2016. At the direction of the Zoning Commission, AU was asked to work with the community to address issues most relevant to the university's "fence-line" neighbors, such as campus planning, enrollment, and housing.

The group is structured to include representatives of parties to AU's Campus Plan which include ANC 3D, ANC 3E, Spring Valley Wesley Heights Citizens Association, Neighbors for a Livable Community, Fort Gaines Citizens Association, Westover Place Homes Corporation, Tenley Campus Neighbors Association, and Tenley Neighbors Association. As new groups form in the neighborhoods directly adjacent to the AU main and Tenley campuses, such as the Spring Valley Neighborhood Association, they also will be invited to participate.

Linda Argo stated that the Neighborhood Collaborative will hold an organizational meeting on April 6, followed by a meeting on April 19 which will focus on the proposed construction of a new Life Sciences building, internal to the AU campus. Following review by the Neighborhood Collaborative, the University will attend the monthly meeting of ANC 3D to present its plans for the science building, moving along to the Zoning Commission after that.

Jane Waldmann, of the Tenleytown Historical Society, asked how many groups from the CLC are excluded from the Collaborative and what subject matter would be covered by the respective groups.

Linda Argo replied that how the groups work in parallel remains to be worked out, but that the Collaborative will focus on issues that directly affect adjacent neighbors.

Gail Hanson added that the CLC is required to provide standing reports related to parking, off-campus student conduct, enrollment, and construction at each quarterly meeting.

Linda Argo said that work of the Collaborative also will be reported to the CLC.

Jane Waldmann asked how many CLC groups also are Collaborative groups and added that the new group seems duplicative.

[Note: A list of CLC membership can be found at <http://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/upload/2017-2018-Community-Liaison-Committee-Roster-3.pdf>.]

Linda Argo replied that while she does not know exactly, there is interest by all parties in having a working group to collaborate on issues pertinent to adjacent neighbors, as well as the campus planning process.

Beth Marcus stated that Sutton Place condominiums is adjacent to AU's commercial property at 3201 New Mexico Avenue, NW, and that should any plans or issues arise related to this building, she would like to be included.

Judy Chesser, of the Tenleytown Neighbors Association, said that when the Collaborative was created there was inadequate notice given to the CLC.

Linda Argo replied that the Zoning Commission addressed this issue at their December 12 meeting and agreed to allow more time for neighborhood input and to take up the matter at the hearing on AU's proposed new science building in the fall.

Tom Smith stated that the agreement forming the Collaborative was altered based on conversations at the CLC.

Linda Argo added that AU does not need a zoning order directive to move forward with the creation of the Collaborative and that the Zoning Commission has applauded the work thus far in the body's creation.

Judy Chesser asked why the entire CLC was not notified prior to the Zoning Commission hearing where this was addressed.

Linda Argo replied that the case before the Zoning Commission specifically addressed East Campus and that the only mention of the CLC was the suggestion to add a neighbor as co-chair. In hindsight, she said that AU should have notified all parties to zoning case 11-07, not only those associated with 11-07F.

John Wheeler, of Ward 3 Vision, stated that the Collaborative concept is a good one, but added that an issue involving Westover Place, for example, should not be open for involvement by ANC 3E or the Tenley Campus Neighbors Association. He also said that ANCs should be able to decide who represents them on the Collaborative, depending on the issue at hand.

Linda Argo replied that these issues can be discussed at the Collaborative's upcoming organization meeting.

Don Edwards commended everyone for their patience during this process and stated that there is some structural work to be done to make these operations more efficient and effective. He stated that a neighbors-only meeting would be held soon to discuss issues of importance to them.

CLC Chair Succession: Factors that Matter to the Community

Gail Hanson stated that with her retirement coming up at the end of March, AU is interested in hearing from the CLC about the factors important to them in identifying a new CLC chair. She added that it is unusual for the VP of Campus Life to have this responsibility, but it is likely because of the amount of testimony during the 2011 campus plan hearings related to off-campus student behavior. She stated that the AU CLC Chair would be a senior-level person at the university. Chuck Elkins, of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D, stated that it should be

someone with the time and jurisdiction to pose solutions to issues. He added that the person needs to be able to be engaged in the time between CLC meetings and that rank is less important than the ability to bring AU to the table when necessary. He then asked if the Zoning Order states that it must be someone at the VP level.

Linda Argo replied that the Order states that the CLC will be led in the way proposed by AU, in this case the VP of Campus Life. It is not, however, a condition of the Order.

Chuck Elkins said that in looking over the AU President's cabinet, he would suggest the VP of Communications as a possible good fit.

Dennis Paul, of Neighbors for a Livable Community, suggested David Taylor as a possible replacement.

Matt Frumin, of Tenleytown, suggested someone with a reputation for candor and someone able to disagree politely. He added that the person also has to have the capacity to get things done within the university.

Chuck Elkins recommended someone involved in the campus planning process.

Tom Smith stated that he believes rank is important and that this helps send a strong message to neighbors as well as the AU community.

Judy Chesser added that it should be someone who reports back to the CLC and follows up on action items from the previous meeting.

Scheduled Reports: Construction Update

East Campus

David Dower, AU's Assistant Vice President for Planning and Project Management, updated the CLC on current and upcoming construction projects on campus. His presentation can be viewed at <http://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/upload/Capital-Projects-Update-03-15-17.pdf>.

Gail Hanson stated that 300 students now are living on East Campus and that, thus far, the impact on the corner of Nebraska and New Mexico Avenues, NW seems minimal. Constitution Hall (on Nebraska Avenue) will not be occupied until May.

Beth Marcus said that the newly installed HAWK signal on Nebraska Avenue between New Mexico and Ward Circle does not seem to be having a negative impact on traffic flow.

Jeffery Kraskin, of the Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association, added that this could be because the classrooms on East Campus have yet to open.

David Dower replied that there are only eight classrooms on East Campus.

Claire Craik, of the Westover Place Homes Corporation, thanked Gail Hanson for her leadership on the CLC and stated that residents of Westover remain concerned about gaps in the landscaped buffer area between East Campus and Westover Place.

She continued that AU has listened closely, that constructive conversations have taken place with Linda Argo and her team and that a walk-through of the area is scheduled for March 28 with representatives from Westover Place and AU. She said that Westover Place is looking for an effective, time-bound plan with clear follow up.

Linda Argo stated that AU understands fully the issue and provided a written response to the Westover Place Board of Directors, outlining the university's commitment to working collaboratively towards a solution.

Summer Projects on Campus

David Dower advised that this summer will be typical with interior work and renovations taking place around campus. Utility work also will be under way on AU roadways.

He added that the AU Public Safety building off of Rockwood Parkway will be demolished to enable the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to remediate the ground underneath the building's foundation. The building demolition will last approximately two weeks, at which point the site will be turned over to the Army Corps.

Bill Krebs asked what will happen with the land at that location.

David Dower replied that it will be a grassy lot; its use will likely be addressed in the next campus plan.

Alan Pollock, of the Fort Gaines Citizens Association, asked what will happen to the bell currently outside of the building – he hopes it will not be disposed.

Gail Hanson replied that AU Fraternity and Sorority Life will make sure it is saved.

Michael Weston, a neighbor, asked why the site was going to be remediated and for what kind of materials.

David Dower replied that the dirt underneath the building foundation is contaminated.

Chuck Elkins asked if the Army Corps will use containment methods during this work.

David Dower replied that he does not believe so.

Chuck Elkins asked if the neighbors have been notified.

John Wheeler stated that this will be done by the Army Corps and that the clean-up of the Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS) at AU has been under way for more than twenty years.

Linda Argo added that four attendees at the CLC meeting also sit on the Army Corps' Restoration Advisory Board (RAB), that the group meets every other month, and that this issue will be discussed there.

Life Sciences Building

David Dower reported that next month AU will begin community outreach on AU's proposed Life Sciences building. The building is intended to bring together biology, chemistry, neuroscience, and environmental science under one roof. It will house both research and instructional labs. The proposed building will total 124,000 square feet.

Tom Smith asked if AU plans to submit for both a zoning modification and further processing simultaneously to which Linda Argo responded yes.

Student Conduct Off-Campus

Michelle Espinosa, AU's Associate Dean of Students, reported that since the last CLC meeting in December, AU has received seven complaints regarding off-campus student behavior. Of these, four were related to single-family homes and three to the Avalon apartments. She continued that four incidents involved neighbors calling both the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and AU Public Safety and that the others were reported directly to the AU Dean's office.

She stated that AU is preparing for its regular spring communication with off-campus students with information on move-out, grass cutting, and rights and responsibilities of living in the neighborhood.

Gail Hanson added that a similar communication was sent out in advance of the recent snow storm, reminding students of their responsibility to keep sidewalks shoveled.

Beth Marcus asked how complaints at the Avalon are handled.

Michelle Espinosa replied that AU has a good working relationship with the Avalon and that after a second complaint, they automatically notify MPD and AU Public Safety to respond.

Beth Marcus asked who to contact with issues at the Avalon.

Michelle Espinosa responded that neighbors should call the Avalon directly and that they will then follow up with AU.

Gail Hanson added that AU is developing a new video for students as part of its off-campus orientation program and that it will be shared with the CLC at the September meeting.

Michelle Espinosa then described AU's tobacco-free policy and the work of AU's Tobacco-Free Ambassadors. She added that the smoking shelter near the Fletcher Gate on Rockwood Parkway has been very successful in keeping students on campus and away from the adjacent residential neighborhood. Benches soon will be placed on the edge of AU's campus near the intersection of Nebraska and New Mexico Avenues, NW, to serve the same purpose. The campus' main Glover Gate also will be considered in the future.

John Wheeler stated that he has observed Washington College of Law students smoking directly in front of no-smoking signs on the Tenley Campus.

AU's Presidential Transition

David Taylor advised that AU's new President, Sylvia Matthews Burwell, will report on June 1. She was the Secretary of Health and Human Services under President Barack Obama and also served as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. The official AU announcement can be read at <http://www.american.edu/trustees/news/detail.cfm?newsID=95DB20EC-5056-AF26-BECB1C0F940DD14B>.

He added that she will attend a future CLC meeting and looks forward to meeting the neighbors. She and her family will reside in the AU President's house on Glenbrook Road.

Good of the Order

Gail Hanson referred attendees to their CLC packets and information on several upcoming events which may be of interest to the community.

She also reminded CLC attendees of future CLC meeting dates which include June 5, 2017; September 13, 2017; December 5, 2017; January 4, 2018 (Town Hall & New Year's reception); and March 5, 2018.

Tom Smith stated that the January 4 Town Hall and New Year's reception could be a conflict for those still traveling for the holidays.

Gail Hanson replied that AU staff would see if alternate dates were available.

The next meeting of AU's Community Liaison Committee is June 5, 2017 at 7 p.m.

Attendees

Community:

Judy Chesser, Tenleytown Neighbors Association
William Clarkson, Spring Valley Neighborhood Association
Claire Craik, Westover Place Homeowners Association
Chuck Elkins, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D
Jessica Herzstein, Neighbor

Jeffrey Kraskin, Spring Valley Wesley Heights Citizens Association
Troy Kravitz, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D
Bill Krebs, Spring Valley Wesley Heights Citizens Association
Hunt LaCascia, Fort Gaines Citizens Association
Silvia Lucero, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D
Beth Marcus, Sutton Place Condominiums
Dennis Paul, Neighbors for a Livable Community
Alan Pollock, Fort Gaines Citizens Association
Tom Smith, Spring Valley Wesley Heights Citizens Association
Jane Waldmann, Tenleytown Historical Society
Mary Ann Weston, Neighbor
Michael Weston, Neighbor
John Wheeler, Ward 3 Vision

American University Staff:

Linda Argo, Assistant Vice President for External Relations & Auxiliary Services
David Dower, Assistant Vice President for Planning and Project Management
Michelle Espinosa, Associate Dean of Students
Gail Hanson, Vice President of Campus Life
Hisham Khalid, General Counsel
Dan Nichols, Vice President of Risk, Safety, and Transportation Programs
David Taylor, Chief of Staff to the President

Other

Ashley Blackwell, Justice and Sustainability Associates
Don Edwards, Justice and Sustainability Associates