

Community Liaison Committee Meeting
Tuesday, June 3, 2014
American University – School of International Service – Founders Room
7 p.m.

The meeting of the Community Liaison Committee (CLC) was opened by Gail Hanson, AU Vice President of Campus Life, who convenes and leads the meetings for American University. She opened the meeting at 7 p.m. by welcoming attendees, who then introduced themselves and stated their affiliations. She also noted the absence of AU's Director of Community Relations, Andrew Huff, who was attending an out of town conference of the International Town-Gown Association in Clemson, SC.

Construction Update

David Dower, AU Assistant Vice President of Planning and Project Management, provided updates on the Washington College of Law and East Campus projects. His presentation can be viewed at <http://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/upload/Capital-Projects-Update-06-03-14.pdf>.

Washington College of Law

David Dower explained that excavation is substantially complete, and that construction is now in the concrete phase and will be through October. Truck traffic should decrease significantly from about 80 trucks per day to 20 trucks per day, as the elevated garage slab is built.

Kent Slowinski, of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D, said that despite the prohibition of truck traffic on Foxhall Road, he received emails and videos of trucks using Foxhall Road and crossing double-lined streets. He asked how trucking routes will be enforced going forward.

David Dower asked Kent Slowinski to please provide these videos so that he could share them with the contractors and sub-contractors. He explained that as the structures are built, new - subcontractors will become involved, and that it would be useful for him to use the videos as examples of prohibited activity.

David Dower stated that the university will enforce the approved trucking routes by as many means as possible. He added that contractors also monitor their drivers and that offenders would be removed from the job site. He reiterated that AU is trying to establish trucking routes that are acceptable to as many people as possible.

Al Brenner, of Westover Place, suggested that AU install cameras to monitor the trucks.

David Dower noted that discussions are ongoing to determine ways that trucks can be tracked and tagged for visual ID.

Kent Slowinski stated that he would like to see the contract language that verifies the trucking route agreements. He also said that he would like to see Skanska enforce the agreed upon truck routes.

David Dower agreed that Skanska shares responsibility for enforcement, but that he does not support Skanska releasing contracts. He also noted that Whiting-Turner dismissed several workers from the WCL site for trucking violations and that the university will continue strict enforcement at East Campus.

Gail Hanson reiterated that AU is very aware that complying with trucking routes is important to the community, and that we will continue to enforce the rules at both the WCL and East Campus.

Chuck Elkins, a neighbor, suggested that AU randomly follow trucks in an attempt to catch violators.

Kent Slowinski suggested that transponders be installed in trucks.

David Dower stated that the goal is to establish truck routes that are reasonable to both AU and the community, but that following vehicles and installing transponders may raise labor issues and violate laws.

Linda Argo, AU Assistant Vice President of External Relations and Auxiliary Services, noted that even the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) advised that contractors often will violate approved routes if they are unreasonable, so a proper balance needs to be struck and then enforced.

East Campus

David Dower stated that 65 pre-construction surveys have been conducted at Westover Place, noting that surveys were even done on properties well beyond the property line and adjacent homes.

Mary Ellen Fehrmann, of Westover Place, complimented Andrew Huff, AU's Director of Community Relations, for his coordination efforts and efficiency in facilitating the surveys.

Judith Berson, of Westover Place, asked if homeowners would have access to the surveys and if so, when they would become available.

Ben Tessler, of Westover Place, stated there was inconsistency in terms of what to expect from the surveys and that he was told that only written reports would be available.

Mary Ellen Fehrmann responded that according to Skanska, videos also would be included as part of the report. Linda Argo offered to confirm what homeowners will receive and communicate that information.

David Dower then reviewed the construction-related activities expected for this summer on the East Campus site. He stated that work will start in June, as trailers are installed, the construction area cordoned off, and tree removal begins. Over the next few weeks, fencing will be installed and erosion control work will begin. Once shoring and excavation work begins, there will be approximately 80 – 100 trucks per day. He continued that, weather permitting, he expects excavation to be finished by early fall. He also explained that excavation work at East Campus would move along at a much faster pace than at WCL because this is a smaller project.

David Dower then said that two tower cranes would be installed and would remain on site for about a year. As the structures are built, the garage will come first, then the base, and then the actual buildings. Enclosure of the buildings is expected to begin in the spring of 2015, followed by mechanical and electrical work in August 2015.

Al Brenner said that trees were supposed to be transplanted into the buffer and asked if AU had looked at the plans. He stated that the plans were unreadable and that he had asked Andrew Huff for a legible plan, but had not received one. He said that AU was not providing information in a timely manner, and that currently he has no information on planting or transplanting of trees.

David Dower advised that the landscape plan was only finalized recently and that the trees being removed are permitted. He explained that some trees were being cut down, but that the majority (21) were being relocated into the buffer zone.

Linda Argo said that the landscape plans also will be available at the landscape committee meeting. She also said that a meeting could be scheduled within the next few weeks.

Judy Chesser, of the Tenley Neighbors Association, said that the landscaping plan meetings and the arborists who explained the plans during the walk-through for Tenley Campus had been very helpful. She also noted that some of the trees slated for removal were not very big.

Judith Berson asked whether AU had to have a complete set of plans during the zoning committee hearings, and why the plans are only being finalized now.

Linda Argo explained that the Zoning Commission only required conceptual drawings, and that the detailed drawings were executed only after Zoning Commission approval of the project. The complete, detailed plans are then submitted to the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) and are available to the public upon submission.

Judith Berson asked if and when the plans are compared to those that were approved by the Zoning Commission.

Linda Argo replied that the Office of the Zoning Administrator is part of DCRA and looks at the plans submission against the Zoning Commission approval as part of DCRA's review process.

David Dower said that the university will try to save plants and trees, wherever possible, during the construction process.

Betsy White suggested that any trees or plants being relocated as part of the East Campus project should be made available to neighbors.

David Dower stressed again that there would be very limited tree removal.

He then stated there will be construction entrances at Nebraska and New Mexico Avenues. He added that once excavation begins, the New Mexico Avenue curb cut would be closed, but eventually be used for construction-related parking. All construction-related and worker parking will be within the construction site. He explained that a plywood fence would be installed outside the property. In front of the masonry wall of Westover Place, there will be another fabric fence that will remain for the duration of construction.

Kent Slowinski said that he was concerned about the fabric fence, and asked if it could be replaced by a plywood fence.

David Dower replied that it will be a fabric fence, and will be shorter than the eight-foot wall so as not to affect the foliage.

When asked if there will be a project webcam, David Dower replied yes, but it has not been determined where it will be mounted. He was asked to be sure it is not directed at the Westover homes.

David Dower then reviewed the proposed trucking routes for East Campus. These routes can be found in his presentation at <http://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/upload/Capital-Projects-Update-06-03-14.pdf>. He also explained the need for north, south, and west routes.

Sema Tokel, a neighbor, stated that trucks are already driving in convoys of up to seven on River Road, creating noise and air pollution. She said that she and her neighbors are petitioning DDOT asking that trucks no longer be allowed to use the route.

Linda Argo replied that it was DDOT that mandated the River Road route for trucks coming from the Washington College of Law construction site.

Larry Joseph, of Westover Place, asked whether Skanska has determined a site for the assembly of the buildings' pre-fabrication modules.

David Dower replied that a site has not been determined yet, as it is still too early in the construction process.

Larry Joseph asked what the width would be for the trucks that will bring the pre-fab modules.

David Dower answered that it would be trucks with standard widths; no over-sized trucks.

Kent Slowinski asked that Skanska be encouraged to double the number of trucks in the summer so that truck traffic would be reduced in the fall. He also suggested that they restrict truck deliveries to non-rush hour periods.

Larry Joseph asked if it is feasible for Skanska to complete excavation on schedule if restricted to non-rush hours.

David Dower responded that excavation would be done as fast as possible, but that lots of things are still in play as far as determining the speed of excavation.

Kent Slowinski stated that he is worried that when traffic becomes worse in the fall, there will be more cut-through traffic on neighborhood streets.

Parking Update

Dan Nichols, AU Executive Director of University Safety Programs, explained that the East Campus construction would displace 904 parking spaces. However, the Nebraska lot was only at 56 percent capacity. He continued that parking would be absorbed by the Katzen and SIS parking garages. He noted that both of those garages would only be at 85 percent capacity, even with these displaced vehicles.

Dan Nichols advised that a memorandum would be distributed to the university community with all of the information regarding parking and the Good Neighbor Policy. He stated that additional staff would patrol neighborhood streets to enforce parking regulations and encouraged attendees to contact the Parking office (202-885-3111) to notify them of any cars that should be added to the “do not ticket” list, or to report violators.

Judith Berson asked if AU Public Safety could patrol Westover between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. when they do not have security coverage.

Dan Nichols replied that he would look into it, but was doubtful, since it is private property.

Judy Chesser asked if the university collects students’ vehicle information when they register for classes, and how AU enforces its parking regulation.

Dan Nichols explained that cars are registered with the university only when there is a request for an official parking permit.

Judy Chesser asked whether AU could begin to require that all students register their vehicles, and Dan Nichols replied that this could be explored further.

Ben Tessler asked where contractors at the East Campus site would park.

Dan Nichols replied that workers would park onsite and that total staffing for the East Campus construction would peak at 150 – 200 people.

Dan Nichols then explained that the university is looking into whether contract employees at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) were being displaced into AU's lots. He said that there are a series of ongoing discussions and assessments with DHS.

An attendee asked what areas are patrolled for parking enforcement.

Dan Nichols replied that patrols extend two or three blocks away from campus. The Washington College of Law (WCL) currently has contracted employees for their patrols near Massachusetts Avenue. He said that AU's Public Safety officers would be responsible for patrolling the new WCL site at Tenley.

In response to a question concerning the intersection of Nebraska and New Mexico Avenues, Linda Argo stated that there are ongoing discussions with DDOT regarding the "right-turn only" requirement at the exit of the School for International Service garage and the possibility of allowing for cars to enter and exit straight in and straight out onto New Mexico Avenue.

Dan Nichols added that AU has requested permission from the National Presbyterian Church to park any buses on their lot that may require an overnight stay.

Dan Nichols also described the "Go DC Go" program, which encourages use of alternative forms of transportation. He said that freshmen students will learn about such programs in an effort to reduce the use of single occupancy vehicles. Similar efforts will be made with AU faculty and staff.

Student Conduct Annual Report

Michelle Espinosa, AU Associate Dean of Students, presented the Student Conduct Annual Report, which can be viewed at <http://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/upload/Student-Conduct-Report-06-03-14.pdf>.

She stated that AU has worked with District agencies to identify more landlords, but has had varying degrees of success and cooperation with landlords and property managers.

Gail Hanson noted that the number of repeat offenders has decreased in the past year.

Chuck Elkins stated that the "Stand With AU" program mentioned that it would create opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to offer ideas and suggestions, and asked whether neighbors could be included as well.

Gail Hanson replied that the university would explore that possibility.

Gail Hanson then addressed the agenda item about a student assault in April. Three students committed a targeted assault on a fourth student on New Mexico Avenue. She said that AU pursued a conduct case against the students, and a grand jury also is pending in the District.

Kent Slowinski stated that AU has never stated publically what measures were taken against the students.

Gail Hanson replied that, as an officer of the university, she was not at liberty to discuss the outcomes of conduct cases, as they are protected by privacy laws. She explained that news outlets like Fox 5 likely got their information about the case from students. The school is bound by laws that protect students' privacy in these matters.

Katzen Arts Center – Loading & Unloading

Linda Argo presented information related to complaints AU has received regarding truck loading and unloading on Massachusetts Avenue in front of the Katzen Arts Center.

She stated that DDOT has agreed to install additional “No Parking Anytime” signage along this stretch of Massachusetts, as some sections have no signage at all currently.

Judith Berson asked if AU Public Safety could patrol Massachusetts Avenue.

Dan Nichols replied that Public Safety does not have jurisdiction on Nebraska or Massachusetts Avenues, but would monitor the area and request compliance.

Linda Argo said that in some instances, it is AU vendors who park illegally, but that the university has made it clear to them that loading and unloading must be done from legal parking spaces.

Gail Hanson added that management at the Katzen Arts Center also notifies all vendors of the available loading dock off of Massachusetts Avenue.

Compliance with CLC Operating Documents Section V – Meetings

Gail Hanson addressed an issue with the CLC Operating Document regarding the ability of members to call additional meetings of the CLC.

She stated that the sense of the group, when the provision was approved was that if a committee member wanted a meeting, a consensus shouldn't be required. She continued that now, with the East Campus project, there will be several different meeting formats to share information in addition to the CLC meetings: ANC meetings, construction meetings, and sub-committee meetings.

Gail Hanson asked if the CLC had suggestions for making the provisions clearer. She asked if the intent of the language might be clearer if it said additional meetings may be “requested” versus “called.”

David Fehrmann, of Westover Place, suggested that AU craft a sentence or two to consider the issue at two successive meetings to allow for consultation with the full range of community groups represented on the CLC

Gail Hanson then solicited suggestions for the exact language, and asked that people send their ideas to her (gsher@american.edu) directly.

John Wheeler, of Ward 3 Vision, said that he does not understand the current language in the document.

Gail Hanson replied that the intent was that anyone could convene a meeting.

Chuck Elkins stated that the CLC should share in the decision to call an additional meeting.

Civility of Interactions by AU employees and representative to the community

Gail Hanson asked if the group feels the need to revisit specific ground rules, and referred to a “code of civility” adopted by a neighborhood empowerment group in Los Angeles. She mentioned that the CLC previously decided that it did not need such ground rules and asked whether that should be revisited. She also suggested that all parties should keep the tone of discussions helpful and cooperative and that a formal document could be adopted if necessary.

Proposed Dates for the 2014-2015 Community Liaison Committee Meetings

Gail Hanson presented the proposed meeting dates for the 2014-2015 Community Liaison Committee: Monday, September 22; Tuesday, December 2; Monday, March 2; and Tuesday, May 26.

There were no objections to any of the proposed dates, with the exception of Tuesday, May 26, as this is the day after Memorial Day.

Gail Hanson agreed to verify the date and to reschedule the meeting if necessary.

Good of the Order

Linda Argo announced the August 22 Neighborhood Movie Night. This year, *Babe* will be screened at 7 p.m. in the AU amphitheater. All are welcome to attend.

She also reminded attendees of the Community Audit Program offered to neighbors over the age of 60 who live in the 20016 zip code. She added that the \$100 fee for one course goes to benefit the Alumni Association Scholarship Fund, so it is tax deductible. Additional information on the program can be found at

<http://alumniassociation.american.edu/s/1395/index1col.aspx?sid=1395&gid=1&pgid=2556>.

Linda Argo announced that, per ANC 3D Commissioner Tom Smith’s request, AU had organized a community meeting on Thursday, June 5 at 7 p.m. in Room 200 of the Mary Graydon Center where the Army Corps of Engineers would review and discuss the history of their work in Spring Valley and specifically at the Nebraska Avenue parking lot. She said the meeting was expected to run approximately 90 minutes.

Judith Berson asked Linda Argo about AU's liability insurance coverage information in relation to the construction inspections of the Westover townhomes.

Linda Argo stated that she could provide general information, but not specific legal documents, and would follow up with that information.

The next meeting of the CLC will take place on Monday, September 22 at 7 p.m. in the SIS Founders Room.

Attendees

Community:

Barbara Alafoginis, Westover Place Homeowners Association
Judith Berson, Westover Place Homeowners Association
Alfred Brenner, Westover Place Homeowners Association
Natalie Brenner, Westover Place Homeowners Association
Judy Chesser, Tenley Neighbors Association
Chuck Elkins, Neighbor
David Fehrmann, Westover Place Homeowners Association
Mary Ellen Fehrmann, Westover Place Homeowners Association
Barbara Harper, Westover Place Homeowners Association
Larry Joseph, Westover Place Homeowners Association
Maria Kress, Westover Place Homeowners Association
Leigh-Catherine Miles, Neighbor
Duffy Miller, Westover Place Homeowners Association
Bob Morris, Westover Place Homeowners Association
Dennis Paul, Neighbors for a Livable Community
Roshini Ponnampuram, Ft. Gaines Citizens Association
Kent Slowinski, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D
Benjamin Tessler, Westover Place Homeowners Association
Harry Thayer, Neighbor
Sema Tokel, Neighbor
John Wheeler, Ward 3 Vision
Betsy White, Neighbor

American University Staff:

Linda Argo, Assistant Vice President for External Relations & Auxiliary Services
David Dower, Assistant Vice President for Facilities Development & Real Estate
Michelle Espinosa, Associate Dean of Students
Gail Hanson, Vice President of Campus Life
Hisham Khalid, Office of the General Counsel
Dan Nichols, Executive Director, University Safety Programs
David Taylor, Chief of Staff to the President