

American University-Neighborhood Liaison Committee Meeting
7:00 pm, Wednesday, January 30, 2008
Bender Library Archives Conference Room

Attendance

AU Representatives:

Jorge Abud, Assistant VP, Facilities & Administrative Services
Jerry Gager, University Architect
Walter Labitzky, Director of Facilities, Washington College of Law
Anthony Newman, Director of Risk Management and Transportation Services
David Taylor, Chief of Staff, Office of the President
Sara Waldron, Associate Dean of Students
Maria Pahigiannis, Projects Coordinator, Office of the President
Joe Vidulich, President, American University Student Government

Neighborhood & Community Representatives:

Alan Pollock (FGCA)
Dennis Paul (NLC)

Handouts:

- Agenda
- NLC/AU Meeting Summary, 9/24/07

Agenda:

1. Introductions
2. Handouts & Updates
3. Old Business
4. Facilities
5. Army Corps
6. Student Issues
7. Parking
8. Other Business

Adjournment: 9:00 pm

MEETING SUMMARY

The meeting began with a short discussion of the Obama rally held at AU on January 28, 2008. The neighborhood representatives were impressed with AU's handling of the event. Furthermore, they were pleased that the university received good press surrounding the event. University officials reported that some concerns were voiced from residents around 46th Street and University Ave., about the line of people awaiting entry into Bender Arena, and requested that for future events, the lines be kept on campus to the best of the university's ability.

Updates & Old Business:

Sedgwick house:

- According to Alan Pollack, the students are trying to do better, but are still enjoying the occasional party. The only present complaint is that the neighbors do not like it when visitors to the house leave and use their driveways to turn around. They say that the headlights are bothersome.
- Pollack though is trying to keep a balanced outlook on the house and does not want to nit-pick about problems such as these.
- Another concern is that a student perceived to be central to the problems is back from his semester abroad. They will wait and see if his presence causes the same problems as before.
- One suggestion was that the University should organize a "Summer Orientation" for students moving into the surrounding neighborhoods to sensitize them to and educate them on the neighbors' needs and perspective.

Facilities (Jorge Abud):

Kogod Expansion

- Permit delays caused the construction delays
- All the permits were finally approved on January 18th.
- The expected completion date is spring 2009.

SIS project

- AU is also experiencing permit delays with this project – mostly due to the new environmental review process. Unfortunately, the DC government simply does not have the capacity/staffing to deal with the number of reviews in queue, so permits get held up in that office.
- The hope is that the permits will be approved in about one month, but there are no guarantees.
- It has a 2-year construction timetable with completion anticipated in May 2010.
- There are no neighborhood issues that have been reported to date.

Mary Graydon Center

- Summer 2008 will bring about Phase Two of the MGC renovations. This will include a covered bridge and new entrance to the building – to make the entrances more functional and fitting.

Residence Hall

- Centennial Hall will undergo renovations this summer, as part of the annual program to keep on-campus housing attractive to students.

Other

- Classroom renovations continue
- There have been no real estate acquisitions or sales since the last meeting.

Neighborhood representative had a couple questions, suggestions and concerns:

Nebraska Hall

- The renovations look beautiful. The only suggestion is that we plant some trees in front of the emergency exit in order to camouflage it a bit.
 - Jerry Gager indicated that landscaping planned for the spring will include such trees.
- They also wanted to know if there were any glitches or student complaints about the renovation.
 - Jorge Abud responded that there were a few small problems, specifically a water leak, but overall there were no student complaints.

Katzen Center

- The neighbors are still waiting for the “orange square” on Katzen (facing Mass. Ave) to be removed. Jerry Gager explained that it was too cold to be taken down and that they will have to wait until the weather warms up a bit.
- Alan Pollack asked if AU will continue to use the exterior of the Katzen Center to display art work. He and other neighbors believe that the building is a piece of art in and of itself and should be left as is. Furthermore, he suggested that AU develop a policy on whether it should be used for this purpose or not. He is not sure if using it to display artwork is really advancing/enhancing the museum at all.
 - Jorge Abud responded that there is no such policy, but that the Museum director always passes these types of displays by Facilities and the President’s office and that they will make sure to keep the neighbors in mind as those decisions are made.

Army Corps:

- They have resumed work on Glenbrook Drive.
- The holding space near Sibley Hospital had to be prepared to accept the new items expected to be found in at 4825 Glenbrook, causing the delay in mid-December.
- Neighbors wanted to know if they are trying to save the houses and if AU has decided what to do with the President’s house after they are able to take possession of it again. Dennis

Paul suggests we move the President's residence back to the "White House on the Hill" as he belongs on campus.

- David Taylor said that AU hopes to take possession of the house in 2009.

Student Issues (Sara Waldron):

- AU has been able to identify all the students living in the neighborhood houses that have caused problems in the past year.
- Waldron wanted to share with the neighborhood representatives that AU has developed a response mechanism for handling neighborhood disturbances and has already brought 17 students through the campus judicial process for underage drinking. Students providing alcohol to minors have also been brought through the process.
 - Another example: Club sport teams and Fraternities will be penalized as a whole (by losing funding or their charter) if any of the teammates/brothers are involved in an infraction
- Joe Vidulich commented that students are becoming more aware that their actions off-campus can result in sanctions from the AU administration. With all the new cases being brought before the campus judicial process, they are "waking up."
- They have also developed a new course, Greek 101, to educate the new Greek membership on how to conduct themselves both on and off campus.
- Alan Pollack urged Joe Vidulich to share with the students that the neighborhood associations are a part of the community and that they welcome the students to get involved. They simply want to encourage mutual respect amongst all the neighbors.

Parking (Anthony Newman):

- New Community Contact
 - Dan Krusemark, Parking and Traffic Coordinator
 - (202) 885-3068 or dkruse@american.edu
- Transportation staff will provide notice to shift workers to not park in the neighborhood.
- Transportation's aim is to identify problems like these before even the neighbors do in order to prevent problems from arising.
- The neighbors had no parking complaints since the last meeting.
- The neighbors inquired about the shuttle buses and services.

Other Business:

WCL (Walter Labitzky)

- No new business
- No parking problems to report
- Student usage of shuttle bus service has increased tremendously