

**Special Meeting of the Community Liaison Committee
on 4801 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Tuesday, January 29, 2013
American University – Washington College of Law – Room 603
7 p.m.**

Introduction

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 began the meeting at 7 p.m. by welcoming representatives of neighborhood organizations and local Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs). She stated that this meeting was being held at the request of the CLC to discuss the university's planned future uses of the 4801 Massachusetts Avenue, NW building, currently occupied by the Washington College of Law (WCL).

Gail Hanson went on to explain that the university has worked with an academic space planning consultant to develop organizing principles which were circulated to members of the CLC and are guiding the university's decisions on how it will utilize this space in the future.

She continued that this meeting was being held to present the university's early thoughts on new tenants for the building. She also advised the CLC that the plan remains a work in progress and that additional decisions will be made in the future, taking into consideration community feedback and comment.

Gail Hanson concluded by stating that this meeting also would include further dialogue on the CLC's Operating Document and Mediation Guidelines, both of which were updated and circulated to the group prior to the meeting. These documents will be finalized at the March meeting of the CLC.

Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves and stated their affiliations.

Presentation on 4801 Massachusetts Avenue, NW

Jorge Abud, Assistant Vice President for Facilities Development & Real Estate, presented a Power Point presentation on 4801 Massachusetts Avenue, NW.

The building provides offices for 380 faculty and staff, classrooms for 1,800 students, and a library. Parking for 304 cars and a casual dining room will remain intact in the new plans. He also reviewed the organizing principles which were established to guide the identification of new occupants.

The School of Professional and Extended Studies (SPExS) will relocate its offices to this location, but its classes will be held on the main campus. Housing for SPExS students will be both on campus and in off-campus, leased facilities already housing these students.

*Note: the full Power Point presentation on 4801 Massachusetts Avenue, NW is available online at <http://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/Documents.cfm>.

Beverly Sklover of AU Park asked if the university was acting wisely in building a law school when there aren't that many law jobs available. She also noted that law school applications are down by 50 percent nationwide during the last three years.

Gail Hanson replied that the university's law dean is in the best position to answer such a question and that the topic is beyond the scope of the CLC and the meeting. She also stated that the concern has been heard and noted.

Tom Hier of Ward 3 Vision asked for additional information on the demographics of participants in the various SPEX programs.

Jorge Abud replied that there is a wide variety, but the population is made up primarily of undergraduates from around the country and overseas. He reiterated that no classes would be held at this location, only administrative and faculty offices for SPEX.

Bob Herzstein of Neighbors for a Livable Community and Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association asked how many of these different programs can occur at the same time in the building.

Jorge Abud advised that all of these uses can and will occur simultaneously and that the current uses planned for the building will leave approximately 20 percent of the space unfilled and unassigned.

Judy Chesser of the Tenley Campus Neighbors Association asked where the SPEX classes would be held.

Jorge Abud stated that classes would be held on the main campus and that housing for these students would be provided both on-campus and in off-campus, leased facilities like the Berkshire apartments.

Nan Wells of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D asked about garage use, who it would be limited to, and if there would be more cars coming and going.

Jorge Abud replied that the garage would not be open to the general public and that the people who work in the building would be the majority of those parking there.

Jeffrey Kraskin of the Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association asked if the university shuttle would continue to operate to and from this location and if any consideration had been given to adding lobby-level, neighborhood-based retail to the building.

Jorge Abud replied that the shuttle would remain in operation and that its frequency would depend largely on the needs of the population in the building. He also stated that while retail was a part of the conversation at one point, there currently is no plan for retail at this location.

Beth Marcus of the Sutton Place Condominium Association asked if parking would be available for participants in the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI).

Jorge Abud replied that OLLI participants will be considered users of the building and therefore would have garage access.

Judy Chesser of the Tenley Campus Neighbors Association then asked if there would be classes in the building for non-traditional students, and if parking would be available at this location for any spill-over from events on the Tenley campus, such as continuing legal education classes.

Jorge Abud replied that there will be classes for non-traditional students conducted in the building, mainly during evenings and weekends. He added that any additional parking which may be needed for events at Tenley would be available on the main campus.

A meeting participant asked if off-campus parking enforcement in the neighborhood would be maintained.

Jorge Abud responded that it will.

A meeting participant asked for the current number of occupants using the building and if this number would remain the same in the future.

Jorge Abud stated that 1800 students and 380 faculty and staff currently use the building. He expects that during the first couple of years after the law school relocates to Tenley, there will be considerably fewer people in the building.

A meeting participant asked if there would be any renovations to the building.

Jorge Abud replied that the goal is to use as much of the space in its current configuration as possible, but that the law library will likely be renovated for other purposes because there will not be as great of a need for library space once WCL moves to the Tenley campus.

W. Philip Thomas of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3E asked what part of the library will be included in the building.

Jorge Abud responded that there is a small need for archive space and part of Bender Library's archives would be relocated here. He continued that we only need 10-20 percent of the space which current makes up the law library.

Gail Hanson then asked the group if there were any other thoughts or ideas the university should keep in mind moving forward.

Jeffrey Kraskin of the Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association replied that some sort of retail space would be a positive addition to the neighborhood. He suggested a clothing store or boutique.

Beverly Sklover from AU Park asked if WAMU will be moving to the building.

David Taylor, Chief of Staff to the President, replied that WAMU is moving to 4401 Connecticut Avenue, NW in Van Ness.

A meeting participant asked if the building's hours of operation would be fewer going forward.

Jorge Abud responded that we have not yet reached a point in the planning process where that can be determined. He added that there will be no students studying in the building overnight as they currently do, so it is unlikely that this will continue to be a 24-hour building. Night classes are a possibility; they generally conclude around 10 p.m.

Gail Hanson invited meeting participants with further question or comments to post them to the CLC list serve or send them to a university representative.

CLC Operating Document and Mediation Program Guidelines

Gail Hanson advised the group that suggestions from the last meeting for revisions to the CLC Operating Document and Mediation Program Guidelines were added. She said that this meeting offered an opportunity to collect additional ideas and refinements to bring back to the March CLC meeting. At the March meeting, these documents will be presented for final consideration. She asked if there were any additional items to raise or suggestions to include.

Judy Chesser of the Tenley Campus Neighbors Association raised a concern about mediators being paid by AU and therefore being more likely to side with university during mediation. She asked if funds could be put into a separate account instead of AU paying directly.

Hisham Khalid, from the Office of the General Counsel, replied that he did not see this as an issue in a mediation proceeding. He advised that mediators are bound by ethics and a strict code of conduct which guides their work. He reminded the group that the mediators will be selected by the CLC and only those who the group is comfortable with will be chosen.

William Krebs of the Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association echoed this assessment and thanked Bob Herzstein from Neighbors for a Livable Community; Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association for his work on the Mediation Program Guidelines.

Penny Pagano of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D stated that she has been through the mediation process in cases where the university paid the mediator. She stated that the community was unable to provide funding and that she did not find any problem with the mediator as she/he was fair.

Gail Hanson advised that the comment period for these two documents will remain open until the March CLC meeting. She also thanked Bob Herzstein for helping to craft the Mediation Program Guidelines. She asked the group if there were any other items for comment or discussion.

Gregory Ferenbach from the Tenley Campus Neighbors Association said that he is comfortable with AU paying the mediator and that the key is to agree mutually on who is selected to be the mediator. He recommended that the language of the Mediation Program Guidelines be modified so that the words “pre approved,” be replaced with “mutually agreed upon.” He stated that both parties must trust the mediator fully for the process to be successful.

Gail Hanson reminded the CLC that the group does not vote on these documents, but rather the group agrees by a sense of the committee and that these documents can be amended over time if circumstances change. She also advised that updated versions of these documents will be posted along with the meeting minutes.

Ron Lefrancois from Westover Place asked about Section 4 of the Mediation Program Guidelines, "In advance of mediation, community organizations must..." Specifically, he asked about groups that have Boards of Directors and representatives in a mediation that might not be authorized to speak and act on their organization's behalf. He stated the mediation arrangement described might not be workable for some groups on the CLC.

Hisham Khalid, from the Office of the General Counsel, said that the process will not be as rigid as that and that we want parties coming to mediation who can actually address a given issue. He advised that we will work with the expressed concern about authority.

Kathy Silva of McLean Gardens stated that a recent dispute involving McLean Gardens was handled by the group's lawyer and inquired if a lawyer should also be a part of this process.

Gail Hanson replied that the goal is to keep the number of participants small, but that this does not preclude an attorney from participating as part of the process.

Good of the Order

Andrew Huff, Director of Community Relations, announced an upcoming program offered by the University Library and SPExS based on a recently released list by the Library of Congress, the "Books that Shaped America." A full list of the books can be viewed at <http://www.loc.gov/bookfest/books-that-shaped-america/>.

The library and SPExS soon will be hosting a series of book discussions on these works of literature, led by AU faculty and staff. These discussions will be open to neighbors and community members. Once dates and locations have been established, this information will be shared with the CLC and greater AU community.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Attendees

Community:

Mary Bresnahan, Spring Valley

Judy Chesser, Tenley Campus Neighbors Association

David Fehrmann, Westover Place Homeowners Association

Gregory Ferenbach, Tenley Campus Neighbors Association

Bob Herzstein, Neighbors for a Livable Community; Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association

Elizabeth Haile, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3E

Tom Hier, Ward 3 Vision

Cici Hughes, Neighbor

Jeffrey Kraskin, Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association

William Krebs, Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association

Maria Lefrancois, Neighbor

Ron Lefrancois, Neighbor

Beth Marcus, Sutton Place Condominium Association

Penny Pagano, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D
Dennis Paul, Neighbors for a Livable Community; Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association
Charles Reusch, Neighbor
Kathy Silva, McLean Gardens
Beverly Sklover, AU Park
Kent Slowinski, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D
Harry Thayer, the Foxhall
W. Philip Thomas, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3E
Jane Waldmann, Tenleytown Historical Society
Nan Wells, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D

American University Staff:

Jorge Abud, Assistant Vice President for Facilities Development & Real Estate
Linda Argo, Assistant Vice President for External Relations & Strategic Initiatives
Michelle Espinosa, Associate Dean of Students
Jerry Gager, University Architect
Gail Hanson, Vice President of Campus Life
Andrew Huff, Director of Community Relations
Hisham Khalid, Office of the General Counsel
Walter Labitzky, Director of Facilities – Washington College of Law
Dan Nichols, Executive Director of University Safety Programs
David Taylor, Chief of Staff to the President

American University Students:

Rory Slatko, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D
Joe Wisniewski, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D