



MINUTES
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4D Meeting
Tuesday, February 16, 2016

The regular monthly meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4D took place on Tuesday, February 16, 2015. **Vice Chair Renee Bowser called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.**

COMMISSIONERS ROLL CALL: Present: 4D01 Nancy Roth; 4D02 Renee Bowser; 4D04 David Sheon; 4D05 Krystal Branton; 4D06 Bill Quirk. Absent: 4D03 Lisa Colbert. Quorum was present for all votes.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: **Comm. Bowser added to the agenda an announcement on Low Income Tax Clinic at UDC through April. Comm. Sheon added an announcement about a junk tax property sale. Comm. Roth moved to accept agenda as amended. Comm. Branton seconded. The amended agenda was approved unanimously by acclamation.**

MINUTES: **Two corrections made to January minutes. Comm. Roth moved to accept the January 2016 minutes as corrected and was seconded by Comm. Branton. Comm. Sheon abstained, having missed the January meeting. Motion passed by a majority by acclamation.**

APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT: **Comm. Branton read the monthly report aloud. Expenditures in through January 21 totaled \$1,257.73. Total remaining in Treasury: \$13,823.08 after DC government deposited quarterly allotment of \$3050.21. Comm. Branton moved to accept the report. Comm. Bowser seconded. Motion unanimously passed by acclamation.**

Comm. Branton moved to approve an allocation of \$300 for payment of rent at Colony House. Comm. Sheon seconded. Motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

NEW BUSINESS

Comm. Bowser described the Mayor's proposed short-term residential facility for homeless families to be opened at a vacant and blighted office building at 5505 Kennedy St. NW. The building, when renovated, is to contain 49 units with a shared kitchen, and bathrooms, with recreation for youth in the back, parking for staff, and staff onsite 24/7. The project is slated to start in the fall and open in early 2018.

Comm. Roth reported on a special meeting she had called on Wednesday, Feb. 10, the night before a larger community meeting held by the city government, in response to concerns voiced by several constituents. Comm. Roth said attendees appeared to support Mayor's initiative to close DC General Family Shelter and install transitional facilities for families in all eight wards of the District. But because the city had not delivered on earlier commitments to improve the Kennedy St. corridor, and had not consulted with the neighbors before announcing this choice of the site, residents were skeptical as to whether the city harbored good intentions for the neighborhood. Some also had raised concerns about the financial side of the project, because the building owner (an LLC) had let the building deteriorate

while dodging the higher tax rate on vacant buildings by filing for construction permits, but not performing improvements. The LLC had also advertised the building for sale at an unrealistic price for the market and for the condition of the building. But DCRA, the agency in charge of enforcing the laws on vacant and blighted buildings, had failed to crack down on the LLC.

Comm. Bowser suggested that all parties with an interest in Kennedy St. should work together, including the city, the neighbors, those interested in enhancing the neighborhood, and the advocates for the homeless families, to improve the neighborhood both for current and future residents. One enhancement might be to expand hours at the Hattie Holmes Senior Wellness Center at the former Kennedy Theater, and using the facility for community-directed activities. She added that the facility sites have yet to be approved by the DC Council.

An attendee asked why city personnel hadn't spoken with the community about their choice of site. Khalil Thompson, who is quickly tapering off his role as Ward 4 liaison to the Mayor's office, said the building needs 30,000 sq. feet to accommodate a facility, and that very few buildings in Ward 4 are that big.

A resident of 5407 Kennedy St. asked if any funds would be put into that block of Kennedy St., including beautification. **Comm. Bowser said the city personnel had stated that the city would move forward expeditiously to make neighborhood improvements.**

Comm. Sheon introduced a resolution to represent the ANC in requesting that Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration (ABRA) "level the playing field" for community members wishing to protest a liquor license application, for example offering "community friendly" hours so working people can attend hearings. The resolution also required that settlement process should restart if police close an establishment due to illegal activity. **Comm. Sheon moved that ANC allow him to testify on this subject on behalf of full ANC. Comm. Bowser seconded. Motion passed by acclamation unanimously.**

Comm. Bowser introduced a resolution on inclusionary zoning. Current inclusionary zoning allows developers who are rehabbing or building new housing to build higher and wider if they include a number of affordable units. It also provides affordable housing to residents who have 80% of the area median income (\$109K+, with DC median at \$69K). The resolution proposes to amend inclusionary law by asking the zoning commission to provide affordable housing for people who have 0-50% of area median income, and asking developers to provide that 16-20% of new units be priced affordably, and some of them be appropriate for families. **Comm. Bowser moved that ANC 4D adopt this resolution, allowing Comm. Bowser to testify on behalf of the ANC before record closes March 3. Comm. Sheon seconded. Resolution passed unanimously by acclamation.**

GUEST SPEAKERS

Comm. Sheon introduced At-Large Councilmember Elissa Silverman to discuss vacant property legislation and Paid Family Leave legislation.

CM Silverman said the Vacant and Blighted Building Enforcement Amendment Act of 2015 would put onus on owners of property designated as vacant or blighted to prove that the designation should be removed. Currently DCRA inspectors are required to visit all vacant and blighted properties every six months to certify vacancies. City has 1,143 vacant building and 143 blighted, but only four inspectors. Vacant Property Enforcement Amendment Act of 2016 closes a loophole allowing owners to avoid the higher tax by claiming they are working on property although they are not (as in case of 5505 5th St.)

An audience member asked what happens to homes left vacant when seniors go to assisted living or pass away. Their home is vacant and going through probate, what is policy on property tax? CM Silverman said the homestead exemption is supposed to be lost. **Comm Roth asked how deaths are reported to OTR and when does senior tax exemption stop?** CM Silverman noted that Ward 4 budget hearings are coming up and that was a good question to raise during testimony (contact CM Orange, to ask to testify).

The Paid Family and Medical Leave Act would set up an insurance fund that would pay benefits for qualifying events. This would create a fund to cover income lost, including for private sector employees who work in DC regardless where they live. It would give up to 16 weeks of paid leave. The US is the only industrialized country in world without family leave program but 3 states do, including California, so there is a lot of experience, and it is shown not to have had bad effects on business. Congress will not allow DC to collect contributions to the fund from the federal government or employers in other states, and self-employed people can opt out. Employer can pay into fund 1% of salary per year. Chair Mendelson has revised what would be a qualifying event and suggested a maximum of 12 weeks instead of 16. He would also define parents as having a legally defined relationship. CM Silverman said the bill was in active legislative process, and the Council has had several hearings.

Comm. Bowser introduced Dr. Bryan Curry, of Howard University Hospital, who said heart disease is the number one killer. Women have different symptoms of heart attack from men, including unexplained fatigue and trouble breathing, not chest pain like men do. An event at Howard U. Hospital is coming up Friday Feb. 26 to encourage exercise, and things to do to stay healthy.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Comm. Roth introduced Carrie Dzwil, who is in a partnership that is opening Planken Downs, first as a beer garden at 518 Kennedy St., and later expanding its food menu. She said they look forward to becoming part of the community. The new business is scheduled to open no more than a year from now. It's in very early stages of planning. **Comm. Sheon** asked if business would to make commitment to hire from community. Dzwil said the staff will be diversified and they would do best to draw from community. Limited staff in beginning, but later would expand to around 10 people.

Jordon Bailey announced CM Todd would hold office hours at 6001 Georgia Ave 3-5 pm on Feb. 18.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Monday Feb 29 DC Council holding hearings on DCRA performance. Need to call to testify.
- PSA 407 meeting: Feb. 18, Lt. Anthony Washington will be doing the briefing.
- Junk property sale has been rescheduled. Instructions on otr.cfo.dc.gov/page/real-property-tax-sale.
- UDC offers free tax clinic for low-income families, Feb. 1-April 30.
- March ANC meeting special guest speaker: Megan Aniton OAG on human trafficking in our neighborhoods, how to recognize it.
- ANC 4D quarterly grant application to start in March.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:56 pm.