

American University Community Liaison Committee Meeting
Tuesday, November 28th, 2023
7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Introductions & Opening Remarks

The meeting of the Community Liaison Committee (CLC) was opened by Don Edwards, from Justice and Sustainability Associates, at 7:00 p.m. Vice President of Administration and Chief Administrative Officer Seth Grossman, who convenes and leads the meetings for American University, welcomed representatives of neighborhood organizations and local Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs).

Standing Reports

Student Conduct Off Campus since September 2023; Office Campus Conduct Presentation

Justin Bernstine, Associate Dean of Students, provided information on the Student Code of Conduct as relevant to off-campus student conduct from September 2nd, 2023 to November 27th, 2023.

Shelly Repp, of the Wesley Heights Citizens Association, asked what the complaint near Horace Mann was about.

Justin responded that the complaint was about people on the playground, with a suspected smell of marijuana, and AU police can report only to campus and so they have to file a report with MPD.

Phil Morse, AU Chief of Police, stated she will call metropolitan police and after hours as it is unlawful entry. We have been responsive as we have asked her to call us. Sometimes DC police don't always come, we are closer, so we arrive sooner. Of those complaints, when we arrived, no one was there. Other instances there were people walking away or fleeing. We cannot assert our authority outside our jurisdiction. If we were to detain them it would be unlawful, and our license revoked. We are mindful of that and or the neighbor's complaint. On New Mexico for the to and from we try to be more visible without violating any jurisdiction. Keep up robust response to her concerns. Thinking about outside the box. There was signage that would support DC police enforcement of that. Privat property signs so that if there are people being disruptive there are prosecution means so that the

Chuck Elkins, ANC 3D Representative, responded that the main complaint is the noise late at night. Not just from the playground but noise at 11:00PM at night and that the equipment has been damaged. It is for elementary students so people that are heavier could damage it. The response from the university has been good.

Community Relations Update

Gwen Coleman, Director of Community Relations, updated the group on several new initiatives regarding Community Relations, including a new link on the website, materials on the AUNP Orientation and updated community programs.

Chuck stated one the biggest changes on student life in the campus plan was the orientation. Instead of intervening after a party but to let students know ahead of time. 95% of them took it. Thank you to those

in the community of getting in place.

Justin Berstein said thank you Chuck, I will pass it along

Beth Deal, AVP Thank you, Gwen. You are doing great work. You can tell the difference you are making. It has been a joy. Can't wait to tell stories of our community to our neighbors

Construction Update

Jonathan McCann, AVP of Facilities and Planning next gave updates on construction items around AU. This included information on the Meltzer Center for Athletic Performance and Sports Center Annex and the Jacobs Field Sound Barrier, as well as the Community Garden relocation and refresh of the Eagle Express and Campus Store.

Shelly asked if the AU garden will open to the public/community as well as students.

Jonathan McCann responded they will have to work with the student garden reps, but he is happy to send the contact information along.

Tim Talley, Wesley Heights resident, asked what the Army Corps continuing work look like, what are they doing there.

Jonathan responded that he cannot speak on those details on what they are doing with what they find. He added that there is a retaining wall, that is what I know what right now

Tim stated there used to be update on the site with progress with a report it would be helpful for the CLC website.

Cory Peterson, AVP for Community and Government Affairs, responded that AU has revived that website. That first blue link, updated PowerPoints and notices for the community. We will update it after this meeting.

Shelly asked if the Beeghly building was empty now.

Jonathan stated it has extremely limited occupancy, and has some things stored there.

John Wheeler of Ward 3 Vision, asked about Spring valley advisory board, the board has been existence for 25 years. Was a member for 19 years. Finally wrapped up last month. The one thing left is the public service building. There is a debris field on that hillside to the paved road. Have to put in retaining wall. That will be resolved in the next few months. It wasn't like the AU presidents house with over a million to clean up. This was just clean glass beakers.

Shelly asked how tall the sound barrier is.

Jonathan stated it was 15 feet tall.

Transportation Update

Josh Finver, Director of Transportation Demand Management at AU, reported on tickets issued in the neighborhood from August 23rd, 2023 through November 27th, 2023, there were a total of 115 tickets issued during this period.

Barbara Repp, a Wesley Heights resident, asked if the money is collected from citations in violation of the good neighbor parking policy.

Dennis Paul, an AU Park neighbor, asked for a specific percentage if possible.

Barbara – the Osher Lifelong Learning Program that is in the Spring Valley building, how is that program integrated with the AU campus plan.

Doug Saunders, responded as an OLLI member, it is on the second page. They do include it.

Beth Deal, AVP for Community and Internal Communications, stated she has lived on Mass Ave, a few blocks down from old law school and is very familiar with the parking situation there. Witnessed what it was like with students and with the OLLI program. AU did have a meeting with Josh, Cory and Gwen. There is a lot of parking that is not supposed to happen, it is the people in the OLLI program.

In a matter of 3 days, AU ticketed 17 cars. A lot of the responsibility falls on the neighbors. This has happened for 17 years. I remember there used to be uniformed people to ticket when there were students there. White shirt and red logo. This has gone on for 17 years, too long and need a remedy. People have mentioned signage. I don't know if you can work with the metro to do signage. We discussed the remedy on the zoom call.

Shelly Repp added the parking garage has 300 spots; the bottom level had 100 spots for cars.

Carol Wells, a Westover resident, added she is on the transportation committee, the director of OLLI joined the group and may be a good point of contact.

Elizabeth added that too much is falling on the neighbors. It is a policy is from the school and it is not being follow through or enforced.

Barbara said in the OLLI strategic plan, they talk about goals and they want to grow and take up more classroom space, morning afternoon and evening if approved. The Good Neighbor policy is not mentioned, and parking is number one issue.

William Clarkson, Steering Committee co-chair, clarified if there are residential stickers on the cars.

Doug stated it is an honor system.

Beth added if they are willing to walk 2 blocks they can park in the garage.

William asked how neighbors are supposed to know, is there a specific type of citation.

Beth responded the old ticket system stated if you don't attend the school, please ignore. That is what the ticket said on the back. None of the people who attend OLLI are AU students.

William asked if the garage is empty.

Barbara stated it is not empty but there are spaces.

John Wheeler asked if they register their cars.

Doug stated there is parking app that you can be registered in, you don't have to buy ticket time.

Don Edwards stated there is some investigation and follow-up to be done on the issue.

Phil Morse, AVP of University Police Services and Emergency Management, appreciated that this brings this to our attention. Sat at CLCs 12 years ago. My predecessor was here 12 years before that. Think there is an opportunity to come together. It is flawed because we are a private university writing ticket with no authority to do so other than the zoning commission. The law prevents running tag to identify who it is. It makes it flawed and unhelpful to get compliance of those who are not following the good neighbor policy.

Beth asked how the current citations are identified.

Phil stated that his educated guess was, like if something was reported. Included vehicle descriptions, dates, times and photographs. Josh's team focused on those areas and hopefully that mitigates it. We can put a band-aid or we can address the concept in place that is flawed to improve. I don't know if there is any means to partner with the city in a lawful area.

Tim suggested AU give a progress report to follow-up on these changes, maybe due the fall semester. Nebraska and Maccomb. My concern are residents pay for parking with the residential stickers. Come home and parking are taken by students. There are lots of students who have residential stickers and others can park for 2 hours. It is his understanding; you need some evidence that there are students parking there. I focused on out of state license plates and coming close to the university. He added he's spoken to a dozen of the parents who are frustrated for the pick-up point there is no parking for the parents to pick-up their students and kids are running across the street. Engaging with Methodist church for pick-up and drop off and parents could pick them up safer.

Chuck Elkins stated he is not as optimistic with the system, improve the system in the meantime. The classes are on schedule. If you stand there before the class, you'll see people parking near Mass Ave. There are ways to make it better than what it is now. Not asking for a perfect system, but a better system.

William suggested it was cheaper and safer to provide free parking for OLLI students in the garage. Instead of neighbors walking out and taking pictures.

Barbara added that license plate recognition could help facilitate parking.

Josh Finver responded that AU has cameras to recognize licenses on campus but not in the neighborhood. We have to maintain number of available spaces.

Betsy brought up the idea of parking for free. She stated she is in OLLI and was under the impression that we had to pay for the garage. I am not sure what the management is communicating.

Beth thanked her for her comment and would make sure to follow up in the next meeting.

Cory thanked the CLC members for their good feedback on the issue. There are a number of items to follow up on like talk to the Executive Director of OLLI and create a communication plan. We will continue the conversation and will report on the progress we are making on the issue.

John Wheeler added this issue should be referred to the transportation working group.

Betsy clarified if OLLI is represented in the working group.

Cory responded they will be.

Chuck stated he thought the university should take the lead on scooter reporting. Think that neighbors to report is unnecessary since the primary culprit is students.

Phil responded stating he understood Chuck's point, we are just saying the more people who contact the scooter companies it seems to be more influential to making changes. When you and I engaged about scooters on Rockwood and I engaged the company Lime, the process was designed to prevent me to reporting scooters blocking sidewalks. It said I don't have enough info to report the situation. That's the type of deeper work that Josh is doing.

Chuck stated he does this a lot. Going through the scooter company is not the way to do it but the 311 system. It takes 5 minutes. The companies are required to remove that vehicle when reported from 311 system. If someone is willing to spend the 5 minutes. The rider is supposed to get fined by the company. If students find that there are monetary consequences. I think asking neighbors to do that is not realistic.

Betsy asked what role the ANC could play if any.

Chuck stated our ANC has written several letters on the issue.

Don suggested we report on this item and the OLLI item at the next meeting if not sooner. These single person vehicles. It is untested. Liability is very weak since it is new. You will need an understanding of

the system and part of it is DC govt. Very little enforcement. This might be a conversation for the consortium of universities because wherever are students there are these issues.

William confirmed that AU has a partnership with SPIN. You can beef up those partnership agreements.

Josh stated AU can enforce on campus but not off campus, that is the DC jurisdiction. If they get multiple reports from multiple sources they often act.

Tim – is there a system where if there is a number of complaints, they might have license suspended. I see bikes and scooters abandoned all over the place. Is that an avenue that would help. I can't remember the contact about that car.

Phil stated there is a city is not doing what it should when it comes to enforcement. The people in this room work very hard to address these issues. With the exception of noise complaints, these other complaints are dependent on the city. We write tickets, people litter with scooters, the law and contractual agreements, horse man because there. It would be great to have interaction with our local council members. It has to be people other than me to tell them to do this. Needs to be a collaborative approach.

John stated, "I think with scooters, that is a city issue. It would be smart to get Councilmember Frumin involved. The people who are supposed to enforce the scooter issue are not doing it and there needs to pressure applied. I see scooters everywhere and anywhere and I don't think it is fair to blame just AU students".

Chuck stated the ANC has been very active, sent a 15-page letter on recommendations with regulation. We might get enough leverage for the person at the top of transportation. I don't have leverage and the ANC does not. Fruman is on the transportation committee. The city of Baltimore has shown how to run a good example.

Shelly Repp stated it is safe to say that OLLI students are not AU students.

Don Edwards said the last resort is that we don't get an update until the next CLC meeting. Strike while the fire is hot. Many will be invited, and further conversation will be had.

Enrollment and Housing Update

Cory Peterson, AVP of Community and Government Relations, walked neighbors through the 2023 Enrollment and Student Housing numbers for American University.

Shelly stated he assumed the bad news was that AU wishes enrollment was higher.

Cory responded yes.

Shelly asked how many beds are people actually sleeping in.

Cory stated he will follow-up with Shelly on that.

Don stated that numbers will be on the website tomorrow.

New Business and Neighborhood Items

Don Edwards opened the floor for any additional items.

Dennis stated the GSA has put up 23 parcels for sale. 2 in DC. One is next to the Social Security building and. The homeland site is on the market. Heck of a piece of property that AU could purchase for investment.

Seth stated AU is aware.

Dennis commented it was a wonderful piece of property.

Chuck stated Senator Feinstein's old house is for sale as well.

Seth stated AU is aware of that as well.

Good of the Order

The next CLC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 5th, 2024.

Don Edwards thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Attendees

Community:

Chuck Elkins, ANC 3D Representation and Student Life and Safety Co-chair

William Clarkson, Steering Committee co-chair

Shelly Repp,

Barbara Repp,

Dennis Paul,

Avi Paulson, AU Student

Doug Saunders, Fort Gaines resident

Tim Talley, Wesley Heights resident

Carol Wells, Steering Committee member

Betsy White, Co-Chair of the Engagement and Communications Working Group

John Wheeler, Ward 3 Vision

American University Staff:

Justin Bernstine, Associate Dean of Students

Beth Deal, AVP for Community and Internal Communications

Cory Peterson, AVP of Community and Government Relations

Seth Grossman, Vice President of Administration and Chief Administrative Officer

Sherry Rutherford, Campus Plan Consultant

Gwen Coleman, Director of Community Relations

Jonathan McCann, AVP of Planning and Project Management
Phil Morse, AVP University Police Services and Emergency Management
Josh Finver, Assistant Director for TDM
Brendan McNickle, Project Manager

JSA Staff:

Don Edwards
Katie Smith
Breanne Kroehler