

Community Liaison Committee Meeting
Tuesday, February 7th, 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 People and External Relations 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 December 2022; Office Campus Conduct Presentation

Jeff Brown, Dean of Students, provided information on the Student Code of Conduct as relevant to off-campus student conduct from December 1st, 2022 through February 1st, 2023. There were three reports from single-family homes and one report regarding apartments or condos. Two reports were from Spring Valley, one was from Palisades and one was from Foxhall village. Additional information can be found in the presentation.

Bruce Klein, member of the Fort Gaines Citizens Association, asked if AU as an organization has the ability has to shut down houses that have been routinely identified as problem areas.

Jeff Brown answered that the code of conduct allows AU to address individuals or registered organizations within the University. I.E. If something were continuing to happen the group can be put on probation.

Rita Bloom, resident of Foxhall Condominiums, asked if these complaints come through management or an individual on the property and what the follow-up process was.

Jeff Brown responded that in this case the police were responding to a police report to an apartment on the property.

Rita clarified by asking if information about this complaint got back to Foxhall Condominium management.

Jeff stated that American University typically doesn't take this kind of complaint to building management.

Community Relations Update

Maria Barry, Director of Community Relations, provided updates on past and planned events for community members in the AU neighborhood as well as info about events and outreach related to the Alan and Amy Meltzer Center for Athletic Performance project.

Bruce Klein asked where Airlie Farms is located.

Maria Barry replied that the farm is located in Warrenton, VA. The farm offers some of its produce, honey, and meat to be sold at local farmers' markets. This property was a gift to AU to manage and the University received it in 2016. The food produced here is also offered to students and the AU community food via the dining hall, the University also coordinates with Martha's Table.

Capital Projects Update

Jonathan McCann, Assistant Vice President of Planning and Project Management, American University, provided updates on Capital Projects at AU. This included AU House, the Sudama art installation and the relocation of AU's community garden.

Bruce Klein asked what the AU House will be used for.

Jonathan McCann answered that this property is used to house the American University President.

Bruce asked if the area to the right of the house will be subject to any additional landscaping or work.

Jonathan answered that this area will be cleaned and touched up by the University.

Bruce responded that he was under the impression AU is not allowed to landscape that area.

Jonathan shared that the university would do any work that the conservancy has approved them to do. He will follow up on exactly what areas will be subject to additional work.

Phil Morse, Assistant Vice President of University Police Services and Emergency Management, added that this is a great property. This school has made a miraculous change.

Don Edwards suggested to Jonathan that a report on the landscaping be added to the next presentation.

Tricia Duncan, Commissioner for ANC 3D, added she was interested in the landscaping plan as well. She shared that this portion of Nebraska Ave. NW is in desperate need of a sidewalk. She asked that AU be mindful of that when it comes to any expensive trees or landscaping they plan to put there.

Jonathan clarified that he meant the space was limited in terms of how close pedestrians can get to the sidewalk.

Bruce asked where Sudama is located.

Jonathan answered that it is located on Massachusetts Avenue NW.

Georgianna Paul, a community resident, asked, where the Community Garden will be located on campus.

Jonathan answered that it is planned to be in front of Nebraska Hall.

Phil asked if the referenced building is located next to the president's residence and part of that property.

Jonathan shared that there is a small utility building for the pool and a shed on that property that houses tools. The house itself has been added to include the conservatory (which is an AU community space) and the garage.

Transportation and Parking Update

Daniel Nichols, AVP of Risk, Safety, and Transportation Programs at American University, gave brief verbal updates on the 2022 TDM Compliance report, new scooter corrals and AU's bike-share program.

A nearby neighbor asked what bicycle usage at AU looks like.

Daniel Nichols answered that there is a bike program where employees receive a subsidy for riding their bikes to work. There is also a discount program for those interested in using any of the Capital Bike Share docks on AU's campus. AU is currently developing a bike share dock on the south side of the campus and expanding the docks on north and east campus. Dan is finding that students are rarely bringing their own bikes to campus and taking advantage of bikeshare and scooter incentives, which is good.

Shelly Repp, resident of AU Park, asked where preferred drop off locations are located for ride shares (i.e. Uber, Lyft, etc).

Dan replied that there is one reserved area for preferred rideshare drop offs by the president's office.

Shelly asked if AU considering transitioning to electric shuttle busses.

Dan shared that at this moment he does not have an answer to that question. They added if the tech is there and it's an affordable option, American University will look into it.

Dennis Williams, representative of the Tenleytown Neighborhood Association, asked if the shuttle bus (at the Metro) goes down to Tenleytown. DDOT is looking at renovating the area. He asked if AU has been involved in that planning process and asked what kind of changes AU would be looking for.

Dan shared that AU has been involved in that process. Metro is aware of AU's shuttle program, and they are accommodating them.

Dennis Williams asked what would help AU, how can the plan help better accommodate the school.

Dan shared that the shuttle buses need to be accommodated for in this area behind the Whole Foods. There is also a need for a more designated areas for pick up and drop off. In Arlington along Route 1, they've made a central lane that goes in both directions that calms traffic. He thinks that's a great idea and he would support a design similar to that.

Dennis shared he would support drop off and pick up outside of the area being discussed.

Dan stated he is not familiar with DDOT's proposal. There are bikes, parking, and pedestrians in that area. There is a lot going of changes needed there in his view.

John Wheeler, Ward 3 Vision representative, agreed that the area is not ideal and needs some re-imagining.

Tricia asked which scooter company American University agreed to partner with.

Dan answered that AU is partnered with Spin. They put out an RFP and Spin won.

Bruce shared that the new hawk light is not synchronized with the traffic lights at Ward Circle and 46th Street NW and asked if someone from AU had been in contact on the issue.

Dan answered that AU has not reached out to DDOT about that intersection. He was working with Tony on that. The University has students who cross there and are aware of the issue. Tony was trying to get DDOT to synchronize that light better. He shared that the community would need to be involved with getting that light synchronized and it would require ANC coordination as well.

Tricia shared with Bruce that she can help with this concern on hawk light synchronization.

Dan stated that AU would be supportive of community efforts to make that change.

John Wheeler shared that in AU's 2012 campus plans, a certain number of parking spaces were to be set aside/developed. The 2022 campus plans guarantee that the campus can accommodate a maximum number of cars. People are using fewer car trips (due to the increase of teleworking). He added we should not do things to encourage people to drive more.

Dan agreed, adding this is where AU and the community converge. Parking is not a good use of money or land and the neighbors don't desire AU using land for more parking.

New Business and Neighborhood Issues

Jonathan, McCann, Assistant Vice President of Planning and Project Management, American University, presented to the CLC information on the planned Alan and Amy Meltzer Center for Athletic Performance and Sports Center Annex. This included info on the Student Thriving Complex, campus and building plans, proposed renderings, mitigation plans for visual and noise impact and plant buffer design.

Bruce asked if American University expects the new facility to attract athletes.

Jonathan shared that AU does hope it attracts athletes to the University. Their vision is a state-of-the-art sports competition facility.

Larry Seftor, Spring Valley resident, asked if AU expects there to be any significant construction impacts on the surrounding neighborhood.

Jonathan shared that it depends on the work being done. He is aware that there will be disruptions from time to time. Jonathan shared that in future presentations he will highlight and share time slots where neighbors should expect disruptions due to construction.

Larry followed up by asking how long construction could take.

Jonathan answered that the expected construction period is slated for more than 6 months.

Don asked if there will be a construction plan developed to present in future meetings.

Jonathan replied that there will be one that will be refined into a logistics plan. There is a regulatory framework that AU has to work within, and they plan to do that for the construction of the Meltzer Center.

Larry inquired if there will be management of the construction vehicles to restrict them from residential streets and to keep parking open in the neighborhoods.

Jonathan answered that parking of construction vehicles will be prohibited on neighborhood streets. AU will make that clear. If this rule is violated, it will be addressed.

Don shared that this agreement and rules around parking are typically included in the construction management plan. It's an agreement that binds the university to certain behaviors. He imagines that the ANC will be interested in that plan as well.

Larry asked if the plan will be presented in subsequent meetings.

Dan Nichols shared that construction vehicles cannot park in neighborhoods surrounding the campus and AU will work with DDOT to keep vehicle routes to primary streets.

Larry shared that in his neighborhood they had minimum work on the gas lines done. It was very disruptive to him.

Shelly stated that the only part of this plan that perplexes him is the turf area presented to the group. He asked if Jonathan and his team have talked about what that area can and cannot be used for.

Jonathan shared that the slides presented earlier list what the turf area is currently programmed for.

Shelly asked if the work on this center that will be part of the zoning plan. He asked what commitments there are for this plan.

Jonathan was not sure how to answer that question and is not sure how AU would add this to the upcoming zoning plan. He stated he would follow up.

Shelly shared that this plan is a smaller project than proposed earlier, which is a positive. When the plan is presented in the ANC 3E meeting, he will be sure to support it.

Jonathan thanked him for his support.

John Wheeler asked about community use for that property and asked what AU has envisioned for it as it pertains to community use. He added that it would be a great place for people to have early morning fitness classes.

Maria committed to looking at community programming and making that property accessible.

John added the last time this was discussed AU was not sure if the community would have access to this property or not. He envisioned using this space for community yoga sessions.

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Other Upcoming CLC Meeting Dates:

June 20th, 2023 (President's Town Hall)

September 12th, 2023

December 5th, 2023

Don Edwards thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Attendees

Community:

Rita Bloom, Foxhall Condos

Tricia Duncan, ANC 3D Commissioner

Stan H. Lan, Resident

Denise Liebowitz, OLLI at AU Park

Bruce Klein, Fort Gaines Citizens Association

Dennis Paul, Resident

Georgianna Paul, AU Park Resident

Larry Seftor, Spring Valley Resident

Robert Smolik, Tenleytown Resident

Suzanne Smolik, Tenleytown Resident

Dennis Williams, Tenleytown Neighborhood Association

John Wheeler, Ward 3 Vision Representative

American University Staff:

Fanta Aw, VP of Undergraduate Enrollment, Campus Life and Inclusive Excellence

Maria Barry, Director of Community Relations

Jeffery Brown, Dean of Students

Beth Deal, AVP for Community and Internal Communication

Seth Grossman, VP of People and External Affairs

Brendan McNickle, Project Manager, Office of People and External Affairs

Jonathan McCann, AVP of Planning and Project Management

Phil Morse, AVP of University Police Services and Emergency Management

Dan Nichols, AVP, Risk, Safety and Transportation
Cory Peterson, AVP of Community and Government Relations

JSA Staff:

Don Edwards, Justice and Sustainability Associates, LLC
Breanne Kroehler, Justice and Sustainability Associates, LLC
Nina Young, Justice and Sustainability Associates, LLC