

American University Community Liaison Committee Meeting
Tuesday, March 5th, 2024
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).

Don Edwards reviewed the agenda and facilitated a round of introductions.

Standing Reports

Student Conduct Off Campus since November 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 November 29th through March 5th, 2024. AU received four reports, three from single family homes and one from an apartment or condo community. All four were regarding noise/parties and gatherings. One report was referred to the Office of Student Accountability and Restorative Practices, one report was resolved through a meeting with the Dean of Students, two reports did not involve AU students.

Construction Update

Jonathan McCann, AVP of Planning and Project Management, next gave updates on construction items around AU. This included information on the Meltzer Center for Athletic Performance and Sports Center Annex, updates on the Jacobs Field Sound Barrier, the AU Community Garden relocation and the replacement of Reeves Field.

Linda Segal, an AU Park resident, clarified where the location of the new Meltzer center would be located.

Jonathan replied it is near the Bender arena.

Dennis Paul, an AU park resident, asked how long Reeves field will be closed.

Jonathan stated AU is going to keep it open as long as possible. The time period for construction is detailed in the presentation.

Dennis asked what AU's hope is to start and end construction.

Jonathan responded realistically AU could see construction starting in March 2024 and end near September of 2025. There will be ebbs and flows and impacts are going to change based on the activities

of the construction.

Dennis asked how Jessica Herzstein feels about the wall.

Jonathan replied that he knows she is pleased about the plantings but added he had not discussed how she feels about the wall overall.

Dennis asked about the green-scaping plan for Meltzer center.

Jonathan stated there will be a mix of trees, shrubs and additional ground cover.

Dennis asked if he could receive a copy of the plan.

Jonathan said the plan was available online.

Gwen Coleman, Director of Community Relations, added AU can share the plans with Dennis.

Chuck Elkins, ANC 3D Representative, emphasized with Jonathan that the LEED platinum certification is a sign of major leadership from AU when it comes to making their buildings environmentally friendly.

Jerry Gallucci, AU Partnership Steering Committee co-chair, went with Jonathan twice to the wall and it is the biggest wall he has seen other than a sound barrier next to a highway. It was a great job and lots of resources went into building it.

Tim added he seconds Jerry's sentiments. He likes the plantings, and the wall is aesthetically pleasing.

Chuck also stated on Jessica's side of the wall, it does not look like the highway wall, adding it looks good.

Gwen Coleman gave an update regarding the Army Core Engineering Work Near

Shelly Repp, an AU park resident, commented that is a big hole, does AU intend to fill it.

Gwen stated they have added some dirt and tried to address the sloping, but I am not the main contact for this activity

Dennis asked how the area will be used once filled back up.

Jonathan said his understanding is that it will be green space.

Don wanted to highlight that there are specific people listed on the slide that folks can contact if they would like to make a comment or complaint or ask questions

Transportation Update

Josh Finver, Director of Transportation Demand Management at AU, reported on tickets issued in the neighborhood from November 28th through March 4th, there were a total of 55 tickets issued during this period. Josh also updated the group on scooters and ride-share pick up locations, as well as new Capital Bikeshare stations. He also followed up from discussion at the last CLC on parking for OLLI students attending classes at AU.

Judith Kopperud, a Wesley Heights resident, stated she noticed a lot of drop offs on Massachusetts Ave and the Katzen Center.

Josh stated AU intends to mitigate that on Mass Ave. They should be using the Hughes Hall drop off location.

Georgianna Paul, an AU park resident, clarified the location of the ride-share spaces.

Josh Finver clarified where they are.

Linda Segal, an AU park resident, asked if there are instructions telling people to not make a left turn on Nebraska to East campus. It ties up traffic.

Josh replied there is a sign, and it is a point of frustration for us too.

Linda asked if it is possible to talk with DDOT and extend the barriers, so that it can only be a right turn.

Josh responded AU can continue the conversation with DDOT for that. Figure out stopping cars in the circle. Cars don't recognize that red lights in the traffic circle

Judith stated WMATA is talking about the M4 and M6 bus routes being discontinued, she asked if AU was working with them on the issue.

Josh responded AU keeps an eye on those discussions and has had an open conversation with WMATA on the issue, they want to make sure community members are involved as well.

Chuck Elkins, ANC 3D Representative, said the scooter situation is worse along N Mexico and Nebraska. The companies continue to stage by campus on N Mexico, it seems unnecessary. Scooter riders are leaving them in the neighborhood. He added he thinks it has gotten worse since the last CLC.

Josh responded there has been concerns about staging on campus. SPIN is under a new company's ownership. It is on agenda for AU's next meeting with SPIN.

Tim Talley, a Wesley Heights resident, asked how many scooters are on campus.

Josh responded there is a cap with the city. We try to be under 100. Per corral it is 3-5.

Tim inquired what is the average useability, and how many are rented.

Josh stated the levels of usage have been good that scooters that are being staged. Companies don't want to put them out if they are not being used.

John Wheeler, of Ward 3 Vision, stated Ward circle is the most dangerous intersection in Ward 3. It would be better if they would just get rid of the circle and put an intersection. Probably safer from a pedestrian perspective. If you want to push something push to remove it, not just reconfigure it.

Margie asked if AU could interface with the Police. If police put cameras on the lights, they would get so much money. Need help to have a conversation with them if possible.

Tim Talley stated Maryland and Virginia residents don't pay their photo cam tickets. A huge amount of money goes unpaid.

Jerry Gallucci, the Steering Committee co-chair, responded he has written our city councilman on the issue, the assistant said it is on the list to be done someday. If we all also contact our city councilman, it may be more impactful.

Tim stated he thinks that there will be a reduction to the speed limits on Nebraska.

Chuck Elkins stated it is changing from 30 to 25mph. 30 at Macomb.

Dennis Paul thanked Josh for his follow up on the OLLI parking issue.

Barbara Repp, an AU Park resident, added a thanks to Gwen Coleman for her responsiveness to the neighbors. It is not just the OLLI members but anyone going to AU. We have seen one officer in the neighborhood in response to a call she made for a gentleman who was going to the AU. The officer was not able to address it as it was an MD plate. If an undergraduate has to register vehicles, what about OLLI members.

Josh replied that AU undergraduates do have to register.

Tony Long, of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), added OLLI has not addressed that yet. If we need to make changes moving forward, we can change our rules for joining.

Barbara Repp asked how the enforcer would know that the person was in the OLLI class.

Tony stated he will talk to the board about this issue.

Barbara stated these are great changes, but questioned if there are consequences for those who violate it.

Tony replied that he doesn't know the baseline number of members parking in the neighborhoods. Talks with the board that these efforts will curtail the amount of people. I will talk to Josh and OLLI members

about what consequences could exist. This is all results based and we will reexamine after our initial findings.

Dennis Paul asked when does semester end and start.

Tony stated it ends the 2nd week in May. Fall starts in September.

Dennis asked if OLLI could think about implementation in time for the Fall semester.

Tony stated he is working with the board to get the attestation to be part of the registration for OLLI.

Barbara clarified so if people sign up for a class, they must read and sign the rules.

Tony replied that this is for them to sign the affirmative stating that they recognize the information on parking.

Barbara asked if anyone received a citation from AU

Tony stated no one has reported one yet, but these rules have just been implemented.

Chuck stated his compliments to OLLI and AU on this team effort. OLLI members usually go at specific times, 3 times a day. Phil's enforcers can be around at the specified time. AU needs to join hands and make it work. 9:30 11:30 and 1:30 and ticket those cars and 2:00.

Shelly stated AU holds Lyft responsible, he added AU can hold OLLI to the same standard, jointly to administer it with fines and penalties and put in teeth to the enforcement angle.

Tim asked if there are these on residential streets that allow people to park there for 2 hours. Does AU policy trump the DC policy, isn't there an issue with AU authority.

Phil Morse responded that AU is given authority through zoning commission. No authority to run a person's tag, just to give the ticket. If you don't know who someone is it is hard to follow through with any consequences.

Tim stated he has difficulty with AU students and other school students taking parking near his residence. Residents are paying for residential parking.

Don Edwards asked what is turn around for Tony to report results.

Tony replied he was happy to report at the next Transportation meeting or the next CLC meeting. Will need help to see if there are known OLLI members who have received a ticket.

Don clarified what is the appropriate window.

Tony stated in a couple weeks he expects to have some initial information.

Chuck followed up from the discussion in November. The test is how many people are parking in the street. He asked what AU is finding from potential violators on Massachusetts Ave and 48th street and the streets near other AU buildings.

Tony stated he can work to report the number of OLLI members who reported getting tickets and continue to work with Josh. We are committed to this

Chuck stated he noticed that Mass Ave and 48th streets were not on presentation.

Josh stated it was, just not posted on the presented slide.

Tim Talley stated a business card about the good neighbor policy so that people are aware and receive a warning could be a good idea.

Josh stated AU will just ticket them, they will then work to address any confusion if the ticket is a mistake.

Judith stated she used to live in Spring Valley by law school. If we saw a student, we would approach them about violation to the student's ethics code. On occasion they would have a parking permit sticker, are they still not allowed to park there.

Barabara replied it is a condition of the campus plan.

John Wheeler also replied that the city has concern for parking legally, it's not a legal issue for AU.

Chuck stated this issue was brought before the Zoning Commission. Students sign a contract to agree to the code of conduct and the neighborhood policy. OLLI has signed the contract, but members have not.

Barbara added she thought any program at AU is subject to this per the campus plan.

John added he has to park on campus even for the CLC.

Barbara added AU staff members must be registered too.

Josh affirmed AU does count the total number of cars on the campus.

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.

Judith asked when the community clean-up and campus beautification day is.

Gwen responded it is Tuesday, April 9 and Wednesday April 10th. She stated she will update the slides to reflect that.

New Business and Neighborhood Items

Don Edwards opened the floor for any additional comments.

Lois Schiffer, an AU Park resident, stated she was distraught with the WAMU news. She added it will affect the fundraising and it was done without conversations with community.

Seth Grossman responded that the coming WAMU council meeting on May 8 is the appropriate venue for this discussion.

Lois questioned who the decision maker was for this.

Seth stated the decision was due to a year's long process. Significant changes had to happen due to the market changes. I know it is on their agenda.

Lois stated some additional context surrounding WAMU, they are eliminating 15 positions without discussion. Investigative reporting issues on local issues. Archives will be available. Not the same as a going forward

John Wheeler stated he agreed with Lois. Adding that the Washington Post is lousy at covering local news. He stated he did not know that they were removing the radio media.

Seth stated WAMU continues to focus on local news.

Jerry Gallucci, co-chair of AU partnership, stated he had been involved with AU since the campus plan of 2010. The Partnership has gone through recent events with Meltzer Center and the Sound Wall and it is working in his view. He added everything I heard in this meeting has been covered in the working group meetings. He added he thinks the CLC is redundant, and folks should take their concerns to the working groups and work neighbors with AU to resolve issues. Highlights the different groups and chairs. I don't think the CLC is good other than making everyone go through everything.

Shelly replied to Jerry stating back during some previous campus planning discussions he did raise concerns about redundancy, but it went nowhere. Adding that years ago he was blackballed from joining. He added there were no updated records on the website from the Steering Committee since November.

Jerry stated he recognized the website issue and is working on it.

Tim added that he doesn't think the Partnership has enough involvement in the community. Need a way to advertise to these various neighborhoods. Spring Valley, the Palisades, things have changed since the

pandemic. Things used to be on Zoom. If we can create a new way for people to come together in person to talk to the decision-makers that could be useful.

Don added holding the CLC is a requirement in the campus plan as ordered by the Zoning Commission.

Jerry stated in his view the Zoning Commission has no means to tell a community how to live.

Chuck stated he agrees with Don. There are working groups where there is back and forth and decision making. You don't have to be a representative of a neighborhood organization, you just have to take orientation. There is also a steering committee that is more managerial. It is interesting that at CLC that AU are the ones presenting. Perhaps in the future the partnership can be reporting what they have been doing and seeing what else the partnership can work on.

John stated he want to echo what Jerry had to say. Everything other than WAMU and DCist is worked on in the working groups. OLLI parking was brought up in CLC meeting but was immediately taken up by the transportation committee for further discussion.

Judith stated she was newer to the committee and did not have time to engage with the neighborhood deeply before joining. The majority of people have been involved for several years and is old hat while it is new to her.

Don stated the CLC forum is for informing AU of concerns and AU to inform the community on the required report by the Zoning Commission.

Jerry stated that because of the Zoning Commission there is a duplicative process. He clarified the working groups are not part of the CLC but part of the partnership.

Judith responded she understands that and is in the partnership, but I don't hear what is going on in the other partnership working groups. Maybe effective communications to get a summary beforehand.

Jerry stated having more general meetings in the partnership is an idea he has spoken about.

Linda asked if AU had any plans to inquire on the nearby DHS property.

Seth stated that at this time we are not bidding on DHS and choosing to remain focused on internal campus development.

Linda stated she doesn't want a Wegmans there.

Don restated that no decision will be made about this issue by the CLC.

Chuck restated that the CLC does not include a report from the partnership, although it is open to Partnership members.

Tim asked if AU was interested in Diane Feinstein's old property.

Seth stated he cannot say. Just contracted AU house so does not see that happening

Dennis asked if AU could provide microphones at the next CLC as in the past. He added he had also heard a rumor that AU will announce a new President soon.

Seth replied he knows a new President will be announced prior to July 1st, but was unsure of the exact timing.

Good of the Order

The next CLC meeting is scheduled Monday, June 3rd, 2024

Don Edwards thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Attendees

Community:

Kathy Culpin, Greenbriar resident

Chuck Elkins, ANC 3D Representative

Jerry Gallucci, Westover Place resident, Steering Committee co-chair

Noah Getz, Tenleytown Neighborhood Association

Dennis Paul, Neighbors for a Livable Community

Georgianna Paul, Spring Valley resident

Barbara Repp, AU Park Resident

Shelly Repp, AU Park Resident

Tim Talley, Wesley Heights resident

Doug Saunders, Fort Gaines resident

Linda Segal, AU Park resident

Lois Schiffer, AU Park resident

Margaret Shephard, Greenbriar resident

Judith Kopperud, Student Life and Safety Working Group member

John Wheeler, Ward 3 Vision

Nancy Whiting, Greenbriar resident

American University Staff:

Justin Bernstine, Associate Dean of Students

Jeff Brown, Interim Director of Student Affairs

Gwen Coleman, Director of Community Relations

Beth Deal, AVP for Community and Internal Communications

Josh Finver, Assistant Director for TDM

Seth Grossman, Chief of Staff

Tony Long, Director of OLLI

Laura Marks, AVP of Community and Government Relations

Jonathan McCann, AVP of Planning and Project Management

Phil Morse, AVP University Police Services and Emergency Management

Brendan McNickle, Project Manager

JSA Staff:

Don Edwards, Justice and Sustainability Associates

Breanne Kroehler, Justice and Sustainability Associates

Katie Smith, Justice and Sustainability Associates