

Community Liaison Committee Meeting
Thursday, June 7, 2018
American University – School of International Service – Abramson Family Founders Room
6:30 p.m.

Introductions and Opening Remarks

The meeting of the Community Liaison Committee (CLC) was opened by AU Special Counsel to the President, David Taylor, who convenes and leads the meetings for American University. He opened the meeting at 6:34 p.m. by welcoming representatives of neighborhood organizations and local Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs).

Attendees introduced themselves and stated their affiliations.

David Taylor acknowledged Linda Argo, AU Assistant Vice President for External Relations and Auxiliary Services, whose retirement was one week away.

Linda Argo replied that working with the neighbors at AU has been a great experience and she was grateful to the opportunity provided her by the late Don Myers, former Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of the university.

Standing Reports for the Fourth Quarter

Construction Update

David Dower, AU Assistant Vice President for Planning and Project Management, updated the CLC on a variety of projects on campus.

Hall of Science

David Dower said that work on the Hall of Science began after AU commencement with the installation of fencing and field offices. Work is expected to begin late June/early July, with a completion date of June 2020.

Public Safety Building Demolition

David Dower said that demolition of the old Public Safety building was completed last summer and the next step is for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to remediate the soil underneath the building. He advised there has been no date announced for this work to begin.

Judy Chesser of the Tenley Neighbors Association asked if the work was related to the discovery of any munitions, to which David Dower replied no.

Summer Projects on Campus

David Dower stated that campus is very busy this summer with a variety of projects, including turf replacement on Jacobs Field, renovations at Anderson Hall, completion of renovations at the

library, and the replacement of pipes across campus as the university's heating system is converted from steam to hot water.

D.C. Water Project

David Dower said that D.C. Water will begin work soon on a large water main replacement project in the neighborhood and that AU is coordinating with them. He added that D.C. Water will handle all neighborhood communications related to this work.

Jeffery Kraskin of the Spring Valley-Wesley Heights Citizens Association asked about a new gate and path that were installed recently near AU's athletic field on 45th Street, NW.

David Dower replied that he did not know and would investigate and report back to the CLC. (Note: it was later determined that the gate and fence are related to Friendship "Turtle" Park and neither were installed by the university).

Student Conduct Off-Campus Since March 2018

Andrew Huff, AU Director of Community Relations, reported that since the last CLC meeting in March, complaints of off-campus student behavior were received regarding one single-family home, two apartments at Cathedral Towers, and one at Ward Circle (crosswalk issue).

Conduct Complaints for the Academic Year

Andrew Huff reported on the year-end totals for the 2017-2018 academic year, which can be found at <https://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/upload/Neighborhood-Reports-Received-2014-15-through-2017-18-Summary.pdf>.

Judy Chesser asked how many of the total calls for 2017-2018 involved a call to police.

Andrew Huff replied that he did not know, but would find out and report back to the CLC with this information. (Note: it was later reported to the CLC that of the 28 reports received, approximately 50 percent were situations in which the reporting party notified the police at some point. However, the ratio of reports to police calls cannot be measured at 1:1 as some reporters stated that they had contacted the police on previous occasions but had not contacted the university, or they contacted the university without contacting the police.)

Update on the AU Neighborhood Partnership

Claire Craik, President of the Board of Directors of Westover Place Homeowners Corporation and Co-Chair of the AU Neighborhood Partnership, stated that the Partnership will allow for more in-depth work and discussion on issues of importance to the neighborhood. She added that there are five working groups (each with an AU and neighborhood co-chair), that are open to interested neighbors: Parking and Transportation, Facilities Planning, Student Life and Safety, Engagement and Communications, and Metrics.

She continued that working group co-chairs have met and will move forward with their work in the next couple of months. She said that this has been a long time coming and it is now time to get to work on issues of concern and further contribute to the work of the CLC.

Use of American University Track

Andrew Huff advised the CLC that there have been several recent events where neighbors have attempted to use the AU track when official practice has been taking place and inadvertently caused a disruption. He announced that the Athletics Department is looking at signage to be placed at the gates to the track so neighbors know when the area is off-limits.

William Clarkson of the Spring Valley Neighborhood Association asked if only the track would be closed at this time or the entire area.

Andrew Huff responded that he would ask Athletics and report back with this information.

Transportation Demand Management Presentation

Dan Nichols, AU Assistant Vice President of Risk, Safety, and Transportation Programs, gave a presentation on the university's Transportation Demand Management (TDM), which can be found at: <https://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/upload/Transportation-Demand-Management-Program-06042018.pdf>.

Dan Nichols stated that the goal is to get people to engage in behavior favored by the university and that the university does not favor single occupancy vehicles. He reminded the CLC that a special CLC meeting was held on this topic in 2014 with a consultant to gather input on the plan from CLC members.

He added that the consultant was brought in again for advice on special events, then again to assess the AU shuttle program. As a result, many improvements have been made to the university's overall TDM strategy.

Shelly Repp of Citizens for Responsible Development asked about the recent change in the pre-tax benefit offered to employees for parking and Metro.

Dan Nichols replied that AU does not subsidize parking for any affiliate and charges market rate for this area. AU's market rate parking was recognized recently by the Coalition for Smarter Growth.

Dan Nichols continued that AU previously had an 80 percent parking utilization rate when the 2017 report to DDOT was submitted. The utilization rate dropped to 73 percent based on a consultant's review in 2018.

William Clarkson asked that, of staff members who hold monthly parking permits, how many live nearby.

Dan Nichols replied that the TDM strategy affects three populations: 1/3 of people will drive no matter what, 1/3 will take mass transit no matter what, and the remaining 1/3 are able to be influenced and are the main target. He added that variables beyond the university's control include where people live, the price of gasoline, reliability of Metro, and personal issues such as child and elder care. These variables often contribute to how an individual chooses to get to and from campus.

Dan Nichols stated that Metro reports more than one million rides on bus and train as part of AU's U*Pass program and that the university has received both national and local recognition for its innovative TDM strategies.

Jeffery Kraskin asked if updated numbers were available, as the ones included in the presentation are dated.

Dan Nichols replied that the numbers used in the presentation came from a letter to the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the data submitted in 2017 was from 2016. Similarly, the data presented to DDOT in 2018 will include information from 2017.

Dan Nichols added that the university soon will enter into a contract with one of the many dock-less bicycle companies in the District, which would allow the company's bikes to be parked on campus.

Dan Nichols stated that AU had 2,724 parking spaces in the fall of 2010, with a 53 percent parking utilization rate or 1,443 spaces occupied on average at a time. As of January 2018, AU has 2,393 parking spaces, with a 73 percent utilization rate or 1,722 spaces occupied on average at a time. AU's current rate falls into the industry standard of 70-85 percent.

Jeffery Kraskin asked about ridesharing companies such as Uber and Lyft, and if the use of these programs added vehicles to the road.

Dan Nichols replied that this could be the case if you assume that those using Uber would otherwise take public transportation as opposed to driving their own vehicle to campus.

Shelly Repp stated that there is a city-wide issue with rideshare vehicles.

Jeffery Kraskin asked if it was something that the university should be promoting.

Dan Nichols responded that AU does not advertise or promote Uber and Lyft directly to students, only the Zipcar vehicles located on campus.

New Business and Neighborhood Issues – Open Discussion

Update on Johnson's Florist and Garden Center - Former Commercial Space

Linda Argo reported that AU currently is in discussion with two organizations interested in this former space and that both would be considered neighborhood-serving businesses. She added

that she is confident that a lease will be signed with one of them in the next three months. She stated that local restaurateur Bo Blair will bring his Surfside concept to the former Firelake Grill space as well, with an opening planned for April 2019.

University Avenue Buffer

Jeffery Kraskin stated that he was speaking on behalf of Dennis Paul of Neighbors for a Livable Community. He said that he was disappointed that 100 new Casey Trees were being planted in the University Avenue buffer and questioned whether the scheduled site visit on June 21 was necessary.

Jeffery Kraskin asked how much AU has spent on all of its buffers.

William Clarkson asked which private property owners have benefitted as a result and how much the Casey Trees planting was worth.

David Taylor responded that the Casey Trees planting is separate from the University Avenue buffer commitment included as part of the Hall of Science project.

**Note: the 100 new Casey Trees planted recently will soon be added to AU's tree inventory and their precise locations will be shared with those interested.*

Troy Kravitz of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D asked if the Casey Tree plantings were above and beyond what the Zoning Commission required of AU, to which Linda Argo responded yes.

Westover Place Repairs

Andrea Garcia-Hamilton of Westover Place relayed to the CLC her displeasure with the repair process undertaken by the university at the conclusion of construction at East Campus. She stated that she was coming to the CLC for guidance on the matter.

Linda Argo replied that the university has been in communication with Ms. Garcia-Hamilton for several weeks on the matter and that she was not comfortable discussing the specifics of her case in a public forum. She stated that AU remains committed to resolving these issues in a timely manner.

Claire Craik stated that the Board of Westover Place has been vigilant in ensuring that AU fulfills its obligations and concurred that the CLC meeting is not the best venue to address these personal concerns.

David Dower stated that the Zoning Order is clear and that AU will meet its obligations regarding these repairs and continues to work towards resolution on the matter.

Ben Tessler of Westover Place asked what would happen if someone discovered potential damage to their home today.

Linda Argo responded that extensive outreach was done to the Westover community in partnership with the Board and that a deadline was established to file claims for repairs.

Judy Chesser asked who performed the inspection, to which David Dower responded an independent, third-party contractor.

The next meeting of the Community Liaison Committee will be **Monday, September 17** at 7 p.m. in Room 1 of Constitution Hall on AU's East Campus.

Attendees

Community:

Judy Chesser, Tenley Neighbors Association
William Clarkson, Spring Valley Neighborhood Association
Chuck Elkins, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D
Andrea Garcia, Westover Place
Alma Gates, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D
Judy Haremann, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
Jessica Herzstein, Neighbors for a Livable Community
Troy Kravitz, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D
Jeffrey Kraskin, Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association
Alan Pollock, Fort Gaines Citizens Association
Pat Pollock, Fort Gaines Citizens Association
Shelly Repp, Citizens for Responsible Development
Ben Tessler, Westover Place
Jane Waldmann, Tenleytown Historical Society
Betsy White, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

American University Staff:

Linda Argo, Assistant Vice President for External Relations & Auxiliary Services
David Dower, Assistant Vice President for Planning and Project Management
Andrew Huff, Director of Community Relations
Hisham Khalid,
Dan Nichols,
David Taylor, Chief of Staff to the President

Other:

Don Edwards, Justice and Sustainability Associates, LLC
Laura Gramling, Justice and Sustainability Associates, LLC

