

Community Liaison Committee Meeting
Monday, September 22, 2014
American University – School of International Service – Founders Room
7 p.m.

The meeting of the Community Liaison Committee (CLC) was opened by Gail Hanson, AU Vice President of Campus Life, who convenes and leads the meetings for American University. She opened the meeting at 7 p.m. by welcoming attendees, who then introduced themselves and stated their affiliations.

Preliminary Report on Fall 2014 Enrollment

Gail Hanson stated that the information being presented is preliminary and that final figures for both enrollment and housing will be available at the December CLC meeting.

David Taylor, the President's Chief of Staff, presented a preliminary report on AU's fall 2014 enrollment. Undergraduate: 6,605; graduate: 3,254; WCL: 1,587; Washington Semester: 481; Other: 388 (non-degree undergraduate, study abroad, certificate programs). He advised that at the end of the week, final numbers will be reported to the appropriate organizations that collect and publish comparative higher education data.

Gail Hanson reported that as of September 15, there were 3,826 AU students in residence halls.

Tom Smith, of ANC 3D and the Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association, asked for the preliminary breakdown of freshmen.

David Taylor responded approximately 1,790.

Tom Smith asked about students being housed in lounges.

Gail Hanson advised that no first-year students are housed in lounges. Students placed in lounges are second years who missed the housing deadline and went on the waiting list. These students will filter into permanent room assignments shortly.

Tom Smith asked about triples.

Gail Hanson replied that approximately 1,000 students are in temporary triples. These students are expected to have opportunities for placement in double rooms at mid-year.

Linda Argo, AU's Assistant Vice President for External Relations & Auxiliary Services, said that the information presented to the Zoning Commission anticipates some level of tripling every year.

Tom Smith asked how many students reside at the Berkshire Apartments.

Gail Hanson replied that currently there are 179 at the Berkshire on the AU lease. She added that Linda Argo will report formally on all of these numbers at the December CLC meeting.

Jeffrey Kraskin, of the Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association, asked if AU has leases at any other apartment buildings, to which Gail Hanson replied no.

Construction Update

David Dower, AU Assistant Vice President of Planning and Project Management, provided updates on the Washington College of Law and East Campus projects. His presentation can be viewed at <http://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/upload/9-22-Capital-Projects-Update.pdf>.

Washington College of Law

David Dower stated that excavation at the Washington College of Law (WCL) project is complete, and the second floor of the Nebraska and Yuma wings are now under construction. Additionally, the concrete structures will be complete in the next month.

Next steps include the buildings' exterior façade and interior fit-out, which will take place concurrently. Renovation of Capital Hall also continues.

Beth Marcus, of Sutton Place Condominiums, asked where the garage exit and entrance will be located.

David Dower replied that it would be located on Nebraska Avenue and that the garage will have 410 spaces.

Walter Labitsky, Director of Facilities at the Washington College of Law, added that there are an additional 45 parking spaces on the surface parking lot. This lot will remain in the same location, on the Yuma Street side of the site.

East Campus

David Dower stated that AU has completed the permitting and approvals process to begin construction on East Campus and that pile driving is now under way on the site.

He advised that pile driving is slightly ahead of schedule and should be complete by September 26. He then reviewed the six month look-ahead construction schedule and the DDOT-approved trucking routes for the project.

Beth Marcus asked if all of the construction traffic would be entering and exiting at New Mexico Avenue.

David Dower replied that there are two entrances, one on Nebraska and one on New Mexico, and that the New Mexico entrance will be used for a short time before having to be closed. He added

that there will be a controlled (flagman) left turn in and out of the Nebraska Avenue entrance during non-rush hour times, per the approved DDOT traffic control plan.

Larry Joseph, of the Westover Place Homeowners Association, asked if there was any more information on DDOT's plan to reconstruct Nebraska Avenue between Chain Bridge Road and Ward Circle.

Andrew Huff, AU's Director of Community Relations, replied that he had reached out to DDOT regarding the East Campus project and reminded them of the approved trucking routes and the expected numbers of daily trucks over the next six months.

Tom Smith asked how AU will ensure that truck traffic is distributed evenly over the several approved routes, specifically the routes headed north, and for how long the routes are approved.

David Dower answered that the destination of the dirt from excavation will be a good indicator of truck distribution and that AU is also considering tagging trucks as they exit the site as a way to keep track of them once they leave the site. He added that the approved trucking routes are good for six months.

Tom Smith asked, if the current routes do not work, whether AU will work with the trucking committee to help revise them.

David Dower responded that DDOT had issues with the committee's original request for Delcarlia Pkwy and River Rd and that things could change over the next six months. As we move forward, this request will be considered.

Alan Pollock, of the Ft. Gaines Citizens Association, asked if a flag person could be placed in Ward Circle to ensure trucks are driving around the circle legally.

David Dower replied that AU will communicate regularly with the drivers and trucking companies regarding several requirements, including following legal traffic patterns at Ward Circle. He continued that if AU is made aware of trucking issues, we will act on them immediately.

Dennis Paul, of Neighbors for a Livable Community, asked if there will be portholes for viewing the construction.

David Dower responded that this is being examined, but because the fence is separated by landscaping, there are safety issues to consider.

Judy Chesser, of the Tenley Neighbors Association, asked if a webcam would be installed similar to what exists at the Washington College of Law project.

David Dower stated that there is not a high enough location on or adjacent to the site that would provide a location for the webcam. He continued that AU is also interested in a webcam and that the matter will continue to be explored.

Main Campus “Tunnel” Upgrade

David Dower reviewed recent renovations to the “tunnel” under the Mary Graydon Center, which included the addition of speed tables, new paint, and additional lighting. Work was completed about a month ago.

Alan Pollock advised that more light is needed in the tunnel at night.

Tom Smith asked if the proposed closing of the “tunnel” included in the 2011 campus plan was still planned, considering this work.

David Dower replied that the work was mainly cosmetic and that it was a part of any other plan.

Traffic & Parking Update

Dan Nichols, AU’s Executive Director of University Safety Programs, provided an update on parking at AU in light of the closing of the Nebraska Avenue parking lot, as well as ticketing information as part of the Good Neighbor parking policy. His presentation can be viewed at <http://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/upload/9-22-Off-Campus-Parking-Report.pdf>.

Dan Nichols stated the Nebraska lot closed in May and resulted in the loss of 904 parking spaces, although the lot was only slightly more than 50 percent full at any given time. Recent analysis has shown that the current parking inventory has absorbed this loss and raised overall utilization to about 85 percent capacity.

He then discussed AU’s informational and education campaign regarding the use of public transit as well as the addition of an “occasional parker pass” now available to students, faculty, and staff.

Dennis Paul asked about the daily rate for the “occasional parker” program, to which Dan Nichols replied \$16/day.

Judy Chesser asked how many of the tickets issued were paid.

Dan Nichols replied that of the xx total tickets written, 77 were written in error and 69 were written to residents.

Judy Chesser asked if AU will begin requiring students to register their vehicles.

Dan Nichols replied that he is making this recommendation to the university.

Jeffrey Kraskin advised that when he called to report a student parked in his neighborhood he had to speak with three different people.

Dan Nichols replied that the enforcement system is now bifurcated, but that this will change when the new WCL opens and Public Safety handles both campuses.

Tom Smith asked that Rodman and Quebec Streets be added to the enforcement area if they are not already included. He added that recently there have been problems on University, Tilden, and 47th Streets and asked if these areas were being patrolled regularly.

Dan Nichols replied that they are and that enforcement will be increased.

Walter Labitsky then presented parking enforcement information for the Washington College of Law. His presentation can be viewed at
<http://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/upload/9-22-WCL-Off-Campus-Parking-Report.pdf>.

Student Conduct Off-Campus

Michelle Espinosa, AU Associate Dean of Students, reported on conduct cases that have occurred since June 3, 2014, and discussed a new orientation being provided to off-campus students.

She stated that the annual fall move-in letter was sent to students and that AU is now asking all fraternities, sororities, and athletic teams with more than three members living in an off campus house to register that address with the Dean's office.

An off-campus living orientation for 50 students was conducted recently by the offices of community relations, public safety, athletics, fraternity & sorority life, and housing and dining programs. The rights and responsibilities of living off-campus were reviewed as were AU expectations for students living in the neighborhood.

She reviewed an excerpt of the off-campus living pledge that attendees were asked to sign and thanked Chuck Elkins for his help in developing it. This orientation will be held on a regular basis moving forward.

Jeffrey Kraskin asked if future orientations might include neighbors to welcome students.

Michelle Espinosa responded that the group has discussed ways for students and neighbors to interact and that this interaction may be more productive if it occurs in the neighborhood as opposed to an orientation session.

Beth Marcus asked what AU might do with copies of individual condo associations' rules and regulations.

Michele Espinosa replied that it would be helpful when meeting with students living in specific communities to be aware of those rules.

She then reported that since the beginning of the school year, there have been nine complaints regarding noise generated by pedestrians walking on the street. Additionally, there have been 11 complaints regarding eight homes or apartments. All students involved in these complaints have

been met with, except for complaints received this past weekend. Two student organizations and two groups of students have been referred to Student Conduct.

Tom Smith asked about follow through with neighbors when they report an incident to AU.

Michelle Espinosa replied that if a complaint contains neighbor information, they are contacted when the complaint comes in. After the relevant students are met with, the neighbor is again contacted with additional information. When cases go to Student Conduct, outcomes related to student organizations are public, but outcomes related to individual students become a part of their disciplinary records and remain private. She then referred attendees to an online complaint form that was created three years ago and is posted on the Dean of Students website at <https://american-advocate.symplicity.com/neighbor/>.

Tom Smith asked about a recent noise complaint at the 45th Street athletic field and if he will find out about the outcome, to which Michelle Espinosa replied yes.

Gail Hanson reminded the group that AU also has an internal community relations committee that meets on a regular basis to share information regarding student conduct in the neighborhood.

Larry Joseph stated that there are issues with students residing at the Berkshire Apartments crossing the marked crosswalk at Massachusetts and Ward Circle but not paying attention to oncoming traffic.

Michelle Espinosa stated that AU's pedestrian safety campaign targeted the entire campus, but that something can be done to target Berkshire residents specifically.

Tom Hughes, of the Embassy Park Homeowners Association, described a similar issue with students jaywalking across Massachusetts Avenue to access Embassy Park Drive and cut through to New Mexico.

Sophia Wirth, President of AU Student Government, added that there are also issues with jaywalking by residents at the Avalon and suggested that any targeted campaign include this building in addition to the Berkshire.

Gail Hanson stated that this matter will be added to the upcoming annual meeting with area building managers.

Other Business

New Signs: Massachusetts Avenue at the Katzen Arts Center & Horace Mann Playing Field

Andrew Huff showed photos of recently added *No Parking* signs on Massachusetts Avenue in front of the Katzen Arts Center. He explained that, based on a complaint from Tom Smith about vehicles unloading at this location, he worked with DDOT to have additional signage installed at this location.

He then showed photos of three new signs installed recently at the Horace Mann athletic field, advising AU students that the field is intended for use by neighborhood children and their families. The AU Public Safety phone number is included on the signs. He continued that he remains in regular contact with the Mann principal and members of the PTA to ensure that any issues on the field are addressed immediately.

Clarification of AU Tobacco & Smoke Free Campus Policy & Enforcement

Michelle Espinosa gave an overview of AU's tobacco and smoke free campus policy. She described the AU task force that worked on the project's implementation and the educational campaign that accompanied its roll-out.

She advised that before the total campus ban there were temporary smoking locations and that 10-14 students walk the campus in pairs from 9 a.m. – 8 p.m. to help ensure compliance and to educate smokers. Additionally, there continue to be resources available to smokers who need help quitting, and recent data show a significant reduction in AU community members who self-report as smokers.

She then addressed issues related to the smoker poles which have been placed on the campus perimeter. They do not designate smoking locations, but rather collect cigarette butts that would otherwise litter the ground. She advised that AU is looking at their effectiveness and whether their use will continue.

Jeffrey Kraskin stated that the problem is the smoker poles and that they have become smoking locations.

Michelle Espinosa reiterated that the program is under evaluation and that the task force will soon be examining the consequences of their original decisions.

Jeffrey Kraskin asked if there will be smoker poles around the Tenley and East campuses and advised that other schools have designated smoking areas on their campuses.

Michelle Espinosa stated that the policy has been in place for less than a year and that AU continues to look at all options.

Gail Hanson said that the task force is still operating and looking closely at how to best manage the initiative moving forward.

Tom Smith said that the policy is a good one and that the easiest solution would be to remove the smoker poles, especially the one on Rockwood Parkway.

Dennis Paul asked Sophia Wirth how prevalent smoking is among her peers.

Sophia Wirth responded that many smokers are international students and that the real answer to the problem is a culture change. She asked what will happen with cigarette butts if the smoker

poles are removed and if this might lead to more smoking in the neighborhood and more cigarette butts on the ground.

Proposed Revision to the CLC Operating Document

Gail Hanson advised that after a discussion at the last CLC meeting on the CLC operating document and the procedure for calling a special meeting, Dave Fehrman, of the Westover Place Homeowners Association, asked AU representatives to draft new language for the committee's consideration.

The current CLC operating document reads, *Additional meetings may be called by any member of the CLC.*

The recommended amended version reads, *Additional meetings may be requested by any member of the CLC to address time-sensitive issues that, if left to the next regularly scheduled CLC quarterly meeting, would create undue hardship to the surrounding community. Such requests will not be unreasonably denied. The CLC chair, in her discretion, may determine other appropriate means to address the matter (such as individual meetings, written communications, etc). In such cases, the chair will report at the next regularly scheduled CLC meeting the manner in which the request was addressed by the university.*

Gail Hanson reminded the group that the CLC does not vote, so a sense of the room will suffice and that members should feel free to consult with their individual constituencies on the proposed new language.

Tom Smith stated that the policy is being changed because AU did not adhere to the original policy and that the proposed language puts too much authority in the hands of a single person.

Gail Hanson replied that the original wording did not provide adequate guidance and that the proposed language is simply a draft and not meant for an up or down approval or rejection at the meeting.

Jeffrey Kraskin said that his issue is with the words "may be requested."

Beth Marcus said that using the wording "will not be unreasonably denied" seemed to respond to that concern.

Judy Chesser asked if the language needed to be changed at all and stated that it reads like the CLC chair determines if there will be a meeting or not.

Gail Hanson replied that only some issues are of interest to all attendees and some only to a single group or neighborhood. She continued that there are many ways to answer questions and address issues outside of the CLC and cited other meetings held recently including several related to East Campus construction. She also cited special meetings on 4801 Massachusetts Avenue and AU's transportation demand management study as examples of issues with broad

appeal. She then asked if the statement “a meeting may be called by a current member of the CLC” stands or if it could be improved by further work.

Dan Nichols stated that the CLC needs some parameters or benchmarks for calling attendees together for a special meeting.

Hisham Khalid, from AU’s Office of the General Counsel, said that there must be a reasonable standard so that members of the CLC know what to expect.

Tom Smith asked who will make the decision whether an issue is valid enough to call a special meeting of the CLC.

Gail Hanson replied that CLC meetings are meant to be a regular, broad forum to discuss issues and provide reports and that several other meetings are held on a regular basis including those related to construction, landscaping, and noise issues. She advised that those with very specific issues to discuss should request individual meetings with the appropriate AU staff members, as has been done in the past with success.

The new proposed language was tabled until the next CLC meeting in December.

Consideration of the Draft Civility Pledge as CLC Ground Rules

Gail Hanson stated that when the CLC was formed, there was discussion about establishing ground rules and that a document used in Los Angeles, California was considered. It was decided at that time that such a document was not needed. Since then, CLC meetings have remained respectful, but in other forums, things have not gone as well. She brought the item back for consideration by the CLC and asked if it was needed to set expectations for the group’s meetings.

Tom Smith asked whether the pledge would apply to what someone says or what someone writes. He added that putting this in a document is not the way to do it and that running a good meeting is more effective. He continued that he hopes the CLC can continue without a document, which he considers to be condescending.

Linda Argo stated that when the current CLC was being formed she did a lot research and discovered that many neighborhood and community organizations around the country had something like this as part of their operating documents. She said that she does not find it limiting and that she has seen very emotional responses at meetings related to the AU campus plan. Many meetings she has attended with Andrew Huff have been very difficult and she believes that when you allow an uncivil tone to prevail it promotes confrontations that are unacceptable. She added that she does not understand why anyone would object to the pledge.

Beth Marcus said that she does not see any harm in the pledge.

Tom Hughes asked if people would find it less problematic if it was more of an agreement than a pledge.

Tom Smith stated that he takes offense to the notion that the pledge is needed.

Jeffrey Kraskin said that if the top two paragraphs were removed and it was titled “meeting guidelines,” he would not have a problem with it. He proposed including items 1-7 and using a new title.

Gail Hanson stated that she will send out a revised draft to the CLC, and will propose that the group discuss the matter again at the December CLC meeting.

Good of the Order

Tom Smith inquired about the driveway at the School of International Service and vehicles exiting straight and left rather than right only, as approved.

Linda Argo replied that AU is aware of the issue and in contact with DDOT to address several issues including signage and signal timing.

Tom Smith asked if AU would be willing to consider a “porkchop” installation which would force right turns only out of the driveway, to which Linda Argo replied yes.

AU Mayoral Debate on September 18, 2014

Andrew Huff described a recent mayoral debate held at AU and co-sponsored by the Kennedy Political Union, Palisades Citizens Association, and Ward 3 Vision. The overflow event was also watched online by more than 2,000 people.

Neighborhood Course Audit Program

Andrew Huff reminded attendees of the option of taking classes at AU as part of the Community Audit program. The program is open to residents in the 20016 zip code who are aged 60 or older. Additional information can be found at
<http://alumniassociation.american.edu/s/1395/index1col.aspx?sid=1395&gid=1&pgid=2556>.

AU in the Neighborhood Newsletter

Andrew Huff advised of a sign-up sheet for the AU in the Neighborhood e-newsletter and encouraged everyone to sign up to receive information on university events and activities in the area.

AU Special Events Open to the Community

Andrew Huff directed attendees to their meeting packets for information on the upcoming *Books that Shaped America* series on campus, as well as the 2014 fall schedule of events at the Katzen Arts Center.

The next meeting of the CLC will take place on Tuesday, December 2 in the Katzen Arts Center.

Attendees

Community:

Judy Chessler, Tenley Neighbors Association
Mary Ellen Fehrmann, Westover Place Homeowners Association
Tom Hughes, Embassy Park Homeowners Association
Larry Joseph, Westover Place Homeowners Association
Jeffrey Kraskin, Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association
Maria Kress, Westover Place Homeowners Association
Beth Marcus, Sutton Place Condominiums
Dennis Paul, Neighbors for a Livable Community
Alan Pollock, Ft. Gaines Citizens Association
Roshini Ponnampерум, Ft. Gaines Citizens Association
Tom Smith, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D/ Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association
Spence Spencer, Neighbor
Jane Waldmann, Tenleytown Historical Society

American University Staff:

Linda Argo, Assistant Vice President for External Relations & Auxiliary Services
David Dower, Assistant Vice President for Planning & Project Management
Michelle Espinosa, Associate Dean of Students
Gail Hanson, Vice President of Campus Life
Andrew Huff, Director of Community Relations
Hisham Khalid, Office of the General Counsel
Walter Labitsky, Director of Facilities, Washington College of Law
Dan Nichols, Executive Director, University Safety Programs
David Taylor, Chief of Staff to the President

American University Students:

Sophia Wirth, President, AU Student Government