

**AU Neighborhood Partnership
Steering Committee Meeting Summary
February 19, 2025, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Abramson Family Founders Room (T-1) in School of International Service**

Community Attendees: Stanley Harris, William Clarkson, John Wheeler, Chuck Elkins, Tricia Duncan, Matt Cohen, Thad Bradley-Lewis

AU Attendees: Matthew Bennett, Laura Marks, Jason Millison, Sherry Rutherford, Jonathan McCann, Justine Bernstine, Josh Finver, Phillip Morse, Elizabeth Deal

JSA Attendees: Donzell Robinson, Raven Nee, Katherine Smith

Highlights	
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and Meeting Guidelines • Co-Chair Opening Remarks • Member Introductions • AU Updates • Campus Safety Conversation Update with Phillip Morse • Working Group Updates • Community Relations Update • Closing Comments and Questions
Actions Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update to the steering committee based on the upcoming Campus Safety Recommendations • Send the partnership information on events open to the community so that members can amplify • Begin to prepare for the interaction with AU’s strategic planning process

Discussion Recap	
Welcome and Meeting Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donzell welcomed everyone and reviewed the ground rules. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Respect the process ○ Be patient and engaged ○ Follow the facilitator’s directions ○ Allow every voice to be heard ○ Speak courteously and respectfully to others ○ Maintain zero tolerance for any obscenity or comment (written or verbal) that is meant to attack or intimidate another person.
Co-Chair Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matt Bennett and William Clarkson, the Steering Committee Co-chairs, welcomed everyone

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Matt provided opening remarks and thanked everyone for their service to the American University Neighborhood Partnership and thanked William for returning to the position of Co-Chair. ○ William reflected on the progress made in the partnership between the neighborhood and American University. William shared that his goal is to continue building on that relationship and towards the steering committee to focus on positive initiatives.
<p style="text-align: center;">Agenda Review & Member Introductions</p>	<p>Donzell Robinson reviewed the agenda for the night and facilitated the member introductions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Matt Cohen, ANC Commissioner representing ANC 3E ● Chuck Elkins, ANC 3D01 Commissioner and Student Life and Safety Co-Chair ● Laura Marks, AVP for Community and Government Relations ● Sherry Rutherford, Consultant to AU regarding campus planning, development, and regulatory matters ● Jason Millison, Director of Community Relations ● Beth Deal, Deputy Communications Officer and the Engagement and Communications Co-Chair ● Stanley Harris, Fort Gaines Community Association representative ● John Wheeler, Ward 3 Vision representative ● Thaddeus Bradley-Lewis, ANC 3A Commissioner ● Justin Bernstine, Deputy Dean of Students ● Jonathan McCann, AVP Planning and Project Management and Facilities and Planning Working Group Co-Chair ● Phil Morse, AVP for University Police, Emergency Management and Transportation and the Student life and Safety Working Group Co-Chair ● Raven Nee, Associate, Justice and Sustainability Associates ● Tricia Duncan, ANC 3D Commissioner & Representative ● Josh Finver, Assistant Director for Transportation Management and the Transportation and Parking Co-Chair ● Donzell Robinson, Facilitator and Principal of Justice and Sustainability Associates ● Katherine Smith, Project Coordinator, Justice and Sustainability Associates
<p style="text-align: center;">AU Updates</p>	<p>Matt Bennett provided a few American University updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● President Alger’s Inauguration (March 27-28): The official inauguration ceremony will be held on March 28. ● Following President Alger’s listening sessions last fall, AU has started the process of standing up several working groups that will contribute to the strategic plan. One of the working groups is focused on public engagement. Once the public engagement working group is established, there will be an

	<p>opportunity for them to engage the steering committee and community members to collect input. Then as progress moves forward, updates will be shared throughout the year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategic planning process will run from March to October, with all input consolidated into a draft plan by November. The final version will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees and is set to launch in January 2026. • Men’s Basketball Update: The team is performing well, with an exciting season. They have upcoming away games, as well as a few remaining home games before the Patriot League tournament. • Terms of Reference Update: A future review of the terms of reference for the partnership will be conducted to ensure they remain relevant. This topic was mentioned in the last meeting, and wanted to point out that this will be a topic as the partnership moves forward. • AU is reviewing federal actions related to higher education that could affect funding and university operations. <p>Questions:</p> <p><i>The partnership to prepare for the strategic planning process and emphasize the work within the Engagement committee to show the importance of the partnership and the relationship with the neighborhood.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The partnership will have space to do some of that preparation. The working group focused on community engagement will share their questions, but those are not the limitation. This is a chance to think big.
<p>Campus Safety Conversation and Student Life and Safety Update</p>	<p>Phil Morse provided a brief overview of the campus safety conversation and provided an update on progress since the presentation in December.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AU’s Security Working Group has been assessing the feasibility and implications of arming its police department in response to national concerns about campus safety. This review, part of a broader risk assessment conducted every five years, involved input from students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and neighbors. The group examined research and implementation factors associated with arming university police departments. Their findings and recommendations will be presented to the Board of Trustees next week after which a final decision will be shared. <p>Questions:</p> <p><i>What are the steps being taken to support student health and well-being, given that there is a correlation between shootings and mental health?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AU’s violence prevention program includes confidential reporting and early intervention by Student Affairs, police, HR, health, and counseling services. The university collaborates with the Metropolitan Washington

	<p>fusion center to monitor external threats in real time. Risk analysis informs countermeasures and community training to enhance safety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AU also has the Care Network which allows anybody in the AU community to submit a report about a student of concern, including that of well-being. AU’s center for well-being programs operates individual counseling, group counseling, a 24/7 hotline, and telehealth counseling. <p><i>What are the steps to roll out the decision to the neighborhood? I have a concern about how the board’s decision will be communicated to the neighborhood, especially if officers are armed.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The survey was open to neighbors and was sent out broadly. AU is looking at all the scenarios and preparing for whichever decision is made and the best ways to communicate it to the full AU community, including neighbors. We are open to that conversation to determine the best ways to communicate with the community. <p><i>To clarify, what is being presented to the Board next week?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The education, forums, survey, and research have informed a report with recommendations. The President of AU will review the report and recommendations and use that information to formulate a decision together with AU’s Cabinet. The decision will then be presented to the Board of Trustees. While the Board will not be voting on the decision, their concerns and questions can have an influence. <p><i>What have Georgetown University, George Washington University, and other institutions done on this issue?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgetown’s officers are not armed with lethal force. GW is armed for those in their department that have the background and experience. It’s unclear if Catholic University’s officers routinely carry them, but they do have firearms. UDC is armed. Howard is armed. Trinity employs a security force that is unarmed. Gallaudet is unarmed. <p><i>I have a concern that the decision will be leaked before being properly communicated to the community.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This effort has a broader focus than just simply arming AU police, but exploring the range of scenarios and circumstances, and the different pros and cons. • Whatever the outcome is, AU will have the appropriate communications plan in place to inform key stakeholders and ensure it is rolled out consistently.
Working Group Updates	Facilities and Planning

	<p>Jonathan McCann provided updates on the construction of the Meltzer Center:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The structural concrete and steel work is 100% complete • Exterior enclosure work is underway • Interior work is underway in the Sports Center Annex • Overall construction for the project remains on track for substantial completion by the end of 2025 <p>Questions</p> <p><i>No questions were raised</i></p> <p>Transportation and Parking</p> <p>Josh Finver provided updates regarding the DDOT annual TDM letter, the CaBi Station locations, and neighborhood parking enforcement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AU completed submission of annual report in December after sharing with the Transportation and Parking working group. • Per DDOT, the new CaBi stations at Fletcher Gate and the Spring Valley Building are to be completed in the spring. It will not take up parking spaces. • Since the start of the semester, AU has issued 142 tickets, with 36 in the area around Spring Valley. <p>Questions</p> <p><i>What is allowing the station to not take up parking spots?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are able to put half of the station on the street and half on the sidewalk. The part that they have on the street is part of an existing no parking area. The station will not block the view lines for cars.
<p>Community Relations and Engagement and Communications Update</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jason Millison and Beth Deal recapped the success of AU’s event for National Girls and Women in Sports day. • Upcoming events in March were highlighted such as the Sine Institute Fellows program and their seminar series, Spring Garden Prep 2025, and the inauguration of President Jonathan Alger. • The Jacobs Field Quarterly Sound Monitoring report will be sent to everybody at the end of February <p>Questions:</p> <p><i>How was the sports event communicated to the community and what was the turnout?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The newsletter, Nextdoor, social media, and community listservs. This event had over a thousand attendees.

Closing
Comments and
Questions

- Matt and William both provided closing comments.
- Donzell adjourned the meeting.