

Community Liaison Committee Meeting
Wednesday, September 21, 2016
American University – School of International Service – Abramson Family Founders Room
7 p.m.

Introductions & Opening Remarks

The meeting of the Community Liaison Committee (CLC) was opened by AU Vice President of Campus Life Gail Hanson, who convenes and leads the meetings for American University. She opened the meeting at 7 p.m. by welcoming representatives of neighborhood organizations and local Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs).

Gail Hanson informed the CLC that American University was recently gifted the 300 acre Airlie estate in Warrenton, Virginia, which currently consists of a hotel and conference center. She added that the site has a storied history and many meetings of civil rights and environmental leaders have been held there.

Linda Argo, AU's Assistant Vice President for External Relations & Auxiliary Services, stated that the deal was brokered over the course of nine months and that AU is in the process of determining how the property will be used, most likely for conferences, retreats, and academic programs.

Gail Hanson announced the recent opening of the AU fitness trail, a 2-mile trail around the campus beginning at the AU Eagle outside of the entrance to Bender Arena. Trail maps will be printed soon and shared with the community.

Gail Hanson addressed news of recent racial incidents on the AU campus and expressed disappointment that such acts occurred. She said that AU will continue to work to address such matters.

Attendees then introduced themselves and stated their affiliations.

New Business & Neighborhood Issues – Open Discussion

Chuck Elkins, a Wesley Heights resident, submitted two issues for discussion in his absence:

Request for information about an incident in the Palisades in August that involved a party and the occurrence on the same night of thefts from cars and other damage in the vicinity. Were AU students involved and if so, what can we report about the incident and its resolution?

Gail Hanson advised that she spoke with Phil Morse, AU's Executive Director of University Police and Emergency Management, and asked him to confer with the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) on the matter. MPD reported no connection to AU students and that if there were a connection the department would be compelled by their General Order to notify AU Public Safety. In this case, AU was not notified by MPD.

Request for an account of what occurred at the July 14 Zoning Commission meeting and next steps in responding to the Commission's charge.

Gail Hanson pointed out that this matter will be addressed later in the agenda. She then asked if there were any other concerns that attendees would like to bring to the CLC.

Jeffrey Kraskin, Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association, stated that there were still challenges related to smoking on the perimeters of the AU campus, specifically the main gate and on Rockwood Parkway.

Gail Hanson replied that there has been some improvement as a result of messaging to the residence halls on the south side of campus, new signage posted at Fletcher Gate, and the installation of a smoking shelter inside the campus entrance. She added that AU will keep working to address the matter.

A neighbor from Wesley Heights raised the issue of Car2Go vehicles parking on residential streets around the campus and asked if AU has an agreement with Car2Go and could located these vehicles on campus.

This neighbor also asked about the opening of East Campus, if students living there would have a curfew, and the role AU Public Safety will play in providing security. Gail Hanson said there would not be a curfew and that curfews in residence halls haven't been in effect for close to 25 years.

Dan Nichols, AU's Executive Director of Risk, Safety, and Transportation Programs, replied that the District government allows Car2Go vehicles to park in any legal spot in the city for an unlimited amount of time. He added that there is no agreement between AU and Car2Go, but that the university does have a corporate agreement with Zipcar, another car sharing service, and that these vehicles are indeed located throughout the AU campus.

Tom Smith, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D, asked if car share vehicles are covered under the university's Good Neighbor parking policy, to which Dan Nichols replied no.

The Wesley Heights neighbor asked if Car2Go can track students who are using their vehicles, to which Dan Nichols responded, no, they do not collect this type of data on their users.

Dan Nichols said that the issue of clusters of vehicles on residential streets is one for Car2Go to manage and that his office would connect with them to ask for their assistance.

Alma Gates, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D, said that there may be a reference in the AU campus plan requiring the university to provide Car2Go spaces on campus.

Linda Argo, referring to a copy of the Campus Plan, replied that there is no such requirement.

Dennis Paul, Neighbors for a Livable Community, asked if AU Public Safety could report if they see large clusters of Car2Go vehicles on residential streets.

Dan Nichols replied that this is a great idea and he will ask officers to do so.

Bill Krebs, Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association, said the clustering of Car2Go vehicles near campus may be a function of the beginning of the school year as students settle in.

The Wesley Heights neighbor replied that the issue has improved lately and was more noticeable last spring.

Dan Nichols stated that the recently implemented U*Pass program should help to reduce demand on car sharing vehicles.

[Note: See recent Washington Post article on Car2Go at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/dr-gridlock/wp/2016/10/04/car2go-reaches-milestone-with-more-than-2-million-members/>].

Michelle Espinosa, AU's Associate Dean of Students, in addressing the questions about East Campus and students in the neighborhood advised that if a neighbor encounters a disruptive house or group of students, to please contact MPD (911) and AU Public Safety (885-2527). She added to also please contact her (espinosa@american.edu) directly as she can work to identify students and call them into the Dean's office. If disruptive behavior continues, they can be referred to the student conduct process. She stated that all residence halls have round the clock staffing and that she would be happy to attend a meeting with a group of concerned neighbors to discuss further if there is interest.

Jeffery Kraskin stated that there will be no freshmen in the East Campus residence halls, only sophomores.

The Wesley Heights neighbor asked if students are permitted to have cars.

Gail Hanson replied that underclassmen tend not to as they take advantage of AU's extensive shuttle system and now the U*Pass program. Upperclassmen with jobs or internships off-campus often do have vehicles.

Dan Nichols asked that neighbors call AU Public Safety with any concerns or incidents. They can do so 24/7 at 885-2527.

Tom Hughes, Embassy Park Condominium Association, stated that there is again an issue with AU students cutting through Embassy Park on the walkway closest to the residences as opposed to the sidewalk along the roadway.

Gail Hanson replied that AU will revisit the issue and communicate directly with students in the Berkshire and Avalon apartment buildings concerning this prohibition.

Standing Reports for September

Preliminary Report on Fall 2016 Enrollment and Student Housing

Linda Argo reported that as of September 21, 2016, enrollment at AU is as follows:

Full-time undergraduates – 6,765

Graduate – 2,524

Other (part time undergraduate, SPeX, international students, non-degree) – 812

Washington College of Law – 1,466

Total – 11,567

She added that AU's total enrollment cap is 13,600 and that there will be a 'melt' in the undergraduate number over the coming weeks. The projection for this fall for the full-time undergraduate population is around 6,730 and may be lower by December when we will report the final enrollment and housing numbers.

Gail Hanson reported that on-campus housing is more than full and that with 311 students backed into the system (waiting for East Campus), AU has an occupancy rate of 104%. She said that there are no students housed in lounges, but triple rooms are at capacity. Once East Campus opens and sophomores are able to move over, the de-tripling will be substantial.

2015-2016 Annual Report on Traffic & Parking Performance

Dan Nichols presented the annual report on traffic and parking performance, which can be viewed at <http://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/upload/Off-Campus-Parking-Report-09-21-16.pdf>.

Dan Nichols stated that AU Public Safety has taken over parking enforcement for both the Washington College of Law and Spring Valley Building. He added that since the Spring Valley Building just opened, the number of tickets issued around the building is lower.

Tom Smith asked if these tickets were issued to students.

Dan Nichols replied that a certain percentage of tickets are issued erroneously to neighbors and that a "do not ticket" list is maintained to help address this issue.

Tom Smith asked if there is information available on tickets issued specifically to students.

Dan Nichols replied that he can try to provide this information. He added that 90% of all tickets are resolved and that some tickets are not responded to at all, which makes them impossible to fully resolve.

Shelly Repp, a neighbor, asked what percentage of tickets are issued to students.

Dan Nichols stated he would attempt to get this information, but that students are definitely the majority. He then reported on improvements to AU's enforcement efforts which include additional staffing, increased hours of enforcement, and a tiered fine structure for tickets.

Shelly Repp stated that he lives on the 4700 block of Windom and that he is seeing some parking in the neighborhood related to the Spring Valley Building. He asked if AU staff could attend a neighborhood meeting to explain the policy and enforcement mechanisms to which Dan Nichols responded, yes.

Jonathan McHugh, of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3E, asked who residents should call to report illegal parking.

Dan Nichols responded that residents can call AU Public Safety at 885-2527, 24 hours/day.

Bill Krebs stated that there is group of AU students living in a house on his street and asked if they are not enrolled in summer classes if they are covered by the Good Neighbor policy.

Gail Hanson replied that they are still considered enrolled, even if they are not taking summer classes, so the policy does apply. However, if they are living in the house and have the proper D.C. vehicle registration, they are permitted to park there.

The Wesley Heights neighbor asked how many of the issued tickets were paid and if there is a penalty for not paying.

Dan Nichols replied that there is a 90% resolve rate. He added that some pay, some comply, and some end up buying a parking pass for campus. He added that if the ticket is issued to an AU affiliate, it doubles after 30 days, so there is a financial incentive to pay.

Off-Campus Student Conduct Report

Michelle Espinosa reported that so far this year (through Labor Day weekend), 11 complaints have been made to AU regarding off-campus student conduct. She added that at this time last year there were 15 complaints.

Of the 11 complaints, 9 involved single family homes, and 2 involved apartment units. One address had 2 reports.

Of the 11 complaints, 4 were made during summer months, 5 between Welcome Week and Labor Day weekend, and 2 since Labor Day.

In all but one instance, AU was able to identify the students, since AU started capturing off-campus student addresses.

In 4 instances, MPD and AU Public Safety responded jointly to a complaint.

American University Updates

Construction

David Dower, AU's Assistant Vice President for Planning and Project Management, updated the CLC on construction at East Campus. His presentation can be viewed at <http://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/upload/Capital-Projects-Update-09-21-16.pdf>.

David Dower reported that the East Campus building exteriors, hardscape and rough grading are almost complete and that interior work continues in the garage, Buildings 1, 2, and 3 (Constitution, Congressional and Federal halls), as well as the buffer buildings. He added that landscaping, including planting the buffer, will commence in October, and that a smoking shelter will be installed interior to the campus in response to concerns raised by neighbors.

David Dower continued and said that the three residential buildings will be ready for occupancy in the first week of December and that it is possible that students could move their belongings over prior to departing for winter break. *[It has subsequently been established that students' belongings will be moved into their East Campus rooms during Winter Break – between December 21 and January 8. Students will move into East Campus after January 8 at 3 pm].* All building exteriors will be complete before there is any occupancy on the site. The project will be fully complete in early 2017.

Jeffrey Kraskin asked when AU Public Safety will move in.

David Dower replied that they are not tied to a specific date and that AU Housing and Dining staff will also be on site in addition to AU Public Safety.

Jeffrey Kraskin asked if AU Public Safety will fully vacate their current location when they relocate to East Campus, to which David Dower replied, yes.

Tom Smith asked if issues with the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) regarding temporary certificates of occupancy had been worked out.

David Dower stated that there will be a follow up conversation with the agency in the coming weeks and that no issues are anticipated.

Alma Gates asked for information on the planting schedule.

David Dower responded that planting will start in October and will include the buffer. He added that weather pending, landscaping should take approximately one month and that all of the trees and plants have been identified and are ready for planting.

David Dower then updated the CLC on the Spring Valley Building (formerly the Washington College of Law) and stated that there has been no change to the occupant list shared previously. He continued that classes held at the building are all for upper classmen, and the large classrooms are not currently in use.

David Dower stated that the building's mechanical upgrades are complete, floors 3-6 are currently occupied, and that floors 1 and 2 will be occupied in December. He added that

approximately 2,000 square feet of retail adjacent to the building's main entrance is still planned, but with no vendor yet identified.

Bill Krebs asked what is on the second floor of the building.

David Dower responded, mainly offices, including IT, the library archives and special collections, Katzen's collection from the Corcoran, as well as 2 classrooms. He added that the first floor includes the offices of enrollment, library technology services, as well as several large, tiered classrooms.

Shelly Repp asked if any of this will change once East Campus opens.

David Dower stated that the two projects are not related.

Shelly Repp asked if the offices of enrollment and admissions are one and the same.

Gail Hanson replied, no, the admissions office Welcome Center is located in the Katzen Arts Center. The office of enrollment is a "back of the house" operation.

Zoning Modification

Linda Argo described to the CLC the recent hearing on East Campus at the District's Zoning Commission. She stated that modification 11-07F was filed by AU seeking relief from the housing requirement included in the campus plan which requires the university to have the capacity to house 67% of full-time undergraduate students by fall of 2016. Because of the delays in East Campus construction, AU was not able to meet this requirement and therefore sought relief from the Zoning Commission.

Linda Argo stated that this matter was heard before the Zoning Commission on July 14, 2016, and that other issues were also raised about the campus plan by members of the community. She added that the Zoning Commission did not seem concerned with the delay in housing capacity, but rather with other issues raised such as the increase in undergraduate enrollment over the last three years, the effectiveness of the CLC (raised by ANC 3D and the Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association), and use of Jacobs Field.

The Zoning Commission advised AU to work out these issues with ANC 3D and the Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association and to return once we had done so for further consideration of the zoning modification request.

Linda Argo said that AU filed a second request on September 12, to extend the time allowed to work with the community on issues of undergraduate enrollment, giving a greater voice on the CLC to organizations and neighbors who live directly adjacent to the university, and use of Jacob's Field. The Zoning Commission agreed to this request. AU will file additional information about progress in these areas no later than October 26. The Zoning Commission will then consider final action on the request at their November 14 public meeting.

Jonathan McHugh asked who are the parties to the current modification request, to which Linda Argo replied ANC 3D and the Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association.

Gail Hanson added that Jane Waldman, of the Tenleytown Historical Society, emailed the CLC listserv regarding the matter of CLC participation and referred attendees to her message.

Tom Quinn, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3E, asked if there was push-back on the current composition of the CLC.

Linda Argo replied not so much about the composition, as this is specified in the zoning order, but rather about the CLC needing to place a greater emphasis on participation and decision making by parties to the campus plan, particularly those directly adjacent to the university. There is no intention to disrupt the current composition of the CLC, but to create a mechanism similar to what Georgetown University has done. This body would be part of the CLC, but would deliberate on campus plan issues, especially those that involve the construction of new facilities. The goal is to come up with a structure for an additional body to act more as a working group to look at current plan compliance and also to look forward to the upcoming campus plan.

Tom Quinn asked Tom Smith and Jeffery Kraskin to explain what the issues are that need to be addressed.

Jeffrey Kraskin replied that it would be helpful to watch the Zoning Commission hearing. He continued by stating that ANC 3F, for example, should not have the same weight in dealing with university issues just because they have a single AU-owned commercial building within their boundaries. He added that the new structure, similar to what exists in Georgetown University's partnership, would allow for smaller working groups and more intimate discussions without restriction.

Bill Krebs asked if this would be like a task force or working group and if the university would be meeting with different people depending on the issue.

Linda Argo replied that AU would continue its current practices with the CLC and that this proposal includes a standing working group of that body. She added that the Zoning Commission recommended this approach and that this group would consist of parties to the campus plan to look at issues related to housing, enrollment, and campus plan proposals for 2020. Whatever work is done here would be reported up to the CLC at its regular quarterly meetings.

John Wheeler, of Ward 3 Vision, asked if ANC 3F would be considered a party.

Linda Argo replied that they are no longer a party, since the last redistricting of ANC boundaries.

Jonathan McHugh asked if there would be six working groups similar to the Georgetown Partnership.

Tom Smith stated that there is nothing unique about this proposal and that the goal is to work with the university in a proactive manner on issues before they get too far along. There is no intention to exclude any group or replace the CLC.

John Wheeler stated that there are interested groups who would not be considered parties including Ward 3 Vision and the Fort Gaines Citizens Association.

Alma Gates stated that these people are represented by their ANC Commissioners.

John Wheeler replied that the new group should then consist of only ANCs and not civic associations.

Alma Gates stated that she does not think the Zoning Commission considered this level of minutia, but rather stressed the importance of open and frequent communications.

Tom Quinn asked if the new structure would mean more meetings with fewer people to solve unfounded problems.

Tom Smith responded that there have been requests in the past for additional meetings of the CLC that were not granted and that instead of being in constant conflict with the university, neighbors want to be proactive in their approach to problem solving. He added that last month Georgetown University had their 20-year campus plan supported by ANCs 3D and 2E before even going to the Zoning Commission.

The Wesley Heights neighbor stated that he would appreciate this type of forum so local representatives can help to address potential issues in the neighborhood.

Gail Hanson said that there is a lot of one-on-one between AU staff and neighbors throughout the year on a variety of issues and that this doesn't only take place at the CLC. She added that mechanisms developed over the last few years have helped make significant progress in driving down student conduct issues, for example.

Transportation

Dan Nichols updated the CLC on Traffic Demand Management (TDM) measures being undertaken by the university. His presentation can be viewed at <http://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/upload/TDM-Measures-09-21-16.pdf>.

He spoke about the university's occasional parking program, Zip car contract, U*Pass program, flexible working schedule, and bicycle facilities.

Dennis Paul asked if the U*Pass program allows for use of Amtrak.

Dan Nichols replied that it does not, but that WMATA is advocating to include regional bus service as part of the program.

Linda Argo presented information related to recent minor improvements to the intersection of Nebraska and New Mexico Avenues, NW. Her presentation can be viewed at <http://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/upload/SIS-Intersection-Improvements-09-21-16.pdf>.

Linda Argo stated that working with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), AU funded improvements at the intersection to include: restriping the roadway which was striped incorrectly when DDOT installed the New Mexico Avenue bicycle lane, allowing for vehicles to exit and enter the SIS garage straight ahead, adding new “No Left Turn” LED lights, as well as increasing time for pedestrians to cross Nebraska and adding a longer cycle for vehicles traveling through the intersection.

Bill Krebs asked where the primary crossing for East Campus will be located.

Linda Argo responded that as part of the campus plan DDOT required AU to install a mid-block HAWK (pedestrian activated) signal on Nebraska between New Mexico Avenue and Ward Circle. She added that AU anticipates that the intersection of Nebraska and New Mexico will be the main crossing point for East Campus residents.

Bill Krebs asked if there were any changes in lighting at Ward Circle.

Andrew Huff, AU’s Director of Community Relations, replied that he worked with neighbors and DDOT to have a new street light installed at one of the pedestrian crossings on Ward Circle.

Spence Spencer, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D, added that he has also worked with DDOT and neighbors recently and that pedestrian improvements along Massachusetts Avenue are on their way as well.

Jeffrey Kraskin stated that we will have to wait and see the impact of the new HAWK signal on Nebraska Avenue.

Andrew Huff replied that the HAWK provides another point for crossing Nebraska Avenue in addition to Ward Circle and New Mexico Avenue and that the university will work with DDOT to address any issues which may arise once the signal is activated.

Dennis Paul advised that the sidewalks around Ward Circle and down Massachusetts Avenue need replacing in some places, including portions of “flexi-pave” near several large trees. He asked AU to reach out to DDOT to repair or replace as needed.

AU Presidential Search

Gail Hanson reported that AU President Neil Kerwin leaves his post this summer and that the search for a new President is in full swing.

AU Special Events Open to the Community

Andrew Huff referred attendees to several pieces of information in their meeting packets regarding upcoming events on campus open to the community.

Next Meeting of the CLC

The next meeting of the AU Community Liaison Committee will be on December 1.

Future CLC meeting dates for 2016-2017 are: January 5 (President's Town Hall & Reception), March 15, and June 6.

Attendees

Community:

Alma Gates, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D
Tom Hughes, Embassy Park Condominium Association
Jeffrey Kraskin, Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association
Bill Krebs, Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association
Jonathan McHugh, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3E
Dennis Paul, Neighbors for a Livable Community
Tom Quinn, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3E
Barbara Repp, Neighbor
Shelly Repp, Neighbor
Spence Spencer, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D
Tom Smith, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D/Spring Valley/Wesley Heights Citizens Association/Neighbors for a Livable Community
John Timmer, Embassy Park Condominium Association
John Wheeler, Ward 3 Vision
James Yenckel, Embassy Park Condominium Association

American University Staff:

Linda Argo, Assistant Vice President for External Relations & Auxiliary Services
David Dower, Assistant Vice President for Planning and 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
Dan Nichols, Executive Director of Risk, Safety, and Transportation Programs