

Community Liaison Committee Meeting
Tuesday, June 9, 2020
Meeting was Held Virtually Over RingCentral
6:30 p.m. - 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 6:30 p.m. Chief of Staff and Counselor to the President, Seth Grossman, who convenes and leads the meetings for American University, welcomed representatives of neighborhood organizations and local Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs).

Standing Reports

Student Conduct Off Campus since March 2020; Office Campus Conduct Presentation

Jeff Brown, AU Dean of Students, provided information on the Student Code of Conduct as relevant to off-campus student conduct from March 3, 2020 to June 8, 2020, The University received a total of three (3) complaints: Two from single family homes, in Upper Chevy Chase area and near Tenleytown, and one in the Berkshire Apartments. Students were identified and actions taken in all three cases. The presentation can be found at: <https://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/upload/clc-presentation-june-9-2020-2.pdf>

Construction Projects Update

David Dower, AU Assistant Vice President for Planning and Project Management, updated the CLC on progress at the Hall of Science, which will begin the move in process in Mid-July. The presentation can be found at: <https://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/upload/clc-presentation-june-9-2020-2.pdf>

Tom Smith, of Neighbors for a Livable Community, asked whether AU's President has put a stop on all new construction.

David Dower said there has been a stop in construction on everything but the Hall of Science.

Tom asked if anything specifically had been stopped.

David replied the updating of 3244 Nebraska Ave. has been put on hold for the time being.

Community Relations Update

Maria Barry, Director of Community Relations, shared information about recent outreach and community work by American University, including information related to the impact of COVID-19. This

presentation can be found at: <https://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/upload/clc-presentation-campus-plan-update.pdf>

New Business and Neighborhood Issues

Ed Fisher, Assistant Vice President of Community and Government Relations, gave an update on the effects of COVID-19 on American University and the 2021 Campus Plan, including a framework related to enrollment and potential development sites. This presentation can be found at: <https://www.american.edu/communityrelations/clc/upload/clc-presentation-campus-plan-update.pdf>

Jeffery Kraskin, of the Spring Valley-Wesley Heights Citizens Association, asked if the 2021 Campus Plan reached a consensus within the AU Neighborhood Partnership.

Ed replied that the Steering Committee had reached consensus on the distributed framework. He added that this framework includes the locations for the residential and academic buildings and enrollment numbers.

Jeff asked that if the university needed to go to the Zoning Commission in regard to the residential housing, specifically regarding the type of modification.

Ed replied that currently the East Campus dorms are designated for upper-classmen only. He stated that for the Fall 2020, the university is proposing only freshman and sophomore on-campus in order to de-densify the school.

Jeff asked where the upperclassmen would be going.

Ed replied that the university is looking at housing upperclassmen in other places, possibly hotels.

Jeff asked if that affected the 67 percent mandate for on-campus student housing of undergraduates.

Ed replied that the university may be looking for relief on the issue related to the mandate.

Jeff asked, since this 2021 Campus Plan is different from the last campus plan, what guarantee there is that the consensus on buildings right now will be followed through on when further processing comes.

Ed replied that the information shared tonight will be the general building footprints. He stated that the building heights reflected in the plan is what AU will present to the Zoning Commission.

Shelly Repp, of the Tenleytown Neighbors Association, asked if AU is trying to eliminate triple dorms, He also questioned what AU's enrollment will look like going into Fall 2020.

Ed replied that the university is not looking to change the formula on handling housing. He stated that it is too early to look towards Fall 2020 enrollment numbers. He added that AU knows the need to de-densify in light of COVID-19 and will prioritize freshman living on-campus.

Shelly asked if the university will publicize the results of traffic study conducted for a campus plan. He also asked for the 2021 Campus Plan submission timeline.

Ed replied that AU intends to file the plan by December of this year. He also stated that the traffic study is still under review and will be made available s to the community.

Dennis Williams, of the Tenleytown Neighborhood Association, stated that it was difficult to understand the enrollment numbers.

Ed responded that the university has around 4,600 beds on or near campus for which they provide student housing.

Dennis Williams asked where the majority of AU students currently live.

Ed replied that AU houses 4,152 students on campus.

Dennis Williams asked how AU de-densifying will affect these numbers.

Ed replied that plans on what de-densifying the dorms would look like are forthcoming from AU.

Dennis Williams stated it would be helpful if the university was clearer on total enrollment. He asked AU to produce a chart that makes the enrollment clearer.

Ed recalled the December 2019 student breakdown across AU's main campus and the Washington College of Law.

Dennis Williams asked if AU was going to add another 1,800 students to the cap.

Ed replied that the cap is adjusted based on the new 2016 Zoning Commission calculations.

Dennis Williams stated there should be a clear academic plan to justify increased enrollment numbers.

Ed pointed to the detail provided in the 2021 Campus Plan framework.

Dennis William asked, if AU had space in their cap for 1,800 students, then would those students be living on-campus or off-campus. He followed up by asking for the total amount of people that will be on-campus or living in our neighborhoods.

Ed replied he can respond in writing with a chart.

Tom Smith asked how many of AUs undergraduate students would be taking classes on Tenleytown campus.

Ed replied that AU does not know that number yet.

Tom asked what type of student life AU was planning on East Campus.

Ed replied that student life examples can be ground floor retail, cafeteria services, and student or academic counseling services.

Tom asked if AU was aware of the disagreement about retail on East Campus during the last planning process.

Ed replied. That level of specificity about retail would not be detailed until further processing on the buildings.

Tom asked what type of modification - consequence or significance - AU will be seeking before the Zoning Commission.

Ed replied that AU is not sure at this point in time.

Tom asked how tall the planned filming tower will be.

Ed replied that the tower is 15 feet high.

Tom stated the current campus plan runs through March of 2022 and expressed concern that there has not been enough quality opportunity for community engagement.

Ed replied that the timeline of this campus plan aligns with AU's strategic plan and funding strategies. He added that the university's position is to move forward.

Tom stated he does not understand why AU wants to finalize the 2021 Campus Plan two years ahead of time. He also reiterated that the community engagement process for this campus plan is not robust like the last two campus plans. He expressed concern that the AU Neighborhood Partnership is getting preferential treatment despite a lot of feedback AU has gotten from residents who are not part of the partnership.

Ed replied that AU has done outreach and asked for residents to submit their concerns. He stated that the university believes the AU Neighborhood Partnership is the best way to engage the community in the campus plan process and has been in effect for 2.5 years. He affirmed that AU has listened to neighborhood feedback from within the partnership and from those not within the partnership.

Tom stated many of the questions asked by residents have not received satisfactory answers from AU.

Alma Gates, of Neighbors for a Livable Community, stated that the CLC is a designated group in for the campus plan by the Zoning Commission. She asked why AU turned to the AU Neighborhood Partnership.

Ed replied that the AU Neighborhood Partnership as a body had been approved by the Zoning Commission.

Alma replied that the role of the CLC should be the designated party for decision making. She stated that the CLC is does not just exist to receive information from AU.

Ben Tessler, of Westover Place Homeowners Association, expressed interest in being informed of the steps for further processing and other concerns raised by community members.

Troy Kravitz, of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D, offered to explain to Dennis the details on enrollment as provided in the 2021 Campus Plan Framework.

William Clarkson, of the Spring Valley Neighborhood Association, stated that there was a difference between not being privy to the AU Neighborhood Partnership and refusing to take part in the Partnership.

Hunt La Cascia, of the Fort Gaines Citizens Association, thanked AU for being motivated to get the community involved in the campus planning process.

Chuck Elkins, of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D, stated that the CLC process is alive and well.

Alma Gates stated that it would be helpful if AU understands that the community wants to be more involved. She asked what the university's process was for moving forward.

Ed replied that AU plans to draft the 2021 Campus Plan over the summer, then present to stakeholders starting in September 2020. He added that AU will present this campus plan to anyone who wants to hear about it.

John Wheeler, of Ward 3 Vision, stated that nothing has changed with the CLC, which was not set up as a decision-making body. He added that the AU Neighborhood Partnership looks to community organizations to get input and noted that the CLC and the AU Neighborhood Partnership complement each other.

Ben Tessler agreed with Chuck Elkins' statement about the CLC process. He asked if there was an easy way to view questions related to the 2021 Campus Plan.

Ed replied that all questions have been tracked. He highlighted that there is an online community input portal with answered questions on the 2021 Campus Plan webpage.

Jeff asked if the presence of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute is included in data related to transportation and parking.

Ed replied that he would need to look up that data.

Good of the Order

School year events/calendar updates:

The next CLC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 15 from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Constitution Hall on East Campus.

Don Edwards thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

Attendees

Community:

William Clarkson, Spring Valley Neighborhood Association
Chuck Elkins, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D
Jerry Gallucci, Westover Place Homeowners Association
Alma Gates, Neighbors for a Livable Community
Teresa Guzman, Westover Place Resident
Jeffery Kraskin, Spring Valley Wesley Heights Citizens Association
Bruce Klein, Fort Gaines Citizens Association
Hunt LaCascia, Fort Gaines Citizens Association
Denise Liebowitz, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
Tony Long, Executive Director of Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
Jonathan McHugh, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3E

Troy Kravitz, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D
Dennis Paul, Neighbors for a Livable Community
Shelly Repp, Tenleytown Neighbors Association
Douglas Saunders, Westover Place Homeowners Association
Tom Smith, Neighbors for a Liveable Community
Timothy Talley, Wesley Heights resident
Benjamin Tessler, Westover Place Homeowners Association
John Wheeler, Ward 3 Vision
Betsy White, Wesley Heights resident
Dennis Williams, Tenleytown Neighbors Association
Kani Xulam, Fort Gaines Citizens Association

American University Staff:

Maria Barry, Director of Community Relations
Stacie Burgess, Director of Public Affairs
Jeffery Brown, Dean of Students
David Dower, Assistant Vice President for Planning and Project Management
Ed Fisher, Assistant Vice President of Community and Government Relations
Seth Grossman, Chief of Staff to the President

Daniel Nichols, Assistant Vice President of Risk, Safety & Transportation Programs

Sherry Rutherford, AU Campus Plan Consultant, Requity Real Estate
Chris Silva, Director of Housing

Other:

Joshua Babb, Justice and Sustainability Associates, LLC
Matt Bell, Perkins Eastman DC
Don Edwards, Justice and Sustainability Associates, LLC
Kayla Elson, Justice and Sustainability Associates, LLC
Laura Gramling, Justice and Sustainability Associates, LLC
Nicholas Kram Mendelsohn, Office of Councilmember Cheh