

American University – Neighborhood Liaison Committee Meeting
7 p.m. Thursday, May 29, 2008
Bender Library Archives Conference Room

Attendance:

AU Representatives:

Jorge Abud, Assistant VP, Facilities and Administrative Services
Jerry Gager, University Architect
Walter Labitzky, Director of Facilities, Washington College of Law
Anthony Newman, Director of Risk Management & Transportation Services
Penny Pagano, Director of Community & Government Relations
David Taylor, President's Chief of Staff
Sara Waldron, Associate Dean of Students

Neighborhood & Community Representatives:

Mike Bilecky (FGCA)
Anthony Byrne (TCNA)
Alan Pollock (FGCA)
Robert Herzstein (NLC)
Capt. Gerry Scott, (MPD 2nd District)
Sgt. Q. E. Wallace, (MPD 2nd District, PSA 205)

Handouts:

Agenda
NLC/AU Meeting Summary for 01/30/08

Agenda:

1. Introduction
2. Old Business:
 - Crime Prevention
 - Sound Policy
3. Facilities
4. Campus Life/Student Issues
5. Parking & Traffic
6. Other Business

Adjournment: 8:45 p.m.

MEETING SUMMARY

Introduction

The meeting began at 7:10p, with introductions and a sign-up sheet circulated.

- David Taylor introduced Ms. Penny Pagano as AU's new director of community and government relations.
- He reported that he spoke with ANC representative Tom Smith, who conveyed regrets that he could not attend (out-of-town) and provided suggestions from Mr. Smith that we note in the January meeting summary a greater sense of concern that he expressed about the January 28 visit of Senator Barack Obama to American University. Mr. Smith asked that the minutes reflect his concerns about the line down Massachusetts Ave. and into the neighborhood, and the recommendation that future lines be confined to campus; the desire for advanced notice for events of this type; the need for AU Public Safety or police presence; and the request for a litter patrol as follow up.
- Mr. Taylor said that in the future, advance copies of the meeting summary circulated to the neighborhood representatives or distributed at the meeting will be marked "Draft."

Old Business:

Crime Prevention

- Jorge Abud reported that most campus crime results from unlocked doors, unattended items, or similar circumstances. Officer Wallace affirmed that most crimes are preventable, and are situations such as leaving valuables on a car seat or a laptop unattended – situations where one can minimize the possibility of a crime occurring. MPD will be glad to provide crime prevention literature for campus use/distribution and to inform new students/parents. MPD's participation was offered for student orientation or similar events.
- A question was raised about the difference between crimes reported on the Tenley campus as opposed to the main campus, with an impression that it might be higher, given the Wisconsin Ave. corridor. Mr. Abud confirmed that it's not unusual to see homeless persons on/around the Tenley campus. Others suggested that monitoring the Tenley list serves might be helpful for anyone interested in tracking the crime stats.
- Student/off-campus housing complaints were discussed, and how can MPD participate or become more strongly involved. Mr. Pollock disagreed with AU's policy to not contact parents and the handling of some recent issues, including the situation at 4485 Sedgwick Street. Concern was expressed that an MPD "drive by" does not wield sufficient clout to curb the behavior nor provide a full picture of what is happening; "having a badge at the door" might be a greater help. What else can MPD do – such as attend a Fort Gaines meeting, attend AU orientations, meet with the offending individuals?
- MPD again volunteered to participate in on-campus education and training opportunities; Sara Waldron asked for MPD's assistance in "creating a record," which enables AU to be firmer in its response and pursuit via conduct code charges.

Sound Policy

- Mr. Taylor reported on an April meeting that included Mr. Herzstein, Mr. Nicholas Burke, ANC Commissioner Smith, and Mr. Abud, at which Mr. Herzstein complained about the noise created at intercollegiate athletics events. At the meeting, he produced a study of sound/volume around the Herzstein and Burke properties during an athletics event in April 2007; the report has been given to AU athletics with the intent to make appropriate modifications to the sound level, speaker placement, and other aspects of intercollegiate sports. Mr. Herzstein asked that AU be mindful of the neighbors and not adjust the volume to just under the allowed decibel level. Mr. Taylor and Mr. Abud assured all that summer discussions will be held with AU athletics employees about decibel levels; speaker placement; schedule information; a designated contact person; and employee sensitivity to neighbor concerns.

Facilities:

- Mr. Abud reported on AU's major projects for the coming months. The two major ones are the Kogod School of Business addition/renovation, which targets January 2009 as completion month;
- The School of International Service excavation began in March; a change in construction plans required pile driving, because the water was collecting and the soil collapsing. A notice was provided to neighbors and the AU campus, to describe the work to be done and projected timeline (about three weeks). Overall project completion is scheduled for May 2010;
- An upgrade/renovation to the Mary Graydon entrance and walkway is underway.
- Centennial Hall will undergo renovation and refurbishment;
- The law school lobby has work planned, along with some improvements to the classrooms and library entrance;
- The turf/athletics field must be replaced, with July/August as the probable time for that endeavor;
- In mid-to late June, the AU owned property at 4545 42nd Street will have work done to the garage and to augment some green space.
- The AU owned house at 4412 Sedgwick will be updated; Mr. Pollock asked that the gate cards be retrieved when the current tenants depart.
- In response to a question, Mr. Abud reported no new property purchases had been made recently.

Campus Life/Student Issues

- Associate Dean Waldron reported that eight off-campus properties were brought to the attention of Campus Life during academic year 2007-08, with the most problematic being the 4485 Sedgwick property and one on River Road. The eight properties involved three fraternities and one club sports team. All students were identified, intervention occurred, and in the case of the Sedgwick house, a meeting was held with tenants and neighbors. Notification was provided to AU principals

(campus life, public safety, facilities, sports &/or fraternity supervisors, and the president's office) to make all aware of the complaints. AU public safety has a data base to record complaints and track problems, and an officer works directly with 2D to review reports and track incidents. When discovered, judicial charges can be filed for violations of local, state, and federal law.

- On a case-by-case basis, sanctions can include fines; losing recognition as a sponsored club, activity or organization; prevention from participation in a sports tournament; intervention by the national organization (Delta Chi, regarding the Sedgwick property); and possible termination of membership in the national organization. AU expects a ruling from Delta Chi this summer regarding the ongoing incidents at the Sedgwick house.
- Dean Waldron repeated a record from a police authority is an important component for AU campus life to act. In the past year, Montgomery County provided such as record for an incident report, which resulted in violations being assessed to students for alcohol abuse.
- Dean Waldron said that the housing and residence life schedule has been modified this summer, with upper class dorm move-in scheduled for later (Aug. 21), to have less idle time between move-in day and the start of classes (Aug. 25). Also beginning fall 2008, all students must report their off-campus addresses two weeks into the semester.
- Mr. Pollock asked that the university work to prevent volleyball games from happening in the land strip between Katzen and the Sedgwick fences; he reported that one took place in May.
- Mr. Taylor said that the annual Juvenile Diabetes fundraiser (that brings real estate firms to campus for an all day athletics event) will be held Thursday, June 5, with most activity inside Bender Arena; the quad; and some limited activity on the tennis courts, Reeves field, and turf field. Sound regulations will be enforced.

Parking & Traffic

- Mr. Newman reported that AU parking & traffic management is aware that at this time of year, buses carting guests/summer conference participants can come and go from campus with regularity, and that we will enforce all idling stipulations (to keep them off the Nebraska lot and to diminish community concern). The regulations are in the rental contract for conference/rental groups.
- Follow up on the Quebec Street ticketing complaint lodged by ANC Commissioner Smith resulted in no clear determination as to why tickets were written and placed on neighbors' cars on that street (which is outside of the normal range of the ticket writers). The individual who wrote those tickets is no longer employed by the university.
- Mr. Newman said that ticket writing "picks up" in late August/early September as part of reminding all of the parking program and the need to abide by it.

Other Business

The meeting concluded at approximately 8:45 p.m.