

# GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

## ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3A



### ANC 3A SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, July 31, 2024

**Quorum call:** Commissioners Thaddeus Bradley-Lewis (3A01), Jeremy Del Moral (3A04) and Ann Mladinov (3A05) were present, which made a quorum. (Two of the three sitting Commissioners constitute a quorum.)

**Verification of Meeting Notice:** The meeting notice was posted 7 days in advance of the meeting on the ANC 3A website, and local listservs in Cleveland Park, Tenleytown, Glover Park, and McLean Gardens, meeting the notice requirement.

**Agenda:** Chair Bradley-Lewis made a motion to vote on the proposed meeting agenda, with the addition of a vote on a request from DC Water for support for an after-hours permit for sewer rehabilitation work between Upton and Warren Streets. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 3-0 to approve the agenda as presented.

#### **Resolutions Adopted**

*Letter to DC Department of Transportation supporting DDOT NOI proposing reconfiguration of the Y intersection at Porter Street and 38th Street NW, installation of crosswalks on all three sides, and removal of 19 parking spaces, with additional comments.* DDOT had issued a Notification of Intent (NOI-24-163-TESD) to make traffic safety improvements at the intersection. The Chair made a motion to vote on the letter. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 3-0 to approve.

*Resolution supporting DDOT NOI to reduce speed limit from 30 to 25 mph on Massachusetts Avenue* DDOT had issued a Notification of Intent (NOI 24-179-TESD) to change the speed limit on Massachusetts between Western Avenue and 36<sup>th</sup> Street. The Chair made a motion to vote on the proposed resolution. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 3-0 to approve.

*Resolution Supporting DC Water Request for Nighttime Work Permit for Sewer Rehabilitation Project on Wisconsin Avenue between Upton and Warren Streets NW.* The Chair made a motion to vote on a resolution supporting DC Water request for an after-hours work permit for the Wisconsin Avenue project. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 3-0 to approve the resolution.

The Chair made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 3-0 to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 pm.

#### **FULL SUMMARY**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm and called the roll. Commissioners Thaddeus Bradley-Lewis (3A01), Jeremy Del Moral (3A04) and Ann Mladinov (3A05) were present, which made a quorum. Commissioner Mladinov reported that the requirement to meet a quorum is now just two. Chair Bradley-Lewis reported that Commissioner Judy Havemann (3A02) had died on July 28, after serving on ANC 3A from its beginning in January 2023, following a long and respected career in journalism most notably at the Washington Post.

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<b>Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners (January 1, 2023-December 31, 2024)</b>				<b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.anc3a.org">www.anc3a.org</a>
3A01	3A02	3A03	3A04	3A05
Thaddeus Bradley-Lewis	Vacant	Vacant	Jeremy Del Moral	Ann Lane Mladinov

Her death leaves a second vacancy on ANC 3A, which cannot be filled until elections can be held. Because there are so few months before the General Election, under DC law the seat will be up for vote in the November 5 General Election.

The meeting notice and proposed agenda had been posted by the close of the day on Thursday, July 24, via the ANC 3A website, email list and local listservs, which satisfied the requirement to provide notice 7 days in advance of the meeting using at least two of the ANC's approved methods of notification.

This was a Special Meeting called to allow for votes on specific items, so the agenda included only those items and did not include Commissioner Updates, Community Announcements, Open Forum or ANC Administrative Matters that would be part of regular public meetings.

The Chair made a motion to vote on the proposed meeting agenda, with the addition of one item: discussion and vote on a DC Water request received the week of the meeting asking for support for its application for an after-hours work permit, to allow evening and weekend work on sewer rehabilitation on Wisconsin Avenue in the blocks between Upton Street and Warren Street NW. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 3-0 to approve the agenda with that addition.

### **Discussion of DDOT Notification of Intent for traffic safety improvements at Porter and 38<sup>th</sup> Street**

In late June DDOT issued a Notification of Intent (NOI 24-163-TESD) and opened a 30-day public comment period on proposed reconfiguration of the intersection of Porter Street and 38<sup>th</sup> Street, in front of the McLean Gardens Ballroom, half a block west of Wisconsin Avenue. DDOT's proposal followed a Traffic Safety Investigation it had conducted in response to a 311 request (part of DDOT's TSI 2.0 program). Public comments on the proposed work were due to DDOT by August 6. Public notice is required for changes that would affect traffic movement and/or parking. The ANC had discussed the NOI at the July regular meeting, gotten comments from Commissioners and members of the community, and voted to send a letter to DDOT requesting additional information on the specific design for the circle, materials to be used, and the number of on-street parking spaces DDOT expected to remove in the traffic safety project. The ANC had shared the notice in advance of the special meeting, and invited public comments before the meeting as well as at the meeting.

Christian Piñeiro, DDOT Supervisory Community Engagement Specialist for Ward 3, was participating in the meeting along with DDOT engineers William Capers and Adolfo Nino. They described the current intersection, which is a "Y" created by Porter Street and 38<sup>th</sup> Street, with a central landscaping feature, allowing two-directional traffic on all three sides. DDOT's plan is to create a one-directional roundabout, narrow the driving lanes, install high-visibility crosswalks on all three approaches to the circle (from Porter Street and from 38<sup>th</sup> Street), and remove curbside parking within 25-feet from a crosswalk.

Mr. Piñeiro said DDOT's latest plan was not to use flex posts or "hardening" (raised concrete) in the project, but instead to use small, low, raised "armadillos" mounted in the pavement around the circle, in the triangular "islands" in each approach street, and other areas to be designated as barred for parking or driving. Because they can be installed in relatively short time, armadillos are practical for TSIs (traffic safety investigations) which are typically quick turnaround projects. He said DDOT would also use paint or striping to demarcate areas where parking and driving would not be allowed, but was not planning to use any flexposts, which many neighbors had found an eyesore. Mr. Capers noted that the safety engineers had also said that flexposts could not be added in the proposed mini circle because of the truck turning radius required for trucks using that intersection. Commissioner Del Moral commented that grass islands would be more aesthetically pleasing. The DDOT representatives said that DDOT would monitor experiences at the new mini circle to assess whether some "hardening" might be in order over the longer term, after they see how it is working.

Chair Bradley-Lewis asked for details about the location and orientation of the crosswalks, and the safety aspects for any pedestrians who are visually impaired. Mr. Piñeiro said that all three crosswalks were required for safety, and the location was determined by the geometry of the circle. The Chair noted that the size of the pedestrian islands had been changed from the original plans DDOT shared in June, and the angle of the crosswalks had been adjusted so the crosswalks would run straight across the approach streets instead of being at slightly different angles on the left side of each island v. the right side. The DDOT representatives said that the crosswalks would be perpendicular to the curbs on both sides, and installing them in a straight line across the street would make it safer and less confusing for people who are visually impaired to find their way. Mr. Piñeiro said all the ramps from the sidewalk to the crosswalk would follow ADA requirements. He also expected that small “truncated domes” would be located in the crosswalks just before they enter the street to provide additional alerts to pedestrians. Mr. Nino said he had initially hoped the crosswalks could be “raised crosswalks” but the consultants said those would not be allowed at that intersection under current standards.

The most recent drawings provided by DDOT did not show all the traffic signs that would be installed, and the Chair asked for more details. Mr. Piñeiro said that in addition to removing current parking signs and installing new parking and directional signs around the intersection, DDOT would place vertical pedestrian pylons (“STOP for pedestrians”) at the front of each of the triangular islands surrounding the mini circle.

The DDOT representatives asked for comments on the Commissioners’ and community members’ preferences for the design, through the course of the meeting, before they proceed with finalizing the project plans. Mr. Capers said that after the meeting, DDOT would go back to the consultants to further refine the design, and would take into account all the questions and comments from the ANC and residents, particularly on the aesthetics.

The Chair also asked about the estimated effects of the project on curbside parking. After the ANC’s request for information on the estimated number of parking spaces the project would remove, which was not included in the original NOI, Mr. Piñeiro had provided an estimate of 19 on-street parking spaces to be removed as a result of the project, in order to meet the legal requirement for 25 feet of clear curbside next to a crosswalk. The Chair noted that the diagrams were not totally clear or consistent about the length of the curb that would be barred for parking. Mr. Nino said that the parking estimate was not precise, and he would go back to the consultants to solidify that estimate. Mr. Capers said the using a vehicle length of 20 feet, about 16 to 19 curbside parking spaces would be removed. Mr. Piñeiro had provided the “worst case” estimate.

The DDOT representatives stated that they should have included an estimate of parking effects in the original notice, they should have provided better diagram to communicate with the community, including the signs and other materials proposed to be installed around the intersection.

The Commissioners and members of the community shared questions and comments, including concerns about how many parking spaces would be removed, and where residents and visitors would be able to find safe parking nearby. Mr. Nino said that he had worked to minimize the effects on parking from the proposed traffic safety improvements. The Chair noted that there could be other DDOT Traffic Safety Investigations in the nearby area in the future that would lead to further loss of parking in the area, and it is important not to create situations where residents are trying to choose between safety and parking.

The Chair discussed several options for increasing parking using already available facilities. As part of the agreement for the Planned Unit Development at Cathedral Commons, the developer had agreed to provide 30 parking spaces for residents to use in the Cathedral Commons garage, and there are currently

25 parking spaces available. Cathedral Commons initially had a parking pass program which they had phased out because there was not enough demand, but there could still be some options for those with particular needs. He also noted that a substantial share of private off-street parking spaces are not being used in McLean Gardens, and it would be useful to explore whether some of those spaces could be made available for other residents to ease the effects of losing curbside parking around Porter and 38<sup>th</sup> Street. This matter had been raised before but it had not led to finding a mechanism for matching spaces with needs and establishing practical pricing. Only residents of McLean Gardens are allowed to pay for parking spaces in the parking lots. There were also some questions about unused parking in the lot at Vaughan Place. Though this is a matter within McLean Gardens, or Vaughan Place, for residents and holders of the parking spaces, he urged that it would be worthwhile to explore. Other meeting participants shared their appreciation for those points.

Several residents from McLean Gardens and surrounding area offered comments. Several neighbors described their reasons for using on-street parking around Porter and 38<sup>th</sup> Street. Some noted that parking at Cathedral Commons or anywhere else that requires walking a substantial distance, especially at night, would not be safe for seniors, teenagers, or women alone. Eileen McCarthy shared the submission she had made to DDOT, citing legal and engineering standards requiring crosswalks and safety protections at intersections such as Porter and 38<sup>th</sup> Street. She noted that officially there already were three crosswalks (implicitly) at that location and the parking spaces DDOT is proposing to remove were already illegal, under the current standards. The roadway was designed and built in earlier years and was allowed to continue and the safety standards under the law were never enforced. She also said that in the future she hoped hardening would be added to keep traffic from hitting people on the sidewalk, since the armadillos are very low. Samara Gerson shared comments and questions, based on her experience walking in the area as well as her professional knowledge from doing traffic studies and parking studies. She asked specifically about the record of crashes and injuries at that intersection. The DDOT representatives said they did not have that information to share at the meeting.

Commissioner Mladinov asked DDOT if they were going to follow the original plan to use FY2024 funds for the project and if that timing would still work. Mr. Piñeiro affirmed that was still the plan, and DDOT could start work on the project immediately. The DDOT process provides that when the public comment period closes, DDOT reviews all comments and can initiate implementation of the proposed modifications as soon as the next day. The only reasons for delay could be scheduling the work crews, assembling supplies, or adjusting to the weather conditions. DDOT was committed to undertaking the project for safety purposes and there were no obstacles to proceeding, under standards for reviewing traffic safety improvements.

The Chair asked if the ANC had sufficient information to make a decision. Commissioner Del Moral reiterated his support for the project based on safety hazards at the intersection as it is currently configured. Commissioner Mladinov commented that although DDOT had not provided all the information in the NOI and the ANC still did not have all information it would like, it was clear that DDOT would be going ahead with the proposed project and the safety assessment had shown that the crosswalks and other traffic safety improvements were needed.

As the ANC has discussed at previous meetings, DDOT's current TSI 2.0 process has delayed consideration of vital traffic safety improvements requested by residents, has eliminated ANCs and communities from the process of identifying priority areas or projects and developing possible solutions in a context-sensitive and holistic way, and has reduced the transparency and accountability of DDOT.

The Chair made a motion to vote on a sending a letter to DDOT supporting DDOT's proposed changes at Porter Street and 38<sup>th</sup> Street, and also expressing concerns about the process, particularly the lack of accurate and timely information for the ANC to review including in the original NOI and follow-up, the confusing and

disappointing DDOT system for dealing with Traffic Safety Investigations under DDOT's TSI 2.0 system, and the lack of consultation with the ANC or the community either about which TSI requests would be addressed or when the investigations are undertaken. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 3-0 to approve the resolution.

**DDOT Notification of Intent to reduce the speed limit on Massachusetts Avenue from 30 mph to 25 mph**

Since the ANC 3A public meeting on July 18, DDOT had issued a new notice (NOI 24-179-TESD) and opened a 30-day public comment period on a proposal to change the speed limit on Massachusetts Avenue between Western Avenue (at the DC-Maryland line) and 36<sup>th</sup> Street (a block east of Wisconsin Avenue), through ANC 3A. Comments were due to DDOT by August 29. The Commissioners noted that this proposal followed similar DDOT projects as part of its "Vision Zero" program, which reduced the speed limit from 30 to 25 mph on nearby arterials including Nebraska, Western, and Wisconsin Avenues as a traffic safety measure. In previous months, the ANC had voted to support those proposals, and there had not been any objections or evidence provided in opposition to the change. There were no comments from residents about this proposal. The Chair made a motion to vote on a resolution supporting DDOT's proposed change in the speed limit on Massachusetts Avenue from 30 to 25 mph. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 3-0 to approve the resolution.

**DC Water Request for Support of Nighttime Work Permit for Sewer Project on Wisconsin Avenue**

As part of its Sewer Line Rehabilitation Program (SLRP) to reline key sewer lines in the District, DC Water is proposing to do work in Ward 3 over the next year, including on the sewer main under Wisconsin Avenue. One area on the list is the portion of Wisconsin Avenue between Upton and Warren Streets. That portion of Wisconsin Avenue runs between ANC 3A and ANC 3E. Because of the high volume of traffic that uses Wisconsin through the day, DDOT had recommended that DC Water do some of the work in the evening and overnight, which requires a permit for after-hours construction work. DDOT also maintains stringent requirements for notification, signage, traffic control and coordination with MPD for traffic safety. DC Water had been in touch with ANC 3A earlier in the week asking for ANC support for DDOT to grant the nighttime permit.

DC Water will be providing more detailed information to the ANC and affected property owners when the work is intended to start, which could be some time in the next month or could be later in the program year, extending through July 2025. The Commissioners invited public comments. No objections or opposition was expressed. The Chair made a motion to vote on a resolution supporting DC Water request for an after-hours work permit for the Wisconsin Avenue project. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 3-0 to approve the resolution.

That concluded the agenda.

The Chair made a motion to vote on adjournment. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 3-0 to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 pm.

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These minutes were approved by the Commission by a vote of 3 - 0 at its duly noticed public meeting on September 17, 2024, at which a quorum was present. (Two of the three Commissioners constitute a quorum.)