

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3A



ANC 3A Minutes of Special Meeting – Wednesday, September 6, 2023

This was a public meeting held remotely by Zoom (not in-person).

Quorum call: Commissioners Thaddeus Bradley-Lewis (3A01), Hans Miller (3A03), Jeremy Del Moral (3A04) and Ann Mladinov (3A05) were participating, making a quorum. (Three of the five Commissioners constitute a quorum.)

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

Agenda: Only one issue was on the agenda for the special meeting to discuss and consider a position on two DC Department of Transportation Notifications of Intent (NOIs) issued on August 24, 2023, proposing to change three Metrobus stops on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue, south of the intersections with Macomb, Porter, and Upton Streets and make related adjustments in on-street parking in those locations. (The proposal was to remove the bus stop at Macomb and move the bus stops at Porter and Upton Streets from the south side of the intersection to the north side of the intersection.)

Resolution Adopted:

Resolution opposing DDOT proposals to a) move the existing bus stop south of Porter Street on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue NW to the north side of the Porter Street intersection, and b) remove the loading space and 4 parking spaces in front of the Crestview Condominium at 3601 Wisconsin Avenue. The Chair made a motion to vote on the resolution. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the resolution to submit to DDOT.

Next monthly public meeting: Tuesday, September 19, 2023

Adjournment: The Chair made a motion to vote on adjourning. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 4-0 to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:03 pm.

FULL SUMMARY

Chair Bradley-Lewis called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. The meeting was held virtually via Zoom. The Chair called the roll. Commissioners Thaddeus Bradley-Lewis (3A01), Hans Miller (3A03), Jeremy Del Moral (3A04), and Ann Mladinov (3A05) were participating which made a quorum. (Three of the five Commissioners constitute a quorum.) Commissioner Judy Havemann (3A02) tried to join the meeting but could not connect so she was not able to participate.

The Chair introduced the topic for the meeting: the two Notifications of Intent (NOIs) issued by the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) on August 24, 2023:

NOI-23-188-TDD Metrobus stop changes in 3 locations on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue: removing the bus stop south of Macomb Street and moving the bus stops south of Porter Street and Upton Street to the north side of the intersections

NOI-23-189-TOA Parking changes at those 3 locations in conjunction with the change in bus stops

Initially DDOT had issued two NOIs for these proposals on August 17, 2023, with comments due in 10 business days, on August 28, 2023. But after Commissioners contacted DDOT for more explanation of the justification for the proposals and the short comment period, DDOT reissued the NOIs with additional explanation, with comments due on September 8, 2023. DDOT noted that it is allowed to provide an abbreviated comment period of only 10 business days rather than the required 30 days in an emergency, such as when the location poses an immediate safety risk or is on a corridor identified as a high risk for traffic incidents or casualties. Wisconsin Avenue is a High-Risk corridor.

The Chair as well as Commissioner Miller, whose Single Member District includes affected portions of Wisconsin Avenue, had shared the notice with residents and invited comments. The Commission scheduled the special meeting to hear public comments on the proposals and have a chance to discuss, deliberate, and adopt an official position to submit to DDOT by the due date, since the next regularly scheduled ANC 3A public meeting was on September 19.

The Commission had posted a draft resolution on its website www.anc3a.org for public review and deliberation at the special meeting.

Commissioner Miller reported he had heard from 20 residents from The Crestview Condominiums at 3601 Wisconsin Avenue, directly north of the Porter Street intersection and adjacent to the location where DDOT proposed to relocate the bus stop. He and Chair Bradley-Lewis had compiled all the comments from neighbors about the DDOT proposals, and built on those to prepare the draft resolution. They also reported participating in a walk-through of the affected area with Councilmember Frumin's staff, to assess potential impacts of the proposals.

The Chair invited meeting participants to share their comments, especially highlighting any points that had not been made in the draft or brought up by other commenters. At the meeting, the Commissioners heard from 11 residents, all of whom lived at the Crestview.

Comments covered a number of residents' concerns:

- With the proposed change, the many bus riders who transfer between northbound buses on Wisconsin Avenue and eastbound buses on Porter Street would have to cross Porter to make that transfer instead of just walking around the corner, as is now the case.
- Staff, ballet company members, and students at the Washington Ballet would no longer be able to get on and off the bus on Wisconsin Avenue directly next to their building as they arrive or leave; they would also have to cross Porter Street to get to and from the Washington Ballet building.
- The proposed new bus stop on the "far" side of the intersection of Wisconsin and Porter would interfere with use of the driveway on Wisconsin Avenue to access the rear parking lot at the Crestview. Buses using the bus stop would block the sight of that driveway for northbound motorists approaching on Wisconsin or motorists trying to exit that lot onto Wisconsin.
- Relocating the bus stop to the area in front of the Crestview would mean the loss of the essential pick-up and drop-off space in front of the Crestview, as well as 4 parking spaces in front of the building, which has many senior residents and others with accessibility challenges, limited parking at the building, and no driveway or protected pick-up/drop-off space at the building.
- The proposed location of the bus stop in front of the Crestview would also affect the privacy, security, and quality of life for residents there, because of added congestion and noise from bus riders gathered at the bus stop to board or leave the bus; lack of places to sit or queue for the bus on that corner unlike south of Porter where there is a wall along the sidewalk in front of the Washington Ballet where people can sit or lean; and concerns about privacy and security related to people gathering on the front sidewalk, leaning against the narrow decorative railing, or during inclement weather trying to use the vestibule of the building which is kept unlocked, or gain access to the lobby to find warmth and shelter. This would impose added risks and costs for residents of the condominiums.

Residents noted that the Crestview is a mid-price condominium that does not have resources to pay for additional maintenance or security staff. Some residents also pointed out that the Washington Ballet at 3515 Wisconsin, next to the existing bus stop, is non-residential, and the building to their north at 3615 Wisconsin is also a non-residential commercial building (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry), so neither of the adjoining buildings would face the same detrimental effects from a nearby bus stop as the residents of the Crestview would experience.

In their comments, several residents observed that there was previously a bus stop on Wisconsin Avenue in front of 3515 Wisconsin, just south of Quebec Street. The concrete pad for that bus stop is still in place at that intersection, but no longer used. Having buses use that stop would not create the same adverse effects for residents as would be caused by relocating the bus stop as DDOT has proposed.

The Chair noted that in the NOI process, DDOT was requesting comments on the specific proposals included in the notices. If DDOT decided not to go forward with the proposed changes but, for example, decided to consider moving one of the bus stops to a different location than had been suggested in the NOI, then the agency would have to issue a new NOI for that proposal. That would involve a new public comment period, and residents could share comments on DDOT's additional proposals at that time.

One resident asked if the Commissioners knew why DDOT had proposed this set of changes at this particular time, and whether the Washington Ballet had requested the change. Commissioner Miller said the ANC had no indication that Washington Ballet had been the source of the proposal for relocating the bus stop on Wisconsin at Porter Street. Chair Bradley-Lewis also responded that DDOT has a standing policy calling for moving bus stops from the "near" side of an intersection to the "far" side (beyond the intersection) for safety reasons: to avoid having disembarking passengers cut in front of the bus to cross the street as the bus is beginning to move forward across the intersection or to have motor vehicles try to pull out and go around a bus stopped before the intersection in order to make a right turn, potentially jeopardizing pedestrians that the drivers can't see as the pedestrians step into the crosswalk. Many bus stops have been already been placed on the "far" side of intersections. The Chair added that there are some bus stops with shelters along Wisconsin Avenue that remain on the "near" side of intersections, but DDOT is not currently proposing to relocate bus stops with shelters.

Another resident asked when DDOT would be making a decision on what to do and going forward with any changes under the current NOIs. The Commissioners agreed that it was difficult to guess from experience how long the process might take or what DDOT might do. Commissioner Mladinov noted that under DC law, an agency issuing a notice is allowed to take action as early as the day after a public comment period closes, but it is supposed to take public comments into account. If an ANC submits comments in response to an NOI, an agency such as DDOT is required to give "great weight" to the ANC comments. That means the agency is supposed to announce its decision in writing and articulate the rationale of the decision "with particularity and precision," including the reasons why it found the ANC did or did not offer "persuasive advice." DDOT does not always do that, but it is a requirement in the law.

At the close of the public comments, the Chair asked for final comments from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Miller had worked on developing the draft resolution. Commissioner Del Moral expressed support for the position in the draft. Commissioner Mladinov asked if the Commission would like to focus its position solely on the bus stop at Porter Street, or if there would be anything about the Commission's position on the proposed changes in the bus stops at Macomb Street and at Upton Street. The proposed changes at Porter Street were the subject of the draft and had been the subject of all the comments at the meeting, but a few residents had sent comments to Commissioners about the plan for discontinuing the bus stop on Wisconsin at Macomb. No one had shared comments on the proposed

changes to the bus stop on Wisconsin at Upton Street. The Commissioners deliberated briefly and Chair Bradley-Lewis offered a summary that the ANC was not taking a position on the proposals for the bus stops at Macomb and Upton Street. The hope was still that DDOT would carefully consider all public comments. Those points were added to the draft resolution.

The Chair called for a vote on a resolution to send to DDOT expressing opposition to the proposal to move the bus stop on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue from the existing location south of the intersection with Porter Street to a new location north of the intersection with Porter Street, and also opposition to the associated changes in parking in front of the Crestview Condominium at 3601 Wisconsin Avenue NW. The motion was seconded and the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the resolution to submit to DDOT by the due date on September 8.

Next public meeting: Regular monthly public meeting on September 19, 2023, from 7:00-9:00 pm

Adjournment: The Chair made a motion to vote on adjourning. The Commission voted 4-0 to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

These minutes were approved by the Commission by a vote of 5 - 0 at a duly noticed public meeting on September 19, 2023, at which a quorum was present. (Three of the five Commissioners constitute a quorum.)