

LeDroit Park Civic Association

Meeting Date:	Meeting Location:	Distribution:	Attachments:
April 22, 2008	Florida Avenue Baptist Church	Website: www.ledroitparkdc.org LeDroit Park Market	Attendee List

7:00 PM

1. Moment of silence.
2. Reading of March 25, 2008 Meeting Minutes by Ms. Andrea Feniak.

Motion:

- To approve.

Vote:

- Unanimous, Yes.

Motion Passed by Unanimous Vote.

3. Public Safety Report

Report by Ms. Dina Lewis:

- The committee met in early April with two new officers who have been assigned to LeDroit Park.
- MPD has increased foot patrols in the neighborhood since the most recent shooting in the Kelly Miller complex. As a result of this increased police presence, four felony warrants have been issued.
- The committee is working with Howard University to reduce the disturbances of parties at off-campus student housing.
- 3D Commander McCoy has been promoted and is reassigned from our district. The new acting commander is Inspector Kusik who is returning to 3D.

Motion:

- The LeDroit Park Civic association supports the return of Insp. Kusik to 3D and recommends that Chief Lanier assign him as the permanent commander of 3D. Further, this recommendation will be outlined to Chief Lanier in a letter from the Civic Association.

Vote:

- Unanimous, Yes

4. Elks - Columbia Lodge Update

Report by Mr. Jeff Herron:

- ABRA held a suspension hearing related to the triple stabbing incident at the Columbia Lodge on March 23, 2008.
- ABRA requested that the Lodge submit a security plan. Mr. Metcalf, Columbia Lodge's Exalted Ruler indicated that a security plan is being put in place.
- The next hearing is scheduled for April 23, 2008 at 11:15 AM at 941 North Capitol Street, Suite 7200
- The Lodge held an open house for the community of April 9, 2008. The meeting was very productive and the Lodge shared information about their programs with the community. The community, in turn, vowed to support the Lodge's public programs.

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- Mr. Metcalf invited the community to participate in the Lodge's annual parade in the first weekend in June.

5. Memorial Trees Update

Report by Ms. Andrea Feniak:

- The community has been awarded a \$500.00 Mini-greening grant from Washington Parks and People to plant flowers and shrubs at the new LeDroit Park entry gate. As part of the grant award, Casey Trees has committed that three to four trees to be planted at the gate or in an approved area.
- A kick-off planning meeting for the design will be held at the gate on Saturday April 26, 2008 at 10:00 AM at the gate. All are welcome.

6. Treasurer's Report

Report by Ms. Donna Morris:

- Membership renewal time is in May of each year.
- Members who are current with the payment of their annual dues are eligible to vote on all Civic Association matters and elections.

7. ANC Report:

Report by Mr. Robert Sullivan:

- Kelly Miller Housing:
 - ANC Commissioner Margot Hoerrner met with MPD, DC Housing Police, Howard Police, ANC Commissioner John Salatti, ANC Commissioner Myla Moss, the DC Housing Authority and representatives from Councilman Graham's Office. The Housing Authority has committed to the following improvement for Kelly Miller Housing:
 - Installing 64 security cameras
 - Improving lighting throughout
 - Adding speed bumps to the alley

8. Cultural DC Heritage Trail

Report by Mr. Robert Sullivan:

- The LeDroit Park and Bloomingdale communities are going to be added to the DC Heritage Trail System.
- Community members will be part of the process to develop the content of the historical markers. It will take approximately 1 ½ years to gather data.
- All volunteers welcome. Contact Robert Sullivan at rbsll@yahoo.com if you are interested.

9. LeDroit Park Civic Association Elections

Presentation by Mr. Richard Myers:

- Nominations for President:
 - Ms. Maude Hills
 - Mr. Jeff Herron
 - Both presidential candidates gave a brief statements about themselves
- Vice President:
 - No Nominations
- Secretary
 - Ms. Andrea Feniak
- Treasurer:
 - Ms. Donna Morris

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- The floor was opened for nominations. No nominations.

10. Nuisance Property Update

Special Guests: Mr. Eric Rogers, DCRA Office of the Director and Mr. Malcom Avant, DCRA Vacant Property Manager (202)442.4332

- DC Council has given DCRA the authority to classify vacant properties without having to go through the Department of Tax and Revenue. DCRA now has control and it is not the department's intent to put people out of their homes.
- A new law went into effect in October 2007 because the existing system had loopholes and closer scrutiny is now possible for classifying exemptions.
- The city wide vacant property list contains approximately 3,200 addresses. Over the course of four months, DCRA Inspectors identified properties that are blighted, vacant or were candidates for reclassification. 1,000 were deemed to be exempt.
- If a property is in probate or legal action, an 8 month exemption will be granted. If the property is still vacant after this time period then the property must be sold or rented otherwise it will be reclassified. Prior to the new law, properties could remain vacant for 180 days. The new law limits the time to a maximum of 45 days vacant.
- If a property is deemed vacant, then an information packet is sent to the owner that summarizes the enforcement policies.
- The new law is about "intention" of occupancy. Home owners will not be punished for vacancies due to death, hospitalization or deployment.
- Even if a property is exempt, it still must be in compliance with minimum building code standards.
- Tax rates for the classifications area as follows:
 - Residential: \$0.89 per \$100 assessed value
 - Commercial: \$1.86 per \$100 assessed value
 - Vacant: \$5.00 per \$100 assessed value
- The LeDroit Park Civic Association has provided DCRA with a Nuisance Property List that contains potentially 70 vacant properties.
- An update on the status of some of the properties is as follows:
 - 1856 3rd Street NW – A violation notice was issued for trash & debris
 - 1822 4th Street NW – On 3/26/08, DCRA secured the property.
 - 315 Elm Street NW – After a reinspection, it was determined that the property is occupied.
 - 605 Florida Avenue, NW – A permit has been issued for construction.
 - 433 Elm Street NW – Still in compliance with violation notice
 - 402 U Street NW – Still in compliance with violation notice
 - 516 U Street NW – The property has been sold and will be reclassified as vacant.
- DCRA maintains an active list. Any updates to the LeDroit Park Nuisance Property List can be forwarded to Robert Sullivan at rbsll@yahoo.com.

Community Questions / Comments:

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- Comment by Mr. Lawrence Guyot: He indicated that he is appalled that the only option residents have is to repair or sell their nuisance or vacant properties. This is a very rigid process
 - Mr. Rogers Response: Every exemption that is possible by law is granted. DCRA are only enforcers of the law and the comment is best suite to be addressed by DC Council.
- Comment by Mr. Rich Green (Howard University Student): He indicated that the property he is renting (321 Elm Street) has been listed as a nuisance property. It is in poor condition and the owner does not have a business license.
 - Mr. Rogers Response: Every rental house in DC must have a business license.
- Question by Ms. Maude Hills: What is the criteria for a nuisance property? How are frivolous calls handled and what resources are available to homeowners?
 - Response by Mr. Rogers: A property is deemed a nuisance by the rate of calls to MPD for crime, drugs, and danger or nuisance occurrences on property. DCRA and other DC Agencies such as MPD - undercover, Social Services, etc. review the list as part of the evaluation. When a complaint is made, DCRA inspects for true violations only.
- Question: What is the time period for construction permits?
 - Response by Mr. Rogers: The property must be actively engaged in construction activities.
- Question: How are blighted properties not visible form the street handled?
 - Response by Mr. Rogers: DCRA may ask for access through an adjacent property.

11. Gage-Eckington School Closure:

Report by Mr. Jeff Herron:

- The mission of the Ad-hoc Committee is to work on a plan to develop the site and how the grounds should be used so that the building and property are safe and secure and that the reuse is a positive contribution to the community.
- A survey on potential reuses was distributed to the community. All completed survey can be dropped off at 309 T Street NW. It is important that everyone complete the surveys so that the community is fully represented.
- The Mayor has been invited to attend the May 27, 2008 meeting. He had indicated that he would offer his support if the community can develop a viable plan. He asked the committee to meet with the Deputy Mayor and the DC Director of Planning. In addition to meeting with the committee, the Planning Department has conducted a separate information gathering process.
- The committee will meet with the Planning Department on May 5, 2008.
- The city has issued an RFP process for the vacant schools. 18 schools submitted proposals and the committee is vetting the applications with a focus on younger, elementary age programs.
- For the exterior, short term options are being considered for the interim while a final, long term use is determined for the interior.
- The city is looking at other non-profit uses. Opportunities that have presented themselves include AmeriCorps (DC version), 7th Street Garden and, Washington Parks and People.

Community Questions / Comments:

- Question: Will the school need to be renovated if it is used for older students?
 - Response by Jeff Herron: It is unknown at this time.

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- Comment: If the school became an elementary charter school then children in the neighborhood could attend.
- Comment: A resident commented that a K thru middle school would be ok.
- Question: Is there a commitment that it will only be a school?
 - Response by Jeff Herron: First priority goes to charter schools for reuse of the building.
- Comment: There has been some discussion that it could be a “model” special education school so that students with special needs would not have to attend schools outside of the District.
- Comment: Has a school for older students been considered?
 - Response: It should be considered because there are few vocational or charter schools for older students. It was noted that Phelps is nearby and is a premier vocational facility.
- Question: What is the difference in financing for charter schools vs. public schools?
 - Response by ANC Commissioner Myla Moss: Private charter schools operate with private funds but they have first right of refusal for the reuse of public school buildings.

12. Citizen Milestones

Report by Ms. Andrea Feniak:

- No Milestones this month.
- The community is invited to make their announcements during this time or to submit information prior to the next meeting to Andrea Feniak at 1903 4th St. NW; Ph: 986.7680; Email: Feniak-Buchanan@att.net

13. Announcements:

- The Columbia Lodge is available to assist in any fundraising efforts with DJ services. For information, contact Brother Broadway at (301) 789-8676

14. The next meeting is Tuesday, May 27, 2008

- Volunteers are needed for distributing flyers around the neighborhood in advance of meetings. Contact Civic Association President, Mr. Robert Sullivan at rbsll@yahoo.com.

This memorandum represents our understanding of the events which transpired and the actions which were taken. If they do not conform to a recipient's understanding, prompt written notice must be communicated to the writer. If no corrections or objections are made, this memorandum will be relied upon as a factual interpretation of this meeting.

Submitted by,

LeDroit Park Civic Association

Andrea Feniak, Secretary