

LeDroit Park Civic Association

President:

Robert Sullivan
rbsll@yahoo.com

Vice President:

Jeff Herron,
jeff.herron@beaconfire.com

Secretary:

Andrea Feniak
Feniak-buchanan@.att.net

Treasurer:

Donna Morris,
Dmorris@ccmc.org

Parliamentarian:

Richard Myers,
mylife98@msn.com

Peter Feather, Chairman
Alcoholic Beverage Control Board
941 North Capitol Street NE, 7th Floor
Washington, DC 20002

March 31, 2008

Dear Chairman Feather:

We are writing to express our serious concerns about the liquor license granted to the Columbia Elks Lodge on 3rd Street NW. It appears to us that the Lodge regularly rents its space to non-members for weekend parties. These parties have presented many problems in our neighborhood for quite some time.

The Civic Association has had several meetings at which Lodge activities were discussed. Members have stated that they are often awakened as late as 3:00 am on Friday and Saturday nights, by the loud and disruptive behavior of those leaving Lodge parties. They have reported incidents of fistfights breaking out in the street, of people urinating on neighborhood lawns, of excessive trash, and of party-goers sitting on neighbors' front steps drinking alcohol. We have received many complaints about how difficult it is to park in the neighborhood on the night of a Lodge party. We have also received an MPD Call For Service report that lists 13 Lodge-related calls in the past 18 months, prior to the most recent stabbing incident (see attached).

Leaders and members of the LeDroit Park Civic Association have reached out to Lodge leadership on numerous occasions, to express our concerns and to try and establish a dialogue so that these concerns might be addressed. Last year we drafted a voluntary agreement and set up a meeting with the Lodge to discuss it. The Lodge cancelled the meeting.

At a Civic Association meeting early last autumn, Lodge representatives promised to have an "open house" in November, so that we might get to know them better. They did not follow through on this promise.

The Civic Association regularly invites Lodge representatives to its meetings, so that they can hear first-hand the neighborhood concerns. We would like the Lodge to be active, engaged members of the Civic Association. It has been our experience, however, that the Lodge will do nothing that is not required by the city. We are still hoping that this situation may change, as a community meeting is scheduled with the Lodge for April 9.

LeDroit Park is an historic, residential community, and the uncontrolled parties that are held at the Lodge are entirely out of place in this neighborhood. The violent stabbings that took place at the Lodge on the night of March 22 were unfortunate, but not surprising; the lack of security at these parties is clearly evident to the members of this community. And we have received many expressions of concern and of fear that this violence may spill over into the neighborhood.

PO Box 135
Washington, DC
20044

www.ledroitparkdc.org

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The LeDroit Park Civic Association asks that the Board require the Lodge to operate within the limits of their liquor license, that the Board ensures that the Lodge provides adequate security at their events (including the installation of security cameras), and that the Lodge be required to address the issues of parking, noise, trash, and disruptive behavior before the Board reinstates their license.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert Sullivan
for the LeDroit Park Civic Association

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