

# ANC 6C Parks and Events Committee

## Meeting Report

Tuesday, June 6, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

Kaiser-Permanente Capitol Hill Medical Center (700 2<sup>nd</sup> St. NE)

Committee/Commissioner Attendees: Phil Tahtakran, Erik Heilman, Joe McCann, Vira Sisolak, Heather Edelman (6C06 Commissioner)

### 1. NoMa Parks Update

Robin-Eve Jasper and Stacie West with NoMa Parks Foundation provided an update.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> & L Street Park – almost at the end of permitting; RFP to secure a contractor to follow shortly after. Still planning for fall completion.
- NoMa Green – undergoing Commission of Fine Arts concept review. Budget issue regarding timing of funding has been resolved thanks to the work of Councilmembers Cheh and Allen.
- M Street Underpass – awaiting final sign off from Amtrak. Still hoping for fall installation.

### 2. 3<sup>rd</sup> & L Mural Project

- At the urging of the community, NoMa BID has been working to help secure a mural for the 3<sup>rd</sup> & L Street Park on the exposed Loree Grand wall.
- Mazi Mutasa, a representative from Words, Beats, and Life (a 501(c)(3) in DC that NoMa has worked with in the past on public art/mural creations) approached NoMa BID in search of wall space opportunities for an artist.
- Contingent upon obtaining the approval of the owner of the Loree Grand building, Mr. Mutasa was seeking support for a grant application to the Commission on Arts & Humanities for such a mural. Two designs were provided: child & dog (large format; small format). Given an application deadline of June 16<sup>th</sup>, expedited action was sought from our committee.
- A motion was adopted unanimously to recommend that the ANC write a letter supporting a grant funding request, with a preference for one of the design formats, contingent upon securing building approval. **The Loree Grand is in the midst of a transaction and has declined to provide such approval, mooting this matter for now.** The Committee will expect greater notice and opportunity for community input should this be revisited.

### 3. NoMa Underpass Projects

- The Committee had a long, extensive conversation about the homeless encampments at the various rail underpasses in NoMa due to be activated by NoMa Parks Foundation for wide public use and enjoyment using public funds.
- Several Committee members raised serious concerns with the state of the underpasses, particularly given that the intent of the publicly-funded projects is to

draw members of the community into these spaces to engage. The concerns include unsanitary conditions (urine, trash, discarded food), hazards (BBQ grills), criminal activity (drugs, recent shooting), and the inability of those in wheelchairs or with strollers to navigate the sidewalks, on occasion, due to obstructions caused by large tents, large furniture, etc.

- Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, HyeSook Chung, and members of her department briefed the Committee on their current strategy for addressing this issue. Deputy Mayor Chung stated that the responsibility for homelessness has been assigned to her office which is arranging a coordinated effort that includes various departments.
- The homeless encampment cleanup protocol is lengthy, involves several city agencies, and usually takes at least two weeks to complete upon receiving a complaint. MPD reportedly refuses to actively engage in the underpasses, despite reports of illegal activity.
- Melvyn Smith, Homeless Services Coordinator for the Department of Human Services, discussed the difficulties encountered in trying to place persons living on the streets into permanent housing. He indicated that **NoMa has the largest concentration of tents right now in the entire city**, ranging from 14-27 tents in recent times. Smith also reported that prostitution is making a comeback in the area.
- NoMa BID echoed many of the concerns raised, claiming that drugs are sold as a business by some dwellers and confirming that MPD has refused to go into the area.
- **The Committee believes that the ANC should focus greater attention on this issue. The Deputy Mayor has offered to come back in 1-2 months to brief the full ANC on progress.**