ANC 6C Parks & Events Committee  
Kaiser Permanente Capitol Hill Medical Office Building  
700 2nd St NE  
June 5, 2018, 7:00 PM

The ANC 6C Parks & Events Committee convened with a quorum of four members consisting of Chair/6C06 representative, J. McCann; 6C01 representative Vira Sisolak; 6C03 representative Luz Dejesus; and 6C05 representative Kelly Crist.

**NOMA Parks Update**

Appearing on behalf of the NoMa Parks Foundation, Robin Eve-Jasper provided a status update on various projects. Below are the highlights:

- **M Street Underpass – Lighting Installation**
  - South side: The LED lights above the south sidewalk are installed and the sidewalk is now open to pedestrians and cyclists.
  - North side:
    - DDOT is requiring that the Parks Foundation temporarily relocate the traffic signals at M St and DE Ave. DDOT recently approved the Foundation’s relocation plan.
    - The north sidewalk is now closed pending construction. Lighting installation should move more quickly than the south side now that the contractor has a better understanding of how to affix panels to the underpass.
  - Estimated delivery: Summer/Fall 2018 (60 to 90 days).

- **L Street Underpass – Lighting Installation**
  - Amtrak requested the opportunity to review and approve the installation (notwithstanding that the installation is adjacent to their property).
  - The 30-day review period expires this month and installation should commence immediately thereafter.
  - Estimated delivery: 2018

- **Swampoodle Park (3rd and L St NE):**
  - Construction is experiencing delays.
    - DDOT has intermittently halted park construction citing too much ongoing utility/construction work in the vicinity. In this regard, on the east side of the park there is unrelated DC Water utility work while on the west side of the park Toll Brothers is constructing condominiums.
    - The Parks Foundation is working with its contractor to ensure proper grading and finishes on the project. Resolution of these technical issues may cause delays.
  - Estimated delivery: Summer 2018

- **Other Items:**
  - The Parks Foundation is actively seeking land for a central civic plaza. Hopefully positive news will be forthcoming in coming months.
  - For future reference, all parks in NoMa are District-owned assets and therefore District leaders, the BID and the ANC will need to consider future responsibility for maintenance of parks such as Swampoodle Park. In this regard, it should be noted that contractor warranties on park installations typically expire after 2 to 3 years and the Parks Foundation will likely dissolve after it fulfills its mandate of delivering parks in the NoMa area.
**Urban Farming**

ANC 6C Resident Sarah Dachos provided our committee with an overview of urban farming in the District.

**THEARC Farm and CSA**

- Ms. Dachos works with the THEARC Farm, which is an urban farm operating in Ward 8 as a community project of “Building Bridges Across the River” which was developed to involve the community in nature, nutrition, and healthy eating. The farm consists of 25 raised beds, 8 in-ground rows, a culinary herb garden, medicinal herb garden, an eighteen-tree orchard, community compost bins, a hoop house and a pollinator garden. For more information, please visit: [http://thearcdc.org/thearcfarm](http://thearcdc.org/thearcfarm)

- As part of the project, the organization offers a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. This low-cost program provides weekly shares of produce grown at THEARC Farm and other local farms.
  - Please note that this CSA offers weekly pick-up in NoMa at 2M Apartments which is located at 2M St NE.

- In addition to the Farm, the group manages 5 smaller plots that are incorporated into the 11th Street Bridge project, which connects Wards 6 and Ward 8.

**Urban Agriculture in the District**

- We talked about the various types of urban agriculture undertaken in the District. For instance, we discussed:
  - Urban Farms, including Rooftop Farms. We learned that there are many different types of agriculture in addition to traditional soil-based agriculture:
    - Vertical Farming, which is food production in vertically stacked layers.
    - Hydroponics, which is a method of growing plants without soil using nutrient solutions in a water solvent
    - Aquaponics, which is a system that combines raising animals, usually fish, with hydroponics in a symbiotic environment.
    - Bee Keeping – there is an abundance of bee keeping on rooftops, backyards, community gardens and urban farms.
  - Community Gardens –
    - DPR manages over 30 community gardens in the district, including 3 in Ward 6 (sadly, none in 6C).
    - More large buildings are providing roof top space for residents to grow plants and produce.

- Ms. Dachos explained that the District is a leader in the urban agriculture movement. In particular, she noted the importance of:
  - The District’s Sustainable DC Plan, which includes targets to put 20 additional acres of land under cultivation for growing food by 2032 among other goals. The plan has a very active Urban Agriculture sub-group.
  - University of the District of Columbia (UDC) has a wonderful extension program called the Center for Urban Agriculture & Gardening Education
which offers a wide variety of classes and seminars available to the public. They also operate an urban farm in Ward 7.

- Legislation/Resolutions:
  - Urban Farming and Food Security Amendment Act of 2014, amended 2016:
    - The 2014 legislation established within the Department of General Services an Urban Farming Land Lease Program for District-owned vacant lots. It also included several mechanisms to incentive the use of privately owned land for urban farms and community gardens, including a 90% property tax abatement. The program was amended in 2016.
    - Ms. Dachos reported that DGS identified 25 District-owned vacant lots suitable for the Urban Farming Land Lease Initiative; however, District agencies with control over the properties have resisted use of the land and, as such, DGS has only secured to two vacant lots to date.
  - Cottage Food Amendment Act of 2017 and Cottage Food Regulations Approval Resolution of 2017 – Effective December 2017, the District now has rules that provide regulatory oversight over cottage foods (e.g., brownies, sauerkraut, etc).

**Takeaways**

- Importance: In light of climate change and food insecurity, urban farming increasingly needs to be part of the solution. Carbon capture and rain gardens are critical.

- Challenges:
  - Urban farming can be relatively expensive because irrigation is costly in the urban environment and transportation costs are neutral at best because smaller vehicles are typically used in delivery.
  - We need to make public investments in urban farming to help make it more economical.