

Hillcrest Community Civic Association
Monthly Meeting
February 7, 2004

Minutes

HCCA President Vince Spaulding called the meeting to order at 10am. Chaplain Hawkins gave a reading, "Living Above Regrets," and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The January minutes were read and approved on a voice vote, and Treasurer Dennis Logan reported a balance of \$338.38 in the Association's account – prompting Mr. Spaulding to remind Members to pay their 2004 dues.

Mr. Spaulding reported that the Board had approved guidelines for controlling meeting time, stressing that questions presented to speakers should be of concern to the entire Hillcrest community. He added that the revised By-laws will be voted on at the next Board meeting, and that Sept. 18 has been set as the date for HCCA's 15th anniversary celebration.

Pastor Senger "welcomed home" the guest speaker, Mayor Williams. The Mayor said it was a "bad day for our city," since he was to attend two funerals for young victims of violence. Mayor Williams said the "faith and credit" of the District had been restored, with seven consecutive balanced budgets, improvements in government operations, and investments of \$27 billion in the city's future – but that progress would not occur in a "straight line." He addressed four areas of critical emphasis:

- **Public safety**: Police must take more responsibility, including for safety in schools affected by neighborhood problems. Legislation is needed to increase police presence by tightening disability rules and turning more office duties over to civilians.
- **Health**: While 50,000 District residents are already served by the Healthcare Alliance, new investments are needed to reinforce Greater Southeast, build a new hospital at the DC General site, and expand neighborhood services.
- **Education**: The Mayor is already accountable for public schools; he needs authority as well. Between DCPS, charters, and private options, the city should provide a network of high-quality choices. "Safe Passages" programs and other supports are needed for at-risk kids, especially those without a good family structure.
- **Full democracy for DC**: The Senate should follow the House's lead in passing budget autonomy for the District. But structural budget imbalances still need to be addressed.

The Mayor reaffirmed support for the Skyland project as a “Number 1 priority” that will require “the threat if not the exercise of eminent domain.” And he added that the existing Skyland is “not historic,” which drew applause from the audience.

In response to questions, he said that he is bringing in Vartan Gregorian (former head of the NY Public Library) to advise on improvements to DC’s library system; that the blight at the foot of Sousa Bridge is in the area to be addressed by the Anacostia Waterfront initiative; and that, given a 57% increase in DC school budgets during his term, the District spends a lot on education but it’s not clear where it is going. He also said that there is funding in the 2004 budget for youth jobs, but that they should be connected to career paths, and that he’s asked the Sports Commission to coordinate resources for youth athletic leagues. Commenting on the lead situation, he said that while WASA had met its formal, legal obligations on testing and remediation, it had not done adequate outreach to inform the community of the potential hazard.

Following the Mayor’s remarks, Deputy Mayor for Economic Development Eric Price said the District is looking for money in the capital budget to purchase an initial parcel at Skyland. Capt. Henry and Inspector Maupin reported progress on the auto-theft problem, saying that many arrests had been made in the past week. Officer Rice noted a decline of 14 crimes since last month.

Faye Lyles said the Fundraising Committee would sponsor two events this year, and asked for additional volunteers. Information Chair Poteat introduced Bruce Jones, who discussed his Hillcrest View newspaper. Representatives of the Palisades Association said that Neighbors through Art would celebrate the 50th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education with a performance in October. Membership Chair Gloria Logan reported 368 households among current membership, and announced a drive for new members, with recognition to those who bring in the most recruits. Education Chair Carrie Thornhill said the Association should scrutinize the Mayor’s school-governance proposals. Mr. Poteat introduced Barbara Delaney of the DC Office of Human Rights, who discussed a campaign against housing discrimination.

Environment Chair Phil Hammond, questioning the “candor” of WASA on water quality, circulated a petition requesting that WASA provide lead testing kits. Miles Steele III announced that Friends of Francis Gregory Library was moving its meetings to the 4th Saturday of every month. Paul Savage noted the need for a sound system for HCCA meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 pm, with 71 Members and guests in attendance.

*Respectfully submitted,
Nelson Smith
Recording Secretary*