

Hillcrest Community Civic Association
Monthly Meeting
May 3, 2003

Minutes

Pastor Senger opened the meeting at 10:00 am. Following a reading by Chaplain Hawkins, the minutes of the April meeting and the treasurer's report were read and approved on voice vote.

Mark Johnson introduced representatives of the Temple Group who will coordinate construction of the new Hillcrest Rec. Center. Lisa Franklin Kelly, Chief of Capital Projects for DPR, and the construction site manager also were on hand to answer questions. Construction should begin in June and take about a year during which time the facility will be off use. Mark Johnson will be to POC for any concerns.

Howard Ways reported that the Strategic Communications Committee had met twice to discuss ideas for promoting the neighborhood, including ways to increase name recognition. A plan and budget will be presented soon for HCCA review.

Carrie Thornhill stressed the need to support local schools when they call on us, e.g. the need for proctors at Ann Beers in late April. She announced the Mayor's literacy initiative that would coordinate the efforts of city agencies in lowering the illiteracy rate in DC. She thanked Anthony Fears, Principal of Ann Beers E.S. for taking on the task of converting HCCA bylaws to electronic format.

Phil Hammond announced that 8 people had participated in the 4/12 neighborhood cleanup. He encouraged residents to pick up trash in the public space in front of their homes and reminded all that the presence of litter is an indication of the decline of a community. He reminded residents to hire only licensed haulers.

Don Murray and Kwame Brown met with Councilmember Chavous to inform him of the work of the HCCA legislative committee. Murray announced a traffic study being undertaken by DDOT on Pennsylvania Ave – east and summarized a presentation to the Penn Ave Taskforce on the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative by OP Director Andrew Altman and staff.

ANC 7B Chair Kathy Chamberlain announced that CFO Gandhi will speak at 5/15 meeting. Also the ANC will vote on liquor license renewals for Fairfax Village and Alabama Express liquors, and on a new traffic light at Southern and Naylor SE. ANC 7B continues to support HCCA on the non-renewal of Clancy's liquor license. More ANC 7B news can be found at www.anc7b.org

The Hillcrest Garden Tour will be bigger than ever since it is the 10th annual. Tickets are on sale for \$10 each. A short bus tour of Hillcrest will be offered, but directed toward visitors to Hillcrest.

Lieut. Sims reported that robberies had doubled in April as compared to March. Other crimes are up as well. He stressed that there is a police manpower shortage and expounded on the causes of the crime increases: ex-offenders without jobs, youth without supervision, and others.

Carrie Thornhill eloquently introduced speakers who briefed the community on the status of revitalizing the Skyland Shopping Center:

Eric Price, Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, announced that he had identified \$800,000 to begin work on Skyland. Land assemblage will cost over \$20 million. He expects to obtain funding from other land sales by DHCD and NCRC, and near-term funding using interim financing through banks or use of section 108 dollars, applying to HUD.

Ted Carter, President and CEO of NCRC, stated that Mayor Williams considers the redevelopment of the Skyland Shopping Center a very high priority of NCRC. A plan is now in place. He has walked the site and spoken to shop owners. He announced that the community will likely see progress on the Skyland project during the 1st quarter of 2004. Not only will it bring amenities to the neighborhood but also 300 construction and retail jobs. He promised to keep the community informed of progress, perhaps through a newsletter. At a retail conference in Las Vegas May 18-21, we should get an idea of what retailers are interested in the site. He stated that NCRC will communicate the status of the Skyland project to the HCCA and ANC's from this point forward.

Gary Rappaport, President and CEO of Rappaport Companies, which develops and manages retail properties, began by introducing members of 2 partner organizations, Washington East Foundation and MHCDO. Before addressing architectural plans and site layout, it will be necessary to identify the anchor tenants because these tenants often decide what the layout will be. Various potential anchors will study the site plan and decide whether it is suitable to their retail needs. Possible tenants in the area of fashion are Coles and TJ Max; in food, Giant and Shoppers; in home improvements, Home Depot and Lowe's; in discount, Target and WalMart. There may be 2 or 3 anchor tenants. Once they are determined, other retail will be identified.

Andrew Altman, Director of the Office of Planning stated OP's role as one of design, regulation, and site planning. Alabama Ave. has a good "street sense", somewhere between urban and suburban. OP's objective is to make the new center fit with the community. One of the property owners is applying for historic designation, so that will have to be considered.

Kevin Chavous, Ward 7 Councilmember, emphasized his support for the Skyland redevelopment project, as well as other projects in east Washington. He said he would "lead the charge" for eminent domain in the City Council if it came to that.

Citizens stated support for the exercise of eminent domain for Skyland land assemblage, if it became necessary, and scoffed at the notion of historic designation for any of the buildings. They emphasized the need for a traffic study as the site layout is being planned. The importance of arts and related activities was raised.

Announcements:

A Ward 7 planner is still needed in the Office of Planning.

A 4-way stop sign has been installed at 38th St. and Suitland Rd, SE.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 pm, with 70 (Gloria, can you check this number?) members and guests present.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Chamberlain*