

Hillcrest Community Civic Association
Monthly Meeting
October 4, 2003

Minutes

Pastor Senger called the meeting to order at 10 am. Chaplain Hawkins read Psalm 100 and then led the Pledge of Allegiance. The September minutes were read and approved on a voice vote. Treasurer Dennis Logan reported a current balance of \$1320.42, and his report was approved on a voice vote.

Vince Spaulding reported that the Board had voted to keep "Do not enter" signs as they are; that the Skyland landlord had requested a 60-day postponement of the historic-designation hearing, but that HCCA should be prepared to participate; that the Board had voted to ask the Legislative Committee to recommend priorities for HCCA action, noting a spate of "feelgood" Council bills with little relevance East of the River; that Carrie Thornhill is leading the revision of HCCA by-laws; that the Board had voted to purchase 10 additional pick-up sticks, recommending that Members adopt blocks for cleanup; and that the Board had decided to invite Councilman Chavous for the November HCCA meeting, an NCRC representative for December, and Mayor Williams for January.

Fundraising Chair Faye Lyles reported the refund of fees for the crab feast, cancelled due to inclement weather, and asked for participation in a flea market on October 11th. Information Chair Willard Poteat announced the promotion of Sgt. Harrington at the Good Hope Marketplace substation to the rank of Lieutenant. Membership chair Gloria Logan reported 364 current households, 29 fewer than September due to removal of delinquents, and said \$600 had been collected after delinquent notices were sent out.

Education Chair Carrie Thornhill introduced Anne Beers Elementary principal Anthony Fears, who spoke about the school's onsite Air and Space Museum, and said that Beers is one of just 50 NASA Explorer Schools in the United States.

Public Safety chair Ed Wilhelm, noting complaints about the rush-hour "Do Not Enter" signs, introduced a motion to retain the signs as they are. Discussion followed, in which some Members described their inconveniences in trying to get into their own blocks due to the signs, including being stopped by police. Mary Moss said the original plan for the signs had been "ill thought-out." Kathy Chamberlain said that the community had fought for the signs in order to reduce traffic, and that some inconvenience is the price to be paid. Dennis Logan noted that the signs were not put up "instantly," and that it took 4-6 months of petitions and public hearings on the matter, with plenty of opportunity for people to voice their concerns at that time. Ms. Moss said there was an obligation to notify the public before the Association takes further action. Pastor Burke then moved that the Wilhelm motion be deferred until the November meeting, with notice of the issue in the newsletter. By a vote of 15 to 6, Members voted to defer the item.

ANC7B chair Kathy Chamberlain said the next ANC meeting would focus on juvenile justice reform. She also asked for volunteers for gardening work at Twining Park, noting that next year is the final year for the partnership with the National Parks Service. Commander Dandridge said the current juvenile justice system is outmoded and can't cope with today's youth, and called on the Council to strengthen legislation providing incarceration of offenders. He also asked for support of the sick leave abuse bill, saying "we've got to retire these people or get them back to work." He also said he's trying to get more personnel for traffic enforcement. He introduced Capt. Henry, who promised better customer service at the 7B substation, with a focus on reducing stolen autos. In the crime report, Master Patrol Ofc. Walker said that 3 of 4 current felony warrants were closed with arrests, and recommended vigilance about theft during the holidays.

Strategic Communications Chair Howard Ways recommended that HCCA join DC Tourism to participate in upcoming activities, and said T-shirts are in progress.

The guest speaker, DCPS Superintendent Paul Vance, said "we have succeeded in stopping the hemorrhaging in the organic functions of the school system," with new data systems for personnel and student information coming online shortly. He said that:

- There are indicators of progress, such as an increase in the number of DCPS students taking honors and AP courses, and AP test scores rising in 60% of schools, but that progress must become "institutionalized."
- This year's goal is acceleration of student achievement, which he characterized as "steady but sluggish."
- He plans to free teachers from "administrivia," and to focus not on remediation but on providing quality course content and teaching.
- Reform of senior high schools is a critical goal – with three high schools in the lead for "transformation" – Anacostia, Eastern, and Woodson SHS.

In response to questions, Dr. Vance said that: he has excellent relations with the Mayor and his staff; there has been no reduction in funds for textbooks; construction at Randle Highlands should be ongoing; the system is making excellent progress in building literacy, with intensive reading programs at 17 schools; there will be a vocational-technical program at the old Phelps site; and he has appointed numerous new principals this year in an effort to strengthen school-site leadership.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 pm with 53 Members and guests present.

*Respectfully submitted,
Nelson Smith
Recording Secretary*