



NEWS

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November 2005

Anacostia Waterfront Program: A Great Success

Reveals That Impact Issues Remain Outstanding

by Dick Wolf

On a cold, windy Tuesday night in late October, over 100 persons attended the CHRS forum at St. Peter's Church on the scope and impact of the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative on the Capitol Hill community. After a brief membership meeting to adopt a CHRS budget for fiscal year 2006, the Waterfront Corporation staff gave an overview of this enormous project.

Uwe Brandes, Vice President for Capitol Projects, made a PowerPoint presentation, complete with pictures, giving a sense of the various projects and areas of particular focus including the baseball stadium area, the South Capitol Street Project, the GSA/Navy Yard area, the Capper/Carrollsborg residential area, Reservation 13, and the vast sweep of waterfront parkland on both sides of the Anacostia River. The presentation was supplemented by a series of photos, maps, and drawings and a variety of handouts.

The total acreage involved is 2800 acres—2000 of these under the control of various entities including the federal government, DC government, public agencies



(Water and Sewer Authority and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority), and private owners.

Unfortunately, there was not enough time to explore, much less understand, the finer points of the project. It is not clear what

Above: More than 100 people attended the October 25 CHRS forum.

Photo: Norm Metzger

traffic issues will arise as the result of adding many millions of square feet of office space and

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Eastern Market Plaque Honors Architect Adolf Cluss

Ceremony Commemorates Market Bicentennial

by Barbara Eck

A substantial crowd of enthusiastic, Capitol Hill neighbors turned out October 22 in the morning rain to join Mayor Williams in dedicating a plaque

commemorating Eastern Market's bicentennial and honoring its architect, Adolf Cluss.

One of the city's most influential post-Civil War architects, Cluss (1825-1905) designed numerous buildings in the city including the Smithsonian Arts & Industries building and Sumner School. The plaque is installed

Adolf Cluss continued on page 4

President's Column: The Year of the Plan

by Dick Wolf

By late March, 2006, there will a draft of a new comprehensive plan for the District of Columbia that has the potential to affect all phases of life for District residents and businesses. This is the culmination of a four-year effort involving an enormous investment of time and money by Office of Planning staff, contractors, and citizens.

Whether or not this plan, unlike previous plans, will be taken seriously by our elected officials and the DC bureaucracy is still in question. The Capitol Hill community has depended upon our Ward 6 Ward Plan to guide zoning and development. Unlike most other parts of the city we have treated this as our blueprint for where we want to go and many of us have participated in its development over the last 20 years.

Why is this so important? Because it gives citizens the right to develop—with their elected officials—the plans for what businesses, housing, schools, and other public facilities they want in their communities. And, it permits these uses to be mapped and described in a detailed manner.

This is particularly important in a city like Washington, which for local governance purposes is only 39 square miles in size; it is the fifth or sixth most dense city in the United

States; and has the third largest downtown of any city in the country—only the Chicago Loop and midtown Manhattan are larger.

We have an extremely dense city with a great planning heritage, but a city that has not only lost population but, more importantly for city dynamics, is also losing (or has lost) proportionally more of its middle class families than any other city in the country. Only Capitol Hill and upper Northwest appear to be adding families. Meanwhile, development takes place at a break-neck pace.

As Councilmember Ambrose's representative to the Task Force advising on revision of the comprehensive plan, even I, after 40 years of involvement in planning issues, have been startled at the lack of planning and coordination to deal with District problems—this, after 25 years of home rule and the expenditure of many billions of dollars on the city's social problems. Years ago some of us got a law enacted that requires the District to create a public facilities plan for the government, even though we were told by the Office of Property Management that such a plan could not be put together because of non-cooperation by other agencies.

That plan should include schools, firehouses, police facilities, office space, bus barns, trash transfer stations, salt domes, and all the physical

properties necessary to run a local government. Of course, such a plan requires agencies to develop a plan for their own operations and capital budget needs, and to coordinate with others.

Although the Home Rule Act calls for (but does not mandate) linking the comprehensive plan with a capital budget so that five-year capital improvement expenditures can be prioritized (as is done in most cities), DC's capital budgeting is a year-to-year exercise, and not driven by anything except the political idea of the moment. Moreover, it is impossible to obtain from the Chief Financial Officer a break-down of the District's capital budget obligations by category, length of time the obligation remains outstanding, and the yearly carrying costs in the annual budget for these obligations.

There is no system, either, for evaluating whether or not the special tax breaks given for development actually work to produce additional tax revenue. It should be noted that the bulk of the District's locally raised revenue—some 5 billion dollars—comes from residents through property taxes, sales taxes, and income taxes. We have a total budget of 8 billion dollars a year for a city of 570,000 people!

This whole mix is further confused by various vague and politically motivated phrases such as "100,000 new residents," "more low and moderate income housing," "better schools," "capturing more of the region's growth." Fortunately, the Task Force representatives have vigorously pursued answers to questions designed to get beyond the sloganeering and find out how these visions all fit within this very small city. What we often find is that many of the issues, particularly in housing, are regional problems, not city problems because DC does much more than any other jurisdiction in the assisted housing and social services areas.

President's Column continued on page 3

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Celebrating our fiftieth year helping to preserve and protect Capitol Hill's residential character, the Society is now the largest civic association on Capitol Hill, and one of the largest in the entire District of Columbia. From the beginning, the Society has played a key role in maintaining the diverse, residential character of our neighborhood. With your participation we will continue to do so for many years to come.

Start or Renew a CHRS Membership

- * On the Web at www.CHRS.org
 - * Call 202-543-0425 and choose option 2
 - * Get a form at one of our meetings
- Starting at just \$25 per year for a single membership, it's a great deal.

Anacostia Waterfront *continued from page 1*

thousands of new housing units. Nor is it clear what impact new retail and restaurant development will have on Capitol Hill businesses, except the proffered assurances that Capitol Hill residents will like to come down to the waterfront to shop and eat!

The needs of new residents regarding schooling and how they will be met are uncertain. And, a grand vision for waterfront parks, trails, and water recreation is accompanied by a plan for waterside roads—"to allow everyone to enjoy the parks, not just the elite and the nearby neighbors." Clearly, much of the planning remains to be sorted out.

Overall, this excellent presentation made explicit the tenuous nature of this whole enterprise. Estimates of the amount of money necessary to create new streets, bridges, sewers, utilities, lighting, clean up of the river, etc., run as high as 8 billion dollars! The sources of the funds have not been identified. In addition, coordination among the many stakeholders presents unresolved issues. Congress mandated that the development include the headquarters of the Department of Transportation. The agency had nothing to do with planning, is ill suited to the site, and will not generate tax revenue for

the city. The baseball stadium too, is an add-on. Reservation 13 is full of unplanned and mandated uses such as St. Collettas and the proposed new medical center. These may be useful and even necessary, but they were never integrated into an overall plan.

Among the most troubling facts is that the development is not directly subject to a public process through a local planning commission. Instead, we have a loose framework of a plan that is implemented through a public corporation, the federal government, and the National Capitol Planning Commission. And, frankly, although comments at public hearings might be treated with respect, the decision-makers are far removed from the public.

This forum revealed that much more discussion will be necessary and much more information needs to be forthcoming for all of this to become understandable. The forum is a beginning. Those of us who are still bewildered by the maps and photos can accept the offer of the Corporation and visit their offices to see and ponder the great model created to envision this development (1100 New Jersey Avenue, SE, 202-724-3780). Thanks to everyone for his or her help in making our first meeting on this subject a success. *

President's Column *continued*

The most important revelation that has come out of this planning effort has been the demonstrated failure of the DC government and its elected officials to develop and adhere to an implementing mechanism for the comprehensive plan. And only a local planning commission can do that. Without that device, implementation is a will-of-the-wisp, done whenever the Mayor and Council feel like doing it—which is not often. As Councilmember Jack Evans once said at a Council session: "I like planning Chicago style; the councilmember sits down with a developer and cuts a deal."

In January there will be two opportunities to hear about these issues. On January 12, the Committee of 100 on the Federal City will present a program at the Building Museum concerning a planning commission for the District of Columbia. And, later that month we will have the Long Range Planning staff of the Office of Planning, put on a CHRS program regarding the development of the comprehensive plan. And, remember, all the things we do with zoning and historic preservation are largely driven by the fundamentals of the comprehensive plan. I will have more to say about these issues in future issues of the *News*. In the meantime, a happy Thanksgiving holiday to all. *

Plaque Honors Architect Adolf Cluss *continued from page 1*

to the right of the main, market door on Seventh Street. (A limited number of miniature replicas of the plaque, bearing the identical, etched inscription and mounted on slate removed from the Market roof during repairs in 1974, are available for \$125. Contact Monte Edwards at monte.edwards@verizon.net)

Donna Scheeder, chair of the Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee, organizer and sponsor of the event, kicked off the ceremony with the introduction of President Thomas Jefferson (aka: Bruce Brennan) who read his proclamation establishing the Eastern Market 200 years ago. That original building stood near the Navy Yard on Seventh Street. Cluss's Eastern Market building was completed in 1873. The dedication ceremony honored Cluss on the One-Hundredth anniversary of his death and acknowledged his significance in the shaping of the capital city and the role Eastern Market plays in the life of the Capitol Hill neighborhood and the city as a whole.

Mayor Anthony Williams and Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, spoke of the significance of Eastern

Market as the heart of the community and its continuing role in sustaining the vibrancy of our neighborhood. Councilmember Sharon Ambrose was heralded for her role in pushing through the legislation that created the Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee and the current Market structure which has led to long needed structural, maintenance, and governance improvements.

Christhard Schrenk, Director of the City Archives of Heilbronn, Germany, where Cluss was born, brought greetings from the architect's hometown and talked about how Heilbronn is honoring its native son.

"Alte Kamaraden," a Fairfax based German American brass band directed by Sam Laudenslager, opened and concluded the festivities with lively German and American music.

The event capped a week of international festivities around the exhibition "Adolph Cluss, Architect: From Germany to America, Shaping a Capitol City Worthy of a Republic" (at the Charles Sumner School Museum until February 28,



Above: Washington, D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams (on right) and Dr. Christhard Schrenk spoke at the dedication of a plaque honoring Cluss at Eastern Market. Photo: Larry Janezich

2006). Additional public events are taking place around the city as part of the Adolf Cluss Year, as proclaimed by the City Council and the Mayor. ✧

** Editor's Note: It was the Restoration Society under the presidency of Jim Hodgson that led the fight to save Eastern Market in the 1960's when the city propose tearing it down.*

Eastern Market to Receive the 2005 "Great Community Place" Award

Eastern Market will receive the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) 2005 Great Community Place Award at the Sixth International Public Markets Conference "Great Markets, Great Cities" to be held in Washington DC, October 28-31. The tri-annual conference brings together public market and farmers' market operators as well as market advocates from all over the world.

PPS Senior Vice President Steve Davies said, "Eastern Market is an exciting example of how a public market can provide economic opportunity for both long-standing businesses and new entrepreneurs—and become a destination for all kinds of people. With the rapid

development of the city, Eastern Market is a model for how markets can become focal points of neighborhoods throughout Washington."

The Award will be presented to representatives from Eastern Market's North and South Halls, Flea Market and Community Advisory Council (EMCAC) by Congressman Earl Blumenauer, Representative of the Third Congressional District of Oregon, during the closing plenary of the conference on Monday, October 31.

The sixth Great Markets, Great Cities conference supported by the Ford Foundation and W.K. Kellogg Foundation is presented by PPS, a New York based not-for-profit orga-

nization dedicated to creating and sustaining public places that build communities.

Donna Hanousek is CHRS's representative to the Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee. In October, CHRS announced a \$1500 grant to assist in underwriting a reception to be held at Eastern Market during the international conference.

For more information or to register for the conference please call 212-620-5660 or visit the PPS website at www.pps.org. The conference takes place at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, DC. ✧

Eleventh Street Bridges Planning Meeting Reveals Issues Impacting Hill

Roads and Parks— and RFK Stadium

by Thomas Grahame

On October 6, the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) held an initial scoping meeting on the Eleventh Street Bridges Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The upgrading of the Eleventh Street Bridges, the main feature of which will be to provide the missing connection to I-295 northbound (Kenilworth Avenue), is on a fast track due to strong community support on both sides of the Anacostia River. When complete in about five years, drivers will be able to seamlessly connect from Kenilworth Avenue to I-395, via the new Eleventh Street Bridge connection, without having either to be part of traffic jams on the Sousa bridge, or weaving through Capitol Hill residential neighborhoods. The traffic jams on Pennsylvania Avenue are a strong source of irritation to both Hillcrest and to Capitol Hill residents, as is the commuter traffic on non-commuter

residential streets. CHRS submitted comments in favor of the proposal.

An issue was raised at the meeting that is peripheral to the Eleventh Street Bridges upgrade, but is central to the upcoming Anacostia Waterfront Initiative plans and to Capitol Hill residents – what use will be made of the land on the west bank of the Anacostia, stretching about 3/4 of a mile from Barney Circle to East Capitol Street, where the RFK access road is currently? There will be parkland here, and there will be a “Riverwalk” for pedestrians and bicyclists, but should there be roads in this narrow strip? Should drivers access the narrow park by means of a convenient parking lot, or via a road through the park next to the Riverwalk, eliminating considerable vegetation and habitat? The CHRS and several neighborhood groups have taken public positions in favor of a park without roads, but we want to hear more from our members. What does access to this park mean to you? Email tgrahame@mindspring.com with questions or opinions.

Although detailed design plans

for the park have not been made, one goal will be to open views to the river, especially on the northern half of the land, south from the East Capitol Street Bridge. This important goal probably doesn’t conflict with the environmental goals of reducing runoff into the Anacostia, which is accomplished by tree plantings near the river’s edge, because shorter trees can be found, and designers can likely locate the trees to achieve views.

In the longer run, Capitol Hill residents should start thinking about what should happen at the site of RFK stadium and the RFK parking lots. Once new baseball and soccer stadiums are built, the city will likely look for new uses there. On the DC Comprehensive Plan website, there is even now the following short comment about the RFK parking lots: “Vast areas of surface parking and underused land adjacent to the stadium.” Capitol Hill residents should start thinking about their preferences for use of this land, or decisions will be made for them. Let us know what you think. ✧

New City Regulations Require Sellers to Disclose Historic Property Status

by Nancy Metzger

One of the long-standing goals of the preservation community was realized this summer when the DC Real Estate Board included three new questions on historic preservation issues in the disclosure form it requires property sellers to fill out. Those questions are:

Is the property a DC landmark or located in a historic district?

Has the property been cited for a violation during your ownership?

Is the property subject to a conservation easement?

CHRS representatives have testified for several years about

the need for better notification of historic property status and added this notification item to the agenda for its monthly meetings with the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, of which the Real Estate Board is a part. The Historic Districts Coalition, the DC Preservation League and the DC Office of Historic Preservation have worked with the DC Real Estate Board to produce the new disclosure requirements and form.

Lisa Burcham, associate director of the Historic Preservation Office, Office of Planning, has made notification of historic property owners a priority of the office’s agenda. She said, “This is a very effective way to

inform buyers of the historic character of their properties. We want to provide them assistance and guidance as they plan the rehabilitation of their properties.” She also noted that this disclosure requirement is only one part of a three-part notification effort that has been planned by the Historic Preservation Office. It is expected that the February 2006 tax bills will include a letter to owners of landmarks and those with properties in the historic districts reminding them of the benefits of the historic status and the need for permits. Historic District signs, affixed to street signs, are also planned as part of the notification effort. ✧

Reminiscing About Historic Preservation

by Dick Wolf

On Saturday, October 22, there were two events that spoke volumes about how far historic preservation has come in Washington, DC.

That morning the Mayor, Congressional Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, Ward 6 Councilmember Sharon Ambrose and assorted Capitol Hill dignitaries gathered at the center entrance of the South Hall of Eastern Market to celebrate the One-Hundredth anniversary of the death of its great architect Adolph Cluss and the 200th anniversary of the founding of the market by order of President Thomas Jefferson.

Later that evening there was a celebration of the Third Annual Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Historic Preservation held at the Kennedy-Warren Apartments. And, as usual, Capitol Hill was accorded recognition through the Mayor's Award to

George Didden, President of the National Capital Bank, for Excellence in Community Involvement. It was all very swish and "in" with Mayor Williams holding forth at great length regarding the wonders of historic preservation and its contributions to economic development. The room was filled with architects, developers, and even a few of us gray-beards from the old days of historic preservation.

Those were perilous days. In the early 1960's the District government was on the verge of taking down the market—the great Victorian firehouse next door, unfortunately, was demolished to make way for the swimming pool. Jim Hodgson, then President of CHRS, persuaded the Government to do an economic study of the market. Such a study was done for \$5000; it showed the market to have economic potential, and it was saved. In 1964 it was put on the local register of historic properties and then on the National

Register in 1971.

Even in the early 1970's much of historic Washington was under the threat of the wrecking ball. Those of us who rallied under the banner of "Don't Tear It Down" stopped the Old Post Office from being "re-developed." Street demonstrations and court cases kept the proposed Three Sisters Bridge from being built from Arlington to Georgetown. And, on Capitol Hill many of us trundled baby carriages around the block to protest the demolition of Mary's Blue Room on East Capitol Street. There were many such incidents before historic preservation was both legally recognized and even more years before it became a reality and part of the city's institutional and political life.

Yet, the enemies of historic preservation are still alive and well and, without vigilance, those forces can be unleashed once again. We will speak in other issues about this specter. ✧

Looking Back on Capitol Hill

by Nancy Metzger

The topic for the Overbeck Capitol Hill History lecture on Tuesday, November 15 is "The Instrument Makers of Capitol Hill." In an oral history interview five years ago, Helene Au talked about her uncle, Karl, who became one of those instrument makers.

"[The family house at 1019 Independence Avenue] was bought because it was connected to a carriage house. ... So the estate bought this. My grandfather was dead; my grandmother bought this and my uncle took the carriage house. He had his shop there. He was an instrument maker and had some very important inventions. One was the outwater stage recorder that was used on the Potomac to measure the flow—how many gallons per minute. He and Major Bagley developed a panorama camera. Major Bagley had an idea and he had some lines on a piece of paper but he couldn't work it out so my uncle got together with him. That camera is in the

Smithsonian. ... Those things were built in the carriage house. He also had some gadget that measured whether salt water was leaking into wells. They were used

around the world. He would hear from all these countries, people interested in getting one. ..." ✧

Reserve Now for Nov. 15 Overbeck Lecture

The Instrument Makers of Capitol Hill

They're largely forgotten today, but in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries our neighborhood was dotted with workshops of scientific instrument makers, who supplied the needs of the US Coast and Geodetic Survey and a variety of other government and private clients. These highly skilled craftsmen, many of them German immigrants, turned out telescopes, surveyor's transits and other precision devices.

On Tuesday, November 15, the Overbeck History Project will

present a fresh look at these industrious men and their inventions. Our speaker will be Deborah J. Warner, curator of the Physical Sciences Collection at the National Museum of American History, which includes many of the instruments that were produced here on the Hill.

The event will be held at 8:00 pm at the Naval Lodge Hall at 330 Pennsylvania Ave., SE. As always, admission is free but a reservation is required due to limited seating. Please email OverbeckLecture@aol.com, or phone 202-544-1845, leaving your name and phone number or email address. ✧

Charter School Zoning—A Matter of Right?

AppleTree Institute Plans
Charter School on Twelfth
Street, NE

by David Holmes

The AppleTree Institute for Education Innovation has bought 136/138 12th Street, NE. It intends to establish a charter school for early-childhood education that would be privately owned but city funded. The building is a double-width row house in the middle of the block in a residential neighborhood. The property is currently zoned R-4.

The current structure is 40 feet deep. The proposed addition would

extend the building to a depth of 95 feet, leaving enough room at the rear on the alley for three parking spots. An open playground would be built on the roof, with a 4-foot-high barricade/wall to contain the children.

Police will designate several car lengths in front of the building as a no parking space for pickup and drop off. AppleTree intends to establish administrative offices in the building to administer both this and their other charter school, which is located in southwest DC. Total occupancy will be 72 students, at least nine teachers, two administrators, afternoon shift teachers' aides, and catering personnel; additional

administrative and custodial staff also seems likely.

AppleTree states that, as an established DC Charter School, it can locate this school at the Capitol Hill residential location as a matter of right regarding zoning issues. Members of the surrounding community dispute that, noting the facility is neither publicly owned nor operated.

An ANC6A meeting called to hear and discuss the proposal filled the meeting room. Vigorous statements came from both supporters and opponents of the pre-school. The HPRB has postponed consideration of AppleTree until November 17. ✱

October Preservation Café Explained Use of Public Space

by Shauna Holmes

The CHRS-sponsored October 19 Preservation Café, at Trattoria Alberto, featured city officials Emily Paulus and Denise Wiktor, who described DC's unique concept of public space and explained the city's laws and regulations pertaining to its care and use.

Ms. Paulus, the Historic Preservation Planner in the District of Columbia's Historic Preservation Office who handles Capitol Hill issues and review, told the audience that DC's concept of public space originated in Pierre L'Enfant's 1791 plan, with its grand boulevards and avenues, some up to 140-160 feet wide. In 1870, Congress gave unpaved space along these avenues to the city in the Parking Act, which envisioned streetscapes lined with green spaces, or "parks." In 1899, property owners were officially given use of this space as front and side yards. In return, owners are required to maintain their public space and abide by relevant city regulations and historic preservation requirements regarding such things as construction, fences, hardscaping, paving, plantings, etc.

The goal is to maintain front yard

public space as public greensward that continues along city streets and unifies adjacent properties with a green, gardenlike character. Paving should be minimal and limited as much as possible to walkways. Fencing along sidewalks and between adjacent front yards should be short and open. For owners of corner properties, their side yards are also public space subject to the same requirements. Guidelines for treeboxes specify low fencing, plantings under 18 inches, no hardscaping (use of rocks or cement, for example), and a short setback from the street.

Ms. Wiktor, Public Space Manager for the District Department of Transportation, addressed DDOT's review and permitting of actions affecting public space, which includes yards, streets, sidewalks, treeboxes, and parking. In historic districts like Capitol Hill, DOT's goal is a lively streetscape compatible with the district's historic character. She emphasized that anything in public space needs a permit – for instance, fencing, building projections, paving, construction, outdoor café seating, and steps and entrances. Permits should be publicly displayed where they can be seen from the street or sidewalk, and to facilitate their legibility, larger permits

are being designed. Large letters on permits indicate their purpose, i.e., B for building, E for electrical, and P for public space. A couple of Department employees are dedicated to Capitol Hill, and Ms. Wiktor emphasized that public space inspectors will ticket anyone (including her husband on one occasion). Citizens wishing to report apparent illegal construction can call 202-442-STOP.

A Q&A period addressed some specific things that are illegal in public space, such as unenclosed construction debris, parking on sidewalks or in front or side yards, and port-a-johns for any work other than road projects. Issues regarding trash and recycling receptacles in public space also generated lively discussion, and the city is working on regulations to deal with some ongoing problems.

The November Preservation Café spotlights the "Artful Use of Paint." David Mahoney, who has been painting Capitol Hill homes since 1989, will discuss how to have a successful paint project. It will be held at Trattoria Alberto, 506 Eighth Street, SE, on Wednesday, November 16, from 6:30 pm-7:15 pm, and will be the final café in the 2005 fall series. The 2006 spring series will begin in February 2006. ✱

Historic Preservation Briefs

Pennsylvania Avenue projects.

Two separate developments along Pennsylvania Avenue are working on permit plans (based on the conceptual plans approved by the Historic Preservation Review Board) that will be approved by the Historic Preservation staff and the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs. Architect Sas Gurai is working on the plans for

an apartment building on the corner of Eleventh and Pennsylvania Avenue. Murphy Antoine of Torti Gallas Architects is working on the plans for the rehabilitation and addition to the Shotgun House at 1229 E Street, SE, and the apartment building at 1230 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. The later project is one of two projects by JPI, which is also building the Jenkins Row

residences (and Harris Teeter store) at Fourteenth and Pennsylvania Avenue.

Medlink Hospital at Eighth and Constitution Avenue, NE.

At the October 25 Historic Preservation Review Board hearing, the Board approved the conceptual massing of the proposed apartment project at the site of the old Capitol Hill Hospital. This massing plan is roughly equivalent to the Holladay proposal that gained conceptual approval from the Board in September 2001. Many design issues remain to be addressed, including the possibility of reducing the height of the Eighth Street building near St. James, varying the roofline, introducing a variety of materials, reducing the amount of glazing (windows), softening of various hard-edged shapes, and similar concerns that were expressed by CHRS, representatives of other Capitol Hill groups, Board members and the staff. This project will return to the Board for further conceptual review.

Capitol Hill Resident Appointed Zoning Administrator.

After conducting a nationwide search, Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) Director Patrick Canavan, Psy. D., announced the appointment of Bill Crews as DCRA Zoning Administrator. Crews is an attorney and brings more than 20 years of land use experience to the position. For the last seven years, he has been an attorney-advisor in the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), facilitating state and local intergovernmental planning and cooperation. Since coming to the DC in 1998, Crews has been elected twice as Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner for Single Member District 6C07, and has regularly testified on his constituents' behalf before the DC Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA). ✧

Vacant Properties Reported

Twenty-one new vacant properties have been reported to CHRS. This begins the process of moving the properties from Class 1 (occupied) to Class 3 (vacant) tax status. If finalized with the Office of Tax and Revenue procedures, this action will:

1. increase the property tax rate more than five-fold
2. eliminate any homestead (owner-occupant) tax reduction
3. alert the city government to the need to abate any nuisance or dangerous condition and, if necessary, bill the owner for the cost of abatement.

The properties are:

1705, 1711, 1717, 1723, 1729 East Capitol Street, SE

1506, 1512, 1514, 1516, 1518 Massachusetts Ave, SE

943 Fifteenth Street, SE

814-816 L Street, SE

216 Ninth Street, SE

238 G Street, NE

302 Sixteenth Street, NE

421 Third Street, NE

421 Tenth Street, NE

620 D Street, NE

834 Eleventh Street, NE

1007 C Street, NE

Among the buildings being reported, for example, is 216 Ninth Street. This property's look of abandonment is confirmed by the disconnected utility connections. It is currently paying Class 1 (occupied) tax rates.

Actions that make the property owner more inclined to renovate or sell the house improve the livability of our neighborhood. Unoccupied houses decrease the property values of surrounding homes, harbor rodents, and threaten the safety of the common walls of row houses.

To discover if a building is currently assessed as occupied, enter the street address at: https://www.taxpayerservicecenter.com/RP_Search.jsp?search_type=Assessment

To find a form to report abandoned and/or hazardous properties, go to: <http://dcra.dc.gov/dcra/frames.asp?doc=/dcra/lib/dcra/information/nso/prop.pdf&group=1697&open=|33466|>

Please provide a copy of your report to CHRS at either 420 Tenth Street, SE 20003 or at info@chrs.org. ✧

Do We Really Need Another Medical Center?

by Rob Nevitt

On Tuesday, October 18, the Capitol Hill Restoration Society co-sponsored a forum at Hine Junior High School to discuss the proposal to build a facility called the National Capitol Medical Center (NCMC). It was well attended, lively, and—to this observer—puzzling. It isn't that I was hearing about the topic for the first time. I have been to other forums and Council hearings on this issue, and I have read a considerable amount of comment and portions of the Stroudwater Associates study commissioned by the Mayor. I also served on an advisory group set up by the Office of Planning to provide guidance on the development of Reservation 13, where the NCMC is to be established. What was puzzling was the disconnect that continues throughout these discussions.

A panel moderated by Colbert I. King, Deputy Editor of *The Washington Post* Editorial Page, consisted of Sharon Baskerville, Executive Director DC Primary Care Association; Robert Bobb, DC City Administrator; Bob Malson, President, DC Hospital Association; and Dr. Robin Newton, Associate Senior Vice President of the Howard Hospital NCMC planning team, Howard University. The questions following the statements given by each panelist were predictable and familiar, as were the answers; and they did nothing to reduce my conviction that the city, or at least Mayor Williams and Robert Bobb, is determined to build the NCMC despite the substantive arguments against the idea.

A clue to the puzzle emerges in how the medical needs of the District were presented. Mr. Bobb described his project in a lot of glorious detail, justifying the pursuit of this vision as following the mandate of the DC Council. Mr. Bobb insists on the immutable virtues of the details in the Memorandum of Understanding he negotiated with Howard University, even though neither the Council nor the Mayor prescribed those exact

details. Most of the respondents at the forum began with the proposition that there were well-documented health needs to be met in the District and offered the solutions they agreed were appropriate. While Mr. Bobb sought justification for the medical center after the fact, the description of health needs seemed to justify something other than a multi-functional hospital.

Asymmetrical distribution of present facilities in the District was a persistent argument, with Mr. Bobb pointing out the concentration of hospitals in the Western end of the city. While some people may be closer to hospitals than others, respondents asserted that no one is too far away to have their needs met. There are national measures of elapsed time for ambulance runs, and the District of Columbia ranks with the best. More importantly, in-hospital care is not the solution to DC's medical problems.

Another central issue is the impact of this facility on the present aggregation of medical facilities. It appears incontrovertible that there is an excess of hospital beds in the city. There seems little basis for the argument that adding the 250 beds proposed for the NCMC would meet any need. In fact, a point repeatedly made was that the competition represented by the NCMC would only exacerbate the financial strain felt by other hospitals. Greater South East Hospital, the only hospital on the Eastern side of the Anacostia River, would likely fail and Howard's own hospital would be vulnerable. The surviving hospitals would have to cut corners on their present services in order to reduce costs to meet the competition. Mr. Bobb offered no point for point counter-argument on this topic.

Perhaps paramount to the issues was what range of medical care solutions could be provided for the hundreds of millions of dollars proposed for the creation of the NCMC alone. No one disagreed that primary care was essential to dealing with leading health problems such as diabetes, asthma, hypertension, and HIV.

Properly done, primary care provides early intervention, further reducing emergencies and acute care that might be needed if these health issues are ignored; and medical centers provide primary care to those who use emergency rooms for routine attention to colds and the like. While there has been considerable improvement in the availability of outpatient care, what is most needed is an increase and improvement in the number of clinics and Level 1 Trauma centers, and increased health insurance coverage, according to a study by the DC Hospital Association, Hill East Waterfront Action Network, the DC Primary Care Association and the Stroudwater Associates. There was no argument that Reservation 13 might be a logical site for some part of this infrastructure and more modest (and appropriate) facilities would serve those deemed underserved.

At the meetings and the hearing I attended on this issue, Howard University representatives, including President Swygert, have had little to say to illuminate or address the issues of managerial and financial challenges that will come with this new facility.

For expanded statements on this proposal, I would direct those interested to the Hill East Waterfront Action Network at hewact@aol.com, the DC Hospital Association at www.dcha.org and the DC Health Care Coalition at 202-635-5909. *The Washington Post* has editorialized on the issue. Details of the NCMC plan should be available on a DC website soon.

What would serve everyone's interests is a broader, comprehensive review. However, the Mayor's office proposes bypassing the customary Certificate of Need process. If you support no other point of view than good government and wise use of resources, you should contact the offices of the Mayor and Councilmember Catania. Mr. Catania promises hearings and taxpayers should insist that this proposal receive the scrutiny the Certificate of Need process would provide. ✧

Mark Your Calendar!

NOVEMBER

7 Monday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Historic District Committee Meeting. Kirby House, 420 Tenth Street, SE

10 Thursday, 7:30 pm

CHRS Zoning Committee, Kirby House, 420 Tenth Street, SE. Call Gary Peterson, 202-547-7969.

12 Saturday, 9:00–3:00

Household Hazardous Waste/ Electronics Recycling Collection, Trash Transfer Station, 3200 Benning Road, NE. See dpw.dc.gov

15 Tuesday, 8:00 pm

Overbeck Lecture. Deborah J. Warner, curator of the Physical Sciences Collection at the National Museum of American History will speak about "The Instrument Makers of Capitol Hill." Naval Lodge Hall at 330 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. Call

15 Tuesday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Board Meeting, Kirby House, 420 Tenth Street, SE

16 Wednesday, 6:30 pm

Preservation Café, "Artful Use of Paint," with David Mahoney, Trattoria Alberto, 506 Eighth St., SE

JANUARY 2006

12 Thursday 7:00–8:30 pm

Ballparks, Eminent Domain, and the Need for a D.C. Planning Commission. Cosponsored by the Committee of 100 on the Federal City and the National Building Museum, this symposia will examine other cities' experiences with a planning commission and suggest how such an independent body could help D.C. align the expenditure of public funds with planning visions and economic development objectives. Watch for details at www.nbm.org/Events/Calendar/Lectures_Symposia.html

Mayor's Awards for Historic Preservation Recognize Three from Capitol Hill

by Nancy Metzger

Mayor Anthony Williams presented awards for excellence in community involvement, public archaeology, and design to three Capitol Hill individuals and organizations at a ceremony on October 22 at the Kennedy-Warren Apartments, marking the third year these awards have been presented.

George A. Didden, III, president of the National Capitol Bank, a Capitol Hill institution for over 100 years, was recognized for his leadership efforts in organizations that have helped revitalize Capitol Hill's business corridors—Barracks Row Main Street and the Capitol Hill Business Improvement District. His efforts in helping to organize the Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery were also recognized in remarks by Lisa Burcham, associate director, Historic Preservation Office, Office of Planning.

The Washington Canal Project was recognized in the area of archaeology for the collaborative effort between the General Services Administration, DC State Historic Preservation Office, and architects, planners, and developers of the SE Federal Center. The canal opened

in 1815 and was filled in 1870. Remnants of the canal were found 125 years later when work began on the SE Federal Center. Canal remains were photographed, drawings made, and period artifacts collected and documented. There were no construction delays and costs were kept to a minimum. The US Department of Transportation, a SE Federal Center tenant, plans signage in the area that will explain the role of the early transportation corridor in the history and development of DC.

The Naval Sea Systems Command Headquarters project at the Historic Washington Navy Yard features sustainable design and innovative construction strategies to convert a WWII munitions factory into a modern office complex housing over 4,000 employees. The interior rehabilitation of Building 197 (erected in 1937), for example, incorporates the very cranes and industrial infrastructure used when these buildings served as the factories that built the big 16-inch guns for the US Navy's fleet during the war. This massive adaptive-use project, comprising more than one million square feet of new and renovated space, won an award for excellence in design. ✧



Capitol Hill Restoration Society

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