



NEWS

www.chrs.org

July/August 2013

June Members' Forum Examines the Height Act

By Monte Edwards

Attorney Laura Richards was our guest speaker at the June 19th members' forum, on the subject of the Height Act. Ms. Richards provided an eloquent and understandable explanation about why the Height Act should not be changed.

Congress has asked the National Capitol Planning Commission (NCPC) and the DC Office of Planning (OP) to study whether the federal Height Act should be changed, and to make recommendations to Congress. The study will address the impact of changes to the 1910 Height of Buildings Act and the extent to which the Height Act continues to serve the interests of both the federal and District governments.

The federal Height Act currently limits the height of buildings to 130 feet (with certain exceptions). Our existing horizontal, sunlit city with unobstructed views is the result. DC zoning rules on building heights are limited to the maximum building height allowed by the federal Height Act. If the federal Height Act was amended to allow buildings taller than 130 feet, DC zoning could also be changed to allow buildings taller than 130 feet.

NCPC and OP's Guiding Principles for the Study state:



IMAGE COURTESY ELIZABETH NELSON

CHRS Vice President Monte Edwards introduces Attorney Laura Richards.

- Ensure the prominence of federal landmarks and monuments by preserving their views and setting
- Maintain the horizontality of the monumental city skyline.
- Minimize negative impacts to nationally significant historic resources, including the L'Enfant Plan.

Ms. Richards noted that these principles are open-ended and may be viewed as "declaring open season on the existing height limits." They "say nothing about the importance of vistas, viewsheds, local landmarks, or neighborhood character."

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President's Column: Worth the Wait

By Janet Quigley

It took 13 months, but we are pleased to see that the DC Mayor's Agent agreed with the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB), CHRS and others that the historic stained glass windows of the 1892 Epworth Church must be saved (see article page 4). This is a win for CHRS in three ways: first, the windows have been saved. Second, it validates the thorough research and convincing testimony given by CHRS in May 2012. Third, it demonstrates the benefits of synergy when organizations work together. CHRS provided fundraising assistance to a neighborhood organization, the Capitol Hill Coalition for Sensible Development, allowing them to participate in the process more fully and resulting in a win for all the groups and individuals involved. In these days of limited resources, cooperation among organizations is key, and CHRS has had some rewarding partnerships.

It was 11 months ago that CHRS undertook an update of its data-rich web site. For those who have not had the pleasure of working on such a task, suffice to say that the amount of detail, analysis and labor required to make a complicated thing look simple is truly daunting. The new WordPress-driven site is now ready and will get you to the information you want more easily.

Frager's

If you Google "largest fire DC," the tragic story of Frager's Hardware will be one of the first results. One month ago, neighborhood landmark Frager's suffered a four-alarm fire, which took 200 firefighters five hours to extinguish. The outpouring of support for the workers, tenants and the store is well documented and exemplary of the Capitol Hill

community spirit. Please keep them in your thoughts, prayers and actions.

The grand reopening of Frager's is a day worth waiting for, and we hope will not be too far in the future.

Log On and Be Counted

When was the last time someone asked for your opinion? Three proceedings of note this summer need your input:

Parks and Recreation Master Plan: Remember when Capitol Hill had more tennis courts, basketball courts, softball and soccer fields? Are there enough places for dogs to run? Kids to bike? Is our green space secure? This summer the DC Department of Parks and Recreation's needs assessment and visioning process is prioritizing improvements and new facilities for the next ten years. The resulting master plan will be released in early 2014. Offer your thoughts at www.PlayDC.org.

Metro Plaza Beautification: What does the Eastern Market Metro Plaza need the most: A permanent welcome center? An electronic information kiosk? Landscaping? A place to sit? More direct walkways? Better bike parking? A permanent play area on the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue? Councilmember Tommy Wells is looking for your input at www.easternmarketmetropark.com, and at the Hill Center the morning of July 13. (I say more grass, less granite!)

Height Act Master Plan Study: Here is a sampling of what people are telling the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC): "DC needs a skyline like Manhattan." "A horizontal skyline means squat." "[Allow] clusters of height in River

East and north of Florida Avenue." "I like the design of tall buildings along parks and open space. Like along Central Park West."

If you disagree, let them know the height limit is what makes this city successful, and that you support the status quo. Submit a comment on the NCPC website and go to the meeting on August 13.

In addition to summer reading, consider adding these to your list of summer writings. Have a great, green summer! ★

Did You Know Ruth Rappaport?

A librarian at the Library of Congress is writing a biography of Ruth. If any CHRS members knew Ruth and would like to speak with the author, please contact Kate Stewart at kathrynvstewart@gmail.com.

Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

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To reach any of the above, please contact the Society offices at (202) 543-0425 or via e-mail: CapHRS@aol.com.

www.CHRS.org

Celebrating more than 55 years helping to preserve and protect Capitol Hill's residential character, the Society is the largest civic association on Capitol Hill, and one of the largest in the 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.

To start or renew a CHRS membership:

- ★ On the web at www.CHRS.org
- ★ Call (202) 543-0425; choose option 2
- ★ Pick up a form at one of our meetings

Starting at just \$25 per year for a single membership, it's a great deal.

Re-landscaping of Eastern Market Metro Park

By Elizabeth Nelson

There has been discussion for the past several years of re-designing the public spaces and roadways near the Eastern Market Metro Plaza. It has now been determined that there will be no change to the traffic patterns in this immediate area but there will be a significant effort to re-landscape the public spaces between 7th and 9th Streets, SE, including the Metro plaza itself, the Pennsylvania Avenue medians, and the park north of Pennsylvania Ave, between 8th and 9th Streets. The goal is to recreate this space to be one of the great community public spaces as was intended in the original L'Enfant Plan.

Councilmember Tommy Wells is launching a "Community Input Effort" to draw out ideas, suggestions and support for the landscaping and beautification project. The goal is to hear from as

much of the community as possible to hear the community's ideas before beginning the planning process. The Community Input Effort will include two public input sessions. The first meeting was scheduled to be held July 8. The second is scheduled for Saturday, July 13, 10 am–2 pm at Hill Center, 921 Pennsylvania Ave, SE, in the Lincoln Room. The public is encouraged to attend.

For those unable to attend the meetings, a map of the area will be displayed at Eastern Market's North Hall during July with idea cards available and a suggestion drop box. Comments and suggestions will be collected and made available on the project's website, www.easternmarketmetropark.com, which will go-live in mid-July. The website will also accept direct input from community members. ★

Website Redesign

By Elizabeth Nelson

This month CHRS launches a redesign of our website, www.chrs.org, to provide you with information about Capitol Hill in an updated and more user-friendly form.

All the previous content—such as house histories, meeting announcements, and historic preservation guidance—continue in a streamlined format. Plus, we've added search capabilities and social media components. We hope you'll find it easier to navigate; though, like all new things, it may take some getting used to.

Your patience and assistance are requested; if you find links that aren't working or you can't locate some material, please let us know. Your comments can be emailed to the Webmaster at chrs420@gmail.com.

Many thanks to Max Kukoy of MaxWebWorks, our web developer, and to Donna Breslin, a CHRS volunteer who moved most of the content and continues to serve as one of our webmasters.

Mayor's Agent Upholds Protection of Historic Epworth Church at 700 A Street, NE

By Shauna Holmes and Beth Purcell

In a welcome victory for the Capitol Hill Historic District, the DC Mayor's Agent has ruled that the character-defining stained glass windows at the historic church at 700 A Street, NE, may not be removed. The Epworth Church, built in 1895, is a major contributing building in the Capitol Hill Historic District and a strong example of the Romanesque Revival style. Because the stained glass windows contribute to the building's historic character, their removal would seriously compromise the structure's historic integrity.

The community was shocked when the new owner of the historic church at 700 A Street, NE—World Mission Society Church of God—began to take out the stained glass windows in early 2012. Neighbors immediately notified the DC Historic Preservation Office (HPO) that the windows were being removed without a permit, and HPO required the World Mission Society to put the windows back and apply for a permit to remove and replace them. Unfortunately some were damaged during the removal and replacement process.

During the permit review process, the DC Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) found in March 2012 that the application of the World Mission Society to remove the windows would be inconsistent with the purposes of the DC Preservation Act. The World Mission Society then filed an administrative appeal of HPRB's finding with the Mayor's Agent that was heard May 18, 2012.

The World Mission Society argued that denying it a permit to remove the windows would violate the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, (42 USC



IMAGE COURTESY CAPITOL HILL CORNER

The historic Epworth Church at 700 A Street, NE

§§ 2000cc et seq.) (RLUIPA), which is designed to protect religious liberty in administering land use regulations. The World Mission Society maintained it cannot worship in the presence of images in the stained glass windows. However, the Mayor's Agent held that RLUIPA did not require removal of the

windows because the church "created the conflict between the preservation law and its religious doctrine. It purchased this historic church because it was affordable. It knew that the building was within a historic district but completely failed to investigate whether it could lawfully remove the

windows it knew that it could not live with." The Mayor's Agent also found that the World Mission Society had failed to establish that retaining the stained glass windows was an undue economic hardship.

ANC 6C, CHRS, the DC Preservation League (DCPL), the Capitol Hill Coalition for Sensible Development (CHCSD), the ANC6A03 commissioner, and neighbors successfully argued at the hearing that the stained glass windows must remain in the Epworth Church. CHRS also helped CHCSD establish a legal defense fund to protect the historic church and is grateful to everyone who contributed.

In addition, CHRS greatly appreciates the contribution of DCPL during the Mayor's Agent process by engaging the valuable expertise of both legal counsel and a professional architectural historian.

The Decision and Order in the Matter of World Mission Society, Inc. (Church of God), HPA No. 12-263, is posted at <http://tinyurl.com/k9y5z56>. The March 2012 CHRS letter to HPRB opposing the permit, along with the HPO staff report to HPRB about the case, are posted on the CHRS website at www.chrs.org and can be found by going to the Community Issues page and clicking the "Epworth Windows" link. ★

Proposed Regulations on Demolition by Neglect Released for Public Comment

The DC Historic Preservation Office (HPO) is requesting public comment on proposed "demolition by neglect" regulations now posted on its website. Following this opportunity for the public to respond with comments, the proposed regulations may be revised to reflect the suggestions. They will then be submitted to the DC Register for official comment.

The proposed regulations are accessible for review on the HPO website by going to the abbreviated URL <http://tinyurl.com/6sudy9j> and clicking on the second link from the top of the page: Chapter 8-Proposed Demolition by Neglect Regulations. Comments must be submitted in writing by August 2, 2013, by emailing historic.preservation@dc.gov or by mailing them to David Maloney, State Historic Preservation Officer, DC Office of Planning, 1100 Fourth Street SE, Suite E650, Washington, DC 20004.

The comments CHRS submitted in April on HPO's 2016 Preservation Plan noted that demolition by neglect, where owners allow historic buildings to deteriorate to the point of having to come down, is a serious, ongoing problem in the historic districts citywide, including ours. We asked that development of regulations to address the issue be given a very high priority. Thus, we are very happy that these proposed regulations were released for comment on July 1, and needless to say, CHRS will be submitting comments about them this summer.

Welcome CHRS Supporters

We thank the following new members, patrons, and sponsors.

NEW MEMBERS

Joseph Priester
Michael J. Schaeffer
John G. Wirt

PATRONS

Patricia Taylor
Ruth Ellen & Jack Wennersten

SPONSORS

John & Kathy Montgomery
Laura Trieschmann

SILVER SPONSORS

Patrick Crowley

Swampoodle Walking Tour Draws a Crowd

By Drury Tallant

Well over 50 people recently enjoyed a beautiful Saturday morning on a walking tour of what was once a part of Swampoodle – the corner of Capitol Hill immediately east of Union Station. The two-hour tour drew interest from beyond the immediate area and greater Capitol Hill with a few non-DC residents as well. The numerous questions from the audience indicated a desire to understand how the neighborhood developed and changed over time, where the name Swampoodle came from, the variety of architectural styles, and local lore.

In the mid 1800s the low-lying land where the Tiber and Goose Creeks came together was not a particularly desirable place to live. Described by a news reporter as an area of “swamps and puddles” in an 1857 article on the dedication of St. Aloysius Church, the area attracted immigrant families, particularly the Irish. Many resided in small alley dwellings that have been all but lost in Swampoodle, although similar alley dwellings remain scattered throughout Capitol Hill. After the creeks were culverted and covered over in 1876, conditions improved. By the late 1800’s larger houses were being built in multiple rows, distinguishing this area from the lot-by-lot development pattern found in Southeast and the older sections of Capitol Hill.

Today the neighborhood represents a microcosm of building styles ranging from very modest mid-19th century structures; more elaborate Victorian residences of the late 1800s; as well as small apartment buildings and Craftsman style residences beginning in the early 1900s. Most of the original Swampoodle neighborhood was demolished when construction



IMAGE COURTESY SANDYTALLANT

The tour takes in the 300 block of G Street, NE.

of Union Station began in 1903. However, you can still see evidence of the older neighborhood if you know where to look. For example, several houses along the north side of the 200 block of F Street and 600 block of Second Street, NE are nearly a full story below the street.

The oldest houses in the immediate area are modest flat front residences at 680–696 Fourth St., NE (1885); while a few doors down are a few relatively rare row house flats (1904). As the neighborhood improved, investments by prominent figures followed. A case in point is the row at 222 through 238 G Street, NE. These row houses were built by Senator John Sherman, and designed by T. F. Schneider in 1897. Schneider was famous—even infamous—for building the Cairo Hotel in 1894, a building judged so out of scale that it led directly to the Height of Buildings Act in 1899.

By the early 20th Century, architectural styles had changed, often reflecting the Beaux Arts/ Neoclassical style popularized by

the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. While Union Station may be the preeminent example in Washington, you can see residential examples in the row houses along the 300 Block (north side) of G Street, NE and the 700 Block (west side) of Fourth Street, NE (1907–1908).

While there are a few mid to late 20th century buildings in the area, the character and architectural styles of the late 1800s dominate. In recent years, large scale modern development has moved closer and even into the neighborhood. A large apartment building is currently under construction abutting the H Street overpass and covering roughly 60 percent of the square that contained several late 19th century structures until 2008. ★

Reserve Now! Anacostia Boat Tour Offers History and Wildlife

CHRS has partnered with the Anacostia Watershed Society to offer a tour of the Anacostia River for CHRS members and their guests. See the remarkable Anacostia from the comfort of the Anacostia Watershed Society's 20-seat pontoon boat. The tour will include Kenilworth Marsh, one of the oldest and only surviving original wetlands on the lower Anacostia.

We will see the handcrafted stone retaining wall built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps;

visit the National Arboretum via the Arboretum's river dock; and watch crew teams practice on the straight run of the Anacostia just over the DC line. Hear the story of the Anacostia's history, its development and challenges and its restoration journey over the past 20 years while you watch for blue herons, egrets, turtles and other wildlife. (See if you can spot the elusive four Bald eagles that nest along the Anacostia River). Seats are limited, so reserve yours today. ★

Anacostia River Nature Tour

September 7, 2013
9–11 am

Donation:
\$45 CHRS members
\$55 nonmembers

RSVP to CHRS, 543-0425 or
CapHRS@aol.com

CHRS Board of Directors, 2013–14

The Election Committee's recommendations for nominees for the 2013–14 Board of Directors were elected by the Membership in a postcard vote distributed in May and announced at the June Membership meeting.

Janet Quigley will serve for a second year as the President of the Society. Four new members were elected: Susan Burgerman, Secretary; Patrick Crowley, Treasurer; Ben Klay, Member at Large, two years; and Undine Nash, Member at Large for a one year term.

The full elected 2013–14 Board of Directors is:

President: Janet Quigley
First Vice President: Monte Edwards
Second Vice President: Lisa Dale Jones
Secretary: Susan Burgerman
Treasurer: Patrick Crowley
Member at Large: Chuck Burger
Member at Large: Ben Klay
Member at Large: Undine Nash
Member at Large: Drury Tallant
Member at Large: Maurice Walters
Member at Large: Lisa Wilson

★

Fall Membership Meeting

Save this date for the CHRS Fall Membership Meeting: September 19, 2013. Details will be provided in the September edition of *CHRS News*.

The Once and Future Frager's (Part 1)

By Susan Burgerman

It almost seems as though the Capitol Hill community suffers a tragedy every few years in order to prove once again what a cohesive little village we really are. We had the Eastern Market fire in 2007; the Tune Inn fire in 2011; and now it is the devastating June 5 fire at Frager's Hardware that has mobilized local residents to support the owner and staff in the hopes that, like those other Hill institutions, Frager's will be restored to us—as it always was, only better.

Origins

Of course, the Frager's that we know is quite different from how it was in 1920, when Fritz (called Frank) Frager opened the store at 1105 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. Frager had immigrated from Russia around 1902. Unlike many immigrants of his day, he had traveled through Europe and picked up several languages along the way, including English. His language skills proved useful when he arrived in Washington, where he found employment as a cabinetmaker at the Navy Yard, and later contributed to his success in business. Frager was laid off from the Navy Yard in 1920 and was able to borrow \$5,000 (the equivalent of \$60,740 in 2013 dollars) to set himself up in business, and thus was born Frager's Hardware. As was typical of small businesses in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the family lived in an apartment above the store.

The store did well—enough so that Frager's expanded in 1930, despite the Depression. Frank's two sons, George and Jules, took over the business after their father died, and Frager's remained in the family until 1975.

New Owners

The brothers had put the store up for sale in 1969—in the wake of the 1968 riots and general decline of the neighborhood—but it remained on the market for six years, until Ed Copenhaver and John Weintraub, an intrepid pair of friends who had served in Vietnam and gone on to graduate school at GWU, took it off their hands for \$68,000 (\$300,825 in today's dollars, not bad for a run-down storefront in a not-good neighborhood).

The new owners wisely kept the name, Frager's Hardware, and continued its expansion in both directions, adding the space at 1113 Pennsylvania Ave in 1980, and over time acquiring all of the properties up to the corner of Pennsylvania Ave and 11th St. The result was the Frager's that we know and love: the garden center, the hardware—and everything else—store, the rental shop that had everything from helium canisters to rototillers to the special ladders you use to paint high ceilings above steep staircases (ask me how I know this!), and finally the paint store on the corner.

Frager's Expansion

Capitol Hill residents could depend on Frager's to have whatever ordinary or obscure object we desired—until the night of June 5. Indeed, it was still expanding when the fire changed everything. Just this past April (as detailed on page 5 of the last *CHRS News*), Frager's Hardware proposed a new retail addition. It was a two-story atrium that would have enclosed the open space between the rear of the paint store and Well Dunn Catering at 510 11th Street—the very alley where a

discarded cigarette butt evidently set off the fire. The proposed addition was on a trajectory toward approval: the CHRS Historic Preservation Committee considered it to be compatible with the historic store, and noted in its May 2 testimony before the DC Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) that the concept also comported with the city's design guidelines for buildings in commercial areas located within historic districts. HPRB in turn found the concept compatible with the historic district and had delegated final approval to staff.

Whether or not the proposed atrium will be part of a rebuilt Frager's Hardware is unknown. Any renovation and construction that may be proposed in the future will need to return to HPRB for review and approval.

Frager's Continues to Operate

Frager's is not waiting until the stores can be rebuilt to return to duty. On the weekend following the fire, with the support of Mayor Gray's office, the garden center moved to temporary quarters across the street from Eastern Market, in the space that had served as a temporary Eastern Market following its fire. The key cutting operation has moved there, too. The rental store began operating out of their warehouse right away, and is expected to reopen soon, along with the glass cutting service, in leased space at 1323 E Street, SE. The hardware store is selling mulch, soil, lime, and propane from the sidewalk at the garden center gate.

Other Businesses Affected

The fire also caused collateral damage to the five businesses that rented office space above Frager's: Brian



Frager's Garden Center temporary location at Eastern Market.

Davis, CPA; The Council for America; Demian \ Wilburn \ Architects (the firm that Frager's had engaged to design the new atrium); Umar Pareja Architects; and AtlasCraft Development.

Community Support

Community relief efforts began almost immediately. Matchbox on Barrack's Row may have earned first place for speedy response: at around 8:50 pm on June 5, Fred Herrmann, VP of Operations for the Matchbox Food Group, invited Frager's employees to come by the restaurant the following afternoon to see about temporary employment.

By the morning of June 6, the Capitol Hill Community Foundation had set up a Frager's Fund for the donations that were already flooding in through their website (www.capitolhillcommunityfoundation.org), and joined with other local organizations on a dedicated

website for Frager's support (www.friendsoffragers.org). Co-organizers of the "Friends of Frager's" effort include Celebrate Capitol Hill, Capitol Hill BID, CHAMPS, Hill Center, Hill Rag, DC Access, Tune Inn, and Eastern Market. CHRS members helped collect donations for the fund at a table in front of the Eastern Market "pop-up" garden center during the weekends from June 15th to 30th. At the time of writing this article, Capitol Hill Community Foundation has collected over \$100,000 and has been able to disburse \$74,000 to support employees of Frager's and the other affected businesses.

Several local venues have held fundraising events. Barrack's Row art gallery The Fridge DC and the hometown derby team DC Roller girls co-hosted a benefit concert on June 21, with all proceeds going to the Fund. That same evening, Capitol Hill restaurants held an Al Fresco

for Frager's Food Festival at Eastern Market, with part of the sale of each ticket going to the Fund. The following Friday, Christ Church at 620 G Street SE held a spaghetti dinner (with a gluten-free option!); all proceeds went to the Frager's Fund. And there was Frager's Appreciation Day at National's Park on the 25th, for which local residents had bought 40 tickets to host Frager's owners and employees.

This story is to be continued. Stay tuned to see how plans unfold for Frager's future. ★

Historical information gathered from "A Short History of Frager's" by Celeste McCall, Hill Rag 6/6/2013, originally published in the September 2010 Hill Rag.

CHRS Letter Submitted on the Height Act

Congress has asked the National Capitol Planning Commission (NCPC) and the DC Office of Planning to study whether the federal Height Act should be changed, and to make recommendations to Congress.

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society has submitted a letter urging no change in the Height Act. The full text of our letter is available on our website.

The letter begins by tying the Height Act with the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans in shaping the City's distinctive character. It discusses the 2010 CapitalSpace Partners Report that identifies critical historical, cultural and environmental resources that must be protected and points out that, "Although London may 'want clusters of tall buildings along the Thames River,' the Anacostia River must remain an unspoiled cultural landscape."

The letter describes the importance of the Comprehensive Plan, resulting from public hearings and the deliberations of our elected representatives; and Overlay Zoning, resulting from extensive public hearings, administrative records, and review and findings of the Zoning Commission, as representing the will of the people.

The Eighth Street SE Overlay, the H Street NE Overlay, and the Zoning of Reservation 13 all resulted from multi-year public processes that required the local communities to invest many hundreds of hours.

They all resulted in heights considerably lower than would be allowed by the Height Act, because they all respected the scale and character of the area, and thus resulted in vibrant and distinctive communities.

The letter ends with the statement:

"In conclusion, the federal Height Act has furthered the principles of the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans, and fostered a beautiful sunlit horizontal city, with wide vistas and vibrant neighborhoods. CHRS strongly urges that NCPC and OP recommend that no changes be made to the Height Act."

In response to the argument by proponents of changing the Height Act that increasing the height of buildings is necessary to accommodate growth, Ms. Richards pointed out that while a population of 632,000 at the end of 2012 seems to be a large increase compared to a population of only 576,000 in 1996, in fact, we had a population of over 800,000 in 1950. And since that time, we have experienced growth in the development of central downtown, West End, downtown east of 16th Street, Penn Quarter, NOMA, Hill East and H Street. These have already happened, and the City is continuing to grow.

In 2011, building permits were issued for 4,726 new residential units, and in 2012 permits were issued for 4,162 units. There are ten large tracts slated for mixed use developments that are slated to produce 15,000 housing units and accommodate 30,000–40,000 residents, including: St. Elizabeth's, DC Village, Poplar Point, Walter Reed, McMillan Reservoir and Reservation 13. Beyond that, the District several years ago identified another 30,000 vacant or underutilized sites that would accommodate another 60,000–80,000 residents.

According to Ms. Richards, raising the height limit to achieve affordable housing is a myth. Raising the height limit is probably the least effective way to deal with any affordable housing needs. It is the most expensive to build and maintain, and its ineffectiveness as a housing solution for large numbers of very low-income families has been tried and abandoned. Prevailing housing policy generally calls for housing families with children in mixed-income low-rise or townhouse dwellings, the same scale favored by families buying market rate housing. A prime example of this

Members: Please Speak Out on Height Act

The Height of Buildings Act limits the height of buildings in DC generally to 90 feet for residential buildings and 130 feet for commercial buildings. DC zoning rules regulate building height within the 90-foot and 130-foot limits.

If the federal height limits are raised, DC zoning rules can then be changed to allow higher buildings. The federal Height Act is the first line of defense in keeping the current DC building heights. A study mandated by Congress is underway to consider increasing the federal building height limit in DC. At the CHRS membership meeting on June 19, the sense of the members attending was to keep the current federal height limits.

National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) and DC Office of Planning are conducting the study. It is important for CHRS members to speak out on the federal Height Act.

Please e-mail: info@ncpc.gov, or go to: www.ncpc.gov/heightstudy.

11th Street Bridge Update

By Beth Purcell

The 11th Street Bridge project is well on its way to completion. It continues to be on time and on budget. Phase I will be complete by July 10, 2013. The overlooks on the local bridge will be almost complete on July 10, including lighting and benches.

DC Dept. of Transportation (DDOT) still hopes to build osprey nest platforms on the old upstream bridge supports (all concrete and steel from the old upstream bridge has already been removed). To construct the nest platforms, a permit modification by the Coast Guard will be needed, which will likely be in place the end of this summer.

In April 2014 there will be a new exit from the westbound Southeast Freeway at 11th Street, SE. This will be a new way to reach Capitol Hill (in addition to the westbound exits at South Capitol Street, C Street, and 6th Street).



Scenic overlooks on 11th Street Bridge.

On September 7, 2013, there will be a celebration on the local bridge. See the calendar on the back page for details. ★

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preference is the growth of families with young children in Capitol Hill neighborhoods, where heights are controlled by vigorously enforced historic district mandates.

Congress has charged DC to explore changing the law outside the L'Enfant City to "support local economic development goals." Wards 5, 7 and 8 are regarded as the areas most likely to be targeted for additional height. But, as Ms. Richards cautions: "Raising height

limits outside the L'Enfant City has the potential to create significant divisions between local and federal Washington. The city has an overall harmony and unity to its built environment. That can be lost if the unity of the built environment is shattered. Targeting the city's least affluent, most heavily African-American areas as the most likely candidates for increased heights is an additional insult. Such targeting says that residents of those neighborhoods

don't really deserve the benefits of the height limit enjoyed in more affluent areas, that their views and neighborhoods don't count, that they are not part of the 'real' Washington." ★



Capitol Hill Restoration Society
420 Tenth Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

Mark Your Calendar!

JULY

11 Thursday, 7:30 pm
CHRS Zoning Committee, Kirby House,
420 10th St., SE, first floor. Details: Gary
Peterson, 547-7969.

13 Saturday, 10 am–noon
Public meeting on Metro Plaza
Beautification. Hill Center, 921
Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. Info:
Councilmember Wells' office, 724-8072.

16 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill
Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second
floor. Details: Janet Quigley, 543-0425.

24 Wednesday, 10 am–noon
Height Master Plan Phase 2 Kick-Off:
Economic Feasibility Analysis (no public
testimony). National Capital Planning
Commission, 401 9th Street, NW,
Suite 500N.

AUGUST

13 Tuesday, 6:30–8:30 pm
Height Master Plan Phase 2 Public
Meeting, Ward 6. Office of Planning,
1100 4th Street, SW, 2nd Floor.

SEPTEMBER

3 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Historic Preservation Committee,
Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first
floor. Details: Shauna Holmes, 546-5211.

7 Saturday, 9–11 am
Anacostia River Tour open to CHRS
members and guests. Host: Anacostia
Watershed Society. Details: CHRS Office,
543-0425 or via e-mail at: info@chrs.org.

7 Saturday, 12–3 pm
Local 11th Street Bridge Celebration.
Entertainment, education, food, music.
Details: 558-6545 or via e-mail at:
11thstreet@eventsmanagementdc.com.

12 Thursday, 7:30 pm
CHRS Zoning Committee, Kirby House,
420 10th Street, SE, first floor.
Details: Gary Peterson, 547-7969.

17 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill
Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second
floor. Details: Janet Quigley, 543-0425.

18 Wednesday, 6:30 pm
Preservation Café (topic to be
announced). Ebenezers Coffee House,
2nd and F Streets, NE, downstairs.
Details: Elizabeth Nelson, 543-3512.

19 Thursday, 7 pm
CHRS Quarterly Members Meeting
Location to be announced; doors open at
6:30 pm. Details: Janet Quigley, 543-0425.