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September 2014

CHRS Testifies Before DC Council on Virginia Avenue Tunnel

By Beth Purcell

On August 26, 2014, CHRS President Lisa Dale Jones testified before the DC Council urging that the Record of Decision in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review of the Virginia Avenue Tunnel (VAT) be delayed until after the DC Rail Plan is completed and that, for now, the “no build” option for the tunnel be implemented. Here is that testimony:

“We commend the Council for approving and funding the DC Rail Plan to prepare a comprehensive freight and passenger rail plan for the District of Columbia. This plan will produce recommendations on how to accommodate future growth in freight, passenger, and commuter rail service. One issue that the DC Rail Plan will likely study is whether dangerous cargo, such as Bakken crude oil, should continue to be routed through Capitol Hill.

“We strongly believe that the correct approach is to first analyze the District’s future rail transportation needs and second, within that analytical framework, to evaluate whether it makes sense to expand the Virginia Avenue Tunnel. It makes no sense to spend \$168 million to expand the Virginia Avenue Tunnel before the DC Rail Plan is completed. Because the Council has funded the DC Rail

Plan for the 2015 fiscal year, there is time for a prompt and thorough analysis of DC’s rail transportation needs and for a public discussion of the DC Rail Plan’s recommendations. There is enough time to get this right because the existing Virginia Avenue Tunnel has decades of service left.

“In addition to the need for comprehensive planning before committing to a major transportation project like the tunnel expansion, the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) contains major errors in scope, data and analysis that threaten public health. CHRS and other organizations have urged that these errors must be corrected in the Record of Decision. Our letters on the FEIS and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act discuss the deficiencies of the FEIS in detail, which include the following deficiencies:

“The Virginia Avenue Tunnel passes through the Capitol Hill Historic District, which has residents of all ages and many fragile 19th century buildings. During the expansion of the Virginia Avenue Tunnel, there would be trains running through temporary tunnels on Virginia Avenue and dump trucks carrying away excavated material (including toxic soil) from the tunnel.

The FEIS admits that vibration can damage older buildings, but concludes that people will not be irritated by vibration, nor would buildings be damaged.

“The FEIS bases its train vibration study on trains that weigh less (and produce lower vibration) than some of the trains CSX runs through the tunnel. This overly optimistic conclusion also assumes that all vibration events from trains passing by will occur in isolation but the data in FEIS shows actual simultaneous vibration events exceeding the FEIS’s threshold for damage. This includes two trains meeting, two dump trucks

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President's Column: Touching the Bases...

By Lisa Dale Jones

It's almost fall again—and we have high hopes for the Nats to keep playing long into October!

As you walk to games at Nationals Park down New Jersey Avenue, SE, you can see all the new construction going up south of the freeway, including what will eventually be a Whole Foods Market. There's also going to be a Whole Foods on H Street, NE. We will also see a new Harris Teeter opening soon at 4th and M Streets, SE. Change is coming.

Another thing you might notice as you walk to the ballpark along New Jersey Avenue is the west entrance to CSX's Virginia Avenue Tunnel (VAT). As you no doubt know, CSX wants to build two new tunnels there in order to increase the frequency and capacity of the freight trains it sends through Capitol Hill. If a "Record of Decision" is handed down by the Federal Highway Administration and the District Department of Transportation on September 15, then CSX will be able to begin construction. On August 26,

CHRS testified at a Council hearing asking for a postponement of that Decision until after the District's Comprehensive Rail Plan, funded in the 2015 budget, is written and studied. More on the VAT can be found elsewhere in this issue.

As you walk along New Jersey Avenue and look at the site of the future Whole Foods, don't forget the food stalls at Eastern Market! The merchants there have been operating without a long-term lease and when they finally do get one, the rents could be much higher. The merchants could expect to be charged a market-based rent that is adjusted to take into account the uniqueness of Eastern Market and the history of service that these vendors provide. By contrast, the weekend food vendors outside can set up shop for as little as \$35 per day. So next time you're looking for a place to buy food, consider those vendors inside, many of whom have been there for generations and keep the market going throughout the week.

Of course, as you walk to Eastern Market, you'll see the Hine School. That, too, is headed for changes. In mid-August, the DC Court of Appeals ruled for the Zoning Commission in a lawsuit against them by a neighborhood activist group, setting the stage for the Hine project to move forward. Although the proposed development still seems much too large for the area, we can take some satisfaction in having successfully pressed for some lowering of the height at 7th Street, SE and Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, as well as many improvements in the design that will help it fit in with the historic streetscape. More on Hine can be found elsewhere in this issue.

If your walk (or bike ride) around Capitol Hill takes you to the Anacostia waterfront east of the 11th Street bridges, you'll find mostly an undeveloped riverbank. However, change could also be coming there. Cohen Siegel Investors is asking the Zoning Commission for approval to build an 800,000 square-foot development at 1331 M Street, SE. The hearing is scheduled for December 1. The *Washington Business Journal* (August 20) writes that the project, to be constructed on a three-acre lot between M and Water Streets is expected to include three new residential buildings. According to Eric Siegel, an executive with Cohen Siegel, "millennials are drawn to the water."

When your trip finally takes you home, take a good look at your windows. If you have original windows in need of an upgrade, there's hope—historic windows can usually be repaired for less than the cost of replacing them. Learn more in two CHRS articles in this month's *Hill Rag*.

Play ball!★

VAT Testimony, *continued from cover*

meeting, or construction machinery being operated when trains, dump trucks, or both are passing. The FEIS expressly ignores these documented real-life dual vibration events. In addition, the FEIS data (but not its conclusions) indicate that the threshold for damaging vibration to buildings from passing trains and 14,000 to 19,000 loaded dump trucks carrying away excavated material will almost certainly be exceeded.

"In addition, the tunnel expansion would require cutting down 400 trees and removing all the soil and all the paving in the construction area of

Virginia Avenue, SE. For a period of 30 to 42 months, construction requiring heavy equipment and over 14,000 dump truck trips would be taking place near the Capper Seniors Apartments (an environmental justice population of low-income seniors), many homes and St. Paul AUMP Church. The FEIS admits that during construction, air quality and noise will in some instances exceed federal standards. In any cost vs. benefit analysis, these are huge costs. It is all the more essential that a Record of Decision for this project waits for the recommendations in the DC Rail Plan."★

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www.CHRS.org

Celebrating nearly 60 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.

Court of Appeals OKs Hine Project

By Gary Peterson

A three-judge panel of the DC Court of Appeals, in a decision dated August 14, 2014, unanimously upheld the Zoning Commission's order approving the planned unit development (PUD) application for the Hine Junior High School property. The Court's opinion is available online at: <http://www.dccourts.gov/internet/documents/13-AA-366.pdf>. Barring further appeals, the decision concludes a process that started with the 2008 closure of the school.

In February 2008 it became clear that the Hine School site would become available for development and the CHRS Board discussed what a successful development should include. CHRS reviews new construction to ensure that it is compatible with the design guidelines of the Historic District and advises the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) accordingly. The Board then laid out its vision of what the development should look like in a resolution that included the following 11 criteria:

- 1) Comply with the recently enacted comprehensive plan
- 2) Be the best example of smart growth and sustainable development
- 3) Reflect the importance of the location
- 4) Be compatible with the surrounding zoning and existing building scale
- 5) Restore the original L'Enfant Plan by reopening C Street between 7th and 8th Streets
- 6) Provide for commercial uses on 7th Street compatible with the existing commercial uses

- 7) Set aside Pennsylvania Avenue for mixed use with retail on the first floor and office above
- 8) Design the 8th Street frontage as residential and include a substantial percentage of workforce housing
- 9) Consider live/work studios on C Street
- 10) Accommodate one to two underground levels of parking over 100% of the site, so there is parking for the residential, commercial and weekend parking for the Eastern Market
- 11) Provide for green space as well as outdoors areas for craft vendors, food vendors and the flea market.

These criteria were used throughout the process to analyze the RFP, to recommend a developer and to review the HPRB and PUD applications.

Now, 17 months after the Zoning Commission's Order, the development can proceed. ★

Historic Preservation Briefs

by Beth Purcell

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) considered the following cases on July 22 and July 31, 2014. HPRB is responsible for determining if proposed changes to a building are consistent with the DC Preservation Act. A “concept review” is a preliminary determination of a building owner’s plan to alter the building, and if the concept is approved, the owner will return to the HPRB for a final review. In these reports, “staff” refers to the staff of the Historic Preservation Office (HPO), which serves as the staff of the HPRB.

625 South Carolina Avenue, SE, HPA 14-455; concept/rear addition to a 1929 brick rowhouse. The HPRB found the concept compatible and directed the applicants to construct a lumber mockup to test for visibility from public space, to change the rear knee wall to a railing (if permitted by code), to change the third story windows to double hung windows (not casement windows) and to work with HPO staff to show how the addition will be built into the existing structure to minimize the amount of modifications to the existing building (The applicant’s most recent plans had greatly reduced the amount of interior demolition).

518 6th Street, SE, HPA 14-450; concept/rear addition. The HPRB found the concept of a rear addition to be compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District with the condition that the applicant work with staff on the detailing of the windows and materials. CHRS agreed that the project was compatible. However, the main issue in this case turned out to be the proposed demolition of a brick garage (to be replaced by a new garden shed). Carriage houses and garages, if built before 1945

and retaining their historic integrity (e.g., not significantly altered), are character-defining features in the landscape of the Capitol Hill Historic District. The research on the garage had not been completed by the July 24 hearing and, as a result, staff must complete research afterward. The HPRB stated that the applicant should work with staff to determine if the garage is a contributing structure especially with regard to whether it has retained its historic integrity. If it has lost integrity, the garage should be documented in detail with photographs before being demolished. If the new shed is built, the alley-facing side should be no higher than the existing garage and should be of a simple design.

700 Constitution Avenue, NE (Medlink), HPA 12-150; revised concept/rear addition, façade alterations and roof deck. This project has been before HPRB several times, and the major elements of the project were previously approved. On July 31, 2014, the HPRB reviewed several proposed changes to the project, including a roof deck. The project is visible from several major streets. The applicant proposed reducing the height of a previously-allowed mechanical penthouse on the roof, adding green roof elements, roof deck, and a new penthouse for roof access containing two toilets (and no mechanical equipment). CHRS testified and introduced photographs showing that the new penthouse would be visible from surrounding streets. The applicant had proposed a trellis on the roof deck to comply with zoning regulations, but indicated the intention to seek approval from the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) to eliminate the trellis. The applicant also proposed changes in restoring

the front entrance based on newly-discovered historic photographs. CHRS supported this proposal. The HPRB adopted the staff report and delegated final approval to staff with the following recommendations:

- The edge of the roof deck is pulled back sufficiently so that furnishings will not be visible;
- The applicant is encouraged to seek BZA relief for the trellis;
- The stair access and bathroom structure is minimized so it will not be visible from public space;
- The bike rack is moved from the front of the building, if allowed by DC Dept. of Transportation (DDOT);
- Clear glass instead of opaque is selected for the historic 8th Street entrance doors;
- Metal fencing is selected and is not placed atop a masonry wall;
- The plaque and flowers are placed behind the fence; and
- The applicant continues to monitor the effect of the construction on the Parish of St. Monica and St. James, located next to the project site.

1122 East Capitol Street NE, HPA 14-463; concept review/two-story rear addition, approved on HPRB’s consent calendar.

The HPRB did not meet in August. ★

Proposed 2014–2015 CHRS Operating Budget

October 1–September 30	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15
40000 · RESOURCES				
41000 · Operating Revenue				
41100 · Membership	25,211	25,000	25,000	25,000
41200 · General Contributions	15,745	7,500	8,500	10,000
41300 · House Tour Revenue	64,911	62,000	62,000	65,000
41400 · Transfer from Savings				8,000
41600 · Interest on Checking	0	0	0	140
Total 41000 · Operating Revenue	105,867	94,500	95,500	108,140
43000 · Special Programs Funded from Savings				
43100 · Investment Fund Earnings				0
43200 · Restricted Fund Disbursal	-16,869	29,000	29,000	15,475
43300 · Swampoodle Awards	33,200		250,000	140,000
43310 · Interest on Swamp - 7080				25
43400 · Dick Wolf Program				3,200
Total 43000 · Special Programs Funding	16,331	29,000	279,000	158,700
TOTAL CHRS Operating Resources	122,198	123,500	374,500	266,840
50000 · EXPENSES				
51000 · Administration				
51100 · Contract Services	19,233	23,900	20,500	17,350
51200 · Rents & Leases	10,844	11,000	11,300	11,895
51300 · Administrative Expenses	6,832	11,124	9,900	9,460
51400 · Insurance	1,123	1,100	1,100	1,900
51600 · Public Awareness	0	0	0	4,500
Total 51000 · Administration	38,032	47,124	42,800	45,105
52000 · Newsletter	15,164	16,600	17,000	14,300
53000 · House Tour	15,264	15,000	15,000	17,000
54000 · Committees				
54200 · Preservation	14,815	4,000	4,000	600
54300 · Community Development	0	50	250	50
54400 · City Planning	0	50	2,000	50
54500 · Community Relations	603	4,610	7,000	400
54600 · Environment	0	50	50	50
54700 · Transportation	315	50	50	50
54800 · Zoning	0	0	0	17,535
54900 · Membership	50	5,350	5,350	8,000
Total 54000 · Committees	15,783	14,160	18,700	26,735
56000 · Fundraising	0	0	0	1,000
59000 · Specially Funded Programs				
59100 · Special Projects	5,400	1,666	2,000	1,000
59200 · Boundaries Project	284	29,000	29,000	18,500
59300 · Swampoodle Improvements			250,000	140,000
59400 · 60th Anniversary				17,535
59500 · Wolf Lecture Series				3,200
59000 · Specially Funded Programs	5,684	30,666	281,000	162,700
TOTAL CHRS Expenses	89,927	123,550	374,500	266,840
Net Operating Income	21,624	1,616	2,000	4,000
Net Restricted Program Income	10,647	-1,666	-2,000	-4,000
Net Total Income	32,271	-50	0	0

CHRS Preservation Café: Breweries of Capitol Hill

By Garrett Peck

Washington, D.C. was founded as a “wet” city and drinking has always been part of our culture. George Washington met with Pierre L’Enfant at Suters Tavern in Georgetown. Congressmen met in bars to discuss legislation, often on the storied Rum Row at Pennsylvania and Fourteenth Street, NW. Immigrants found saloons a relief from crowded boarding houses and tenements. Navy Yard employees often had a glass of beer or whiskey after a shift. And Capitol Hill was absolutely crowded with breweries to support the bustling neighborhood.

The first image we have of a brewery is from an 1833 painting that shows the tall brick building housing the Washington Brewery near Navy Yard. That site is now Parking Lots H and I between Nationals Park and the DC Water pumping station and Forest City will redevelop the site in coming years. Given that the block, Square 744, was only lightly used in the years before it became a parking lot, there is a good chance that artifacts will be discovered underground once the asphalt is peeled back. These can help fill in the gap for a site that was used extensively first as a sugar refinery (1798–1805), then as the brewery (1805–1836).

Capitol Hill historian Cindy Janke once led me on a walking

tour of Capitol Hill brewery sites—and mentioned that many brewers were buried at Congressional Cemetery. Several years later I was researching my fifth book, *Capital Beer*, and returned to the question of which brewers were buried in the cemetery.

With more than a little help from the digital records in the office, ably assembled by Sandra Schmidt, I was able to document nineteen people who worked directly in the brewing industry, or who were tangentially related (such as Hattie Berkley, a thirteen-year old who tragically collided with a brewery delivery wagon when she lost control of her bicycle).

Many of the early brewers were English immigrants and made English-style ales. John W. Collet, the second owner of the Washington Brewery, died in September 1814, less than a month after the British burned Washington. His grave—marked by a flat, slate-colored sandstone—is in remarkably good condition considering its two centuries of exposure to the elements.



The National Capital Brewing Co. site on 14th Street, SE is today the Safeway.

Clement Coote was a prominent dry goods store owner, justice of the peace, city alderman—and the last owner of the Washington Brewery, which he shut down in 1836. His white marble grave stands just downhill from the gatehouse.

Brewing history was forever changed with the arrival of German immigrants in the 1850s. They gave us lager beer, a gift that has proved vital to surviving DC’s hot and humid summers. It was these immigrants who turned brewing into a major industry in Washington: brewing was the second largest employer after the federal government and there were nearly a dozen breweries operating near Capitol Hill around the time of the Civil War. George Beckert may have been the first to brew lager in DC and he, his wife, Theresa, and brewing son-in-law Hermann Richter are buried side-by-side in Congressional Cemetery. Their graves are a pilgrimage site for lager lovers.

With the Gilded Age, the breweries consolidated, leaving just four major breweries in the national capital region, including two on Capitol Hill. Congress mandated that Washington go dry on November 1,

Barracks Row Day 2014—Call for Volunteers

This annual street fair is not to be missed. As always, CHRS will host a booth with activities for children to enjoy while we share our mission with the adults. Society members are invited to help staff the activity, September 27 from 11 am–5 pm on 8th Street, SE between D and I (Eye) streets. This is an important community outreach activity and volunteers are more than welcomed—they are truly needed. Not only will your help be greatly appreciated, it’s also a lot of fun. Contact Elizabeth Nelson at elizabeth_knits@yahoo.com or (202) 543-3512.

1917 and all of the breweries closed. Only the Christian Heurich Brewing Co. managed to survive and reopen after Prohibition, but the two Capitol Hill breweries were permanently closed. The Washington Brewery—a completely different brewery—was demolished in the 1920s for Stuart-Hobson Middle School (a fact that seems to stun just about everyone), while the National Capital Brewing Co. became the Meadowgold Dairy. Its Romanesque structures were torn down in the 1960s for the Safeway that now stands there. Not a hint of brewing architecture remains on Capitol Hill, save for a few private residences.

Fifty-five years after the Heurich brewery closed, brewing returned to Washington in 2011 with the opening of DC Brau, followed by numerous other breweries. We now have countless, locally-produced sudsy options. Just one thing is missing: large scale beer gardens like the Alhambra. Capitol Hill could really use a beer garden.

On May 10, 2014, Congressional Cemetery served as a one-day beer garden when it hosted a Maibockfest. Three local breweries—Capitol City, Mad Fox and Port City—supplied kegs of this malty, strong beer and cemetery staff put out a Red Solo cup by each of the nineteen graves for the day. Bock is the lager of Lent and it has a double meaning: it's also the German word for billy goat. After the cemetery made national news for using goats to clear out invasive plants in summer 2013, it was just the right theme for the beer festival.

At the Maibockfest we symbolically cut the ribbon for the Brewers Tour, a self-guided walking tour of the nineteen graves. You can download the tour on the Congressional Cemetery website, or stop by the gatehouse to pick up a copy. And raise your glass to those who began a long tradition of brewing in our fair city. ★

Garrett Peck is the author of Capital Beer: A Heady History of Brewing in Washington, D.C. and Prohibition in Washington, D.C.: How Dry We Weren't. You can meet Garrett at the September 17 Preservation Café at Ebenzers Coffee House, or visit www.garrettpeck.com.

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September Membership Meeting: DC's Trees

September 25, 6:30–8pm · The Hill Center, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE

Join CHRS on Thursday evening, September 25, as we welcome Mark Buscaino, Executive Director of Casey Trees, to talk about the work of maintaining DC's abundant tree canopy.

Trees are vitally important for a number of reasons beyond being beautiful: they filter our air, soak up storm water, shelter and feed wildlife, provide shade, windbreaks and create a definite character by their presence. Casey Trees works with property owners to plant and maintain trees throughout the District.

Mark will discuss the work of increasing DC's tree canopy and how you can help by maintaining your trees. Come with your tree-related questions!

Before the presentation there will be a member meet-and-greet with CHRS's new Board members and officers (with light snacks) and a brief members' meeting to vote on the coming year's budget.

The evening starts at 6:30 pm with a meet-and-greet and light snacks; at 6:45 pm, we will conduct the membership meeting, and at 7 pm, the presentation will begin.

We look forward to seeing you there!



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

Mark Your Calendar!

SEPTEMBER

3 Wednesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Historic Preservation Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor conference room. Details: Beth Purcell, (202) 544-0178.

11 Thursday, 7:30 pm
CHRS Zoning Committee meets at 420 10th Street, SE, Kirby House, first floor conference room. Details: Gary Peterson, (202) 547-7969.

16 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Lisa Dale Jones, (202) 543-0425.

17 Wednesday, 6:30–7:15 pm
CHRS Preservation Café: “Breweries of Capitol Hill,” presented by Garrett Peck (see article in this month’s newsletter). Ebenezers Coffee House, 2nd & F Streets, NE. Details: Elizabeth Nelson, (202) 543-3512.

25 Thursday, 6:30 pm
Membership Meeting: Mark Buscaino of Casey Trees will present “Our Unique Urban Forest” following the business meeting to approve the FY 2014–2015 budget.

27 Saturday, 11 am–5 pm
Barracks Row Day 2014: CHRS will host a booth with activities for children to enjoy while we share our mission with the adults. To volunteer, please contact Elizabeth Nelson, (202) 543-3512.

OCTOBER

6 Monday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Historic Preservation Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor conference room. Details: Beth Purcell, (202) 544-0178.

15 Wednesday, 6:30–7:15 pm
CHRS Preservation Café: Ruth Troccoli, City Archaeologist, Historic Preservation Office. Ebenezers Coffee House, 2nd & F Streets, NE. Details: Elizabeth Nelson, (202) 543-3512.

16 Thursday, 7:30 pm
CHRS Zoning Committee meets at 420 10th Street, SE, Kirby House, first floor conference room. Details: Gary Peterson, (202) 547-7969.

21 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Lisa Dale Jones, (202) 543-0425.