



NEWS

www.chrs.org

March 2005

D.C. Council Chairman Linda Cropp to Address March 31 Membership Meeting

The Role of Neighborhoods in DC's Future

by Brian Furness

The Honorable Linda Cropp, Chairman of the DC City Council, will deliver the keynote presentation at CHRS's March 31 membership meeting (see box for time and place). The program will focus on the events and actions that made Capitol Hill the vibrant, desirable urban neighborhood it is today, and set the stage for a discussion of where Capitol Hill might be going. Ms. Cropp will talk about the role of neighborhoods—such as Capitol

Hill—in DC's political future. Questions and answers will follow, and the audience will have an opportunity to meet the speakers.

A panel that will explore how Capitol Hill was "restored" as a vibrant urban neighborhood, the challenges faced and overcome by the community, and—consistent with its 50th Anniversary Year—CHRS's contribution, will precede Ms. Cropp's presentation. Panelists will include Dick Wolf, Hill resident since 1964 with 40 years of activism on land use and planning issues; Don Denton, managing broker at Coldwell Banker Pardoe Capitol Hill (and writer on Capitol Hill real estate trends); and Hazel Kreinheder, Hill resident and activist since 1963. Hazel was a key player in the creation of the Capitol Hill Historic District and participated in preparing Capitol Hill Prospectus, an analysis of Capitol Hill's demographics and challenges published in 1960s.

Capitol Hill's success—soaring real estate values, commercial revitalization (look at Barracks Row!), and Victorian charm—reflects much hard work and community activism but it conceals the challenges we face. Some challenges stem from success: diminishing diversity, fewer families, and pressure on Capitol Hill's architectural



The Honorable Linda W. Cropp, Chairman, DC City Council. Keynote speaker at the March 31 Membership Meeting.

fabric. Others stem from development on Capitol Hill's borders: along M Street SE and H Street NE, on lower Pennsylvania Avenue SE, and Reservation 13. Still other challenges stem from city and national trends, including the impact of security measures at The Capitol and the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative. And many see a challenge in the city's downplaying of neighborhoods in favor of grand "themes," such as economic development and commercial corridors, and mega-projects, such as the proposed hospital on Reservation 13. The program will illuminate some of the major trends that will affect residential life on Capitol Hill in the years to come. Bring your friends and neighbors! ✧

Residential Capitol Hill: Where We've Been and Where We're Going

Keynote Speaker:
The Honorable Linda W. Cropp,
Chairman, D.C. City Council

Thursday, March 31, 2005

Doors open at 7 PM for refreshments.
The program begins at 7:30

St. Peter's Church, Second and C, SE

President's Column

by Rob Nevitt

This month's President's column is going to spread beyond its usual confines in an attempt to address the subject of a new hospital, proposed as a partnership between Howard University and the city, to be built on "the DC General" site. Publicly, the subject has been addressed at a Ward 6 Democrats' meeting on January 31 and then at a Roundtable sponsored by David Catania, At-large Member of the DC Council and Chair of the Committee on Health. The issue becomes more and more complex the closer you look at it and I won't pretend to address all of the complexities in detail. I testified at the Roundtable on February 17 and I will begin by reproducing my written testimony here. An accompanying article provides an account of the testimony of others.

Testimony: I am Rob Nevitt, President of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Over that span of time, CHRS has been actively involved in issues before the community, from the establishment of the Historic District itself, to the current development of the site across from the Potomac Avenue Metro stop. The question of health services for the District of Columbia ranks in importance with them.

Unhappily, the community has learned about this proposal piecemeal and unofficially. No one

really knows the dimensions of the proposal.

So, first, I want to congratulate you, Councilmember Catania, for your attempts to "peek behind the curtain," to use your own phrase. I urge you not just to peek, but to take that curtain in both hands and rip it down. Not only do citizens have a right to full knowledge of the planning for health facilities, but also the planners have an obligation to plumb opinion and solicit thinking from the public. A medical facility will spend a lot of our money, should be designed to meet our real needs and should respect our neighborhoods.

I am not an expert on health care and I am not here to testify as one. I do represent the membership of an active civic group. I hear from people who expect me to represent their views and to ask questions on their behalf. By definition, this meeting is the place to pose questions that I hope you will find useful to ask in your own pursuit of what exactly is going on.

The central question is certainly: How can the DC Government best meet the health needs of the citizens, particularly those presently under-served? Nothing I have heard suggests that the answer to that question is a full service hospital.

If the city is bent on adding a monument to the skyline of a major city, perhaps this is the answer. However, we should not be told it is built to meet real taxpayer needs. Facilities built in the



name of anti-terrorism may attract federal funding, but that is working from the wrong end of the health care equation, and still will require long term drains on DC revenue. Effective management of this complex is in no way assured.

The particular space being mentioned is Reservation 13. The voters who live from the Capitol to Nineteenth Street have long crusaded to make clear that this land is a gem, albeit a diamond in the rough. Part of the problem is the willful disregard by some city officials of the true potential of this land. We have resisted attempts to treat it as a dumping ground, fighting proposals for impound lots and expanded incarceration facilities. Absent derelict buildings, rusting chain link fence and underbrush, this land sweeps grandly to the Anacostia in as inviting a way as any riverfront parcel one can imagine. This is a place for people, not facilities.

A few years ago, it appeared that redemption had arrived with planning for the site, overseen by the Office of Planning. I was a member of an advisory group that spent many hours with professional urban planners. Our work was taken to the public through a series of charettes. These hours and

Continued on page 3

Start or Renew Your CHRS Membership

- ✧ On the Web at www.CHRS.org
- ✧ Call us at 202-543-0425 and choose option 2
- ✧ Get a form at one of our many meetings

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

Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Robert Nevitt

First

Vice President Barbara Eck

Second

Vice President Charles McMillion

Treasurer Lyle Schauer

Secretary Beth Purcell

At Large Mike Canning

At Large Gary Peterson

At Large Tom Grahame

At Large Diane P. Scott

Immediate

Past President . . . Brian R. Furness

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Mike Canning, *Budget*

Dick Wolf, *City Planning*

Bernadette McMahon, *Communications*

Brian R. Furness, *Community Development*

Gene Smith, *Environment*

Nancy Metzger, *Historic Preservation*

Charles McMillion, *Membership*

Tom Grahame, *Transportation*

Gary Peterson, *Zoning*

Ann Richards, *House Tour*

NEWS:

Larry Janezich and Jane Ruyle, *Editors*

Roxanne Walker, *Design and layout*

WEBSITE:

Charles Towe, *Webmaster*

To contact any of the above, please contact the Society offices by calling 202/543-0425 or sending email to CapHRS@aol.com.

www.chrs.org

Founded almost 50 years ago 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.

President's Column *continued from previous page*

hours of work resulted in a plan for development that included a substantial residential and retail core, with public and municipal facilities on the periphery. That core meant that the neighborhood would extend to the river, providing housing for taxpayers and amenities for everyone. It forestalled the building of a tract full of office buildings that would wall off Reservation 13 and the river beyond it, creating empty and uninviting canyons of deserted streets when all the employees went home. The council embraced this vision, but, ominously, the Office of Planning has not done the promised zoning that set standards for building there on a block-by-block basis.

Robert Bobb stood up, however briefly, before the audience at the January 31 Ward 6 meeting and talked as if Reservation 13 was a blank slate on which he could sketch his plans for "a medical park." I saw our Councilmember Sharon Ambrose's surprise as he talked. He later admitted that she may have been "left out of the

loop." What is going on when our representative is not in from the beginning, as we all should be?

Residential and institutional development can coexist, but the proportions can be critical. In addition to the jail, the morgue, TB clinic, methadone dispensary, and the like are changing those proportions on Reservation 13. I urge you and urge all the planners, to put value on what already has resulted from so much professional and public input, accept that Reservation 13 is a prime piece of real estate that, used as planned, can provide both facilities and tax revenue.

As I began, the main question to be answered is about the character of the medical care the city should provide. I believe much of the answer will come from others who testify today, judging from what I have heard so consistently about the need for primary care. This round table is a wonderful beginning to an open and participatory process. Let it not stop here. Thank you. ✧

The New Hospital and Capitol Hill

by Rob Nevitt

There were almost as many views as witnesses at a DC Council Roundtable convened February 17 by Chair of the Committee on Health David Catania. However, they are classifiable.

First, there is the character of the facility itself. City Administrator Robert Bobb and the leadership at Howard University envision a very sophisticated health institution committed to research and teaching, as well as providing full service to patients of every financial stripe and medical need. The construction price tag was stated as \$400 million, divided fifty-fifty between the city and

Howard, although the city would also pay carrying charges for the debt and provide the land and build the infrastructure. There was no agreement between the partners as to which would fund the anticipated operating deficit. The medical complex is proposed for the DC General site, occupying nine acres on Reservation 13.

All the council members present challenged the full service nature of the proposal as unresponsive to the actual health needs of DC's low-income and underinsured residents and coming with too high a price tag.

Chairman David Catania's challenge to the concept came with

Continued on page 4

The New Hospital and Capitol Hill *continued from previous page*

more particulars. He, as did others, made a compelling case that the city has too many hospital beds (about one third of authorized beds in DC hospitals are “mothballed”) and the proposed hospital would take business away from existing hospitals, rather than providing needed capacity. This was particularly critical in the case of the Greater Southeast Hospital since it is both the only hospital East of the Anacostia and in the most precarious financial condition.

Catania said his focus was on the need for more emergency care capacity and plugging the hole in the health safety net that appeared with the closing of DC General. He envisaged a more modest hospital with complete emergency services, partnering with Howard and using Reservation 13. It was noted that the DC government’s low income health insurance program and the allied primary care system has decreased the numbers of people using DC’s ERs for routine health problems and that people with means have no problem getting in-patient or specialized service.

Several ancillary issues arose. Most obliquely addressed was Howard’s competence in managing this second hospital, given management problems at their existing hospital. The possibility of a bio-terrorism research laboratory was dismissed as remote, but remains in various parts of the proposal. Therefore, no one spoke to the implications of having highly dangerous biological agents on site just two miles from the US Capitol or the intense security required for such labs. Perception problems were addressed, such as Councilmember Barry’s challenge that political, not medical decisions were being made, trying to alleviate the political pain of closing DC General. It was charged, too, that the impetus for this new hospital was coming from the Congress,

which has always wanted a hospital nearby. There was also the problem of the sobriquet “poor peoples’ hospital” being attached to anything less than the glittering edifice proposed, because of the assumption that this is synonymous with poor quality.

The issue of location looms large for me, since Reservation 13 has such promise for Capitol Hill. I was a member of the Office of Planning Steering Committee for planning for the site. Critical to the concept that was taken to the public and approved by the Council was that the development there be an extension of the existing neighborhoods, all the way to the Anacostia. Around a central core of residences and retail was room for institutional (along Independence Avenue) and municipal buildings (along Massachusetts Avenue extended). This opens this wonderful piece of river-view geography to inhabitants and would provide a return of revenue, instead of a drain of revenue as institutions do, most particularly a hospital. With the jail at one end of the reservation and the proposed medical complex at the other, sandwiching the existing methadone clinic, detox unit, morgue, etc., the site becomes less and less attractive to a developer of residential complexes.

The site has the symbolic attraction of appearing as DC General redux. There was very tortured argument made by the City Administrator and some Council members that it was the single site most convenient to the underserved, although the arguers tried to have it both ways. They said a new hospital was needed because people couldn’t be expected to travel long distances to existing hospitals, concentrated in Northwest. When it was proposed that the hospital should be in Ward 8 rather than on the other side of the river, it was averred that

people had no problem making the trip over the river. The problem of traffic congestion blocking the Anacostia River crossings during DC’s extended commuting hours was never mentioned. The current traffic system has commuters streaming through residential streets, a system that would be exacerbated by the attraction of a hospital on Reservation 13, plus RFK stadium and the planned new soccer facility. If an investment of the kind under discussion were made in Greater Southeast Hospital or in bringing the services really needed closer to those who need them, it would make more sense, cost less and do what’s best for both Reservation 13 and the wards East of the river.

Which brings me back to David Catania’s work as Chairman of the Health Committee. While the Mayor’s Office and Howard are committed to the NATIONAL CAPITOL MEDICAL CENTER (even the name betrays the grandiosity of the plan) David Catania is trying to break down medical services into constituent parts and ask: which are needed, who needs them and how can they efficiently be provided? His approach is good health policy, but I think he is in danger of spoiling a great opportunity for the city in the development of Reservation 13 by insisting on use of that site. He is committed to weekly discussions with the parties about achieving best solutions. I wish him the best.

Both medical and development common sense may become victim to politics and the Mayor’s edifice complex, but David Catania’s committee and an informed and vocal public provides the best hope that reason will prevail. ✧

CHRS 50th Anniversary Kickoff

by Beth Purcell

On January 29, 2005, CHRS members celebrated the 50th Anniversary with birthday cake, champagne, sparkling cider, and music by the President's Own Woodwind Quintet of the Marine Band, at the Marine Corps Barracks at Eighth and I Streets, SE.

CHRS Board member Gary Peterson welcomed members, and recounted the launching of CHRS on January 28, 1955. He noted that CHRS continues its mission of historic preservation through its recent undertaking of photographing the 8,000 contributing structures in the Capitol Hill Historic District. The first 2,000 structures will be photographed in 2005 in black and white digital images, with the hope of completing the work in the next four years. He reminded members that the grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) is a matching grant, and that contributions are needed for this important work.

CHRS President Rob Nevitt reminded members that CHRS is much more than preserving windows and doors, and recognized past presidents present at the party: Lawrence Monaco, Peter Powers, Richard Wolf, Trudy Peterson, Lawrence Pearl, Gary Peterson and Brian Furness. He noted



CHRS President Rob Nevitt addresses CHRS members and guests. Photo : Norm Metzger

that CHRS's on-going work on several significant projects, including the Middle Anacostia Crossings DDOT study.

Nancy Metzger, Chair of the Historic Preservation Committee, thanked the Committee members for their hard work in assuring that new construction projects meet historic preservation guidelines and in advising on maintenance of historic buildings. Last year, CHRS completed the Park Street Project, helping a low-income family restore

the facade of their home. CHRS and the Committee continue to work on projects such as the Call Box Project.

Ward 6 Councilmember Sharon Ambrose was introduced to read a City Council Ceremonial Resolution honoring CHRS. Rob Nevitt then introduced Colonel Lockhart, Marine Barracks Commander, who welcomed CHRS members to the Barracks and explained its history and encouraged members to visit again, particularly for the evening parades in spring. ✧

Think Spring! The 48th CHRS Annual House and Garden Tour

The first signs of rebirth are peeking through the brown ground cover...thoughts of cleaning up the yard come to mind...and now we remember that the mailing for advanced-ticket sales for the CHRS House and Garden Tour will soon be in our mailboxes.

Some very special residences and locations of interest have been lined up for the Forty-eighth Annual Tour. Tickets go on sale April 8 at Eastern Market and selected retail establishments around the city. Go to www.chrs.org for further details.

May 7 from 5:00–8:00 pm and May 8 from 12 noon–5:00 pm

Victims of Communism Memorial Slated for Capitol Hill

by Gary Peterson

The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation has obtained approval from the National Park Service and the National Capital Memorial Commission to build a memorial to the victims of communism on the small triangle of land bordered by Maryland Avenue, Constitution Avenue, and Third Street, NE.

The design will include a 13 foot 6 inch replica of the statue of the "Goddess of Democracy" erected by the pro-democracy Chinese students in Tiananmen Square in Beijing in the summer of 1989; a roll call of nations that suffered under communism; and quotations by such Cold War leaders as Ronald Reagan, Harry Truman, Lech Walesa, and Andrei Sakharov.

There will be a granite plaza surrounding the statue. The proposed placement of the memorial will be on the westerly most third of the triangle of land. The two mature oak trees on the site will be preserved. Construction is estimated to take six to eight months.

The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation is a non-profit, bipartisan organization approved by Congress in Section 905 of Public Law 103-199. The bill was unanimously passed by Congress on December 17, 1993, and signed into law by President Clinton. The law authorized the

Late Breaking News!

As this issue was going to press, the National Park Service announced it has canceled plans to place the memorial at this location. Stay tuned!

construction, in the District of Columbia, of a memorial to honor the some 100 million victims of communism. The Foundation currently has around \$300,000 of the \$500,000 necessary to construct the memorial.

Gary Peterson, chair of the CHRS Zoning Committee, appeared at a ANC6C Planning and Zoning Committee meeting considering this site and objected to the location. Gary stated that:

1. The L'Enfant plan envisioned that there would be lots of green space in the city and planned for the many small green spaces. Placing a memorial at the proposed location violates the spirit of the L'Enfant plan and trades green space for hard granite space.
2. The scale of the monument to the size of the triangle is too big.
3. The volume of bus and automobile visits that will be generated by commemorations held

at the memorial hasn't been taken into consideration. There is no bus parking available and no space to provide bus parking. The proponents of this site believe that there will be no ceremonial visits but CHRS fears they are wrong. What will be the plan then?

4. The District of Columbia Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) was not among those contacted. This parcel of land is within the Historic District and HPRB review is required.

Both the ANC Committee and the full ANC voted to support the memorial, but to oppose the location. CHRS President, Rob Nevitt has sent a letter to the National Park Service supporting the memorial, but opposing the location. Nevitt asked for a meeting to discuss alternative locations.

The Foundation has agreed to try and find another location on Capitol Hill and the ANC has offered to assist them. The National Capital Planning Commission, the Commission on Fine Arts, and the HPRB must approve any proposed location and design.

You may send your comments on the location and design of the memorial to The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, 1521 Sixteenth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036 or www.victimsofcommunism.org. ✧

Welcome CHRS Supporters

We thank the following sponsors and patrons.

SPONSORS

Peter & Sandy Clark
Todd DeGarmo & Bill Sales
John Franzen
Elizabeth Hannold & Douglas Delano
Jan Schoonmaker

PATRONS

Mr. & Mrs. Alan Dye
Farleigh H. Earhart
Tom Grahame & Jan Kern
Barry W. Johnson
Kathryn & Peter Powers
Diane & John Shages

John Smeltzer & Cathy Flanagan
Visitors Services Center

Nancy Metzger's Latest Award

by Charles McMillion

Proving once again that—sometimes—good deeds ARE recognized, Nancy Metzger has been named by the Capitol Hill Community Foundation as a recipient of its 2005 Capitol Hill Community Achievement Award.

The tireless Chair of the CHRS Preservation Committee, organizer of the popular CHRS Preservation Cafés, successful champion of Barrack's Row revival and its

Heritage Trail—and so much more—Nancy will receive her award at the Community Foundation's Annual Awards Dinner on May 12. (Information: 202-544-4236)

Also receiving the 2005 award will be Frances Slaughter, teacher and director at the Capitol Hill Cooperative Nursery School for the past 20 years, and John Parker, Commissioner of the Capitol Hill baseball and Softball League. Call 202-544-4236 for further information or to register to attend.



Nancy Metzger Photo: Norm Metzger

Spring 2005 Preservation Cafés

The March 16 Preservation Cafe will feature C. Dudley Brown, a nationally recognized expert on historic interiors, and a lively discussion on Victorian wallpapers—how they were used then and how to incorporate them into today's interior design. If you are thinking about redoing that living room or dining room, come find out how those rooms might have originally been decorated.

At the April 20 Café, Gary Hallewell of Garden Arts, one of

Capitol Hill's experienced landscape designers, will provide tips and answer questions about plants and landscaping on Capitol Hill. As the weather warms up and we start thinking about spring planting, this will be an excellent opportunity to get your questions answered.

The final Preservation Café for the Spring 2005 series will be May 18. The speaker will be announced next month.

The Preservation Café, a popular free forum, sponsored by the

Capitol Hill Restoration Society, will meet from 6:30–7:15 pm on Wednesday, March 16, 2005 at Trattoria Alberto (top floor), 506 Eighth Street, SE (one block from Eastern Market Metro). For more information please contact the CHRS offices at 202-543-0425 or CapHRS@aol.com. ✧

Slate of Officers Proposed

The Nominations Committee has proposed the following slate of officers for the coming fiscal year beginning on October 1, 2004.

President:	Dick Wolf
1st Vice President:	Charles Mc Million
2nd Vice President:	Gary Peterson
Secretary:	Beth Purcell
Treasurer:	Mike Canning
At Large:	Elizabeth Nelson & Joan Joshi (2 year terms)
At Large:	Diane Scott (1 year term)

Members who wish to nominate themselves or any other member for any of these offices should e-mail BARB539@Juno.com. Please include a short biography of the nominee and a signed acceptance of the nomination from anyone other than yourself. The April *News* will carry photos of and information on all the nominees. Ballots will be mailed in April. ✧

Nuisance Property Cleaned

Thanks from the residents surrounding 321 18th Street, SE

This nuisance property was cleaned up as of 12:00 noon, February 1. Many thanks are owed to Gary Peterson, Chairman of the CHRS Zoning Committee who meets monthly with DPW/DCRA to go over nuisance properties. He took photos of the site that served as proof that the city needed to intervene. We have a friend within The Capital Hill Restoration Society. Thanks Gary!

Antonette E. Russell, ANC
Commissioner 6B09

The Planning Game

by Dick Wolf

CHRS has always taken urban planning seriously. The Home Rule Act sets forth an elaborate municipal planning process to be integrated with Federal planning conducted by the National Capitol Planning Commission. The result was a document called the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capitol.

Zoning is supposed to be “not inconsistent” with the Comprehensive Plan. From the Home Rule Act of 1974 to this day there has been conflict over what these words mean. And, CHRS has been in the middle of all the battles. A new phase has started, initiated by the Office of Planning, to completely revise the existing Plan.

Past planning wars has been a series of battles. One concerned

whether or not the Plan will be enacted into law. The citizens won that battle—plans and maps have been enacted into law. Another battle was over the creation of ward plans—detailed presentations describing neighborhoods and projecting future development along specific lines. The most important component of these plans and sub-plans, i.e., ward plans, is land use. That is, how is the land to be used—residential, commercial, industrial, or what? And the details of those written plans have been incorporated into maps and ultimately into zoning.

The critical issues have been how detailed these plans ought to be, should they be largely based on citizen-based planning, and to what degree should over-arching city policy override plans, i.e., how much should top-down policy override citizen-based plans?

These are issues that have driven planning since the inception of home rule and are continuing issues in this new phase of planning activity.

Since I am Councilmember Ambrose’s appointee to the DC Comprehensive Plan Revision Task Force, I expect through this newsletter and other venues in the Ward to keep those interested in this topic up-to-date on what is transpiring. In the meantime the Office of Planning has posted information concerning this process on a Website—www.Inclusivecity.org. Some of the information is factual and some of it represents OP’s views. As always this effort is critical to the future of the Hill—how it looks, how it develops as a community, and whether or not we will continue to be a distinctive neighborhood within a larger city. ✧

Report of CHRS Zoning Committee

by Gary Peterson

The CHRS Zoning Committee met on February 10 to consider three zoning cases. The owner of the property or the owner’s agent appeared in each case.

BZA# 1729 is the application of Mr. Patrick J. Browne, Jr., to add a rear addition to 326 Second Street, SE. Mr. Browne needs a special exception because the new addition will exceed the 60 percent lot occupancy allowed as a matter of right by the zoning regulations. The addition will increase the lot occupancy from 57 percent to 65 percent provided a small 12X18 foot shed on the rear property line is demolished. The committee found that the impact on light and air by the addition is minimal in this case and that the privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties is not unduly compromised. Based on this finding, the committee voted unanimously to support the application

provided that the shed at the rear of the property is removed.

BZA# 17264 is the application of Michael and Jill Murphy for a variance to construct a deck at 407 E Street, NE. The crux of this case is that the Murphys, in 2002, removed a nonconforming two-story back porch and replaced it with a smaller, one-story deck without benefit of a building permit. In 2004 they obtained a building permit to do substantial interior alterations and to, after the fact, build the already constructed deck.

An adjacent neighbor objected to the work and a stop work order was issued for the construction of the deck. The Murphys were allowed to proceed with the work provided they obtained a variance for the deck. The Zoning Administrator determined that a variance was necessary because the deck made the lot occupancy 74 percent. A variance rather than a special exception is required when the proposed lot occupancy exceeds

70 percent. The committee found that the new deck substantially reduces the interference with light, air, and privacy when compared with the previous two-story porch. The committee further found that a variance is not necessary when an existing nonconforming structure is repaired, altered, or modernized, and especially in this case where the alteration reduces the amount of nonconformity (see 11 DCMR 2001.2).

BZA# 17288 involves a nonconforming use located at 1315 First Street, SE. The property is a solid waste transfer facility that was recently rezoned from light industrial to mixed use commercial and residential. The rezoning made the use as a solid waste transfer facility a nonconforming one. The property lies in the footprint of the proposed new baseball stadium. The property owner proposes to make repairs and renovations in the amount of \$400,000. The work will not change the use or

Visit the “Islands” in DC

by Gene Smith

Have you ever visited Roosevelt Island in the Potomac River? If you haven't, you should. It is a lovely urban sanctuary, nestled on the edge of the river below Rosslyn, complete with memorial to Theodore Roosevelt. Cross a small foot bridge (no bikes, consider leaving the baby stroller behind, forget the skateboard), and you are suddenly in the middle of a small forest, winding your way toward an opening in the woods that is peaceful, meditative and calm, despite the low hum of traffic from the nearby George Washington Parkway and the two bridges overhead. All of this a tribute to nature and its glory just minutes away from downtown DC.

A thought: Why can't we have the same refuge on our side of the Hill? Actually, that is exactly what is in the works with efforts to clean up, restore and revitalize Kingman and Heritage Islands, resting in the middle of the Anacostia River. Tentative opening date: Fall 2005.

After years of what is termed “neglect”—but seems more like

scorn, derision and outright use as a dumping ground—the islands are back, beginning with a massive project to restore adjacent wet lands, remove sediment and plant wild rice to attract birds and other wildlife.

Credit needs to be given to many parties, but the Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS) deserves special recognition. AWS has pumped time, attention, and volunteer hours into restoring the Anacostia River, including the area around Kingman and Heritage Islands. The DC Government and its partners (like the US Army Corps of Engineers and the National Park Service) have made their own contributions. Special mention deserves to be made of the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, much maligned but monumental in its undertaking.

The Anacostia River has been called “undervalued” and “forgotten” by politicians and citizens alike. It is time to play a role in tearing that concept apart, and making the islands in the Anacostia what they could be—a destination of choice, a playground, a place of reflection and a source of pride for the District

and more specifically for the Hill. And we can do it sooner rather than later—the more participation the better.

Kingman Island is scheduled for opening to the public in the fall of 2005. The Native American totem arch that currently resides in the Historic Congressional Cemetery will be the centerpiece of the District-wide 9/11 memorial once installed in its final destination on the Island.

Do your part. Even a few hours of organized effort will make a difference. You can visit the “Islands” in April as part of a community clean up effort, then return in the fall and see what a difference you made. Suggestions for getting out, helping out and seeing something new are elsewhere in this newsletter. You can also check out more information on the “DC Memorial Tree Groves Project” on Kingman Island on the DC Government Website. Any further thoughts or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at gmsmith@smithbrandon.com. (I'm a volunteer, too.) ✧

Zoning Report

Continued from previous page

capacity of the facility. The committee believes that the property owner was erroneously told to apply for a variance because the Zoning Regulations allow repairs to be made to a structure devoted to a nonconforming use as a matter of right (see 11 DCMR 2002.4).

The next meeting of the Zoning Committee will be held March 10, 2005, at 7:30 pm. The committee meets at the Kirby House, 420 Tenth Street, SE, in the first floor conference room. Cases to be considered involve 227 C Street, SE, and the Shotgun House. The meetings are open to the public and you are invited to attend and comment on the cases. ✧

Donna Hanousek to Serve on the EMCAC

Donna Hanousek, a city planner and historic preservation consultant, will represent CHRS on the Eastern Market Community Advisory Board (EMCAC). She replaces Barbara Eck.

Donna has served the Society and the Capitol Hill community, in many capacities. She worked on a special committee set up by CHRS in 1998 to draft a proposed set of Bylaws to define EMCAC's role in implementing the Eastern Market legislation.

As a member of the CHRS Historic Preservation Committee

and through her work with the DC Preservation League, she has contributed her professional expertise to further the goals of the Restoration Society. Serving as director and an officer of the Friends of the Old Naval Hospital, she has worked toward the restoration of this landmark building and its redevelopment. Donna has been a member of the EMCAC's, Capital Improvements Subcommittee since its inception in 1998. ✧

Mark Your Calendar!

MARCH

10 Thursday, 7:30 pm

CHRS Zoning Committee Meeting. To consider 227 C Street, SE, and the Shotgun House. Kirby House, 420 Tenth Street, SE.

15 Tuesday, 6:30 pm

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

16 Wednesday, 6:30 pm

March Preservation Café. Topic: Victorian Wallpaper. Dudley Brown will be talking about Victorian wallpapers — both how they were used then and how they work with today's interiors. Trattoria Alberto, Top Floor, 506 Eighth Street, SE

31 Thursday, 7:30 pm

Membership Meeting. Residential Capitol Hill: Where We've Been and Where We're Going. Keynote Speaker: The Honorable Linda Cropp, Chairman, D.C. City Council. Refreshments at 7:00 pm, meeting starts at 7:30. St. Peter's Church, Second and C Streets, SE.

APRIL

8 Friday

Forty-eighth Annual CHRS House and Garden Tour tickets go on sale. Eastern Market.

20 Wednesday, 6:30

April Preservation Café. Topic: Landscaping. Trattoria Alberto, Top Floor, 506 Eighth Street, SE.

Help Wanted: Make the Hill and Your Neighborhood a Better Place!

by Gene Smith

Organizers are desperately seeking help with special events currently planned for Kingman and Heritage Islands, near RFK Stadium in the Anacostia River.

Even two hours on one day can make a huge difference! Please wear old clothes and shoes and bring gloves. Supplies like drinking water, trash bags, glove liners, etc., are available at the clean-up site.

You can contact the organizers in advance to find out exactly where you should show up for the day and to determine special needs or suggested provisions. You will meet like-minded members of the DC community that understand and appreciate your contribution. Please remember these are volunteer organizations trying to do their best; be patient with them and they will reward you more than you imagine. ✧

Saturday, April 2, 2005 9 am–12:00 noon

Potomac River Watershed Cleanup. Contact: Wende Pearson at 301-292-6665 or www.PotomacCleanup.org.

Saturday, April 16, 2005

Anacostia River Cleanup. Contact: Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS) at 301-699-6204 or www.anacostiaws.org.

Saturday-Sunday, April 16–17, 2005

DC Ridge Crossing. Contact: 202-462-7275 or www.washingtonparks.net.

Sunday-Sunday, April 17–24, 2005

Kingman Island Earth Week Contact: Michael Lucy at 202-673-7681 (michael.lucy@dc.gov) or Darcy Anurca at 202-282-0726 (Darcy.Anurca@dc.gov).

Friday, April 22, 2005

Earth Day. Mayor's Environmental Task Force event on Kingman Island. Contact: Michael Lucy at 202-673-7681 (michael.lucy@dc.gov).



Capitol Hill Restoration Society

420 Tenth Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003