



NEWS

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July/August 2005

Myriad Traffic Studies Reflect Pace of Change to Come

by Tom Grahame

Capitol Hill residents should be aware of the many new DDOT (DC Department of Transportation) traffic studies in progress.

Although the studies are many, each covers a small area of land adjacent to the other study areas. In fact, changes in one area will affect traffic in the all the other areas. It would be much easier for residents to understand how the whole fits together, and make comments based upon that whole, if the studies were put together as one and put forward for public comment as one before proceeding to the Environmental Impact Statement stage.

Here are the four DDOT study areas most important to Capitol Hill: the Middle Anacostia Crossings (MAC) Study (covering from the Eleventh Street bridge to Independence Avenue at Reservation 13); the South Capitol Street Corridor study;

the Kenilworth Avenue Corridor (KAC) study (covering the area around Kenilworth Avenue from the Sousa bridge northeast to Eastern Avenue); and the Capitol Hill Transportation Study (which currently does not include most of Capitol Hill south of Pennsylvania Avenue, but DDOT has heard comments on this omission and says it is working to fix it).

When the Eleventh Street bridge upgrade is complete, connecting I-395 (SE/SW Expressway) to I-295 north, it will impact traffic flows on both sides of the river, e.g., in the MAC, KAC, and Capitol Hill study areas. The Eleventh Street bridge upgrade will benefit neighborhoods on both sides of the Anacostia by removing traffic from the Sousa bridge in both directions. Traffic that previously used the I-395 spur at Barney Circle to connect to either the very crowded Sousa bridge, or the Seventeenth/Nineteenth Streets combination to get to the East Capitol Street

bridge, and vice-versa, would now use the new Eleventh Street bridge connection between I-395 and I-295. The projected traffic count for the Sousa bridge drops from about 50,000 cars daily each way in 2004, to about 35,000 cars each way in 2030, reflecting traffic moving to I-295 from neighborhood streets and the Sousa bridge. Residents on both sides of the river applaud the acceleration of this upgrade.

Another reason divisions between adjacent study areas matter is that new bridge and road options affecting Capitol Hill residents and neighborhoods—such as a new Massachusetts Avenue bridge, or a road on the western bank of the Anacostia between Barney Circle and Benning Road—were part of the only study emphasizing traffic issues on the east side of the Anacostia, the KAC study. Thus Capitol Hill residents who might have been interested in these proposals may not have known they were under consideration.

For example, a new Massachusetts Avenue bridge would carry about 27,000 cars per day through Reservation 13 to Massachusetts Avenue on Capitol Hill. Massachusetts Avenue traffic counts would increase from about 10,000 daily in 2004 to about 29,000 daily in 2030, if a Massachusetts Avenue bridge is built. This bridge would thus establish a new com-

Nite Club Applicant Withdraws

On Monday, June 27, President Dick Wolf informed the CHRS Board that the applicant for the proposed restaurant at 535 Eighth Street SE, currently the site of The People's Church, had withdrawn the application for a liquor license. No additional details were available at press time. The June issue of the News reported that the CHRS Board voted to support ANC 6B and the neighboring residents in their opposition to the issuance of a new liquor license for the planned 350-seat restaurant. ✧

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President's Column

by Dick Wolf

Greetings to all members. This is the first time since 1980 that I have had the opportunity to address you as CHRS president. In these last twenty-five years there have been many changes on Capitol Hill—much that is positive. Many of our long-term initiatives in the areas of planning, zoning, and historic preservation have come to fruition due in large part to the leadership of many persons. We have had the long view, but never mistook a vision for accomplishment; reaching goals has meant a lot of hard work on a day-to-day basis. The physical framework of the Hill has been saved and with it a sense of history, continuity, and the secure knowledge that one could put down roots without risking life, limb and fortune.

Life has flourished. Eastern Market is in much better shape today with a legislative framework that ensures its continuation as a market and central gathering place in the community and the city. Small business development proceeds apace—an accomplishment difficult to sustain in cities. Barracks Row/Main Street has been recognized by the National Trust for its accomplishments; Market Row on Seventh Street, SE, has a number of small flourishing businesses. The H Street Main Street Program is beginning to take off with several performing arts spaces and condominium development on the site of the old Children's Museum.

Religious and creative life has been revitalized. Many of the churches that once were "going

out of business" and hanging on as crash pads and coffee houses have re-opened as new attendees have moved in. The Capitol Hill Arts Works Shop came into being and spawned a variety of acting companies and singing groups with more to come. The social services community has also grown and flourished with the renewed vigor of the Group Ministry, the enormous growth and success of the Capitol Hill Community Foundation, and the great success of Washington's first Hope 6 development, a mixed income town home community on the site of the old Ellen Wilson public housing project.

Housing prices have escalated beyond belief and new infill housing can be found all over the Hill. Capitol Hill is one of the "hot" housing markets in the Washington metropolitan region. One of the most salient features of this boom is the evident growth in young families moving to the Hill. The playgrounds are filled with children. Real estate agents say that the great demand is for single-family houses.

Much Work Still To Be Done

Along with that comes the great challenge of keeping these families on the Hill. The statistics regarding Washington's still shrinking population shows that the fastest disappearing part of that population is families with children, particularly middle-class families. At this point they constitute a very small portion of the population. It would appear that only Capitol Hill and Upper Northwest are gaining families. The challenge will be to hold them in the city, and that is very dependent upon good public schools, libraries, recreational opportunities and public safety. We hope to illuminate some of these issues in the future.

Over the years several prominent Capitol Hill residents have said to me the "Hill is finished"

why bother with what you do. My response is that communities, including the Hill, are never finished. We have an extremely complicated transportation and development situation on Reservation 13 and Hill East. Very large downtown development pressures are pressing on the Hill—up and down North and South Capitol Streets and on the Anacostia Water Front. Planning and zoning laws and codes are coming up for the greatest overhaul since home rule began. The Ward Six plan directive for enlargement of the historic district remains unfilled. And, the US Capitol master plan is still in flux. In short, we have accomplished much, but much remains to be done, and our members will be engaged as they have been for 50 years.

Thank You to Our Departing Friends

Finally, we sadly bid farewell to some of our hardest working and longest term board members. Rob Nevitt has not only finished a successful record four-year stint as president, but he has moved! The move is only to California Street, NW, but he has already attended his first ANC meeting up there. As former president, Rob will sit on the board for a year and is willing to continue his work on Reservation 13 issues. Brian Furness has moved to New Orleans and left behind an enormous legacy of accomplishment: president, savior of Providence Park, the Bryan School project, the new housing at Kentucky Courts, the successful fight over the Boys Town site, work on Eastern Market and much, much more. Lyle Schauer is leaving his treasurer's position and the board, after many years of tedious effort. In addition, for some years he also served as chair of the zoning com-

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Please Note

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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

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

Start or Renew a CHRS Membership

* On the Web at www.CHRS.org

* Call 202-543-0425 and choose option 2

* Get a form at one of our meetings

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

Myriad Traffic Studies *continued from page 1*



Map of the overlapping traffic studies underway, showing the coverage hole in Capitol Hill south of Pennsylvania Ave.

muter route through residential streets of Capitol Hill and east of the Anacostia.

Finally, with the benefit of the Eleventh Street upgrade removing traffic from the west side of the Anacostia, a new "park road" from Barney Circle to Benning Road, and connected to Reservation 13 by a Massachusetts Avenue circle, is projected to carry only 5,000 cars daily. John Deatruck, in charge of traffic engineering for DDOT, stated at a June 14 ANC 6B meeting that the costs of a road carrying such low volumes would be too high for the limited benefits—and this calculation doesn't account for losing

park values to roads.

In fact, the long neglected wooded areas on either side of the RFK access road, running on the west bank of the Anacostia from Barney Circle to the RFK parking lots, have outstanding urban wild natural values as a result of several decades of letting nature do what nature wants to do. An article in the cur-

rent issue of the *Hill Rag* describes these outstanding natural values, and proposes that this narrow corridor be established as an urban natural area park, without roads. ✧

(This article was adapted from Tom Grahame's recent article in the *Hill Rag*.)

For More Information

The transportation studies discussed in this article are available online at www.ddot.dc.gov/ddot. Under the heading "Information" select the option "Transportation Studies".

President's Message *continued from page 2*

mittee. I told Lyle he is welcome to come back anytime for whatever he wants to do. A thousand points of light, public service: these people did it all.

CHRS has had a rewarding year. The National Trust honored the Society as the outstanding civic membership organization of the year in preservation; the Council of the District of Columbia hon-

ored CHRS with a proclamation celebrating 50 years of work. And we had an outstanding tour due to the efforts of many, but particularly to tour chair Ann Richards. I look forward to speaking to you through this column over the next year in depth about many of the issues mentioned. Have a good summer, and see you in September. ✧

CHRS Responds to Letter in June *Voice*

Capitol Hill Restoration Society
P.O. Box 15264
Washington, DC 20003-0264

June 23, 2005

The Editor
Voice of the Hill

Dear Editor,

Answering Ms. Elkin's letter in the June *Voice* presents the usual difficulties associated with responding to a letter rife with misstatements and calculated exclusions. I want to spare readers a long history of both the Capitol Hill Restoration Society and the compounded problems associated with the alterations to Ms. Elkin's house at 20 Ninth Street, NE. However, the board of CHRS decided that her letter should not be ignored, so I offer this.

CHRS remains the organization we have always been, committed to preserving the architectural framework unique to Capitol Hill and the close community lifestyle that goes with it. Ms. Elkins has shown respect for neither. Purporting to make roof improvements in the original application for permits, she and her husband John Robbins, a official of the National Park Service, raised the roof in question and proceeded to create an extension to the house that aroused the neighbors to ask CHRS to support their objections. DCRA and the HPRB began the continuing process of trying to make Ms. Elkins and her husband accountable.

In Ms. Elkin's upside-down world she casts herself as the aggrieved and victimized home owner, when the opposite is true. Creating the extension to the house threatened to inflict a monstrosity on the neighbors. The regulations requiring permits and conforming to HPO standards were protection, not an invasion of anyone's rights, except Ms. Elkin's perceived right to do what she pleased, neighbors' concerns be damned. She is anything but the good steward she claims to have ambitions to be.

In this time of increased interest in Capitol Hill as a place to live, CHRS has worked hard with responsible developers like Eakin-Youngentaub and JPI to make new construction compatible with the community; with other community groups on the development of Reservation 13 and other major projects; with DCRA to bring vacant and nuisance properties back to useful life; and always, always with you, our neighbors to be a channel of information and advice through meetings, guidelines and availability. Our goal remains yours, to preserve the life style and architectural context that brought us here in the first place.

Sincerely,

/s/
Robert L. M. Nevitt
President

Looking Back on Capitol Hill

by Nancy Metzger

One of the treasures of the Library of Congress is a journal kept by Francis (Frank) Ormand French (1837–1893) published by the Library of Congress in 1997 as *Growing Up on Capitol Hill: A Young Washingtonian's Journal, 1850–1852*. The French family home stood at 37 East Capitol Street until the 1890's when it was torn down to make way for the Library of Congress. The following excerpts show how the Fourth of July was celebrated at that time. (The spelling is as in the original; the bracketed phrases are scholar's notes.)



Capitol and east grounds, Daguerreotype by John Plumbe, Jr., ca. 1846. Library of Congress.



Francis O. French and the cover of his journal. Library of Congress



but in truth the North East Corner of the south wing... We (that is boys) had a celebration of our own in our garden. I decorated the summer house

with battle pieces, etc. where we had dined we adjourned to where we made speeches, drank toasts, orations... and we had a right merry time."

Monday, July 5 [1852] As the genuine fourth of July came this year on Sunday the celebration was deferred to this day. My company (I am captain of a boy's artillery) appeared in uniform about

nine and at the command— 'Forward March'—started for a parade. We (with two one pounders) accompanied a company from the Navy Yard—the Green Mountain Boys, Capt. McCathleen—down the Avenue for four and a half street where we turned up, down C to 3rd, passing Hon. John W. Maury's, our present mayor, and thence out the turnpike to the Spring Tavern where we had a collation spread. We returned to the city about five and had a glorious time... At five Mrs. Pendelton presented the 'Columbia Fire Co.' [a volunteer fire organization located near the Capitol] with a beautiful banner... The Columbia boys made a fine turn out, and paraded the hill after the presentation. Take it all [in all] I had a glorious time." ✧

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Thursday, July 4 [1850] Did not sleep last night more than three hours. Got up and blazed away with my ould gun (or rather new gun) for some time. Today the Corporation laid their block in the [Washington] monument 2 years from the time the cornerstone was laid. Genl. Taylor was there. At night there were fireworks at the monument and Prof. Grant exhibited his light [probably a light using gas from birch bark]."

Friday, July 4 [1851] Today was laid with all ceremonies the corner stone of the new capitol as it is generally called

Welcome CHRS Supporters

We thank the following new members, sponsors and patrons.

NEW MEMBERS

Linda A. Cartwright &
John J. Dineen
Ximena Chevallier
Kimberly Crichton
Ned Ertel & Jennifer Squires
Judith A. Jacobs

Breck & Diana Jeffery

Craig Jerald
Marlynn Perna
Dana Singiser
George Smith & James
MacKillican

SPONSORS

Bill Manville
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PATRONS

Helen Carey
Ximena Chevallier
Mark Flemming, AIA

CHRS Elects New Leaders for 2005-2006

by Jeff Fletcher

At the June membership meeting, CHRS President Rob Nevitt reported the results of the CHRS election, held by mail ballot in May. Approximately 200 members returned ballots in this year's election.

The 2005-2006 officers for the Society are: President, Dick Wolf; First Vice President, Charles McMillion; Second Vice President, Gary Peterson; Treasurer, Mike Canning; Secretary, Beth Purcell; and Past President, Rob Nevitt.

Newly elected at-large members of the board are Joan Joshi and Elizabeth Nelson, who will join continuing board members Tom

Grahame, Diane Scott, and a half-dozen CHRS committee chairs to round out the board.

Leaving the board after many years of service to Capitol Hill and CHRS are Brian Furness, Lyle Schauer, and Bernadette McMahon.

The CHRS standing committees are now re-forming and seeking expressions of interest from members wishing to serve. The standing committees deal with policies and programs that touch on many important aspects of life on Capitol Hill: City Planning, Communications, Community Development, Environment, Historic Preservation, House Tour, Membership, Transportation, and Zoning.

Incoming
CHRS
President,
Dick Wolf



Any member interested in serving on one of the CHRS committees during the coming year should contact the CHRS office at 202-543-0425 or CapHRS@aol.com. ✧

CHRS Board Extends Deadline For Filing for Community Grants

by Larry Pearl

CHRS hopes to stimulate interest in its Community Grants program by extending the deadline for filing proposals to Labor Day. 2005 marks the sixth year that CHRS has allocated a portion of the Annual House Tour proceeds for this pur-

pose. Last year the Society awarded four grants totaling \$7,500. The maximum grant is usually between \$2,000 and \$2,500 and a majority of the proposals received have been funded.

Applications must be for a specific project relating to Capitol Hill. Incorporation or nonprofit status

is not required so long as there is capacity to carry out the project and accountability for the grant. Past grants have included plantings and fences around schools and libraries, trees and pocket parks, front yard sculptures and an exhibit honoring educators who are buried in Congressional Cemetery.

The CHRS Grants Committee focuses on the clarity and feasibility of the proposal, its innovative nature, benefits to the Capitol Hill community (the highest rated factor), measurability of results and reliance on CHRS funding (the Society prefers projects that rely wholly or in large part on the CHRS grant). More detailed information on these criteria may be found on the CHRS Website at www.chrs.org/docs/grants.htm. Applications for grants (an original and 6 copies) should reach the CHRS Office at P.O. Box 15624, Washington, DC 20003-0264 or at 420 Tenth Street, SE, by Labor Day, Monday, September 5. Anyone with questions may call Office Manager Jeff Fletcher at 202-543-0425. ✧

Where is SPNWN?

The Society is holding approximately \$450 for the "Stanton Park Neighborhood Watch Network (SPNWN)." In 1993, the Society agreed to accept donations to SPNWN and, over the next five years nearly \$3,000 was received and about \$2,500 paid out. Contributions to SPNWN were for the purpose of raising awareness of public safety issues, keeping the public informed about criminal activities, and encouraging crime prevention activities in the neighborhood around Stanton Park.

The last activity in the account was in September 1998 and since then we have lost contact with SPNWN. The Board has made a serious effort to identify current officers of SPNWN, and failing that, to identify any successor organizations. We have not been successful.

Therefore, the Society seeks information about the present status of SPNWN or its successors, if any. If anyone has such information, please call the office 202-543-0425. ✧

Call for Volunteers to Paint Call Boxes

by Nancy Metzger

Summer and early fall is the perfect time to paint call boxes—and we're looking for some volunteers to help with the project this summer so that the boxes will be ready for the art/history plaques. Each of our Capitol Hill call boxes will have a unique painting scheme, based upon the traditional colors plus some colors that reflect the theme of the box.

Since the boxes are already primed, most of the prep work is done. That just leaves the fun part—applying the glorious colors according to a predetermined scheme. We have some volunteers already but could use several more. Eric Snellings reported that it took him about three hours to paint the police box at Sixth and Maryland NE, but the box at Fourth and E Streets, SE, took about 5 hours.

If you'd be interested in helping or would like more information, please contact Nancy Metzger through the office 202-543-0425 or at CapHRS@aol.com)

The bases of some boxes were repaired last week through CHRS funds. This will keep those boxes, which are in the approval process, from serving as trash receptacles. As other boxes get closer to approv-



Artist Bill Fleishell and his son, Will, with the recently completed call box at First and D Streets, SE. The theme is "Party Animals," and features the entwined figures of a struggling donkey and elephant. The work commemorates the role that politics plays in the lives of many of our residents. The artist, now 83 and a sixth generation native of Capitol Hill, designed the piece, which was installed by Will Fleishell and a group of friends and colleagues. Photos: Steven Heck



al, another batch of base panel replacements will be ordered. For those boxes without the original identifying light, we'll be ordering the acorn finials seen on the police call boxes. ✧

Tour Income Sets Record Thanks to Good Weather (and Hard Work)

by Lyle Schauer

Financially, the 2005 Tour was the most successful ever. To date we have income of \$61,000 and expenses of \$11,000, for a net gain of \$50,000. These are not final figures, but the net gain seems firm because unpaid expenses will likely be offset by amounts owed to us.

The 2005 Tour was blessed with nearly perfect weather: dry, warm,

but not hot. As a result, income from ticket sales was up a whopping 71 percent from last year. Tour booklet advertising also was up by 54 percent.

We have to be cautious about expecting the same good results from the 2006 Tour. This year's record was heavily dependent on good weather—a rainy tour week-end next year could drop net gain by \$15,000 or \$20,000! ✧

The Trees Need You

As the summer heat settles in, not only do joggers and dogs need adequate amounts of water, but so do Capitol Hill's street trees. We have many new trees that are just getting their root systems developed. They need water and they need it regularly. For those so inclined such stores as Frager's have devices called "gator bags" that feed a constant drip of water to trees. We have many new trees, especially new Princeton elms—a gift from Casey Trees. They need your attention. ✧

Mark Your Calendar!

JULY

5 Tuesday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Historic Preservation Committee, Kirby House, 420 Tenth Street, SE

12 Tuesday, 6:30 pm

DC Comprehensive Plan Citizens Task Force Meeting, 777 North Capitol Street NE

13 Wednesday, 10:00 am

Agenda: The Process of the District of Columbia and Howard University in Developing the National Capital Medical Center. The entire plan for the Medical Center, to be located on Reservation 13, will be presented. Chamber (Room 500), John Wilson Building, 1350 Pennsylvania Ave., NW. Committee on Health, David A. Catania, Chairperson.

14 Thursday, 1:00 pm

Public Oversight Hearing on Parking Policy in the District. Your chance to comment on changes to the RPP program and more. Chamber (Room 500), John Wilson Building, 1350 Pennsylvania Ave., NW. Committee on Public Works and the Environment, Carol Schwartz, Chairperson

23 Saturday, 10:00 am

Opening of Adolph Cluss Exhibition Project, Eastern Market

AUGUST

9 Tuesday, 6:30 pm

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

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Architect of Eastern Market's South Hall To Be Honored

Adolph Cluss Exhibition Project

by Donna Hanousek

The kick-off event for the Adolph Cluss Exhibition Project will be held at Eastern Market on Saturday, July 23 at 10:00 am. The Project, a celebration of the life of architect Adolph Cluss, is being coordinated with the Mayor of Heilbronn, Germany, where Cluss was born. Cluss was the architect of Eastern Market's South Hall (the Center and North Halls, constructed 35 years later were designed by Snowdon Ashford, the City's first Municipal Architect).

Sharon Ambrose will read a city council resolution in honor of the One-Hundredth anniversary of Cluss's death. There will be special tours of the market that emphasize its architecture, an Eastern Market art exhibit, and an information table on the Cluss exhibit at the Sumner School.

Mr. Joseph Browne, one of the organizers of the Exhibition Project, said that the celebra-



Cluss designed the Wallach School, 1864-1949, formerly at the site of Hine Jr. High.

tion was not just about Cluss the architect, but would also provide a way to see Washington and the social changes that were happening at the time of the Civil War. Eastern Market is sole survivor of the three markets he designed. The Market is the perfect place to begin the celebration because it reflects Cluss's philosophy about the important role of "public architecture" in a civil society.

For more information, check out the Website: www.adolf-cluss.org ✧



Capitol Hill Restoration Society

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Washington, DC 20003