

**Capitol Hill Restoration Society Board Meeting
Minutes for April 17, 2018
Capitol Hill Townhomes Community Building, 750 6th St. SE
Washington DC**

The following members were present:
Chuck Burger, Monte Edwards, Greg Holeyman, Joanna Kendig, Tina May, Elizabeth Nelson, Susan Oursler, Beth Purcell, Janet Quigley, and Undine Nash

The following members were absent:
Adam Apton, Susan Burgerman, Michelle Carroll, Lisa Dale Jones, Steve Kehoe, Patrick Lally, Nina Tristani, and Gary Peterson

Angie Schmitt and Carl Spier were also present.

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 pm.

Minutes

Susan O. presented the minutes from the March meeting. Beth made a motion to agree to the minutes as presented, and Joanna seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Adam was not present for the meeting, but supplied a treasurers' report.

President's Report

Elizabeth asked for Board approval to purchase signs indicating that squares 753 and 778 of the Swampoodle neighborhood were now part of the Historic District. These signs would be purchased with Swampoodle funds. She reported that the fastest and easiest way to procure signs would be for CHRS to contract directly with Gelberg Signs. Gelberg has the approved image. DDOT will install the signs at no charge. Chuck made a motion to purchase seven signs. Undine seconded the motion, and the motion carried. The signs will be installed at the following locations:

- 734 3rd Street, NE
- 701 3rd Street, NE
- G Street, west of the alley, near 222 G Street, NE
- 2nd and F Streets, NE
- 4th and F Streets, NE
- 4th and G Streets intersection, northwest corner

The Board had previously agreed to take responsibility for Norman Metzger's photo project of properties in the historic district. Max Kukoy (who provides technical support to the CHRS website) was hired to migrate the old photo site onto the CHRS server. The plan had been to proceed with maintaining the old format and funds to facilitate that were allocated in the current budget. However Elizabeth recommended that instead we repurpose those funds and hire Max to set up space on the main website to store future additions to the photo archive. This recommendation did not represent a budget increase.

Susan O. made a motion to authorize hiring Max, and it was seconded by Greg.

Elizabeth reported on research on the \$27,000 grant CHRS received in 2011 from Valor Development in connection with the project at 1350 Maryland Avenue, NE (sometimes referred to as "Smart Settlements" in CHRS records). As of March 31, 2018, CHRS financial records show \$17,000 in a restricted account entitled Smart Settlements. The grant letter from Valor Development dated September 20, 2011 requires that CHRS expend the grant funds "only for expenses reasonably related to preparation of the applications of two historic districts. Such expenses shall include, but are not limited to, consultant fees, attorney fees, application fees, study fees, written materials and photographs."

CHRS paid more than \$10,000 for the survey of H Street, NE, the basis for a historic district application. CHRS also paid \$95,493 with a transfer of funds from the endowment fund to general corporate funds (i.e., not from the Smart Settlements/Valor restricted account) for a survey of 105 squares outside the Capitol, including electronic and hard copies of a survey, building permit research, and description of each building in those squares, plus photographs, a necessary component for one or more historic district applications. CHRS has satisfied the requirements in the Valor Development grant letter, and the remaining \$17,000 should therefore be transferred from the restricted account to the endowment fund.

Beth made a motion that, because CHRS has satisfied the requirements in the Valor Development grant letter, the remaining \$17,000 should therefore be transferred from the restricted account to the endowment fund, and the Smart Settlements/Valor restricted account should be closed. Chuck seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Documents attached:

Report to CHRS board date June 2011 showing CHRS expenditures of \$95,493 for Beyond the Boundaries survey of 105 squares outside the Capitol, including electronic and hard copies survey, building permit research, and description of each building in those squares, plus photographs, a necessary component for a historic district application. Note: this amount

does not include the costs of surveying H Street, NE. These payments were made from CHRS general corporate funds.

Contract w/ EHT Traceries signed October 13, 2011 for a nomination for H Street, NE. Costs are on pp. 9-10: \$10,000 for the survey plus and additional \$500 to \$1000 for expenses. CHRS paid Traceries for this work.

Election Committee

Monte presented the recommendation of the Election Committee. The proposed slate would keep Monte and Susan B. as committee chairs (of the Committees on which they currently serve as chairs), and proposes two new board members, Maygene Daniels, and Angie Schmidt. The slate is as follows: President, Elizabeth Nelson; 1st Vice-president, Janet Quigley; 2nd Vice-president, Tina May; Treasurer, Adam Apton; Secretary, Susan Oursler; At-large, Patrick Lally, Angie Schmidt, Maygene Daniels, Joanna Kendig, and Steve Kehoe.

Monte made a motion that the Board approve the slate, and Chuck seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Monte said that the slate with bios and photos will appear in the May newsletter and that ballots will be mailed in accordance with the by-laws. He asked that current board members on the approved slate review their bios and photos and let him know of any changes that should be made.

Comprehensive Plan

Monte requested authorization for a letter opposing a commuter road along the Anacostia River. The letter also expresses concern about the Federal Government giving the District of Columbia control of this area given experiences with Reservation 13 and Boathouse Row.

Chuck made a motion to approve the letter, and Elizabeth seconded. The motion was agreed to (letter attached).

House Tour

Janet gave a House Tour update, and asked Board Members to sign up to sell tickets at Eastern Market. Elizabeth asked Board Members to identify additional potential docents for the tour. Janet showed the Board the House Tour poster, the map of the tour, and the tickets. She reported that the House Tour catalog would contain advertisement from about 32 advertisers this year.

Eastern Market

Susan O. reported that the DC budget now before Council did not provide any money for capital improvements to the Market, and that the City planned use \$75,000 from the Enterprise fund to pay for a market study. Chuck said

that the amount designated for this purpose would not be enough. The Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee is working with Council Member Allen to include \$300,00 for the market study as well as funds for capital improvements.

Historic Preservation Committee

Beth reported that the only case on the March calendar was 816 E Street and 518 9th Street, NE involving rooftop additions, mechanicals and railings. Beth also reported that an addition is planned for the Rectory at St. James Church to convert the property into two apartments. Also, the property at 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE has a new proposal that would keep the arches that they have previously asked to remove. Also discussed was the Ebenezer Church request for a curb cut to access parking in the alley behind the church and some other properties.

Zoning Committee

Gary was not present at the meeting. Elizabeth reported on a property at 445 15th Street. The property contains a garage, but does not have a curb cut. The property owners want a curb cut. There is no permit for a garage on the property.

Chuck made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Joanna seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:45.



420 10th Street, SE Washington, DC 20003

Surina Singh, Project Director
Attn: Comprehensive Plan Public Comment
National Capital Planning Commission
401 9th Street, NW, Suite 500N
Washington, DC 20004

surina.singh@ncpc.gov

April 18, 2018

Subject: Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements - Parks & Open Space Element

Dear Ms. Singh:

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS) is the largest civic organization on Capitol Hill. For over 60 years CHRS has advocated for the welfare of the Capitol Hill community, including sound land use planning and protection of parks and the environment. We appreciate the Commission's leadership on preserving federal parks and open space and are honored to submit comments on the draft Parks & Open Space Element, arranged in order as they appear in the Element:

Stewardship Opportunities (pp. 21-25)

Preservation of waterfront open space

As a result of the stewardship by the National Park Service(NPS), incredible natural resources of waterfront and open space have been preserved in the District of Columbia. NPS has been able to prevent private development of these lands through its ownership/ control of these public lands in the District, including both shores of the Anacostia River waterfront and large sections of the Potomac River waterfront and much of the lands adjacent. Once waterfront land is used

for private residential, commercial or institutional uses, it will be lost forever as a valuable natural resource capable of being enjoyed by all.

There should be no further transfer of federal park land to the District of Columbia government. The District has been a poor steward of land transferred from the federal government. After the District obtained title to Reservation 13 (DC General campus), it did adopt a master plan and zoning through a public process, but then ignored its own rules and offered the property for a Redskins training center and more recently, for Amazon's HQ2.¹ After acquiring historic Boathouse Row on the Anacostia River in 2008, the District advocated pushing city streets through a sensitive natural resource area. Based on the District's poor track record, we urge that no additional federal park land be transferred to the District, and NPS's stewardship of these lands should continue. We suggest adding new POS.B.19 on page 25:

new POS. B. 19. The National Park Service should continue to own/control and preserve all of the open space federal parkland, including the Stadium Armory area, along the north and south shores of the Anacostia River. [suggested changes in bold]

Similarly, we suggest a new POS.C.11 on p. 32:

new POS. C.11: On NPS-controlled property no non-park or non-water dependent use is permitted within 600 feet of the Anacostia highwater mark. [suggested changes in bold]

Roads (p. 22)

The Element calls for protecting ecologically sensitive areas from the impacts of development. EventsDC has joined the DC Department of Transportation to suggest building a commuter road (the "Park Drive") through a natural habitat area in federal parkland along the west side of the Anacostia River from Benning Road to Barney Circle. Please see Figure 1. The road would block access to the waterfront and to the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail, and in one area, would be directly next to the trail, endangering pedestrians and cyclists moving to and from the trail through Capitol Hill. In addition --

- The proposed road is in a 100-year floodplain. No road should be ever be built here.²

¹ Jonathan O'Donnell, "D.C.'s pitch to Amazon focuses on 4 hot neighborhoods," *Washington Post*, 17 Oct. 2017, A-14.

² DOEE, "Vulnerability & Risk Assessment: Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the District of Columbia" (2016), Map 4 (500-year flood plain, 2080). DOEE, "Relative Sea Level Rise inundation predictions in Washington, DC for 2018, 2068, and 2100." US Army Corps of Engineers, from DOEE, "Wildlife Action Plan," 124 (2015). Present-day Storm Surge From Category 1, 2, and 3 Storms. DOEE, "Climate Ready DC," 4.

- This is a natural resource area and roads are a danger to wildlife; roads reduce habitat connectivity, are an impediment to dispersal and foraging, and are a source of polluted stormwater runoff.³

New or expanded roads should only be built if there is a compelling reason and no other alternative. For these reasons, we suggest a change to POS.B.11 on p. 24:

POS.B.11 Discourage **new or expanded roads** and paved parking areas along the shoreline of rivers, streams, and at waterfront parks. Remove existing parking when feasible and restore those areas to a landscaped condition, which could include recreational uses. [suggested changes in bold]

Minimizing effects of light pollution on wildlife (p. 22).

The Federal Environment Element does not specifically address the effects of light pollution on wildlife. pp. 18, 20. We suggest that the Parks and Open Space Element add goals to reduce light pollution. Light pollution not only causes bird collisions with buildings, it attracts birds into urban areas and away from forested areas with more abundant food sources. In January 2018, American Bird Conservancy's collisions@lists.abcbirds.org noted:

Recent papers ... now confirm what has long been surmised: urban glow attracts birds towards the built environment. This applies primarily to migrating songbirds, found in unexpectedly high densities in areas lit at night. These birds are not circling and crashing into buildings, but as they stop over in these areas, they are vulnerable to collisions with glass, predation by cats and other unintended consequences of urban life. [emphasis added]

Most birds migrate at night through increasingly light-polluted skies. Bright light sources can attract airborne migrants and lead to collisions with structures, but might also influence selection of migratory stopover habitat and thereby acquisition of food resources. We demonstrate, using multi-

future.com..DOEE, Wildlife Action Plan, (2015), p. 95. Table 16 IUCN Hierarchy of Conservation Threats and TRACS Action Drivers in the District.

year weather radar measurements of nocturnal migrants across the northeastern U.S., that autumnal migrant stopover density increased at regional scales with proximity to the brightest areas, but decreased within a few kilometers of brightly-lit sources. This finding implies broad-scale attraction to artificial light while airborne, impeding selection for extensive forest habitat. Given that high-quality stopover habitat is critical to successful migration, and hindrances during migration can decrease fitness, artificial lights present a potentially heightened conservation concern for migratory bird populations.⁴

To insure that the lighting satisfies the most rigorous dark sky standards, we suggest that the Element specify that all new and replacement lighting fixtures on federal buildings meet the standards for a seal of approval from the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA). Fixtures approved by IDA employ warm-toned (3000 K or lower) white light sources or employ amber light sources or filtered LED light sources, are full-shielded, emit no light above the horizontal plane, have no sag or drop lenses, side light panels, or uplight panels, etc. For this reason we suggest a new POS.B.19 on p. 25:

new POS.B.19. Minimize light pollutions by requiring that all new and replacement lighting fixtures on federal buildings meet the standards for a seal of approval from the International Dark-Sky Association.
[suggested changes in bold]

Parkways as Scenic Routes (pp. 34-36)

As noted on p. 34, "visual and physical encroachment on and adjacent to parkways is an important challenge threatening the scenic and pastoral qualities of parkways" Maintaining an open space along riverfront parkways will contribute to preserving parkway viewsheds. For this reason we suggest a new POS.D.8 on p. 36:

new POS.D. 8. An open space parkland at least 600 feet wide along the entire north shore of the Anacostia River should be developed/required. [suggested changes in bold]

Balance Multiple Uses Within Parks (pp. 33-36)

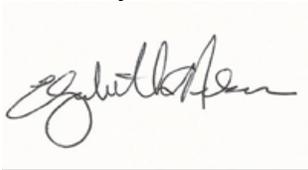
This section advocates "programming that supports recreation, education, commemoration, and special events while protecting natural and cultural resources." POS. D.2, p. 36. There is a documented need for additional

⁴ McLaren, J. D., Buler, J. J., Schreckengost, T., Smolinsky, J. A., Boone, M., Emiel van Loon, E., Dawson, D. K. and Walters, E. L. (2018). Artificial light at night confounds broad-scale habitat use by migrating birds. *Ecol Lett.* doi:10.1111/ele.12902.

recreation space, and we urge that the RFK Stadium property, owned by NPS and leased to District government, be developed to maximize recreation space, and minimize parking and other non-recreation uses. CapitalSpace (2010).

Thank you for considering our comments. For questions or additional information please contact CHRS at 202 543-0425 or email to info@chrs.org.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Nelson, President

cc: Councilmember Charles Allen email: callen@dccouncil.us

Figure 1. Proposed route of the "Park Drive" along the west bank of the Anacostia River from Benning Road to Barney Circle. DDOT, Middle Anacostia Crossings Study (2005), " p. 7-1 (2005). Red arrows point to the "Park Drive."

