

# Government of the District of Columbia

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2C

## May 2023 Meeting Minutes

**DATE:** May 9, 2023

**ANC-2C COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Commissioner Michael Shankle, Commissioner Kristin Roe, Commissioner Rebecca Strauss, and Commissioner Thomas Lee

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Shankle called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm over Zoom (available at <https://www.anc2c.us/video-recordings>).
2. **ROLL CALL:**
3. **INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMISSIONERS:** The four commissioners introduced themselves.
4. **QUORUM:** A quorum of four commissioners was present.
5. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Shankle reviewed the agenda (available at [www.anc2c.us](http://www.anc2c.us)). Shankle motioned to approve the May 2023 agenda, seconded by Roe. (Vote 3-0-0)
6. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Minutes not available.
7. **TREASURER REPORT:** Not available.

## COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. **MPD 2<sup>nd</sup> District Crime and Community Awareness. Lieutenant Sylvester Garvin, [Sylvester.garvin@dc.gov](mailto:Sylvester.garvin@dc.gov).**

Lieutenant Garvin reported that over the past 30 days there have been four robberies out of which came two arrests. There have also been two burglaries, one involving a liquor store, another a shoe store. Three guns have been recovered. While thefts have increased, this largely originates from two stores. Lieutenant Garvin stated that Macys, especially, has been the target of many thefts.

2. **MPD 1<sup>st</sup> District Crime and Community Awareness, Captain Justin Roth, [justin.roth@dcgov](mailto:justin.roth@dcgov), 202-729-2179**

Captain Roth reported that there have been no robberies in the Chinatown area, though two have occurred in the Mount Vernon section. Burglaries are down 50%. Motor vehicle thefts are down approximately 75%. Property crime is down as is violent crime. Captain Roth spoke of an increased law enforcement presence around the Pat Handy Shelter leading to several weapons confiscations, though a stabbing was reported. He referenced the importance of participating in the District's Camera Rebate Program.

Commissioner Strauss asked about carjackings and if juveniles are especially drawn to this type of crime. Commissioner Lee inquired about the stoops along Chinatown and if they constitute private property. Captain Roth replied yes, and that MPD can arrest those loitering.

3. **Office of Unified Communications 911/311 Agency update. Ingrid Bucksell, communications specialist, [Ingrid.bucksell@dcdgov](mailto:Ingrid.bucksell@dcdgov), 202-373-3724**

Not present.

4. **Ward 2 Mayor's Liaison**

Not present.

5. **Office of Ward 2 Councilmember Brooke Pinto—Brooke Pinto Councilmember, Ward 2, [bpinto@dccouncil.us](mailto:bpinto@dccouncil.us), 202-724-8058, Pablo Velasco Rodriguez, constituent services coordinator, [pvelascoordriguez@dccouncil.gov](mailto:pvelascoordriguez@dccouncil.gov)**

Mr. Rodriguez spoke of budget season, with the first vote to occur on May 16 and the final vote expected in early June. The councilmember views the draft budget submitted by her Judiciary and Public Safety Committee as being a blueprint for making the District safer. The budget restores funding for victim's services and legal aid. The Emergency Rental Assistance Program will receive additional funding. The councilmember is calling to restore funding to the K Street Transit Way Project. Mr. Rodriguez talked about extending the mandatory residential air conditioning dates owing to hot weather and climate change.

Mr. Rodriguez also spoke of porous material sidewalks being added to the list of things reportable via the 311 city services number. Commissioner Shankle asked for clarification on this matter, and noted the difficulty that goes into getting sidewalks repaired.

Commissioner Lee asked about the long-term presence of metal plates atop sidewalks. Mr. Rodriguez said they may be evidence of ongoing construction work, but if it appears that these plates have become abandoned, please reach out to Councilmember Pinto's office. Commissioner Lee also inquired about Pinto's possible pursuits in terms of seeking budgetary cuts.

Resident Howard Marks inquired about monies for a Clean Team in Chinatown. Marks commended Pinto for opposing a ridership surcharge that especially targets people living downtown. Marks asked if the ANC might offer a letter of support to Pinto in this regard. Commissioner Strauss asked Rodriguez who, in addition to Pinto, best to send an email letter of support, to which Rodriguez replied the at-large members of the Council.

**MOTION:** Shankle motioned to send a letter of rejection to the potential surcharges for accessing downtown, seconded by Strauss. (Vote 4-0-0)

## LOCAL EVENTS THAT IMPACT THE COMMUNITY

**1. DC Smart Street Lighting Project, Patricia Brooks and Ana Hassegawa, DC Smart Street Lighting Project, [ashley@tbaconnects.com](mailto:ashley@tbaconnects.com)**

Patricia Brooks gave a presentation on the DC Smart Street Lighting Project. It will modernize DC streetlights. Rehabilitation work has already begun. In addition to the timeline, a top priority is in keeping the ANCs and the public well informed, notifying 45 days in advance of work beginning, including notification of no-parking restrictions that will come into effect.

Commissioner Shankle asked about the March 2024 and May 2037 dates that were mentioned in the timeline. Ana Hassegawa explained that two companies are involved in the lighting project, one of which is responsible for the scope of work that ends in 2024 as well as maintaining the existing system. She described the improvement project as being a “rolling operation,” and noted that historical/visual integrity will be maintained.

Commissioner Lee inquired about soft glow lights versus the harsh lights. Ms. Hassegawa stated that it will be a softer light, with yellow-orange color temperatures.

**2. Golden Triangle Business Improvement District. Letter of Support for District’s Commission on the Arts and Humanities grant to replace in-kind the existing Foon Sham rain garden sculptures on 19<sup>th</sup> Street NW. Andrew Huff, associate director of member and government relations. [ahuff@goldentriangeldc.com](mailto:ahuff@goldentriangeldc.com), 202-684-8922**

Andrew Huff outlined the Golden Triangle boundaries, saying it is the second oldest BID. Huff introduced Helen Solomon, with the Golden Triangle planning department. Huff spoke of the public arts program and underscored their desire of receiving a letter of support for a DC Commission of Arts and Humanities grant application.

Helen Solomon offered a presentation, saying the deadline for the application is in July. Three new, durable sculptures are being sought. In addition to being aesthetically pleasing, the sculptures collect rainwater then store and filter the water into the rain garden. The purpose is to reduce storm water runoff all the while serving as public art. Ms. Solomon stated that the installation kick-off is anticipated to occur in September 2024.

Commissioner Lee inquired about the fate of the existing eight artistic structures. Ms. Solomon said five will remain.

Mr. Huff noted that a draft letter of support has been provided to Commissioner Strauss.

**MOTION:** Strauss motioned to send a letter of support for the Foon Sham rain garden sculptures grant, seconded by Shankle. (Vote 4-0-0)

## ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE LICENSING (ABRA)

1. **Taqueria Xochi Intl, LLC, 1825-1875 I (Eye) Street NW., Space #4, New Retailer's Class "C" (ABRA- 124059). Manalle Mamoud, Esq. associate attorney, Mallios O'Brien & Sandground PLLC<, [mmanoudm@alliosobrien.com](mailto:mmanoudm@alliosobrien.com) 202-625-7700**

Attorney Mamoud underscored that this application is for International Square, one of eight stalls opening over the coming months. There will be communal seating, along with 22 designated seats for Taqueria Xochi. Commissioner Shankle asked if the food area will be opened on the weekends, which it will.

**MOTION:** Shankle motioned to send a letter of support for the Tageria Xochi International application, seconded by Roe. (Vote 4-0-0)

## PLANNING, ZONING, ENVIRONMENT, AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

1. **800 8<sup>th</sup> Street NW (Square 404, Lot 31) Application for Special Exception Relief. Eric DeBear, member, Cozen O'Connor, [edebear@cozen.com](mailto:edebear@cozen.com), 202-747-0769.**

Eric DeBear introduced Caitlin Goldberg with the Society for Science non-profit that has been dedicated to expanding scientific literacy for over a century.

Mr. DeBear then summarized the proposal, stating that this is an existing office building that will be modernized. The Society seeks special exception as the existing parking would be reduced to 10 spaces. He described it as a unique situation owing to old regulations, grandfathered, as they are under the previous zoning regulation, hence the filing for relief.

Mr. DeBear stated that the standards for relief have been met, and that there is plentiful public transportation in proximity. The hearing is scheduled for June 28.

Commissioner Shankle asked if P1 and P2 are located below-grade, which Mr. DeBear confirmed to be the case. Commissioner Shankle confirmed that the P1 level would be converted to office space. Mr. DeBear reiterated that there are currently 20 parking spaces in total. Zoning recognizes only six, that exist within the property line, on each level. Zoning will view it as 10 spaces on site and four in public vault space, for a total of 10.

Commissioner Roe asked how many parking spaces would be required under today's standards? Mr. DeBear responded zero. Commissioner Shankle asked how many employees the Society currently has, to which Ms. Goldberg responded approximately 120. Commissioner Lee asked as to the reason for the move, to which Ms. Goldberg said that the organization has almost doubled in size.

**MOTION:** Shankle motioned to send a letter of support for the Society for Science special exemption, seconded by Roe. (Vote 4-0-0)

**2. 512 10<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Fords Theatre Society, HPBR Revised Concept Review, Sarah Vonesh, LEED Green Associate director of preservation planning.**

Sarah Vonesh introduced an architect from OTJ Architects who recapped previous meetings before the ANC on the Fords Theatre Society, HPBR Revised Concept Review. Covid impacted the schedule. The architect spoke of how the delays also impacted on the budgeting of this project. OTJ design specialist, Chris Leonberg, was introduced, who provided an overview of the renovations and additions. Mr. Leonberg stated that the Fords Theatre façade will remain largely as-is. The additional Fords Theatre buildings will undergo the greatest changes.

Commissioner Shankle inquired as to whether the setback and grade levels are in alignment with the Zoning Commission, which they are. He also asked about existing tiling. The tiles will be restored and reinstalled.

Commissioner Roe asked about the removal of meshing and whether this is an aesthetic change or if the mesh has a practical, environmental purpose such as energy control. The architect said window foaming fulfills this purpose.

**MOTION:** Shankle motioned to send a letter of support for the HPBR Revised Concept Review for Fords Theatre Society, seconded by Lee. (Vote 4-0-0)

**3. Chinatown Review Committee, #040573, Kamol Farid, Permit Express, 571-339-9499.**

Commissioner Shankle reviewed the application stating that it is for a new Taco Bell Cantina that is going in on the first floor of 808 7<sup>th</sup> Street NW. Commissioner Shankle feels that the plan fits into the Chinatown aesthetic.

Commissioner Shankle asked if the conversion from office to mixed-use was already completed. Lockhart stated it was a matter of right.

**MOTION:** Roe motioned to send a letter of support for the 808 7<sup>th</sup> Street signage permit, seconded by Strauss. (Vote 4-0-0)

**4. Founding Farmer, Square 452 LLC, 600 Massachusetts Ave NW, Installation of new signage—Office of Planning, Chinatown Review Committee. Gary Brent, [gary\\_brent@mgpermits.com](mailto:gary_brent@mgpermits.com), 410-507-0053.**

Commissioner Shankle provided an overview of the sign change request, stating that he is okay with the changes. Commissioner Roe asked if the Chinese letters are illuminated, which they are not.

**MOTION:** Shankle motioned to send a letter of support for the 808 7<sup>th</sup> Street signage permit, seconded by Roe. (Vote 4-0-0)

**OTHER**

**1. Balance Gym Conversion.**

Commissioner Strauss alluded to new information that the gym has been rezoned to a shelter, but the question remains—what kind of shelter? Commissioner Roe underscored that DHS told the ANC that a decision on what to do with the site had not been made. She said a call should be made with the deputy mayor.

Commissioner Strauss spoke of making improvements to the alleyway, especially with pedestrian safety. Commissioner Strauss said a meeting should take place bringing together the numerous interests abutting the alleyway.

Commissioner Shankle said letters should be sent to the deputy mayor and DHS in expressing the ANC's concerns that efforts appear to be in motion without community engagement.

**MOTION:** Shankle motioned to send a letter of concern regarding the Balance Gym conversion, seconded by Roe. (Vote 4-0-0)

**ADJOURNMENT:** Shankle made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 pm, seconded by Strauss. Commissioners were in favor of adjourning the meeting (Vote 4-0-0)

**Minutes Submitted by:** Minutes Services

**Minutes Approved by:** 08.08.23

**Next Meeting:** June 13, 2023, 6:00 pm

ANC Commissioners and Website

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Meetings are scheduled for the Second Tuesday of each month.