

PCA Trails Committee Meeting Minutes

June 23, 2014

Attendees

Committee Members: Avi Green (AG), Alex Dietrich (AD), Adrienne Shoch (AS), Buffie Brownstein (BB), Hans Moennig (HM), Jack Kozela (JK), Mark Binsted (MB), and Brett Young (Chairman) (Avi Green and Jack Kozela left the meeting shortly after the start of the portion of the meeting open to questions from other community members.)

Other: Michael Greene, Greg Safko, Kent Slowinski, Judith Michaels, Janet A. Nash, Mary M. Tschudy, Ted Tschudy, and Michael Sriqui

Scribe

Hans Moennig

Agenda

- **Discuss Foundry Branch Bridge progress**
- **Eleanor Holmes Norton Meeting Synopsis**
- **Layout of water pipes under Trolley Right of Way (ROW)**
- **National Park Service (NPS), Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA)**
- **Pepco's concrete blocks**
- **Mowing of Trail**
- **Survey Questions**
- **Trail count**
- **Points of agreement**
- **Other business**
- **Open questions**

Discussion

- **Meeting was opened at 7:06 PM by the Chairman.** The Chairman proposed that the first of hour of the meeting be devoted to agenda items and that the second hour be available for open discussion involving the other community members present. The committee members and others present were asked to introduce themselves.
- **Foundry Branch Bridge Progress.** The Chairman reported that he had been in communication with Stan Wall of the Washington Area Metropolitan Transportation Association (WAMATA) regarding progress on their structural evaluation of the bridge.

He was told that WMATA was presently reviewing an initial draft of the report. WAMATA would make the report available when complete. It is the Chairman's view that WAMATA would like to get rid of the bridge. AS questioned the Chairman regarding whether presented himself to WAMATA as representing the PCA or its Trails Committee or as just an interested member of the community. The Chairman said that it was as the latter, and that his inquiries were strictly of a fact finding nature. He also said that he is hoping to arrange for PCA sponsored community walks of the area. AS also questioned whether he had tried to involve the Foxhall Village Community Association. He said he had spoken with some members of that organization. AS volunteered to reach out in a more direct way, to determine how they would like to be involved. HM pointed out that the Foundry Branch Bridge was on the DC Historic Preservation Association's list of endangered sites.

- **Eleanor Holmes Norton Meeting.** The Chairman reported having attended the meeting which was held for DC residents to raise issues of concern with the NPS. He spoke to the NPS representatives about concerns of members of the Palisades with having safer access to Fletchers Cove. Kevin Brant an NPS representative indicated that a bridge across Canal Rd. would not be viable because of truck traffic clearance requirements. Kent Slowinski a community resident and ANC Commissioner reported on a follow-up meeting he had had with the NPS and DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) where he received assurances that some sort of traffic control might be installed at the intersection of Reservoir and Canal Roads before the end of the year to provide a safer pedestrian crossing.
- **Water Pipes.** The Chairman reported that the water authority had provided maps of the 78" pipe which runs under the ROW. He had shared the map with Committee member Mark Binsted who had also reviewed. Both the Chairman and Mark indicated that the maps were of limited use, as they did not provide a cross-section of the line. The Chairman said he would provide access to the maps to AD, who is a civil engineer.
- **National Park Service (NPS), Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA).** The Chairman has had conversations with Beth Porter of the RTCA. He indicated that she was interested in meeting with the group, and proposed that a separate meeting of the committee be held to see what she had to say. The Committee agreed.
- **Pepco's concrete blocks.** The Chairman informed the Committee that he had contacted Pepco to remove concrete blocks at the foot of Q St. NW. Pepco agreed to do so without agreeing that the blocks were theirs. A brief discussion of exactly where the blocks were located followed, without resolution.
- **Mowing of Trail.** The Chairman informed the Committee that he had contacted the DC Department of General Services to request that as the ROW is District property it should be mowed. He indicated that he had spoken with Kirt Bakos of that department who is contracted to mow the ROW in the immediate neighborhood of the Recreation Center. He also indicated that although some residents were paying to have segments of the ROW mowed, that was strictly speaking not legal as the land belonged to DC. He has written to Councilmember Cheh to request that she have the ROW mowed by the city. It was also suggested that other community members contact Ms Cheh's office, call 311, and enlist the support of the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC). AD volunteered to draft a letter to the ANC to solicit its support in getting the grass mowed.
- **Survey Questions.** The Chairman recommended that a separate meeting be held to review and approve the draft survey questions within the next 30 days. A copy of the draft survey which had been prepared by AG and AD had been distributed to Committee before the meeting. The Committee agreed that it might take too much time to consider the survey questions during a regular meeting.
- **Trail Count.** The Chairman noted that no work had been done by the members who had been asked to develop a trail count strategy. It was agreed that the trail count would be put on the "back burner."
- **Other Business.** AS raised two items of concern. The first was that the minutes of

the previous meeting should be brought up for approval at the next meeting. There was agreement that this practice should be followed. The second was that there should be a deputy chairman who could conduct any scheduled meeting that the chairman could not attend. AD volunteered to serve as Deputy Chairman, and was approved as such by acclamation. In addition AD and AS agreed to develop an agenda format which would make it easier for meetings to be held in the absence of the Chairman.

- **Open forum: The Chairman opened the floor to questions and comments from other members of the community.**

- **Janet Nash, Greene St. NW.** Ms Nash questioned what the mandate of the Committee was. She saw no need for improvement of the ROW, as parallel biking and walking trails already existed. She indicated that what she had read or heard about the Committee suggested that the goal of the Committee was to create a paved parallel bike path into Georgetown.
- **Kent Solwinski, ANC Commissioner.** Stated that other options such as a bike lane on MacArthur Boulevard should also be considered, and that needed work on the retaining walls along Reservoir Road between MacArthur and Canal Road might provide an opportunity to provide safer access to Fletcher's Cove from the community.
- **Michael Greene.** Supported the concept of preserving the ROW for future use by the community. Stated that encroachment was already occurring.
- **Greg Safko.** Raised questions about the mission of the Committee.
- **Michael Srigui.** Raised questions about the authority of the Committee, in light of the December 2013 PCA meeting when the question of studying the possibility of a trail along the ROW was discussed.
- **Ted Schudy.** Also raised mission and process questions. He voiced the opinion that the Chairman of the Committee should be neutral with respect to the issue of a trail on the ROW, given that the community seemed divided on that issue.
- **Committee response.** It was agreed that the Committee would seek to meet with Steve Waller, PCA President, to discuss issues regarding the Committees mission and authority. AS agreed to prepare a draft mission statement for review and possible approval by the PCA board, so that issues raised by the community could be addressed.

Next Meeting

The Chairmen said he would look at his calendar and inform the Committee of date and time of the next meeting.

Next Meeting Agenda Items

- The Chairman said he would prepare an agenda for the next meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:50 PM.