

Troy Kravitz

Candidate, ANC 3D02

Tell us about yourself.

I live in Spring Valley with my wife, daughter (age 7), son (age 5) and a wonderful dog. I'm a game theorist by training doing economics research related to the financial system. I was elected to the ANC two years and have served as the Commission's Treasurer during this time. Despite living here, I support Philadelphia sports teams through-and-through.

What are your thoughts about the need for development in our area?

While I don't think the word "need" is appropriate when considering development in our area, I think thoughtfully-done development offers valued amenities to our community and should be welcomed. (Viable) businesses entering our community provide services and products that the community desires (or else they wouldn't be entering or be viable). This is practically a tautology, but it is how I view thoughtfully-done development.

This doesn't imply that the community should simply accept development proposals without thorough and thoughtful consideration and without ensuring the project is optimized to provide tangible community benefits. Far from it. But the occasional mentality – shared by few, fortunately – that "all development is bad" is fallacious and harmful to the community's interests.

For example, what would be an ideal outcome for Palisades Safeway?

Speaking euphemistically regarding the Palisades Safeway, I think the community would benefit from a modernized grocery store at that site. While I haven't seen any plans speaking to a specific proposal, I accept the premise that an improved market likely necessitates more intense usage of the space above the grocery store than simply housing a mechanical penthouse. The decision, to me, will come down to the tradeoff between residential density and community amenities. That is, how much residential development does the community accept in exchange for a new grocery store, improved design features (such as setbacks and pedestrian areas) and other items present in a fulsome community benefits and mitigation package.

Do you have views about the historic preservation process in Washington? On the ANC, how would you weigh the interests of owners faced with landmark nominations with those of preservationists?

Largely, I think the historic designation process has run amok. The District agencies tasked with assessing historic designation applications rarely reject an application, regardless of the underlying merits of the case or the sentiments of the homeowner/community. At the same time, dedicated and knowledgeable preservationists have begun deploying the historic designation process as a way to blunt development. Thus, a legitimate and valuable service –

that of protecting the city's heritage – is being used for purposes well-beyond its initial intent and without viable restraint.

I am not an architect and lack the expertise needed to evaluate historic designation applications. That doesn't mean I'm helpless on the ANC, however. I can – and do – argue against the all-too-common occurrence of groups from outside our community submitting applications to designate properties within our community without even informing the homeowners of their efforts. To me, there are no ifs, ands or buts: this is wrong. And to make matters even worse, the homeowners often have to incur significant expenses (greater than \$30,000), hiring architects and their own historic preservation experts to defend their property during the designation process. So, yes, I think the historic designation process has run amok despite its laudable intent.

The ANC approves many issues unanimously. Should Commissioners be allowed to select items – e.g. driveway cut permits – they feel are not controversial for fast-tracking, or do neighbors deserve to hear presentations on all such projects to be fully informed?

Non-controversial issues should not require presentations before the ANC. These presentations are not free, with most applicants feeling obligated to bring counsel, engineers and architects before us. The challenge is determining when an issue is non-controversial. Constituent work is the key and applicants should discuss their case with their neighbors so that they can provide the ANC with evidence of support, non-objection or, at minimum, awareness.

When is it acceptable to side with businesses or large institutions over the interests of residents?

I disagree with the premise of this question. I listen to the arguments presented and support the side that I feel is more compelling.

How should we accommodate cycling as an alternative to driving in our community?

Cycling offers many benefits to the community and, like walking, should receive the accommodation necessary to create a safe environment. The District has a good long-term multi-modal transportation plan whose implementation we should encourage through awareness and advocacy. Most of the changes necessary to foster greater cycling are well-beyond our ability as local elected officials, so I view the role of the ANC as one of informing the community about possible options and facilitating discussion between community advocates on both sides and the relevant District agencies.

What will you do to help realize pedestrian and cyclist connection from Arizona Avenue to the Capital Crescent Trail and C & O Canal?

Short of grabbing a machete and a backhoe, there is not much the ANC can do other than pester those in the relevant positions of power to get working. This connection is too simple and too obvious for it to remain mired in inaction.

What are your thoughts on DDOT's proposal to introduce an 8-10 feet wide crushed stone surface along part of the Palisades Trolley Trail between Galena Place and Nebraska Avenue?

I think a well-designed multi-modal path along the former Trolley Trail would immediately become a cherished asset to the community. To unlock the full value of such a trail, the path should cross the trestle bridge and connect to Georgetown.

The devil, of course, is in the details and I recognize there are legitimate disagreements about the best surface material. This is something the community should discuss and I firmly believe there exist options that would satisfy those with differing viewpoints while still producing an attractive and effective multi-modal path into the city.

If this answer is unsatisfying, I'm comfortable saying that I think concerns about the trail becoming "Capital Crescent Trail – lite" are overblown. I agree that the Trolley Trail should fulfill a quite different function than the CCT, but at the same time I don't think there is much risk that the Trolley Trail would be similar to the CCT. I'm also comfortable saying I think a less solid surface material is probably preferable to what was recently proposed by DDOT.

What are your thoughts on the future of the entire Palisades Trolley Trail between Galena Place and Georgetown?

Combined with previous answer.

What are your thoughts on the slated \$20M expansion of Key Elementary School? Considering the constraints of the site should the allocated funds address the needs of the school's population today or it's anticipated growth over the next 50 years?

Frankly, I'm not sufficiently informed about the details of the expansion plan to offer a worthwhile opinion.