

The Corner Forum

for the 1200 and 1300 blocks of E, the 400 and 500 blocks of 13th,
Duncan Place and Emerald Street NE

Issue #48
Sunday, Sept. 21, 2003
37¢ + 2¢ D.C. sales tax
<http://www.thecornerforum.org>

D.C. Seeks Input on H Street Transportation Study

BY SHARON COCHRAN, 1300 BLOCK OF EMERALD STREET NE

I attended one of the three community charrettes held by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) for the H Street NE Corridor Transportation Study, at the Children's Museum last week. A charrette is an open collaborative planning process that includes all interested parties, such as community residents, H Street business owners and workers, and public officials.

DDOT expects to spend \$7.5 million on H Street NE improvements in 2005. The agency is trying to avoid producing a plan for H Street that is created by only a few but that will affect many of us. One of the common urban planning tools to avoid this, and to also achieve community trust between the government and citizens, is to organize a charrette. One very nice thing about the charrette was that it was not necessary to spend the entire day at a meeting. Presentations were given each hour by a consulting team from Michael Baker Corporation and by city planners from the D.C. government.

I started my participation in the charrette by placing a dot on a map to show where I live. I walked around the auditorium and looked at many graphic displays showing H Street accident data, sidewalks, tree boxes, public transit and traffic volume. I was often asked by the staff whether I had any questions, and I was asked even more often about my opinions. We were then asked to sit at a table as a group, to methodically discuss topics and complete a survey. Topics included: Should we widen the sidewalks? Where? Should the sidewalks be brick or concrete? How do we get light for pedestrians at night? What type of streetlights do we like? Should there be more trees? What about street crosswalks — should they be painted stripes or colored pavers? I thought the discussion informative and very interesting.

There will be a public meeting to discuss the findings from the charrette soon. To be added to the mailing list for information about H Street transportation issues, call Rachel MacCleery, the project manager and the DDOT Transportation Planner for Ward 6, at 671-2555, or e-mail her at rachel.maccleery@dc.gov. You can find more details about H Street activities online, at <http://www.hstreetdc.com/mainst> and <http://www.bakerprojects.com/hstreetne>. §

Drug Activity in Alley North of 1200 Block of E St.

BY LISA OLSON, 1214 E ST. NE

On Wednesday evening, there was lots of fire department and ambulance activity. I spoke with police Officer Jones, who said there was a fire at 1212 C St. NE.

Officer Jones was in our back alley — the very large alley between E and F Street — helping to get rid of tags from abandoned cars, which were going to be towed away. He said there has been some drug activity in the alley. I just wanted to let people know that that's been going on, so we can have more neighbors looking out for things like that.

I was really disappointed when I heard that was what was going on — right in my back alley. This is the city, so I do expect these things, but I really want to try clean things up as much as possible. §

City's Decline Is Tied To Preference for Suburbs

BY RICHARD LAYMAN
800 block of 6th Street NE

Someone just showed me [the Aug. 10 issue of the Corner Forum] in response to something we were talking about.

While I think the interview with Leo Gordon is actually quite interesting (and the Corner Forum did a great job with it, in my opinion), I think it has a limited perspective, just like people might say I do. I do think that Mr. Gordon excuses some terribly chaotic behavior, and a number of streets are under siege as a result of such behavior, i.e., Wylie Street, 7th Street north of G Street, 1000 block of 4th Street, etc. I don't think that can be denied or shrugged off.

The discussion about streets and sidewalks in Jane Jacobs's *Death and Life of Great American Cities* is amazing and well worth reading (again and again). Those principles broke down in the city, and we are still paying the price. (I would also recommend *The Future Once Happened Here*, but it is a harsh depiction of the decline of the city that many people feel is politically incorrect.)

To me, there are two different things going on here. One is that I think that there is a lag in behavior and attitudes between African Americans and whites with regard to a preference of where to live. Where there has been a marginal increase in interest in urban living on the part of the latter, the former still appear to be interested in the American Dream as it is represented by migration to the suburbs. Hence, plenty of middle-class and upper-middle-class African Americans live in Prince George's County, and in fact the overall D.C. population continues to decline somewhat, even as the percentage and number of whites increases while the percentage and num-

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ber of African Americans decreases (although the latter is also partly as a result of the elimination of traditional public housing projects). But I think this is a matter of attitudes, not “the plan.”

A related problem that comes from a belief that the suburbs are better is the desire to aggressively suburbanize the city. Examples like the Autozone, the Community Development Corporation row houses on the 800 block of 10th Street NE, the Hechinger Mall, etc. are anti-pedestrian, fundamentally anti-urban building forms. (Not the row houses exactly — they are just lousy design.)

Related to the first point, then, is economic forces, and in that Mr. Gordon is correct. People with more money — with a greater interest in urban living — find the greater neighborhood more affordable than say Dupont Circle or Georgetown, and incredibly convenient besides. So they buy and move here. This does drive up prices. Part of the reason the neighborhood is more affordable is because there are fewer conveniences comparable to Georgetown or Dupont Circle.

In my neighborhood, more west than where you are, the fact that a new metro station is coming has led to a tripling of housing prices in some instances. This is not a good thing, and there is no easy solution. I would not be able to buy my house today, on my now single-person income. I am capable of being able to pay increased property taxes, though. The impact on multigenerational and/or long-time residents is no less pronounced.

Getting back to disorder, I can’t speak for the area by Excello, but I know for a fact that “the people hanging on the street corners” do in fact mask criminal behavior. They drink

and carry on. They litter; they urinate publicly. At least by where I live, one of the people who does this clearly plays both sides and helps set up houses for bur-

glaries, etc. On 7th Street, drug sales occur. As you probably know, that is a center for heroin dealing. People may serve as lookouts, if only for the price of a small bottle of vodka. And, according to residents on Wylie Street, children “playing” were being used to mask drug sales — just as is described in books such as *The Corner* (about Baltimore), movies like *New Jack City* and in innumerable newspaper articles.

I read stuff by Jane Jacobs, and I lament my desire to make it impossible to sit on the low brick wall “fence” in my yard, but I am tired of the people who urinate on my house, etc. The fact is that maybe 10-20% of the people create all the problems, and others suffer as a result. But we can’t deny that there are people who are stumbling drunk on H Street at 9:30 a.m. during the week. §

Share Your Thoughts!

by phone: 544-2447

by voicemail: 517-9128

by e-mail: news@thecornerforum.org

or by mail: 536 13th St. NE §

Isabel Huffed and She Puffed. Near Us, What She Blew Down Included a Sunflower And a Large Tree.



Hurricane Isabel beat down one of the two sunflowers at 1248 E St. NE.



She also toppled this 50-year-old tree, at Maryland Avenue and 14th Street NE.

Ellery Vaden and Sharon Cochran, 1300 block of Emerald Street NE, reported that their block’s power went out during the storm.

Ms. Cochran said her power was out from around 4 p.m. Thursday to 11 a.m. Friday. §

Goods and Services

FOR SALE: Charleston sofa by Pottery Barn, pecan velvet slipcovers, excellent condition, bought new in 2001, \$850 (negotiable).

— Darrian Hopkins, 1216 Duncan Pl. NE, 486-3825 §

Mayor to Attend Kingsman Dedication

By MARC BORBELY, 536 13TH ST. NE

On Wednesday morning, from 9-10 a.m., there will be a ribbon-cutting and dedication ceremony at the newly renovated Annex of the Kingsman Charter School Campus, at 1375 E St. NE. There will be a continental breakfast and a tour of the facility.

D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams and U.S. Deputy Undersecretary for Education Innovation and Improvement Nina Shokraii Rees are scheduled to attend.

According to the event announcement from the Charter Schools Development Corporation, the D.C.-based nonprofit group that has been renovating Kingsman and is leasing the property to two charter schools, the former Kingsman Elementary School is being dedicated to Richard E. Thompson, chairman of the Thompson publishing group and founder of the Charter Schools Development Corporation.

Kingsman Elementary School, at 1375 E St. NE, was closed by the city in 1993. Sasha Bruce Public Charter School students began attending school in its annex this month. Options Public Charter School students are scheduled to begin attending school in the main building in September 2004. §

Updates

KINGSMAN FIELD: The field next to Kingsman Elementary School has been renovated and looks beautiful. Benches have been installed. The field remains closed.

OVERFLOWING DUMPSTER: The dumpster on the 1200 block of E Street NE, belonging to 501 12th St. NE, was flowing over, onto the sidewalk again today. I took a photo.

COMINGS AND GOINGS: If you have met one of the area's new residents or know someone about to move out, please ask them if they'd like to introduce themselves or say goodbye. According to the Long & Foster Web site, <http://www.longandfoster.com>, viewed yesterday, the real estate listings for the Corner Forum area have not changed from Sept. 13: 1246 Duncan Pl. NE (\$365,000); 408 13th St. NE (\$309,990); and 1306 Emerald St. NE (\$298,000).

CORNER FORUM ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: The following people helped produce or distribute the Sept. 14 issue of the Corner Forum: Marc Borbely, 536 13th St. NE and Sharon Cochran, 1300 block of Emerald Street NE. There are 81 households in the Corner Forum area that are subscribed to the newsletter (29 on E Street, 26 on Emerald Street, 19 on 13th Street, and 7 on Duncan Place). §

Dramatic Developments at Lake Fort Fisher



A week ago Friday, as shown at far left, crews were jack-hammering the alley.

On Monday, as shown in the two photos in the center, workers removed the old alley east of the 400 block of 13th Street NE and began putting in a new one.

The photo on the right was taken Friday.

— Amy Fisher, 427 13th St. NE §

Photos
by
Amy Fisher



SEND IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND YOUR NEWS! — by phone (544-2447); by voicemail (517-9128);
by e-mail (news@thecornerforum.org); or by mail (536 13th St. NE).
TO SUBSCRIBE (\$10.17 including tax for 26 issues), call 544-2447 or drop off cash or a check to the address above.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

If you attend any of these events, please send in anything from a few lines to a long article about what happened. And if you know of any upcoming events that other readers might be interested in, send them in! Events are free, unless otherwise noted, and open to all.

— COMPILED BY SHARON COCHRAN
1300 block of Emerald Street NE

Sunday, September 21

11:30 a.m. International Day of Peace. “An interfaith gathering. [With] brunch. 12:30 p.m., speakers, including Muslim Imam Abdulalim Musa, Christian Rev. Phil Wheaton, Buddhist Bante Uparapana and Hindu Dr. Mahapatra Gyanendra. Jewish speaker to be announced.” At mosque Masjid Al-Islam, 4603 Benning Rd SE. On the corner of Benning Road and “C” Street, SE. (Metro: Benning Road).

Noon-3 p.m. The Black Student Fund’s 31st Annual School Fair. “Learn about independent schools and financial aid for your child (ages 3-17) from representatives of over 50 day and boarding schools.” By DaimlerChrysler Corporation Fund. At the Washington Convention Center, 801 Mt. Vernon Pl. NW. Info, 387-1414, http://www.blackstudentfund.org/programs/school_fair.htm.

Wednesday, September 24

9:30 a.m. Excello Liquor Store Status Hearing. The Alcoholic Beverage Control Board asks Excello Liquors (419 13th St. NE) and protestants of the renewal of its liquor license for an update on negotiations. At the Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration, 941 North Capitol St. NE, 7th floor. Info, Laura Byrd, 442-4359 or Zandra Goode, 442-4418.

10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Experience Corps Tutoring/Mentoring Open House. “[Seeking] volunteers 55 and older to tutor students during upcoming school year.” At 1816 12th St. NW, 797-1150. <http://www.experiencecorps.org/washington/index.html>.

6:30-8 p.m. A Conversation With Sweet Honey in the Rock. “An interview and discussion with the group’s members ... to mark the 30th anniversary of the internationally acclaimed a cappella ensemble.” At the National Museum of American History, Carmichael Auditorium, 14th & Constitution Avenue NW, 357-2700. <http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/events>.

7-9 p.m. Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A Alcohol Beverage Licensing & Public Safety Committee. Monthly meeting. At Miner Elementary School, 600 block of 16th Street NE. Info, Commissioner Jessica Ward (ANC 6A06), 396-3193.

7:30 p.m. Historic Preservation. “A forum for Capitol Hill residents to find out more about what is underway at the Historic Preservation Office — and to start a dialogue about historic preservation in the city and on the Hill.” With Lisa Burcham, head of the D.C. Historic Preservation Office. By the Capitol Hill Restoration Society. At the Old Naval Hospital, 921 Pennsylvania Ave. SE. Info, 543-0425. <http://www.chrs.org>.

Thursday, September 25

8:30 a.m. Light Rail Transportation Near Capitol Hill. “The

single biggest event that will affect Capitol Hill in the next five to 10 years will be light-rail transportation. Soon the first working demonstration project will be built next to Capitol Hill. Future growth will radically impact our community and the Capitol Hill commercial corridors. ... Get the right information and speak directly with the planners. This affects your business and home values and the future of Capitol Hill.” With metro and D.C. government representatives. By the Capitol Hill Association of Merchants and Professionals. At Christ Church Parish Hall, 620 G St. SE. RSVP requested, 547-7788. CHAMPS members \$10, nonmembers \$15.

Saturday, September 27

10 a.m. Corner Forum meeting. “Help assemble the current issue and plan future ones.” At the home of Marc Borbely and Tammi Cioffi, 536 13th St. NE, 544-2447.

10a.m. - 4 p.m. 36th Annual Washington National Cathedral Open House. “Free musical concerts by eight-time Grammy nominees Cathy Fink and Marcy Marxer, Cathedral arts and trades demonstrations. ... Climb the Central Tower, puppet shows and a carousel for children, strolling musicians, Morris Dancing, free cake, and much more.” At Washington National Cathedral Grounds, Massachusetts & Wisconsin Avenues NW. Free Shuttle bus from the Tenleytown Metro. Info, 537-6200. <http://www.nationalcathedral.org>.

Ongoing

Tai Chi. Saturdays at 8 a.m. David Walls-Kaufman (411 East Capitol St. SE, DCWK@aol.com), 46, offers free one-hour tai chi classes (weather permitting, i.e., above freezing or no rain worse than sprinkles). Mr. Kaufman says he has practiced tai chi seriously for fifteen years and that his teacher is Ben Lo of San Francisco, senior student of Prof. Cheng Man-Ch’ing. “The curious should wear loose clothing, flat shoes, and understand that tai chi emphasizes slow movement and non-movement and is a meditation-based exercise.” At Lincoln Park (which starts at 13th Street and East Capitol).

Capital Neighbors: A Walk About Capitol Hill. 1 p.m. The 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month through October. “Stroll the charming 19th-century streets where hometown Washington met national politics. Your DC Heritage Tours guide shares captivating Capitol Hill lore while showing you a virtual museum of Victorian architecture.” \$12. Meet at the Eastern Market Metro Station, corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 7th Street SE. Info, 828-WALK. http://www.dcheritage.org/information2546/information_show.htm?doc_id=156823.

Fred Maroon Photography Exhibit: Poetic Washington. Through Oct. 5. “DC’s most renowned photographer, will have his collection ... on display. ... Mr. Maroon’s photographic career began in the 1950s, and included work for all the leading photography-driven magazines including Look, Life and National Geographic, and exhibitions in museums such as the Museum of Modern Art and the Smithsonian.” At Union Station, 50 Massachusetts Ave. NE, 842-9800. <http://www.unionstationdc.com/events.html>. §