

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 #59
Saturday, Dec. 20, 2003
37¢ + 2¢ D.C. sales tax
<http://www.thecornerforum.org>

We Inspect the Wires

Sharon Cochran (1300 block of Emerald Street NE) spoke yesterday with Greg, a contractor with W.A. Chester who, along with a colleague, was working in a manhole under a three-part grate in Emerald Street NE, near 1317. Thick electrical wires could be seen running along the walls. Greg spoke to Ms. Cochran while standing on a ladder leading down into the hole. W.A. Chester is a Pepco subsidiary.

Would you like to tell me what you're doing today?

We're basically coming out, doing inspections, making sure everything's up to date, making sure all the wires are in good condition, to prevent any blowups or power outages or anything like that.

About how deep is this hole?

That hole is about 10 feet, and 6 by 10, and it's just a transformer hole. As you can see, it gets nasty. All the trash from the roads and all that goes down in there. You have other crews that'll come out and clean them every now and then, like Flippo or Joy or someone like that.

And that's also why we come out here — we write up what kind of condition the hole itself is in — if it's stable, if the grates that sit on top of the road are strong

enough, that it'll carry the weight of a car — if not they get a crew out here immediately and repair any damages.

How old do you think this manhole is?

Hmm, I don't know — it's a really old transformer. [Greg asks his colleague.] Doesn't have a date on the nameplate? It looks about anywhere from 10, 15 years old.

Oh, OK. So it's not that old.

No, it's not that old. They just have newer transformers out that they usually put in, downtown.

This is actually a fairly small hole — it's fairly clean. No syringes or anything are down there! [Chuckles.] So you've got an all right neighborhood. [Chuckles.] No rats or anything — so pest control has kept up on it. So far from what I can see, it's in fairly good shape.

All we do is we come out, we take amps on each of the wires, see how much of a load they're carrying. If they're carrying too much, they'll come out here and install new wires that can handle a heavier load. And that's pretty much it!

Great, thank you very much.

No problem. Have a good day! §

Former Miner Building Is Possible Location For Police Substation

The following are comments by City Council Member Sharon Ambrose (Ward 6), from the ANC meeting on Dec. 11. Ms. Ambrose spoke about the number of police facilities in our area when it becomes part of the First Police District.

We will have some problems: we only have one substation [in the First District] right now, and that's on E Street Se, and that substation really cannot handle all the additional police officers, cars, lockers — the whole thing. Because this will almost double the number of police officers, if they do it the way they're talking about doing it. So there has been a lot of talk, and a great deal of interest on the part of folks along the H Street Corridor — [ANC Commissioner]

Continued on page 2, column 1

Pepco: Chain-Link Fence to Remain

BY MARC BORBELY, 536 13TH NE

In two recent letters to Sharon Cochran, 1300 block of Emerald Street NE, Michael Sullivan, Pepco's vice president for customer care, stated that Pepco is unable to remove its chain-link fence. Ms. Cochran had requested that Pepco removed the fence and otherwise improve the property.

In a letter dated Sept. 17, Mr. Sullivan wrote that the fence could not be removed. "While we understand your concerns to have the chain-link fence removed, due to safety and environmental issues, we are unable to honor this re-

Continued on page 2, column 2

A Neighborhood Book Club, Anyone?

BY TAMMI CIOFFI, 536 13TH ST. NE

Is anyone interested in starting a book club?

I've only been in one other before and this is how it worked: the group would meet once every couple of months and each person would take turns picking a book. We could take turns hosting the book club, have some snacks and talk about the book.

I really enjoyed the last book club I

was in — one thing I really like about book clubs is it gives you a chance to read books you may not have thought about reading. You get a good mix of people and personalities and you get to read different types of books.

If anyone is interested, call me at 544-2806 or drop a note off at 536 13th St. NE. You could also drop a note in the Corner Forum saying what you think of this idea. I'd be happy to organize this if people are interested. Thanks! §

Police Substation Possible at Miner

(continued from page 1)

Wanda [Harris] has been part of that for about six years — in having a police substation or some presence up on H Street. Well, I now think that it is clear that it would be necessary to have a substation of some sort in the Northeast area. I don't know if anybody in this room remembers when there actually was a Northeast substation on Maryland Avenue at about 9th Street NE?

There was one, so there is a precedent for having a genuine whole substation — not just a little workstation like they have at the 7-11. So we're going to talk about that a little bit, and one of the places that a couple folks have suggested might work for that — because you've gotta have a lot of parking spaces — one of the places that might work would be the old Miner school. So whatever's gonna happen to Miner school — I think at some point we all have to think about that — we also have to start thinking real hard about where we could put a substation. And then I have to start putting the screws to everybody in sight about the money and all the stuff that has to happen to make that happen. §

This Newsletter Needs Your Voice

SEND IN YOUR
REACTIONS TO THE
ARTICLES YOU READ

SEND IN YOUR THOUGHTS
AND YOUR NEWS

(anything that might be interesting or
useful to your neighbors is welcome)

-
- by phone (544-2447);
 - by voicemail (517-9128);
 - by e-mail
(news@thecornerforum.org);
 - or by mail (536 13th St. NE)

Pepco Says Fence Is Necessary

(continued from page 1)

quest.”

After Ms. Cochran wrote back to inquire what safety and environmental issues Mr. Sullivan was referring to, Mr. Sullivan sent a second letter on Dec. 9, saying: “As you are aware, the substation has been deactivated but still remains an important Pepco asset, as well as the electrical equipment located at the property. Because of heightened security measures, it is important that Pepco keep all of our facilities secured for safety purposes. As a result, we are unable to disclose any additional information regarding this matter. As previously stated, we will make every effort to perform bi-weekly inspections to maintain the upkeep of the property. However, to ensure the safety and security of the property, the chain-link fence will remain in place.”

Neighbors first started sharing their concerns about the facility in the Aug. 17 issue of the Corner Forum.

In that issue, Asilia Hill, owner of 404 13th St. NE, asked: “I was wondering if you would do a story on 401-403 13th Street, NE. The boarded-up building is the property of Pepco. They have not cut the grass in front of the property, and the space on the inside on the chain link fence has become a graveyard for beer bottles and soda cans. Has anyone been in touch with Pepco? Do they have any plans for the building? What about the upkeep (grounds)? Any information you can provide would be greatly appreciated.”

Ms. Cochran's first letter to Pepco was reprinted in the Aug. 24 issue. In her letter, Ms. Cochran asked that Pepco clean up its property at 13th & D Streets NE, take down the industrial-type fence, renovate the building and landscape the property. “This site has a historic use of a trolley car station and there is no reason for it to look so shabby,” she wrote.

Shortly after receiving Ms. Cochran's letter, Pepco sent Aaron Tyler, gardener class A, and two colleagues to clean up the property. Mr. Tyler told the Corner Forum the property had been neglected due to an oversight, and he said workers would be coming by every two weeks to clean up the property.

In his Sept. 17 letter, Mr. Sullivan also promised that “every effort will be made to perform bi-weekly inspections to ensure the upkeep of the property.” For future concerns regarding the maintenance of the property, he referred Ms. Cochran to a Mr. Myers at 388-2271. §

Updates

PSA MAP: Council Member Sharon Ambrose said at the ANC meeting on Dec. 11: "I am pretty convinced that this map [showing the compromise that was reported in the Dec. 1 Corner Forum] will be what the PSA boundaries will be." The ANC voted unanimously on Dec. 11 to request that the police department leave the existing lieutenants, sergeants and officers with their existing geographic areas of responsibility after our area, currently part of the Fifth Police District, becomes part of the First District. (The Corner Forum will be in PSA 103 rather than 511.)

LIQUOR/GROCERY STORES: Both N-A Minit (421 13th St. NE) and Excello (419 13th St. NE) are in negotiations with residents who protestants on the renewal of its. Shannon Micah Salb, 1300 block of G Street NE, and Mary Beatty, 1200 block of Duncan Place NE, are representing protestants in negotiations. Council Member Sharon Ambrose, outside the ANC 6A meeting on Dec. 11, said the following about the protests: "Whatever Michael Musante says, that's what we're doing. I am supporting the SMD Commissioner on that. He is the elected representative for this community, and I respect his ability to represent the community, so what he tells me on that — he's closer to everybody that lives in that community than I am, so I respect that, and I think that he adequately represents the neighbors." Commissioner Musante's last public statement was at the November ANC meeting, where he voted to support a motion that the ANC protest the transfer of Excello's liquor license to N-A Minit and said, "The majority of the individuals in my single member district have approached me and said we should continue with [the protest], and I will do as I stated — whatever the majority of my single member district wants to do, I will do." However, he did not personally sign on as a protestant to either the renewal or the transfer.

KRAMER ST. GROUP HOME: Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A voted Dec. 11 to request that the City Council require that any D.C. agency planning to build or expand publicly funded facilities notify the affected ANC 40 days before submitting a building permit application to DCRA. (ANC Commissioners and residents near a facility being built on Kramer Street are frustrated that they had not been notified about the project beforehand.) Council Member Ambrose introduced the Notice Requirement for Publicly Funded Building Project Amendment Act of 2003 in the City Council on Tuesday. The bill, B15-0635, would require that ANCs, individual commissioners in affected single-member districts and the Council member in the affected Ward be notified of building permit applications for publicly funded projects. It is co-sponsored by Council members Catania, Orange, Graham, Chavous, Brazil, Allen, Mendelson, Schwartz and Cropp.

CORNER FORUM ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: The following people helped produce or distribute the Dec. 10 issue of the Corner Forum: Marc Borbely, 536 13th St. NE (editing); Tammi Cioffi, 536 13th St. NE (folding). There are 81 households in the Corner Forum area that are subscribed to the newsletter (29 on E Street, 29 on Emerald Street, 17 on 13th Street, and 6 on Duncan Place). Thank you, to all. §

Calendar of 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

Wednesday, December 24

First day of winter break for D.C. Public Schools.

Thursday, December 25

Christmas. Federal holiday today and tomorrow.

Ongoing

Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Dec. 28, 29 and 30 at 7:30 p.m., plus Saturday and Dec. 28 at 2 p.m. "Family entertainment has arrived on H Street! A storyteller theater production for all ages. Come see why the bear sleeps all winter, how the Chinese calendar came to be, how a young Russian girl befriended winter, and more. Our all female cast will weave a spell of magic and laughter you won't forget." At the new H Street Playhouse, 1365 H St. NE. Tickets normally \$15 (children 12 and under and groups of 10 or more, \$10), but tickets are free if you live between 8th Street and 19th Street NE, and between C and M streets NE. (Pick up free tickets at least 30 minutes before the show). At H Street Playhouse, 1365 H St. NE. 800-494-8497 or <http://www.theateralliance.com>.

Friday through Jan. 4. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. The Washington Auto Show. At the Convention Center, 801 Mount Vernon Pl. NW. Tickets \$10 for adults, \$5 children 6-12. 237-7200. <http://www.washingtonautoshow.com>. §

H a p p y
Holidays !!!