



stanton park neighborhood association news

CALENDAR

- APR 20** **Community Meeting—MedLINK**
Wednesday, 7:00 PM
St. James Episcopal Church
222 8th Street NE.
- APR 25** **Stanton Park Neighborhood Association Meeting**
Monday, 7:30 PM
Northeast Branch Library, at 7th Street and Maryland Avenue NE.
- MAY 1** **“Seussical” SPNA Fundraiser**
Sunday, 3:00 PM
St. Mark’s Episcopal Church
118 3rd Street SE
- MAY 11** **ANC 6C Meeting**
Wednesday, 7:00 PM
National Public Radio boardroom,
635 Massachusetts Avenue NW
- MAY 12** **ANC 6A Meeting**
Thursday, 7:00 PM
Miner Elementary School, at
16th and F Streets NE
- MAY 22** **Capitol Hill Classic**
Sunday, 8:30 AM
Stanton Park, 5th and C Streets NE
10K starts at 8:30 AM; 3K at
9:45 AM, and the kids fun runs
at 10:30 AM. See you there!

Want to know more about SPNA?

Want to know what happened at the last meeting? Find out more about how you can get involved? All this and more available on the SPNA Web site:
www.stantonpark.org

Check Out What’s New in the Neighborhood!

April’s SPNA meeting will feature three speakers: representatives from the **Ebenezer Coffee House** (currently under construction at 2nd and F Streets NE), the **Atlas Performing Arts**

Center at 1333 H Street NE, and Don Denton, who will discuss the Capitol Hill real estate market. The meeting will be Monday, April 25, at 7:30 PM at the Northeast Library.

Next MedLINK Community Meeting on April 20; MedLINK Continues Parking Violations

Commissioners from ANC6A and 6C are sponsoring a second community meeting to discuss the MedLINK redevelopment project. The meeting will be at 7 PM on Wednesday, April 20, featuring a presentation of additional information by the architect and a public Q & A session. The meeting will be at St. James Episcopal Church, 222 8th Street NE, adjacent to the MedLINK site.

The first community meeting at St. James took place on March 16. The principal architect for the project (Robert Sponseller of the firm Shalom Baranes Associates) presented the initial design. This was followed by a public question and answer session during which many concerns were raised by neighbors. The description of the proposal that follows is based on the presentation at the March meeting, and may continue to evolve in the future.

Overview

As described at the last community meeting on March 16, the proposed redevelopment of

MedLINK is a combination of renovation and new construction. The 1928 building at the corner of 8th Street and Constitution Avenue would be renovated. The 1975 tower along 7th would also be retained, although it would have a new facade. The remaining 1956 buildings, as well as the small 1975 building at 7th and C Streets NE, would be demolished and new buildings would be erected in their place, along with a new underground parking garage. In addition a new building would be constructed over the existing parking garage. The Capitol Hill Group, which owns MedLINK Hospital, plans to build around 300 condo units at the facility. Although MedLINK is requesting approval of the entire project at this time, the construction is in two phases. Approximately 160 units would be built on the southern end of the property during Phase 1, with about 140 units constructed at the northern end during Phase 2. MedLINK intends to complete Phase 1 within 3 years. The MedLINK Nursing Home would continue to operate at its current facility in the northwest corner of the property until

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Race for Schools—Capitol Hill Classic May 22

The 26th annual Capitol Hill Classic will be held on Sunday, May 22, 2005 at Peabody School on Stanton Park (5th and C Streets NE). The 10K, 3K, and Kids Fun Runs, which are a Capitol Hill tradition, raise money to support the Capitol Hill Cluster Schools (Peabody, Watkins, Stuart-Hobson). Not a runner? You can buy a T-shirt to support the cause, and turn out on Sunday to cheer on your neighbors! For more details, visit: www.runwashington.com/other/chc02list.html.

the Phase 2 construction, which could occur in 5 to 10 years (or never).

Most of the new buildings would be 6 stories high (aboveground), with the exception of the one along C Street, which would be 3 stories high. Although this is below the height limits allowed for the site, the proposal is near the maximum zoned floor area ratio (FAR), a measure of the density of a development. As a result, the architect couldn't increase the height any more in one area of the development without decreasing it in another. The buildings would also have English basements, which don't count towards the FAR limits.

As currently planned, the development would not require any zoning changes, because the height, density, and lot occupancy fit within the existing R-5 zoning for the property. Thus, MedLINK does not need to go before the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA). MedLINK does need approval from the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB), which considers how the buildings fit into the surrounding historic district. Matters such as density and parking are outside of HPRB's jurisdiction. The proposal is currently scheduled to go before HPRB at the end of May for a "concept" review of the massing and general design, to be followed by one or more subsequent HPRB hearings on detailed design decisions.

Parking

The development provides about 1.1 parking spaces per unit in two underground garages. (One already exists, and the other will be newly constructed.) A small amount of parking in the building's interior courtyard is provided mainly for deliveries and service vehicles. The 1.1 ratio is slightly more than the Holladay Corp offered to provide when it planned to redevelop the site, and is significantly more than the legal requirement. Still, many people have objected that the 1.1 ratio provides inadequate parking, and that the project will negatively impact the neighborhood.

MedLINK has proposed building a new underground parking garage accessed from 7th Street. There would also be an entrance to the interior courtyard from 8th Street. In Phase 2 the new underground garage would be connected to MedLINK's existing underground garage, which would permit use of the C Street entrance. While MedLINK is in operation, however, the existing underground garage (along with at least 33 aboveground parking spaces) must be dedicated to hospital

and nursing home parking, and could not be used for condo residents.

Many neighbors have raised concerns that placing the entrance for the new garage on 7th Street would create serious traffic problems on 7th Street. (Although residents of 8th Street spoke out in favor of this design.) Since all traffic to the condo's underground garage would be off of 7th Street until Phase 2 is completed, SPNA requested that the architects consider whether temporary access to the underground garage could also be provided off of 8th Street in the interim. If Phase 2 is ever completed, the combined underground condo parking garages would be accessible from both the 7th Street and C Street entrances.

Neighbors were also concerned about whether condo owners would be required to buy a parking space in the garage, instead of parking on the street. The architect felt that this wouldn't be an issue because off-street parking is a desirable feature that owners will want to buy.

The architect has proposed a circular driveway on Constitution for vehicles to pull in and drop people off. Although many people appreciated the attempt to keep traffic off of the side streets, there was widespread concern that the circular drive could create serious traffic problems for commuters on Constitution and Massachusetts. Given the traffic problems created by the convergence of Constitution, Massachusetts, and 8th Street, there were numerous objections that having traffic pulling in and out of this circular driveway would result in vehicular and pedestrian accidents. In addition, neighbors expressed opposition to having a "ceremonial" entrance for vehicles instead of one that celebrates the pedestrian culture of the neighborhood.

MedLINK has commissioned a study (not yet completed) on the impact of the proposal on traffic and parking. Some residents voiced concerns that MedLINK's study wouldn't be unbiased, and indicated that they would like to see the DC Dept of Transportation (DDOT) perform its own study. DDOT has retained a consultant to prepare a traffic and parking study for Capitol Hill, but that effort has only just begun. DDOT has agreed to have their consultant review the MedLINK study.

Facade

Many people complained about the facades of the proposed new buildings. They felt the design uses too much glass and metal

(including the architect's plan to clad one of the buildings on 7th St with copper, zinc or brass). Several people stated that they moved to Capitol Hill because of the historic fabric, and want to see that preserved. They felt the proposal has a modern look that doesn't fit into the character of the surrounding neighborhood. One person commented that Amy Weinstein's buildings provide better examples of new buildings that are sensitive to the Capitol Hill environment. There was also criticism that the perspective renderings the architect presented showed the new buildings at distant and angled views that downplayed the modern features of the new buildings, and didn't provide an accurate picture of their visual impact on the neighborhood.

Although some of the buildings would be stepped back from the street, there was criticism that the design presents a solid, massive facade that is not sufficiently articulated. There was a comment that the buildings should drop a story here and there to present a facade more like the typical Capitol Hill block.

Impact of 300 Units

Some people described themselves as pro-development, but just opposed to the particular design of this proposal. Others said they were concerned that adding 300 residential units in this block will create congestion and parking problems for the neighborhood, and that they had moved to Capitol Hill instead of Adams Morgan or U Street specifically to avoid those problems.

SPNA Volunteers Needed

Volunteering with SPNA is a great way to get involved in your community. Candidates are needed for officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer) and the Steering Committee. Volunteers are also needed for the various committees (Annual Dinner, Environment, Land Use, Membership, and Scholarship), and to act as newsletter deliverers. The qualifications include energy, enthusiasm, and a commitment to the neighborhood. For more information, contact Dee at 546-8777. You CAN make a difference!

Other Issues

There were a variety of concerns raised at the meeting. Questions were raised about the amount of pavement versus planted areas in the courtyard near St. James church, and whether the buildings would utilize “green roofs” and other environmentally friendly design aspects. There was also a request that MedLINK consider placing commercial or retail facilities on the ground floor of the buildings, such as a coffee shop or restaurant. The architect pointed out that this would require approval by BZA, and MedLINK doesn’t want to pursue that.

MedLINK Continues to Violate Parking Requirements; SPNA Requests Compliance

A recent inspection by the city has shown that MedLINK is in violation of a 2004 requirement to provide adequate parking, making at least 14 years that the facility has failed to provide the parking that it is legally required to. As a result, SPNA has asked the city to halt the review process for the redevelopment until MedLINK comes into compliance with its existing requirements.

MedLINK has a 144 space underground garage for the current hospital operation, but an inspection in 2000 found that the lower level of the garage was flooded and the upper levels were being used for storage of hospital equipment. In 2003, SPNA appealed a decision by the Zoning Administrator in the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) to reduce the number of parking spaces that MedLINK was required to provide. In February 2004, the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) agreed with SPNA, and required MedLINK to provide one parking space for every hospital or nursing home bed that it operated. At the time, MedLINK was operating 177 beds.

SPNA’s concerns with the current redevelopment plans include whether MedLINK provides the required amount of parking, and whether this parking would continue to be provided during construction and after Phase 1 of the redevelopment becomes operational. In response to SPNA’s concerns, DCRA recently conducted an inspection of MedLINK’s parking facilities. While the specific results of that inspection were not yet available when this newsletter went to press, the Zoning Administrator in DCRA confirms that MedLINK is in continuing violation of its parking requirements. But rather than imposing penalties for MedLINK’s

continuing violation of the BZA order, DCRA apparently intends to try to provide a mechanism for MedLINK to seek relief from the BZA order. The Zoning Administrator has suggested that MedLINK apply to DCRA for a lower parking requirement, have that request denied by DCRA, and then use that denial as a basis for a new appeal to the BZA. MedLINK did not appeal the February 2004 BZA decision, and the deadline for such an appeal has long since passed. The procedure suggested by DCRA would provide a “back-door” appeal for MedLINK in an effort to accomplish an appeal they could have filed last fall. DCRA should not reward MedLINK’s decision to ignore the BZA decision rather than file an appeal.

SPNA has sent a letter to Patrick Canavan (the Director of DCRA), Councilmember Jim Graham (chair of the Council committee that has oversight over DCRA), and Councilmember Sharon Ambrose stating that DCRA needs to demand that MedLINK provide at least the 177 parking spaces BZA required in February 2004. MedLINK can do this either by rehabilitating the underground garage to make it fully useable, reconfiguring the building’s courtyard to provide parking, converting some of MedLINK’s currently unused buildings to parking, or leasing parking spaces at some nearby location. SPNA has further requested that the historic preservation review process for the proposed redevelopment be stopped until MedLINK is brought into compliance with all existing BZA orders.

Since the BZA order required MedLINK to provide one parking space per bed, the number of parking spaces that MedLINK is required to provide cannot be determined without updated information on the number of operational beds. MedLINK had 177 operational beds in 2003, but had a

license from the DC Department of Health to operate 287 beds. SPNA has requested that DCRA determine the current number of operational beds at MedLINK.

SPNA has also requested that DCRA impose monetary penalties on MedLINK that reflect the economic benefit to MedLINK of violating the of parking requirements for 14 years. MedLINK’s violations date back to 1991 and span three separate BZA orders (in 1991, 1999, and 2004). Since parking spaces on Capitol Hill typically rent for \$1,800 a year, the economic benefit to MedLINK of violating the parking requirements from 1991 through January 2004 is estimated to be about \$1.7 million, with an unknown additional benefit from February 2004 until whenever MedLINK provides the parking that is required. SPNA believes the economic benefit of these violations should be the basis for economic penalties by DCRA, with a multiplier to reflect the egregious nature of MedLINK’s 14 year violation.

While MedLINK has enjoyed the economic benefit of its continued violation of the parking requirements, the employees and visitors to MedLINK have had to utilize on-street parking to the detriment of the residents of the area. MedLINK visitors and employees park on the street with impunity on evenings and weekends, while local residents find it almost impossible to find on-street parking near their homes.

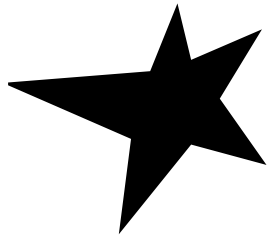
SPNA’s Position on Redevelopment

SPNA is generally supportive of redevelopment of the MedLINK site for residential use, but has specific concerns about parking, traffic and the proposed two-phase development. (SPNA believes that HPRB needs to consider the impact of Phase 1 on the neighborhood if Phase 2 is never built.) Please provide your comments on the proposal by e-mail to spna@stantonpark.org. MedLINK’s concept drawings are available on the SPNA web site at www.stantonpark.org. New material will be posted as it becomes available. •



FRESHFARM Farmer’s Market Returns to H Street!

The H Street Farmers Market reopens for the season on May 7, and will be open every Saturday from 8:30 AM –12:30 PM until November 19. The market is located in the parking lot between 609 and 625 H Street NE, and has 7 farmers selling a variety of products, including organic vegetables, greens, seasonal fruits, eggs, dairy and meats, breads, cut flowers, and more. For information, visit their web site at: www.freshfarmmarket.org.



SPNA Scholarship Fundraiser, May 1 - 3 pm

“Suessical” by the St. Mark’s Players

Reservations Due by April 23

Join us for a fun, family-oriented event that benefits a great cause!

Every year, the Stanton Park Neighborhood Association holds a special event to raise money for its scholarship program, featuring food, entertainment, gifts donated by local merchants, and lots of good company. This year, the fundraiser will be held at a performance of “Seussical” by the St. Mark’s Players. Characters from the beloved stories of Dr. Seuss bounce from page to stage in this colorful and imaginative musical cleverly sprinkled with bits of gentle wisdom. “Seussical” will delight audiences of all ages, especially families with children. The SPNA Scholarship Fundraiser will be held at St. Mark’s (at 118 3rd St, SE) starting at 3 pm on Sunday, May 1. The play will be followed by a barbecue reception.

Tickets to the SPNA’s “Seussical” fundraiser are \$22 per adult, \$8 for children 12 and under, and \$16 for those ages 13 to 21. The ticket price includes the barbecue reception in the St. Mark’s courtyard after the play. Reservations must be mailed by April 19, or made by phone by April 23. **Fill out the reservation form below and send a check to SPNA, P.O. Box 75085, National Capitol Station, Washington, DC 20002.** Donations beyond the ticketed event price are greatly appreciated even if you can’t attend the play can still make a tax deductible donation to the Scholarship Fund.

For those who do attend, SPNA will have donations by silent auction and raffle from generous Capitol Hill merchants and others. Donated items in the past have ranged from meals at Capitol Hill restaurants to gift certificates at area business, from automobile tune-ups at a local garage to services from a master gardener. Past one-of-a-kind items have ranged from a basketball signed by members of the Washington Wizards to a ride in a private airplane. Please contact SPNA if you have a good or service you are interested in donating.



Stanton Park Neighborhood Association Registration Form 2004-2005

[SPNA Membership Year: September 1, 2004 - August 31, 2005]

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ (day) _____ (eve)

E-mail: _____

Would you like to receive the SPNA newsletter via e-mail?

- Single Annual membership (\$10)..... \$ _____
- Household Annual membership (\$18)..... \$ _____
- Household Lifetime membership (\$250)..... \$ _____
- Tax-deductible SPNA scholarship donation \$ _____
- Tickets to SPNA Scholarship Fundraiser, “Suessical”
 _____ adults (\$22) + _____ youth (\$16) + _____ children (\$8) \$ _____

Signature: _____ **GRAND TOTAL \$** _____

Want to get more involved?

Let us know if you’d be interested in working on any of these SPNA committees:

- Land use
- Membership
- Environment
- Newsletter/Web
- Scholarship review
- Annual dinner/special activities

Please make checks payable to SPNA. Send checks and form by **April 19, 2005** to:

SPNA
 P.O. Box 75085
 Washington, DC 20013-5085