



stanton park neighborhood association news

CALENDAR

NOV 28 **Stanton Park Neighborhood Association Meeting**
Monday, 7:30 PM
Northeast Branch Library, at 7th Street and Maryland Avenue NE.

NOV 30 **Community Meeting on MedLINK Redevelopment**
Wednesday, 7:00 PM
St. James Church, 222 8th St. NE

DEC 7 **ANC 6C Zoning Committee**
Wednesday, 7:00 PM
National Public Radio boardroom, 635 Massachusetts Avenue NW

DEC 8 **ANC 6A Meeting**
Thursday, 7:00 PM
Miner Elementary School, at 16th and F Streets NE

DEC 12 **Zoning Commission Hearing on MedLINK Rezoning**
Monday, 7:00 PM
441 4th St. NW, Room 220 South

DEC 14 **ANC 6C Meeting**
Wednesday, 7:00 PM
National Public Radio boardroom, 635 Massachusetts Avenue NW

**No December SPNA Meeting—
Happy Holidays!**

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

MPD Commander at November Meeting

Metropolitan Police Department Commander Diane Groomes will speak about crime and safety at the SPNA meeting on November 28. Commander Groomes, who worked on Capitol Hill as a sergeant in the old PSA 510, was named Commander of the First District in August. In her various positions in MPD,

Commander Groomes has supported community policing. According to Commander Groomes, "I look forward to renewing my relationships with the community, and to working closely and productively with all of the residents, businesses, and community stakeholders throughout 1D."

A MedLINK Update: Another Round of MedLINK Meetings

The proposed redevelopment of the MedLINK Hospital and Nursing Center on Massachusetts and Constitution Avenues between 7th and 8th, NE will be the focus of several upcoming meetings in November and December, including a community meeting on November 30 at 7 pm at St. James Church, 222 8th Street NE.

The Capitol Hill Group, which owns the property currently occupied by the MedLINK Hospital and Nursing Center, asserts that it will eventually convert the entire site to residential use but at this time is requesting approval only for a proposal involving the southern portion of the property (Phase I). This proposal calls for renovation of the 1928 building at the corner of 8th Street and Constitution Avenue, and demolition of the adjacent 1956 buildings (with new buildings to be erected in their place). The Capitol Hill Group proposes to provide 1.1 parking spaces per unit in an underground garage to be constructed under the new buildings. Approximately 160 units would be built during Phase 1. In 2004, MedLINK signed an agreement to sell the hospital and nursing home operations (but not the property itself) to Specialty Hospitals of America (SHA), which will continue to occupy the north end of the property under a lease with Capitol Hill Group until some unspecified date in the future, but which could very well be 10 to 15 years from now.

Under the existing zoning for the property, the proposal does not need to go before the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA). However, the Capitol Hill Group does need approval from the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB), which considers how the buildings fit into the surrounding historic district. The next HPRB hearing on the project will take place on December 15. In addition, ANC 6C has filed an application to bring the zoning of the entire property in line with that of the surrounding residential neighborhood. The Zoning Commission will hold a hearing on the rezoning application on December 12 at 7 pm.

Although SPNA is generally supportive of redevelopment of the MedLINK site for residential use, it expressed the concerns of its members at hearings held by two different city agencies on October 27. Those concerns include parking, traffic, design, and the phasing of the development.

The October Historic Preservation Review Board Hearing

The first of the two hearings on October 27 was before HPRB. SPNA stated its support for redevelopment of the hospital site for residential use, restoration of the historic facades of the 1928 building, and replacement of the noncontributing structures with new construction more harmonious with the Capitol Hill

Historic District. Because SPNA had not had an opportunity to review rendered elevations prior to the hearing, it did not address the merits of the proposed design and instead called for Capitol Hill Group to submit additional design drawings for community review.

At the hearing, SPNA expressed its opposition to any vehicular drop off on the south side of the project on account of the insurmountable safety issues and the incompatibility with the pedestrian culture of the Capitol Hill Historic District. SPNA also opposed having a vehicular entry to the new underground parking garage from Seventh Street while the hospital and nursing home continue to operate on the northern portion of the property. Because of the 10 to 15 year lease between the Capitol Hill Group and SHA on that portion of the property, SPNA recommended that HPRB evaluate Phase I independently of Phase II.

After listening to the public testimony, the HPRB stressed the architectural deference due to St. James Church and made clear that the new proposal should not exceed the mass and height of the Holladay design approved in September 2001, except for specific improvements, such as adding modulation to the roof line. The Board also stated that the revisions must begin with a “presumption” against a vehicular drop off along Massachusetts and Constitution Avenue. And the Board directed the applicants to participate in another community meeting on the project that addresses only Phase I.

The State Health Planning and Development Agency Hearing

On the afternoon of October 27 SPNA also testified at a hearing of the State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA) of the D.C. Health Department regarding the proposed transfer of MedLINK’s Certificate of Need, which a health care facility needs to operate, to SHA.

SPNA’s testimony focused on the parking requirements at the facility. A 2004 BZA order required MedLINK to provide one parking space for every hospital or nursing home bed that it operates. MedLINK has been operating 177 beds at the facility, yet SHA’s application to SHPDA mentions the lease of only 84 parking spaces from the Capitol Hill Group. At the hearing, SHPDA initially stated that parking issues are outside the scope of its review. However, SPNA pointed out that it is not asking SHPDA to determine how many parking spaces the facility needs, merely to require the applicants to comply with BZA’s existing parking requirements before approving the transfer of the Certificate of Need to SHA. SPNA’s post

hearing submission to SHPDA documented the parking violations that have occurred over the last 14 years. SHPDA had not issued its decision on the Certificate of Need at press time for this newsletter.

Community Meeting November 30 on Phase I Proposals

In response to HPRB’s statements during its October hearing that the Capitol Hill Group solicit further community input on its proposed plans for Phase I, on November 10 the architects and representatives of the affected community groups engaged in a charette moderated by HPRB staff. (The term “charette” is used to describe the intense work effort expended by architecture students to meet a project deadline.) The attendees represented SPNA, St. James Church, ANC 6C, ANC 6A, Capitol Hill Restoration Society, Capitol Hill Coalition for Sensible Development, and the Union Square Townhome Homeowners Association, as well as the Capitol Hill Group. They reviewed three new architectural models.

All three models incorporate a structure that steps down on the east side of the building approaching St. James Church and four bays with four chimneys on the south side of the building facing Massachusetts Avenue. The models differed in the placement and angles of the pavilion portion of the building near the southeast corner. All community repre-

sentatives were encouraged with the revised vision of the architects, but remained unanimous in their opposition to vehicular access on the southern side of the proposed project. Additional concerns focused on the facade of the Seventh Street “hyphen” (connecting the new structure to the existing “tower”), the height and square footage of the proposed models, and the appearance of the bays. The architects agreed to make copies of the drawings available to the community groups. SPNA anticipates putting a link to those drawings on our web site: www.stantonpark.org.

A community meeting to discuss the revised plans for MedLINK is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 30 at 7 pm** at St. James Church, 222 8th Street, NE. The project will also be reviewed at:

- ANC 6C Planning and Zoning Committee
Wednesday, December 7, 7 pm
NPR Building (635 Mass. Avenue NW)
- Zoning Commission Hearing
(ANC 6C’s rezoning application)
Monday, December 12, 7 pm
441 4th Street NW, Room 220 South
- Full ANC 6C Meeting
Wednesday, December 14, 7 pm
NPR Building (635 Mass. Avenue NW)
- HPRB Hearing
Thursday, December 15, time TBD

Changes in Stanton Park

Some things will be changing in Stanton Park and some won’t. At the October SPNA meeting, Gayle Hazelwood, superintendent of National Capitol Parks East, solicited community input about whether the shrubs surrounding the children’s playground in Stanton Park should be replaced with an iron fence. Based on the comments at the meeting, Ms. Hazelwood decided to remove the shrubs around three sides of the enclosure (retaining the shrubs along the inner circle, which circle the statue of Nathaniel Greene). The timing will depend on how long it takes to get the fence fabricated.

On another topic, Ms. Hazelwood explained that the recent act passed by the D.C. Council to allow so-called “dog parks” (fenced-in areas where dogs can run off leash) only applies to parks owned and operated by the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation. Some area parks such as Stanton Park and Lincoln Park are federal land operated by the National Park Service (NPS). NPS regulations that apply throughout the nation require dogs to be on a leash no more than 6 feet in length at all times. This will not be affected by the new D.C. law.

Lieutenant Phillip Beck of the NPS Park Police stated that they have a single car patrolling the parks in the area, and depend on the public to alert them to problems. You can call the Park Police at 202-619-7105; if you don’t get satisfaction, you can call the central district at 202-426-6710. If there is an emergency, you can call 911.

The meeting also featured a presentation from D.C. Greenworks, which works with neighborhood volunteers to plant trees, and offers training in tree planting and maintenance, tree box improvement, and tree pruning and monitoring. For more information, please visit: www.dcgreenworks.org or call 202-518-6195.