



All the ghouls
that's fit to print

Volume 25, Number 2
October 2001

stanton park neighborhood association news

CALENDAR

OCT 24 Stanton Park Neighborhood Association Meeting 7:00–8:45 PM

The meeting will be held at the Northeast Branch Library at 7th Street and Maryland Avenue NE. Presentation by Sarah Woodhead, Deputy Director of Facilities Planning, Design and Construction for DC Public Schools.

OCT 31 Halloween Pumpkin Patch Party at NE Library 2:00–4:00 PM

The Northeast Branch Library will be hosting a fun Halloween party for children in pre-school through elementary school. The party will be held on the lawn (if weather permits), or in the Children's Room. For more details, call 698-3320.

NOV 3 Park Clean-up and Tree Pruning Workshop 10:00 AM

Meet at the pocket park at Massachusetts Avenue, 8th Street, and Constitution Avenue, NE (see story on page 2).

Want to know more about SPNA?

Want to know what happened at the last meeting? Got an item for the newsletter? More information about SPNA activities, and how you can get involved is available on the SPNA Web site at:

www.jubiar.com/spna

SPNA Passes Resolution Supporting Free Speech

Concerned about the right of individuals to speak out publicly without fear of civil litigation, the Stanton Park Neighborhood Association at their September meeting unanimously approved a resolution to contribute up to \$500.00 to the legal fees of Will Hill and Ellen Oppen-Weiner. Will and Ellen have been sued as individuals by Girls and Boys Town for voicing protest to the planned Girls and Boys Town development in SE. SPNA is greatly concerned that this kind of legal action will discourage activist neighborhood associations and erode the power of citizen groups and individuals from speaking out about issues in their neighborhoods. The text of the resolution is as follows:

RESOLUTION

The Stanton Park Neighborhood Association:

- Notes that two of our neighbors, Ellen Oppen-Weiner and Will Hill, have been sued by Father Flanagan's Girls and Boys Town because Ellen and Will oppose Girls and Boys Town's plans to develop group homes and a dormitory-type facility near Barney Circle.

And believes that:

- It is wrong for a financially robust organization to use litigation to intimidate public participation in an issue that is of legitimate concern to the community.
- Civil litigation should not be used to intimidate or silence those who speak out in public meetings concerning proposed land use development and other activities requiring approval of public boards.
- Such actions should not be filed to burden opponents with legal defense costs and the threat of liability to discourage those who might wish to speak out in the future.

- The rights of citizens to participate freely in the public process must be safeguarded with great diligence.
- The utmost protection must be provided for the free exercise of speech, petition and association rights, particularly where such rights are exercised in a public forum with respect to issues of public concern.
- SPNA and its spokespersons are exposed to much the same risks as Ellen and Will because SPNA takes an active role in speaking out on issues requiring approval by public agencies or boards.

And takes notice of the fact that:

- Resources are being provided for the defense of Ellen and Will in their capacities as officers of the Southeast Citizens for Smart Development and for Will in his capacity as an ANC Commissioner, but that both Ellen and Will are also exposed to legal expenses as private individuals.

Hereby resolves:

- To contribute up to \$1,000 to assist in the payment of expenses that will not be paid by other sources, because such expenses will be incurred by Ellen and Will as private individuals, in the form of an initial contribution of \$250 each to Ellen and Will, with subsequent contributions up to the \$1,000 limit to be determined by a committee consisting of Warren Friedman, Cory Fleming and Monte Edwards.

MedLink Project Approved

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) has approved a proposal by the Holladay Corporation to retain nearly all of the existing structures for a 275-unit housing development at the MedLink property. Retention of the existing structures spares the community a long demolition/construction period, and should get the project to market more rapidly. The 1928 building will be restored to its original appearance. The facades of the 1950s additions will be restored with new window configurations to introduce a more interesting rhythm. An addition to the rear of these buildings and two levels of underground parking will provide at least one (1) parking space for each dwelling unit. The unattractive North Tower will be completely redesigned with a new exterior designed to reduce the apparent scale of the structure. New three-story apartment buildings will be built at the corners of 8th and C, and 7th and C Streets, NE. HPRB directed Holladay to work with the staff of St. James Church, to explore if adjustments to the building design could be made to prevent excessive trimming of a large magnolia tree at the church.

While the project is not as large as Holladay had initially proposed, it still raises considerable concern over issues such as parking and traffic. However, the primary benefit to the community is the replacement of a non-residential property with residents who will support local businesses.

Station Place Project to be Redesigned

At a meeting held September 20, the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) rejected the proposed design for Station Place by the Louis Dreyfus Property Group. The joint Capitol Hill Restoration Society/SPNA Task Force made a presentation to the Commission which expressed our strong desire for a major project at this site, but also detailed our design concerns. In a

Questions about Station Place can be directed to Drury Tallant at 543-8773 or Warren Friedman at 543-1822.

letter to the Zoning Commission, the CFA stated similar criticism of the building's height and bulk, and noted that the excessive length of the building along Second Street required further study to reduce the visual mass of the structure, including stepping the building back and dividing or further articulating the building and its facades to provide more discreet units. As a result of CFA's rejection of the design, the project will be redesigned and resubmitted. Dreyfus intends to present a revised design to the CFA on October 18, and will present plans to the Zoning Commission on November 1 (or perhaps November 8). No public meetings have been scheduled to present the revised design to the community.

Heritage Foundation Improvements

The Heritage Foundation recently acquired the large apartment building at 208 Massachusetts Avenue NE and plans to renovate it for housing by visiting interns and researchers, as well as use as additional meeting space. The Massachusetts Avenue elevation will be restored, and dramatic alterations to the upper three floors will improve the appearance of the otherwise drab exterior on the other elevations.

After a request by SPNA's Land Use Committee, the unsightly (and illegal) public space parking on 3rd Street has been replaced with landscaping.

Environment Committee Leaders Wanted

The Environment Committee is looking for someone to head up the Tree Subcommittee, which has been very successful in getting street trees planted throughout our neighborhood. They recently completed a survey of empty tree boxes, now used by the city to locate new street trees. Last April, the subcommittee organized a well attended citywide summit on street trees. We need this important work to continue!

Want to lend a helping hand, lead clean-up efforts, or share your ideas on improving our public spaces? Join the Environment Committee today! Please call Laura at 547-4759 or e-mail lmc01@bellatlantic.net if you are interested in volunteering.

Park Clean-Up

Come join friends and neighbors Saturday, November 3 to beautify the pocket park at Massachusetts Avenue, 8th Street, and Constitution Avenue, NE. Margaret Missiaen from Trees for Capitol Hill will be there to give advice, and help us with our tree and shrub pruning technique. Bring heavy-duty yard gloves, rakes, brooms, pruners, and other gardening tools for a morning of hard work, fresh air and a great sense of accomplishment! Cider and donuts, too! We'll start around 10:00 AM. For more information, contact Laura at 547-4759.

A Neighborhood in Action

SPNA has a well-earned reputation of being one of the most active neighborhood associations in the District of Columbia, and the 2001-2002 year is shaping up to be one of our busiest years yet. From several major development projects, to ANC redistricting, to the restructuring of neighborhood schools, SPNA provides a voice for neighborhood residents to make sure our interests are represented. We need your help and involvement to ensure we can continue this important work!

As a small nonprofit, SPNA relies primarily on membership dues for its financial support. We have maintained our same low annual dues—just \$10 for an Individual Membership, and \$18 for a Household Membership—to make it affordable for everyone to be a member.

Volunteers are always needed. This fall, we need people to help distribute our monthly newsletter, plan our annual dinner next spring, and conduct a neighborhood tree survey for the DC Tree Master plan. Please join us this fall and contribute any way you can when our fall membership drive begins in October. Look for the membership letter in your mail and choose to support SPNA this year!