

Shepherd Park News

Planting to Last: Native, Perennial Beauty

by Cynthia Prather and Liz Crafford

SPCA made another big step towards providing an attractive yet environmentally friendly Shepherd Park. With a new, stronger directive by SPCA's Board of Directors, the planting team chose native, perennial plants for its 23 container gardens along upper Georgia Avenue. The board also made a commitment to remove invasive species from the pots.

The switch was partly driven by the challenge of how to maintain the annuals planted each year after the show of perennial daffodils and tulips. Despite volunteer watering by neighbors and businesses, glass watering bulbs, and Mother Nature herself, DC's summer heat always took a toll on the geraniums, petunias, and other annuals planted each year. The board began weighing the benefits of choosing perennial, native plants.

"The native species should not require the same amount of care that other species require because they are more tolerant of weather extremes than traditional garden plants," shared Liz Crafford, Kalmia Road neighbor, native plant gardener, and Rock Creek Park weed warrior. In addition, she noted that native plants provide the necessary food and habitat for the insects, birds, and other wildlife in our community that are essential for keeping us all healthy. And although pots are not the natural habitat of native plants, planting native plants in pots is a great way to brighten up the neighborhood. "It just takes some experimentation,"



photo by Liz Crafford

A switch to native perennials marks SPCA's move to low maintenance, environmentally-friendly beautification.

reported Margaret Tate, in an 2018 article in the *Washington Gardener*. Tate often stuffs a container to the brim with different types of plants and "lets them duke it out."

The transition began last summer when Jackson Carnes planted Adams needle (*Yucca filamentosa*) and some tall grasses in various pots. Last fall, SPCA planted perennial mums and heuchera.

This spring, more native plants were added to the pots. Here is

what you can see the next time you stroll down Georgia Ave: Green and Gold (*Chrysogonum virginianum*), Moss Phlox (*Phlox subulata*), Alum Root (*Heuchera americana*), Beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*), Golden Ragwort (*Packera aurea*), Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*), Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), Goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*), Brown-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia triloba*), and Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*).

SPCA is hoping that using native plants will beautify the avenue and also eliminate recurrent costs, minimize maintenance, and encourage environmental resiliency in the neighborhood. Let's watch and see what happens!

To learn more about using native plants to restore biodiversity and improve the health of our community and city, visit homegrownnationalpark.org/ or reach out to Liz Crafford at craffordfamily@gmail.com. For more information on using native plants in pots, visit washingtongardener.blogspot.com/2018/06/tips-for-creating-native-plant.html.

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Comfort Food: The Little Free Pantry



Shepherd Park Christian Church's Little Free Pantry offers walk-up-and-take-what-you-need nonperishables 24 hours a day.

by Donna Lee Edwards, photos by Cynthia Prather

Shepherd Park Christian Church's Little Free Pantry (LFP) has been a tremendous success, with neighbors embracing the motto of "take what you need, give back when you can." The Little Free Pantry Cam at <http://365project.org/spccfreepantry/365> shows what is available every day. "Neighbors have been extremely generous," commented church member Paula Edwards. "We really appreciate their support." The concept of Little Free Pantries enables people to get staples safely, 24 hours/day, 7 days/week as needed, just as they do with their pantries at home. People have stopped by on the way to and from work, while running errands, or passing through the neighborhood. The LFP is usually restocked at least twice per week and contains canned foods, masks, cleaning products, paper goods, lightbulbs, and other items. *Note: Shepherd Park Christian Church is located at 7900 Eastern Avenue, NW.*

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SPCA's Membership Year is January 1 to December 31
 Annual Individual Dues \$25
 To join/renew your membership, join a committee, or volunteer for one of the SPCA activities, visit www.shepherdpark.org

The *Shepherd Park News*, a newsletter of the Shepherd Park Citizens Association, is published four times per year: October/November; December/January; March/April; and May/June. As a matter of policy, all errors of substance are corrected in the next issue. Report errors to shepherdparknews@gmail.com.
 The Shepherd Park Citizens Association is an IRS 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization. Dues and donations are deductible as charitable contributions.

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March Meeting Spotlights Progress at Walter Reed and Shepherd Park Community Center

by Cynthia Prather

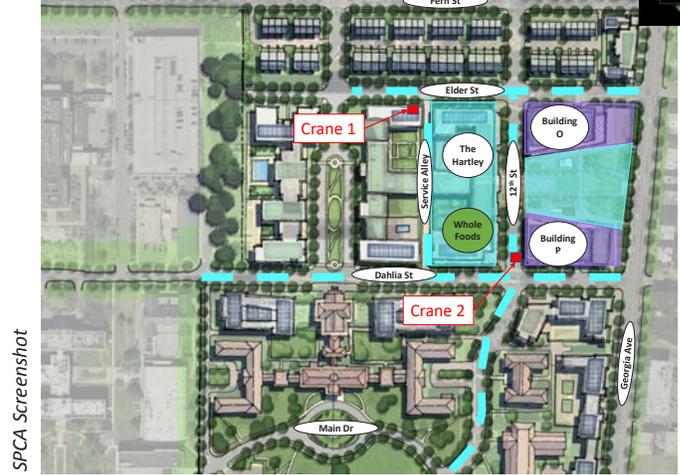
To open the March 2021 virtual meeting, a development team from Hines-Urban Atlantic and Triden Development Group provided updates on infrastructure development and construction at Walter Reed. As reported by Jonathon Quince, "construction intensity is shifting" to the Hartley, with 60,000 square feet of retail, two-thirds of which will be the much-touted Whole Foods. The area also will include 323 living units and a community plaza abutting buildings O and P and underground parking. Demolition and Georgia Avenue utility lines were to be completed by April 30, with construction to begin shortly thereafter. The plaza is slated to open late summer 2022, with the first retail tenants opening that fall. Construction also is underway on several residential buildings along Aspen Street.

Developers see that regular communication with neighbors is key to this process and meet regularly with them to hear their concerns. "It starts with good communication and listening to each other," Quince said.

The remainder of the meeting included presentations from various community representatives. President Jefferson reviewed Phase 2 COVID-19 reopening guidelines provided by the Mayor's Office (for details, visit coronavirus.dc.gov/phasetwo). Tamira Benitez from Councilmember George's office provided information about DC's COVID-19 vaccine pre-registration portal, a community safety forum, and the importance of testifying for the DC City Council budget hearings. Board of Education Representative Frazier O'Leary encouraged people to contact OSSE to express opinions about PARCC testing this spring and provided an update on his ongoing "Books for Friends" drive. Steven Marencic, Office of the People's Counsel, announced a moratorium on utility shutoffs until the end of May.

Finally, newly appointed center coordinator for the Shepherd Community Center, Shirleta Settles, provided an update on Community Center activities. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, only the fitness room is open to the public (appointment only). Outdoor spring activities include a spring basket decorating and egg hunt (see article on p. 6), a spring tea ("Mommy, Tea, and Me"), and a summer Little Explorers Camp. For more information about programming, schedules, and hiring, contact Shirleta.settles@dc.gov.

The Hartley and Infrastructure under construction



Jonathon Quince, supported by Vicki Davis, Mark Simpson, and Kathy Wiscek provided an update of the progress at Walter Reed.

- Roofing company recommender.
- Paint color helper.
- Neighborhood sales analyzer.
- Landscaping advisor.
- Friendly neighbor.

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Neighbors in Action

Jackson Carnes: Shepherd Park's Johnny Appleseed

by Cynthia Prather

Shepherd Park neighbor Jackson Carnes is a man with a mission. Early in the mornings, weekdays, and weekends, you might see him quietly, yet diligently caring for tree boxes along upper Georgia Avenue.

It all started about four years ago when Jackson moved to an apartment in the 7300 block of Georgia Avenue, but saw a neglected front yard and tree box with tall weeds and a mix of gravel and packed dirt. When he stepped out one day, he found an abandoned pickaxe in the tree box! He decided to act (or should I say axe?).

After sprucing up the box in front of his building, Jackson expanded to other tree boxes on the block, then the next block and the next, until he reached Eastern Avenue and came down the other side. To date, Jackson has transformed over 100 tree boxes and other public spaces on and off the Georgia Avenue strip! And we're not talking some superficial job. He's removing trash and debris, digging, planting perennials, and adding mulch icing on the top. In addition to tree boxes, Jackson is slowly filling the avenue planters with long lasting, low-maintenance yucca.

As Director of Constituent Services for former Councilmember Brandon Todd, why didn't he just call DC Government? "DC Government will do the basics like cutting high grass, but not so much regular maintenance or general beautification. Maybe a Main Street or Business Improvement District would do that," shared Jackson. "Also, getting it [a tree box] to a good state is what takes the most time and effort. Maintenance is the easiest part."

Perhaps most amazing is that all of Jackson's plants have been free – donations from neighbors' yards or area gardeners redoing landscaping, listserv posts, and municipal resources. "People are always redoing their yards and have extras," he said. "I just go and get them."

His mission seems simple: to make the Georgia Avenue corridor more attractive and inviting like the rest of our neighborhood. "Once it starts to look nicer, people don't litter as much. Everyone respects it more."



photo by Cynthia Prather

Jackson Carnes has transformed dozens of tree boxes along upper Georgia Avenue.

Congratulations, Stephen Whatley!

by Angela Martin

Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner (ANC) Stephen Whatley has reached his 21-year anniversary as ANC 4A03 Commissioner! As a non-partisan, neighborhood body comprising locally elected representatives, the ANC is a unique feature of the DC Home Rule Charter. ANC 4A03 covers the part of Shepherd Park south of Geranium and Alaska, the Walter Reed site, and Brightwood down to Van Buren.

Steve was born and raised in Washington, DC and has lived in Shepherd Park with his wife Annie, for over 30 years. (Annie owns the upscale women's resale boutique, Annie's Collection, on Georgia Avenue here in Shepherd Park.) Always a community activist, it was Steve's "love of the city" that made him run for ANC. He enjoys "interacting with the community and being able to assist Shepherd Park and Brightwood become better communities." Asked what is the most difficult part of being an ANC, Steve replied, "It is challenging to reconcile many diverse opinions on any given topic."

One of Steve's greatest achievements was working to require health insurance coverage for dependents from age 21 to age 26. His proposal was approved by ANC 4A and then by the DC Council well before it became part of the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare). Steve says his most memorable project was when ANC4A first started working on the redevelopment of the Walter Reed site after it was transferred from the federal government to the city as part of the Base Realignment and Closure process. Commissioner Whatley's goal was to ensure that the Walter Reed site had amenities like those found in Georgetown, Palisades, and Spring Valley. He also points to his work to recommend a decrease in total utility taxes (electric, gas, water) from 11% to less than 6%. This proposal was approved by the DC Council.

Steve was re-elected last November to his 11th term as ANC. Thanks for your service, Steve. Congratulations!

Commissioner Steve Whatley
4A03@anc.dc.gov; anc4A.org
(202) 723-3145



photo provided by Stephen Whatley

Steve Whatley has served ANC 4A03 for over two decades.

Petal Porches: A New Twist on a Springtime Favorite

by Eleanor Lewis, photos by Ralph Blessing

As with all things big and small over the past year, the annual National Cherry Blossom Festival had to pivot in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead of the weeks-long, in-person celebrations and pageantry, this year the festival was scaled back but was still celebratory. In the newly conceptualized Petal Porch Parade, residents of DC, Maryland, and Virginia were invited to get creative and celebrate their love of the pink blossoms by decorating their porches, yards, or windows. The Petal Porch Parade ran from March 20 to April 11, and Petal Porches bloomed all over the DMV. Families were encouraged to tour the Petal Porches by going for a walk or bike ride, or driving around their neighborhood. The culminating event during the weekend of April 10-11 was a procession of artist-decorated vehicles that paraded through selected Petal Porch neighborhoods in and around DC. The parade route included Eastern Avenue and upper Georgia Avenue!



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McGruff and MPD 4D Prep Neighbors on Crime Prevention

by Cynthia Prather

On March 19, McGruff, the Crime Dog, together with MPD Fourth District Commander Randy Griffin, other officers, and staff gathered on Kalmia Road across from Target/Morris Miller to remind Shepherd Park neighbors to be watchful about crime. Representatives chatted with neighbors, shoppers, and business owners and provided pamphlets on some of the most pressing issues.

Google Images



McGruff, the Crime Dog, provided tips for reducing crime in Shepherd Park.

According to Lieutenant Taylor, the biggest problem facing our neighborhood right now is an uptick in property crime and stolen vehicles. People are leaving their cars running and unattended. Why, you ask? During the winter months, warming the car is often the culprit. Then there are the meal or package deliverers, service providers, and drivers filling the tank at the neighborhood gas stations. Despite numerous warnings, officers too often see items in plain sight in the cars. In addition to the potential

loss of personal property, unlocked and idling cars often result in compounded problems if the car is used in other crimes and/or is later abandoned, with towing, reclaiming, and repair costs to follow.

Reluctant to give tickets, officers often choose to leave ticket-like warnings on windshields when they see flagrant violations. To reach more residents, Fourth District representatives also attend Citizens Advisory Council, Police Service Area, and ANC meetings each month. As with March 19, they are making personal visits to communities. "We're stronger together," said Commander Griffith.

With warmer weather, officers fear that property crimes due to deliveries and other activities will continue or rise. What's the best advice? "Don't leave the car running," commented Taylor, "and don't leave personal belongings in the car."

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Community News

Shepherd Field’s Proposed New Turf: a Win for Health and Safety

photo by Sarah Gilberg



Shepherd field’s aging turf with crumb rubber infill will soon be replaced.

by Sarah Gilberg

This February, DC’s Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) notified Shepherd Park residents of plans for a field replacement at Shepherd Park Athletic Field, adjacent to Shepherd Elementary. The work was scheduled to begin March 11 and take approximately 30 days, but permitting delays have set back the timeline.

Shepherd Field previously used crumb rubber from recycled tires as infill for its artificial turf. Crumb rubber can contain toxic chemicals such as Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons, phthalates, heavy metals, processing oils, and other additives. Many of these are carcinogens, mutagens, and/or developmental and reproductive toxicants.

In 2017, the City Council banned installation of tire-derived crumb rubber on city property. All of Shepherd Field’s aging turf material is being removed and replaced with BrockFill, an infill made of engineered wood particles, with Brock’s SP14 Shock Pad (made from expanded polypropylene) beneath the turf.

“We like it because it’s an organic infill product and reduces heat on the turf fields,” says Brent Sisco, Capital Projects Planning & Design Officer at DPR. “This will be a great improvement over the previous field at Shepherd. We recently used this system to replace the Park View athletic field and it has also been used at the Fields at RFK. We’ve had nothing but positive feedback so far.”

As of this printing, no new start date has been provided.

For more information on turf options and health impacts, visit homefree.healthybuilding.net/products/70-turf-hazard-spectrum.

New Community Center Hosts Spring Egg Hunt

by Beth Allaben

The weather was perfect for the Department of Parks and Recreation’s Spring Egg Hunt and Basket Decorating Activity at the new Shepherd Park Community Center on April 3. Neighborhood children decorated baskets and searched for eggs around the school and community center. Watch the listserv for information about a Mommy and Me tea DPR is planning for May (due to COVID-19 restrictions, pre-registration will be required).



photo provided by DPR

Neighborhood children celebrated spring at Shepherd Park’s new community center.



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Living with COVID-19

Senior Year Countdown: Graduation Requirements and College Applications during COVID-19

photo by C-Suite Pics



Julien Kearns (third from the right in this Kearns family shot) is navigating senior year amidst COVID-19.

by Julien Kearns

Julien Kearns is a senior at School Without Walls High School and a dually enrolled second year student at George Washington University.

Graduation and college applications for a senior in high school during COVID-19 is a unique challenge. When it comes to graduation, a lot of the rules for seniors to graduate were changed or even eliminated altogether, while in other instances

they weren't changed at all despite the increased difficulty to complete them. For example, our requirement of 100 community service hours to graduate was removed, but our requirement of 60 hours of internship was not, so there was one less hurdle, but I still need to go about finding an internship during such a time. When it comes to class and project requirements, many find online classes much harder because of the difficulty to pay attention, but the credit requirement did not change.

Amidst trying to complete all of the necessary graduation requirements, college applications were still very prevalent. Applications fundamentally stayed the same, however according to schools, grades were considered from the perspective of completing class during a pandemic. Standardized tests also became optional for nearly all schools, as finding a safe testing environment became a struggle. Finally, an extra portion was added to each application where you could explain how COVID-19 has impacted your life and perhaps how it has hindered your college application.

Circumstances change, and COVID-19 had been one big lesson in adapting to these changes!

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RenovatingShepherdPark.com



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Children’s Opens Genetics Services Program at Walter Reed



photo by Cynthia Prather

The Children’s Hospital Rare Disease Institute coordinates multidisciplinary care of children with genetic, metabolic, and undiagnosed disorders. In-person visits began on February 1.

by Stephen A. Whatley, ANC 4A03

Children’s National is very excited to have its first clinical program on the Walter Reed site.

The Children’s National Research & Innovation Campus (RIC), the first-of-its-kind pediatric research and innovation hub located in Washington, DC, now has its first occupant – the Rare Disease Institute (RDI). The institute, which includes the largest clinical group of pediatric geneticists in the nation, focuses on developing the clinical care field of the more than 8,000 rare diseases currently recognized and advancing the best possible treatments for children with these diseases.

The Rare Disease Institute moved into the completely refurbished space, formerly called Building 52, and is now called the Primary Care and Rare Disease Institute Building. RDI is led by Dr. Marshall Summar, who was instrumental in the Army's transfer of the property to Children's National and was part of the Children’s team from the early days of the Walter Reed project. The RDI team is composed of 14 medical geneticists, 11 genetic counselors, nutritionists, and staff who coordinate the multidisciplinary care of children with genetic, metabolic, and undiagnosed

disorders in collaboration with primary care physicians and specialists from other divisions at Children’s National. Although most visits will continue to be through telemedicine, in-person visits began on February 1, 2021. Primary care services will join RDI in this building in July - August.

The former Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (Building 54), now named the Children’s National Research Institute (CNRI), welcomed its first tenants at the end of March . Johnson & Johnson Innovation-JLABS-Washington, DC will move into two levels of the building and will be joined by the CNRI’s Center for Genetic Medicine Research, Children's Hospital's Metabolic Lab, and Virginia Tech's Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC.

With the advent of advanced DNA sequencing, databanks, informatics, new technology, pediatric consortiums, and global partnerships, clinical researchers have never been in a better position to diagnose and treat rare diseases. As this field of medicine continues to rapidly evolve, the benefits provided to patients, families, clinicians, and researchers through its new home at RIC will further accelerate the trajectory of rare disease from an academic specialty into a mainstream medical field.

RIC looks forward to being a part of the neighborhood. Summar noted, “We are looking forward to connecting with local restaurants and also with the schools.”

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Business Beat

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GA Avenue Main Streets Seeks New Director for Next Phase

adapted from Center for Nonprofit Advancement press release, March 31, 2021

After nearly two years on the job, Paul Ruppert, the Executive Director of Upper Georgia Avenue Main Streets (UGAMS) has resigned his position to pursue another opportunity in West Virginia. With guidance from its parent organization, the Center for Nonprofit Advancement, as well as support from DC's Department of Small and Local Business Development, Main Street America, and community board members, UGAMS has provided valuable support to the businesses along upper Georgia Avenue, from Eastern Avenue south to Missouri Avenue. Some accomplishments include providing more than \$55,000 in grant funding to 17 independent businesses in 2020, providing direct support, technical assistance, and capacity building to over 75 businesses impacted by the pandemic, launch-

ing and maintaining engaging social media platforms and a comprehensive website for ongoing communications and coordination with the community and small businesses, and hosting ongoing technical assistance and community engagement sessions.

The search for a replacement is already underway, with an estimated start date of early summer for the new director.

Black-Owned Book Printing Company Receives Award

adapted from press release

Congratulations to Paul Coates, founder and owner of Black Classic Press, the country's only Black-owned book printing company, for receiving Baltimore Business Journal's Family-Owned Business Award for 2021. Opened in 1978

to publish "obscure, and significant books by and about people of African descent," the business is celebrating its 43rd anniversary. Paul, lives with his wife, SPCA past president Rosalyn Coates, in Shepherd Park.



photo by Baltimore Magazine



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Community Calendar

May-June 2021

May

Every Sun morning, 10:30 am

Platform Service

zoom: tiny.cc/wesplatform
Washington Ethical Society

Every Sunday morning, 11:30 am

Community Coffee Hour

zoom: tiny.cc/wescoffeehour
Washington Ethical Society

Tue, May 4, 7 pm

ANC 4A Meeting (Virtual) Visit Anc.4A.org for update

May 8 (Second Saturday), 9:30 am

Free Online Yoga

zoom: tiny.cc/wesyoga
Washington Ethical Society

Thu, May 13, 7 pm

MPD 4D Sector One Meeting (WebEx Platform)

Sun, May 16, 2-5 pm

SPCA Garden Tour

Shepherd Park Christian Church
7900 Eastern Avenue, NW

Wed, May 19, 4 pm

MPD 4D Citizens Advisory Council Meeting (WebEx Platform)

Mon, May 24, 7 pm

ANC 4B Meeting (Virtual) Visit Anc.4B.org for update

June

Tue, Jun 1, 7 pm

ANC 4A Meeting (Virtual) Visit Anc.4A.org for update.

Thu, Jun 10, 7 pm

MPD 4D Sector One Meeting (WebEx Platform)

Wed Jun 16, 4 pm

MPD 4D Citizens Advisory Council Meeting (WebEx Platform)

Mon, Jun 28, 7 pm

ANC 4B Meeting (Virtual) Visit Anc.4B.org for update

16th Shepherd Park Citizens Association Garden Tour



Photo by Ralph Blessing

Mark your calendars! The SPCA Garden Tour is back this year! Our 16th garden tour will be on Sunday, May 16th from 2-5 pm. In addition to the beautiful, self-guided tour through Shepherd Park, Colonial Village, and North Portal Estates, we are planning to have a small number of socially-distant vendors in the parking lot at the Shepherd Park Christian Church, 7900 Eastern Avenue, NW (12th Street & Eastern Avenue, NW), where you may pick up maps for the tour.

If you would be interested in serving as a volunteer, sponsor, or host, please contact Jackson Carnes at **Jackson.Carnes@gmail.com**. Also, if you have a neighbor with a nice yard that may be willing to serve as a host, please let us know as well.

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photo by Vanessa Dennis



A turkey struts its stuff in Shepherd Park.

Recently, numerous members of the Shepherd Park email group have reported sightings of a turkey exploring backyards and even parading along Jonquil Street, Kalmia Road, and 12th and 13th Streets. Keep your eyes peeled. It may be coming your way.

visit www.shepherdpark.org to join/renew your membership!

SPCA Upcoming Events Garden Tour

Sun, May 16, 2-5 pm

Stay tuned to the Shepherd Park email group, the SPCA twitter account, and other social media outlets for updates on SPCA 2021 activities.

COVID-19 Local Information

Up-to-date information and statistics: coronavirus.dc.gov
District's COVID-19 Hotline: 1-888-349-8323
COVID-19 Testing Hotline: 1-855-363-0333
Department of Human Services Hotline: (202) 727-5355
Local updates, information, or assistance:
Councilmember Janeese George (202) 724-8052

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