



# Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A

*“Serving the Foggy Bottom and West End communities of Washington, D.C.”*

## Special Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 21st, 2019; 7:30 p.m.

St. Mary’s Court, Dining Room – 725 24th Street NW

### Call to Order

Chair William Kennedy Smith (04) called the meeting to order at 7:39 pm. Commissioners Patrick Kennedy (01), Nicole Goldin (02), Trupti Patel (03), Philip Schrefer (05), Jeri Epstein (06), Detrick Campbell (07), and James Harnett (08) were present.

### Adoption of the Agenda

Chair Smith made a motion to adopt the ANC’s meeting agenda by unanimous consent. Without any objection the agenda was adopted.

### Adoption of Past Meeting Minutes

Chair Smith made a motion to adopt the ANC’s regular January 2019 meeting minutes by unanimous consent. Without any objection the minutes were adopted.

### Announcements and Public Comments

Chair Smith thanked St. Mary’s Court for hosting the ANC’s special meeting.

### General Agenda

#### Consideration of a Resolution Regarding the Impending Over-Enrollment Crisis at the School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens

Chair Smith made a motion to adopt a proposed resolution regarding the matter. Commissioner Kennedy seconded the motion, which was voted on and passed (VOTES: 8-0-0). The resolution reads as follows:

WHEREAS, the School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens (SWWFS) is a citywide educational resource serving students from all eight wards, with the majority of attendees living outside of Ward 2,

WHEREAS, over the past several years, SWWFS has demonstrated one of the strongest year-over-year track records of academic improvement of any public elementary school in the city and currently has a waiting list of 700 students requesting enrollment,

WHEREAS, current enrollment at SWWFS is 474 students and, with a perfect distribution of students from preschool through grade 8, the building could reasonably accommodate a total of no more than 500,

WHEREAS, the middle school at SWWFS is currently budgeted and staffed to accommodate 150 students, while middle school enrollment for the next academic year now stands at 160 and estimates provided by school administration and community

groups project it may significantly exceed that, depending on the number of eligible students from Thomson Elementary School and Ross Elementary School who choose to enroll,

WHEREAS, completion of the staff compound at the Chinese Embassy may result in additional elementary school students attending SWWFS during the coming academic year,

WHEREAS, the need to recognize, support, and build upon academic success should be a first order imperative throughout the DC Public Schools (DCPS) system and the current enrollment surge at SWWFS, particularly in the middle school, represents a clear and present threat to the academic integrity of the school,

WHEREAS, in an effort to identify viable short-term strategies to address overcrowding, and the costs associated with their implementation, ANC 2A and community members facilitated a pro bono evaluation of the building by a team of noted architects, the findings of which are attached, and those findings provide solid reason to believe a satisfactory expansion in capacity could be completed prior to the next academic year for a sum of less than \$1 million, and

WHEREAS, outreach by school administration officials and community groups to DCPS regarding the danger of overcrowding at SWWFS for academic year 2019-2020 began in October of 2018 and no satisfactory response was received prior to ANC 2A's regular February meeting, which is consistent with a pattern of non-responsiveness called out for years by community groups as a real barrier to effective long-range planning at the school.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that ANC 2A requests that DCPS increase the funding available to SWWFS for the 2019-2020 school year by roughly \$600,000 in order to increase staffing to a level commensurate with the anticipated expanded enrollment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2A requests that DCPS, Mayor Bowser, and the DC Council allocate \$1 million for an urgent expansion of capacity at SWWFS prior to the 2019-2020 academic year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2A requests that DCPS utilize such funds to prioritize a renovation of the physical plant at SWWFS in the next six months in order to eliminate two small offices and repurpose unused balcony space between them and the small gym so as to create two new 1,200 square foot classrooms, and replace the computer lab with a rolling cart, as suggested by DCPS, in order to provide a third. If undertaken in the next 30 days, the above renovation can be completed prior to the 2019-2020 academic year, thereby raising the overall capacity of the building by 75 students, which should be sufficient to accommodate any anticipated surge for the coming academic year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2A requests that DCPS empower a liaison to work in full partnership with SWWFS leadership, the Local School Advisory Team (LSAT), the Home and School Association (HSA), and the impacted ANCs in a long-

range strategic planning process to define what, if any, further renovations are needed for the 2021-2022 academic year, as well as the details of renovations that will be funded by monies currently appropriated by the DC Council for fiscal years 2022-2024.

Consideration of a Resolution Regarding the Proposed Redevelopment of Shaw Middle School

Commissioner Kennedy made a motion to adopt a proposed resolution regarding the matter. Commissioner Harnett seconded the motion, which was voted on and passed (VOTES: 6-1-1). The resolution reads as follows:

WHEREAS, ANC 2A joined with other ANCs and community organizations in Ward 2 and elsewhere six years ago in order to advocate that Francis-Stevens Education Campus and Garrison Elementary School not be closed, as then-planned,

WHEREAS, as a result of that advocacy and robust parent engagement on school turnaround plans, the DC Public Schools (DCPS) removed both schools from the list of public schools that were planned to be shuttered – even as the second iteration of Shaw Middle School (at Garnet-Patterson) was consolidated into Cardozo High School as a middle-grade extension,

WHEREAS, the reconstituted School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens (SWWFS) has been enormously successful as a result of a turnaround plan that aligned the former PreK-3 to Grade 8 campus with School Without Walls High School – as measured by a doubling of student enrollment (to over the building’s capacity), increased test scores, and a waiting list of close to 700 students,

WHEREAS, Garrison Elementary School has been similarly successful in its turnaround,

WHEREAS, the robust enrollment growth and enhanced desirability of these two formerly under-enrolled schools demonstrates a strong degree of latent and actual demand among parents for quality neighborhood schools – particularly at the middle school level – in the center of the city,

WHEREAS, the closure of the old Shaw Junior High School and the conversion of Francis Junior High School into a campus that only partially serves the middle grades has left DCPS with considerably less capacity at that level in this area than existed prior to 2008,

WHEREAS, as a result, there will not be enough seats to meet future demand at the middle grades in the center city area, given rapid projected demographic growth among school age children in the boundary area, increased enrollment at projected feeder schools, and induced demand that a quality public school is sure to generate above-and-beyond existing projections,

WHEREAS, DCPS has previously committed to the community that the site of the former Shaw Junior High School would be made available for the construction of a future “Center City (Shaw) Middle School” when sufficient demand returned – and did not properly consult with the affected communities before presenting an alternative use,

WHEREAS, the proposal put forward to relocate Benjamin Banneker Academic High School to the former Shaw site is incompatible with the need to reserve space at the site for a new middle school to meet the demand and need previously referenced,

WHEREAS, no other equally suitable site exists for the creation of a new Shaw Middle School – when considering the location of elementary schools and neighborhoods that would feed into it, as well as the lack of success that poorly- planned Shaw substitutes at less convenient sites have already experienced,

WHEREAS, a major factor in the current enrollment pressures at SWWFS is the bulge of students entering the school at the sixth grade level from Ross and Thomson Elementary Schools, whose students have a right to matriculate there – a right which is being fully exercised as SWWFS has evolved into a viable middle school option for families – as part of a feeder pattern established precisely because there is no Shaw Middle School option,

WHEREAS, SWWFS is currently the only traditional middle school option in a large swath of the urban core – with Hardy Middle School in upper Georgetown, Cardozo Education Campus north of U Street, and Jefferson Middle School Academy in Southwest otherwise being the closest available options, and

WHEREAS, in the absence of a viable Shaw Middle School concept, it is a foregone conclusion that other elementary school communities such as Garrison, Seaton, and/or Cleveland will seek to join Ross and Thomson in attaining access to SWWFS as the only nearby, quality, neighborhood middle school option – either exacerbating the current enrollment pressures if such requests are granted or driving families to leave the public school system if not.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that – in recognition of the substantial negative spillover effects that the current DCPS proposal would visit upon the School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens and our community which relies on it – ANC 2A joins with our Ward 2 colleagues in ANC 2F as well as other communities in Wards 1, 5, and 6 to encourage responsible school capacity planning. Specifically, ANC 2A:

1. Considers the construction of a new middle school on the site of the former Shaw Junior High School to be the best and highest use of the site,
2. Urges DCPS to proceed with plans for construction of the new Center City Middle School, as promised in the 2014 Boundary Realignment Plan and in the years before by successive administrations,
3. Encourages DCPS to engage in vigorous, extensive, and sustained outreach efforts to communicate with all stakeholders and obtain feedback on proposals regarding the use and disposition of DCPS facilities in the neighborhoods in which they are located, as current efforts are inadequate and ineffective, and
4. Requests that DCPS and the Deputy Mayor for Education share the data and assumptions upon which they base their apparent determination that Logan Circle and neighboring DCPS schools definitively will never need a standalone middle

school option in the area – given that similar projections were used to justify the closure of Francis-Stevens Education Campus – projections that were proven to be completely wrong.

### Consideration of a Resolution Regarding the Revised Master Plan for Francis Field

Commissioner Goldin made a motion to adopt a proposed resolution regarding the matter. Commissioner Epstein seconded the motion, which was voted on and passed (VOTES: 8-0-0). The resolution reads as follows:

WHEREAS, a revised master plan for Francis Field (Exhibit A), a park situated in the West End neighborhood of ANC 2A, has been drafted in accordance with the 2018 partnership agreement between the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the Friends of Francis Field (FFF), a nonprofit organization that is improving the field with private funding,

WHEREAS, FFF submitted a proposed revised master plan to DPR for approval on December 13, 2018 which primarily documents changes that were made since the current master plan was approved in September of 2009, including the addition of the Francis Dog Park in 2015 and the expansion of the 2501 M Street NW building at the south end of the field in 2016 and 2017,

WHEREAS, the new landscape plan was drafted by the professional landscape architecture firm Oculus, which also developed the 2009 plan,

WHEREAS, FFF has funded the architectural work, and according to the DPR-FFF agreement, will also fund the improvements, which principally comprise of landscape plantings,

WHEREAS, numerous community members and stakeholders have been consulted by FFF and the ANC and are in support of the revised master plan and proposed landscaping enhancements, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors and leadership of the Francis Dog Park are currently prioritizing improvements within existing dog park boundaries.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that ANC 2A requests that DPR approve the FFF proposed revised master plan as submitted (Exhibit A), recognizing that, in the future, alterations may be brought to the ANC and DPR for consideration if safety, usage, or community needs or interests evolve.

### Regulatory Agenda

#### Duke's Grocery – Application for a New Retailer's Class "C" Restaurant License at 2000 Pennsylvania Avenue NW

Commissioner Harnett made a motion to adopt a proposed resolution regarding Duke's Grocery's license application. Commissioner Epstein seconded the motion, which was voted on and passed (VOTES: 8-0-0). The resolution reads as follows:

ANC 2A supports Duke's Grocery's application for a new Retailer's Class "C" Restaurant license at 2000 Pennsylvania Avenue based on the hours outlined in the attached modified license application, on the condition of acceptance by the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board of the attached settlement agreement prohibiting outdoor amplified noise.

Commissioner Harnett made a motion to adopt a proposed resolution regarding Duke's Grocery's stipulated license request. Commissioner Goldin seconded the motion, which was voted on and passed (VOTES: 8-0-0). The resolution reads as follows:

ANC 2A supports Duke's Grocery's request for a stipulated license as part of the establishment's application for a new Retailer's Class "C" Restaurant license at 2000 Pennsylvania Avenue based on the hours and stipulations outlined in the attached modified license application.

**Adjournment**

Chair Smith adjourned the meeting at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "P. Schrefer".

Philip Schrefer  
Secretary, ANC 2A05