



DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE FOR MAYOR LEO ALEXANDER IS KCA GUEST SPEAKER THURSDAY, MARCH 25

This Thursday, at the March 25th meeting of the Kalorama Citizens Association, Mayoral candidate Leo Alexander will be the guest speaker.

As of this writing, Mr. Alexander, a Democrat, is one of a few announced candidates challenging incumbent Mayor Adrian Fenty.

Mr. Alexander, a Brooklyn native, graduated from the University of South Alabama and has worked in television news in Mobile, New Orleans and Washington. After leaving WRC TV, he worked at DC General Hospital as Vice President of Marketing and Public Affairs. More recently, he was Director of Public Affairs and Communications for the DC Public Housing Authority.

I hope you'll take this opportunity to learn more about Mr. Alexander's candidacy and ideas.

When: Thursday, March 25, 7:00 pm.

Where: Good Will Baptist Church, 1862 Kalorama Road, NW, Go up the main front steps and bear right to the rear side door.

-Denis James

HISTORY OF KALORAMA PARK CREATION REVEALED THROUGH VINTAGE NEWS ARTICLES, PART I

An interesting sidelight to the stalled construction project in Kalorama Park is the research, independent of each other, into Washington Post archives by Adams Morgan neighbors Eddie Becker, Matt Forman and Mary Belcher.

The articles from which I've drawn quotations below describe how over the period of about a half century, resident demand helped create the park we all care so much about today. I hope you'll find these as enjoyable as I did. All quotations are courtesy of Proquest Historical Newspapers The Washington Post

"Largest Apartment House, April 9, 1904"

This article refers to the acquisition of the land where the Shawmut apartment building would be built.

"Kalorama Avenue is to be cut through between the two streets in the same manner as Wyoming avenue was two years ago. A small triangular piece of ground will be left south of the avenue, and it will be converted into a park."

Presumably, this is the park directly in front of the Shawmut with the bus stop.

"Organize For A Park", April 11, 1906

"The Washington Heights Citizens Association was formed last night at Washington Heights Presbyterian Church*, with about sixty members."

"The association was formed in the interest of a park, and the opinion generally expressed was to the effect that it would be secured."

"A committee was appointed to inquire into the cost of lands, location, &c. and will report Tuesday night."

*Now Good Will Baptist Church.

"Another Public Park", November 4, 1906

"For the second time in a week the Commissioners have transferred to the Chief of Engineers, United States Army reservations of land in the northwest section of the city, to be converted into public parks. Upon the recommendation of Capt. J.J. Morrow, assistant to the Engineer Commissioner, a plat of the reservation at the intersection of Columbia Road, Nineteenth street, and Kalorama avenue northwest was forwarded to the chief of Engineers, with the request that he accept jurisdiction."

"Petitions Urge New Park", April 10, 1912

"Petitions asking Congress to acquire the Truesdale property at Columbia and Kalorama roads for a park were drawn up last night at a meeting of the Washington Heights Citizens Association, held at the Washington Presbyterian Church. Admiral T.O. Selfridge

pointed out the need for a park at that place. The tract, he said contains about two acres and can be bought for \$200,000.”

“\$2,000,000 Is Asked to Extend Parks”, December 13, 1938

“The National Capital Park and Planning Commission yesterday submitted to the District Commissioners a \$2,000,000 plan for acquisition of playgrounds, parks and recreational centers in various parts of the city.

Justification for the expenditure, which would be included in 1940 budget estimates, was offered to the commissioners by Frederic A. Delano, chairman of the commission, John Nolan, jr., director of planning; Arno B. Cammerer, executive officer, and T.S. Settle, Secretary.

A sum of \$300,000 for the Columbia road playground, at Belmont road, was the largest single item requested by the commission. The tract of land was described as “partly wooded” and in a neighborhood where play facilities “practically do not exist.” The commission said agents have indicated the property can be bought at a reasonable price and that its development with apartment houses “is likely in the near future.”

More next month.

-Denis James

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 25, 2010 KCA MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Denis James, President, called the meeting to order at 7:28 pm. The minutes of the January meeting were approved.

Community Announcements

Lisa Duperier announced the dedication of a memorial brick for deceased park volunteer **Marwan Burgan** in Kalorama Park on Saturday, March 6.

On Thursday, March 11, several local restaurants will be participating in Food & Friends. These restaurants will be giving some proportion of their proceeds that day to the organization, which provides for home-delivered meals to people living with AIDS and other illnesses.

Ann Hargrove reported that the DC Council Committee on Public Services & Consumer Affairs voted out a disapproval resolution on the Mayor’s proposal regarding oversized signs which was supported by the billboard industry. She urged writing in support of the anti-sign measure before the vote on Tuesday, March 2. Denis said he presented the KCA resolution on this issue to all City Council members and many were interested.

Presentation on Mount Pleasant Library by DC Public Library Officials

Archie Williams, of the Intergovernmental Affairs Office of DC Public Libraries, and **Chris Wright**, Capital Projects Manager for DCPL, gave a presentation on the proposed changes to the Mount Pleasant Library. Mr.

Williams has been involved in the community engagement process and in selecting the design team for the expansion. Since Mt. Pleasant Library is a Carnegie Library, the work must be meticulous. He said there were at least 15 meetings held with the community. They have been examining what unique things the library does in order to convey this to the architects. The library, after the proposed changes, will have 22,000 square feet, with a 100-seat meeting room, and study room space. There will be an addition in the rear. There were and are still many technical issues to deal with.

Chris Wright is dealing with technical design issues. The current scheme is the latest of several. Much has been demanded from the architect since the goals of the library are very different now than in 1925 when it first opened. One goal is to have more space, including a 100 person meeting room, so an addition has been proposed in the rear yard. The location of the addition and entry plans has been changed a few times. The desire is to have a common entrance accessible to all. The current front entrance is a grand staircase with a ramp at the right leading down to a basement door for disabled users. The plan now has a very long ramp, starting on the side rear and leading to an entry in the back. A ramp attached to the existing main front entry was rejected because there were too many challenges. Putting the ramp on the side has solved some problems and created others. For example, there is an impact on other buildings. With the ramp on the right side of the building, the purported upside is that it takes advantage of the outside rear staircase on the building, which is beautiful and historic.

In response to a question about how it has been received by people in the immediate area, Chris said that even after many changes, there is still some opposition. The changes were made in response to the very great opposition which existed originally.

Fay Armstrong, president of Historic Mount Pleasant (HMP), said that the whole design had been planned by the time she knew about it. She is disappointed in the process and the design. HMP feels that DCPL has imposed its program on the library. HMP was successful in getting the “ice cube” (the first plan) changed from Lamont Street to behind the building, but she is disappointed in Fine Arts Commission and the DC Historic Preservation Review Board (although the HBRB got the location of the addition changed). The local neighborhood had wanted only to renovate the building. If there was a need for more space, they would have preferred to push it out at the basement level in back. The very long ramp is an issue, as is the proximity of the addition to other buildings. It takes light from them. Also, fire safety is an issue.

There was a question about why there seemed to be a need for meeting space. Fay said it was presented to them as a requirement for all libraries today. She suggested that the program the city was demanding was wrong for the library. Ann Hargrove noted that libraries all over have

many functions now, but this building is not suitable for these functions. Fay noted that HPRB was not interested in the uses, only in design. In response to a question, Fay said one thing she would seek is to get rid of the 100-person meeting room. Chris noted that it was not the 100-person meeting room that was driving the design. Archie noted that the design has been through many versions. Certain criteria are contained in the RFP. There is not a requirement that all libraries be the same, but there is a requirement that all libraries provide equity in services. That's how we got to the meeting room, the study space, etc. that make up the program. He said the point was that we went through the correct process. He claimed that the design we have now is one that many people approve of.

Denis noted that an appropriate needs assessment does not seem to have been done, since there is unused space in the building that could have been used. Chris agreed that there is unused space, and that it will be used better in the new design. The unused space was not enough to meet the requirements, however.

Denis asked if the DCPL was imposing a program on the community. Chris said this was not true—the children's section is not big enough to accommodate all the needs, e.g., for requested meeting space, and for study areas. There is an opportunity now to provide for those needs. **Bob Ellsworth** noted that there is a new school down the street from the library, and that their auditorium could be used for a meeting room. Archie said DCPL approached DCPS about that without success. Fay said that the neighborhood has made the point that not all space demands should be made on one site.

A member of the disability community said she wants the front steps preserved, even though they would not necessarily be used by everyone. This would be in addition to the common, dignified entrance (the new ramp) that could be used by all. She suggested that Archie has misrepresented what the disability community wants. There was some discussion about who originally suggested that the front steps be removed, an idea that was subsequently rejected.

Denis asked Chris to talk about the very long ramp. Chris said that a concern about the proposed ramped entrance into the lower level (subsequently rejected) was that it did not provide an equal caliber of experience to everyone. Also, it was a security challenge. There was no overall control point, which is a goal in all libraries. Two entrances on two levels are too hard to keep track of, even with a camera. Chris said that it would not be the longest ramp in the city, and many changes have been made to the plan. They insisted that, for various reasons, it has to be this long.

Mary Belcher asked about the sudden availability of money in a cash-strapped city. Why spend all this money on an imposed project when you could just put a guard at the downstairs door. Archie talked about capital funds and operating funds. It was suggested that since "equity"

seemed to be driving these requirements, why do this project if the neighborhood does not feel that it is getting an equitable service.

Ann Hargrove said that the urban renewal plan calls for a library in Adams Morgan, in the Marie Reed area, and that idea should be resurrected. She said just the building should be renovated, and suggested that the nearby St. Stephen's Church had found a creative ramp solution. Also, there should be an alley between all the buildings, in order to get fire trucks in.

ANC- 1C-02 Commissioner **Chris Otten** said that the Adams Morgan and Mt. Pleasant ANC's are contracting with a design company to review the plan. He noted that if there is a ramp and a main entrance, they might have to close the main entrance so that everyone would be able to use the same entrance (read new ramp). But Chris Otten said many want to keep the current ramp, which works well with the elevator just inside the basement door. He noted that the public did not get to see the first several iterations of this plan. (At this point Secretary **Linda Ingram** left the meeting. Treasurer **Bill O'Field** kindly agreed to take the remainder of the minutes.)

Denis stated that only 150 Ward One residents participated in the Aviles Survey which was essentially community outreach on what folks wanted for the library. In response, Archie said there were four structured Ward One meetings that expanded to 15 meetings, plus information was on the DCPL Web site. Denis presented a resolution asking DCPL to reengage with the community to come up with a plan that better suits the building and community needs. After discussion and amendments the resolution was approved.

Guest speaker Jacob Kishter Commander of the 3rd District MPD

Denis introduced guest speaker Third District **Commander Jacob Kishter**. Commander Kishter said he has been with the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) for 20 years; was a part of the Mobile Crime Lab; and believes in community policing and has added plain clothes officers to cover the Adams Morgan neighborhood. He had previously been stationed at the 3D substation. Commander Kishter opened the floor up for questions from the attendees. In response to questions, Commander Kishter stated that the DC Fire Department classifies arsons, not the MPD; that additional officers have been added to the 3:00 – 11:00 p.m. and 11 p.m. – 7:00 a.m. shifts, with special emphasis on the weekend shifts; that Police Service Area (PSA) 303 will be getting new officers which will include new graduates from the Police Academy; that a new matrix has been developed in which none of the Third District officers will get Friday or Saturday nights off; and that he will ask officers to be sure that dog owners clean up after their dogs.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

- **Linda Ingram/Bill O'Field**

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CONTRIBUTIONS AND DUES PAYMENTS

Annual dues are now due. Contributions can be made by credit card or Paypal at: <http://www.kaloramacitizens.org/join>
Or use this convenient form and send your check to KCA, PO Box 21311, Washington DC 20009. KCA is a 501(c)(3) organization. All dues and contributions are fully tax deductible to the extent provided by law

- Here's my \$_____ contribution for plants and supplies for the Biltmore Triangle Garden.
 - I support the Walter Pierce Park Archeology Project. Enclosed is my \$_____ contribution to help pay project costs.
 - For a minimum \$25.00 contribution to the Walter Pierce Park Archeology Project, get an Adams Morgan T-shirt.
 - Here's my \$25 dues for 2010.
 - I've corrected the mailing label below. Here's my e-mail address for new updates:_____
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Kalorama Station
PO Box 21311
Washington DC 20009

Return Service Requested

**NEXT KCA MEETING: THURSDAY
MARCH 25, 7:00**

**GUEST SPEAKER
DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE FOR
MAYOR LEO ALEXANDER**

**GOOD WILL BAPTIST CHURCH
1862 KALORAMA ROAD, NW**