

*From the desk of Michael J. Henderson
For information purposes only*

**Eckington Civic Association
Monthly Meeting
Monday, August 3rd 2009
Harry Thomas Recreation Center
7 PM**



Ted McGinn opened meeting at 7:05pm



Historic Preservation

There are currently some 40 historic districts; Ted handed out a helpful handbook that the Association keeps pertaining to Historic districts, information, household income, etc; Also what do people look to be preserved, (facades, windows, etc); 30-40 percent of your home is windows; historic preservation would like to keep a certain level of consistency; the handbook also dispels myths, gives facts, etc; Office of Planning gives this booklet out; there will be a series of discussions; rules and regulations for historic districts is 104 pages, some of which does not apply to home owners Steve Rynecki handed out brochures about the history of some neighborhoods; he has been working with Charlene McCullers to put together a grant to get funding for brochures (they did receive funding); Kim Williams will get a proposal next week; she has done quite good work on brochures; Humanities Council has given them a grant to put Eckington website online; this is a neighborhood driven effort

What is Historic Preservation? There are official eyes that come and look at your plans; not to prevent you from doing what you want to do but more to keep a feel and character for the neighborhood; this applies only to the front of your building (not the side, back, or inside of your house); for example some brown stones have been painted different colors and it changes the look and feel; or, when some bricks are used they are a specific type –

a decorative brick; Ted said when you paint bricks you may be doing harm to your home – bricks are designed to breath, and paint can inhibit that; Ted mentioned how wallpaper was often used years ago as well; Steve R. spoke about brick work done that did not follow decorative veins;



A resident said we may be putting cart before the horse; Eckington is not historic; there was discussion about costs of windows (historic may be a bit more than your average Home Depot windows); you can also use composite windows as historic windows to save money;

Ted said some people feel that others are doing some odd things to their castles; then he mentioned things folks have done to make things look historic and/or just better, like painting lamp posts, cultivating tree boxes, inserting/adding cast iron into tree boxes; Scott Roberts said there is a grant program that has been very popular in all the historic districts; a resident said there are a lot of renters in Eckington; Ted said that's why we need a survey; example: Eckington School was sold to investors, now it is historic; the DCRA window counter is where most applications for home improvements are made and approved; a resident said not everyone in Eckington makes a lot of money; Ted said this is where the survey will help; a resident asked if the interior or back of house is affected – answer – no; we are talking about the façade (outside, front yard) only;

Scott Roberts said the city has initiated a Zoning Regulations Project – recruited zoning experts, started with 20 categories, met with residents, Office of Planning, etc; they looked at major cities, small towns, etc., to determine what shortcomings our zoning laws have; decision was that trying to come up with a uniform zoning code may not be the best thing because DC has so many different kinds of structures for houses, etc; maybe they should have zoning for your neighborhood; he mentioned the Chevy Chase DC historic designation conversations years ago; some were for and some were against; historic designation means you get design review; you have to plan your development; zoning does not do design review – they do not account for bad taste; zoning does not address design review, it addresses things like pop-ups; zoning does not address styles, materials, colors, etc; A resident said let's say a hypothetical – Eckington is historic district – what happens to the blighted properties? Ted said they will have to go through

the same design reviews prior to any work; Steve R. said he understands Jason's concerns but there is a certain charm in neighborhoods that are designated historic; Steve said you should see the grant program in Anacostia – it's incredible;

I (*Michael Henderson*) said people need to be educated about the pros and cons of historic designation before you start a survey;

Kris Hammond asked about which doors he could use if he were in an historic district; the answer was he would need to choose from among those that fit the area/historic district; wood panel doors are all allowable for example; Ted said the key word is consensus; if we can get the money to do a structural inventory of the neighborhood then that alone is a good thing; we will still do web sites and brochures, house and garden tours; Ted said they could also do a week-day walk with the kids; when kids planted gardens, for example, littering and graffiti disappeared because residents including children take ownership

Emory Clean Up Day – last Saturday in August; sponsored by Washington Capitals; folks that sign up on the DCPS site will get a t shirt and cap from the Capitals; will plant flowers, spread mulch; Urban Forestry youth division is coming to Emory to pull weeds, prune, mulch, etc;

Meeting closed at 8:10 PM

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