

FOXHALL News

foxhall.org

October General Meeting

Our next gathering is the celebration of the reopened Hardy Park on **Saturday, October 16 @ 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.** (see below)

Along with social events we will thank the DPR employees who made this happen. We all agree that they did a great job. Please join us on the 16th at the park. All are welcome.

We are also planning a Halloween parade and crafts before trick or treating on Halloween day (the 31st). Location and exact time to follow and will be posted on the Listserve and website.

Hospitality in Foxhall Village

Nikki Farison

Foxhall Village has launched a hospitality committee this year. There are three parts to this committee. First we will make welcome bags for new homeowners and deliver these monthly, second we will make meals for families who had a new baby, are experiencing sickness in their household or death of a family member. Third, we will organize neighborhood parties.

The Welcome Committee will make bags/baskets monthly for new neighbors. So far it is just a bottle of Italian wine and a homemade loaf of zucchini bread and a Foxhall history booklet. We are looking for volunteers who may want to bake either bread or cookies. I would also like to make the homemade jam once a year and freeze it and pass that out too. Strawberry picking is in the spring and could be a fun trip for anyone interested in picking and jamming.

I would love to see families volunteer maybe once in awhile to cook a meal for a neighbor bringing home a new baby, or experiencing sickness or death in their household. This volunteer opportunity would

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Hardy Park, Foxhall Elementary, and Mary Cheh

As we celebrate the reopening of Hardy Park it is important to remember that the City is currently still planning to build a 550-student Foxhall elementary school on top of the park with construction beginning next fall and the school opening in 3 years. The City also purchased the 700-student GDS lower school on MacArthur Blvd last spring with plans to use it as a public school. There has been much public debate over both of these projects and a number of facts have emerged, but many questions remain. So far, we know:

- The City has not decided how to use the GDS school and recently announced that it would not be used until at least the 2023-2024 school year (two years from now). The City did not announce any change to the timetable for the Foxhall School but it is reasonable to assume that if GDS is pushed back so is Foxhall.
- The City has publicly admitted that the decision to place the Foxhall school on the Hardy Park was done without any site-selection process or consideration of any other location and that the decision to expropriate the park for the school was a "political" decision. **Community Updates con't on Page 3...**

THE BIG GRAND OPENING

HARDY PARK CELEBRATION
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2021
3:00 - 5:00PM
HARDY PARK, 4500 Q STREET, NW

MUSIC/FOOD/DRINK/ICE CREAM
PUMPKIN DECORATION & MORE!

When possible, please contact the appropriate FCCA Board Member directly to discuss issues and concerns—Focus Areas are listed after the board member’s name. General issues can go to Bob Avery.

FCCA Board

Bob Avery, President and Police Liaison

338-3834, raverydc@gmail.com

Carter Beach, Clark Place Liaison

301-523-7207, cartermbeach@gmail.com

Vipul Bhagat, Treasurer

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Leo Blyth, Hardy Park Liaison

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Cari Borrás, Vice President & Bylaws Committee

borrasca2008@gmail.com

Liz Davis, Membership & Young Families Liaison

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Michael Delaney, Special Projects

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Conrad J. DeWitte, Jr., Secretary and GCP Steering Committee Representative

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Brian Donahue, FCCA Listserv Administrator

Paul DonVito, Historic Preservation & Listserve Liaison

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Nikki Farison, Community Events & Welcome Committee

nikkifarison@gmail.com

Ann Haas, Hardy School Renovation Committee Chair

333-2635, ahaas212@comcast.net

Michael O’Connell, GU/Medstar Construction Liaison

342-8165, JMConnell3@gmail.com

Sara Paulson, Aging-in-Place, Palisades Village Liaison, & Chair of the Foxhall Call Box Restoration Committee

333-0797, sara.paulson@gmail.com

Edward Ponzi, Lab School Representative & Neighborhood Beautification

378-3284, e_ponzi@hotmail.com

John Szymkowitz, Bylaws Committee

john@szymkowicz.com

Peter Van Allen, DC Fair Skies & Colony Hill Liaison

333-0586, peter@vanallen.org

FCCA Administrator

Brittany Aguilar, Administrator

britt.aggie@gmail.com

FCCA Listserv

FCCAlistserv+subscribe@groups.io

Who Do You Call?

City-Wide Call Center

Go to 311.dc.gov or call 311 to request free bulk trash and yard waste pickups, and to report burned out street lights, illegal dumping, graffiti, cars obstructing sidewalks or displaying suspicious guest parking permits, and other issues.

DC Animal Shelter 576-6664

Police and Fire Departments

Call 911 for both emergency and non-emergency Police matters.

Georgetown 24/7 Community Hotline

Report student activities that negatively impact our community including noise after 10 pm at GU’s 24/7 Hotline, 687-8413

PEPCO

Power Outages 877-737-2662

Street Lights Out 269-0855

Washington Gas 624-6049

Ward 3 City Council Member

Mary Cheh, mcch@dccouncil.us

Ward 3 Mayor’s Liaison

Emir Gur-Ravantab, emir.gur-ravantab@dc.gov

Our ANC Commissioners, Jason Rao

(ANC 3D06) 3D06@anc.dc.gov, J.P.

Szymkowicz (ANC 3D09) jp.szymkowicz@anc.dc.gov. For more information,

go to anc3d.org.

Foxhall Village Historic District

Planning to work on the exterior of your Foxhall Village home? See work going on that seems contrary to our Historic District guidelines? Please call or email our DCHPO rep, Anne Brockett, (202) 442-7600 or anne.brockett@dc.gov. Historic District Guidelines can be found at http://foxhall.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/FVHD_Design-Guidelines.pdf

Going out of town?

Email MPD Officer Tony McElwee to check on your home periodically, anthony.mcelwee@dc.gov.

Join the FCCA Listserv!!

Keep up-to-date with all happenings in your community by joining the FCCA Listserv. For more information and to join, check out: groups.io/g/FCCAlistserv

Scheduled Meetings with Local Private Schools

Share comments and concerns so they can be aired at these public meetings that institutions are required to schedule with local communities according to their agreements with the Board of Zoning Adjustment.

Lab School – All at 6pm

2021: Dec 6,

2022: Feb 7 and April 25

St Patrick’s – All at 7:30pm

2021: Oct 19

2022: Jan 18, April 19, July 19

FCCA Newsletter Submissions

Send to cjdewitte@hotmail.com for the next newsletter. Generally submissions should be under 300 words, but longer pieces may run by advance arrangement.

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require you to make a meal and deliver it after talking with the recipients as to food likes and dislikes and when they are going to be home to receive it.

The neighborhood parties going forward could be:

- Q oval Fall Potluck- October (this year we will not do this as we are planning a party at Hardy Park)
- Halloween parade and crafts before trick or treating
- Christmas Carols
- New Year’s Eve Day progressive dinner
- Spring Cherry Blossoms children’s bike parade and games

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- Whenever it would open, most of the students at Foxhall school would come from outside of our neighborhood. The City's own planning figures show that less than 150 students live within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of the school and thus are "walkable."
- Originally Foxhall was proposed as a solution to overcrowding at Key, Mann and Stoddert schools. However, in June the City decided to deal with Stoddert's overcrowding by building out the school, leaving Foxhall solely as a solution to Key and Mann.
- Key and Mann are both currently operating below capacity. Indeed, Key School enrollment has been flat since 2011 and has actually declined since 2017 (its peak year). Although there are issues about sufficient cafeteria/common space the school is currently operating well below capacity (even without the trailers) and was so pre-covid. Mann is also operating below capacity and has no trailers.
- All parties agree that there is a need to provide additional spaces for Pre-K students in Ward 3 including Key and Mann neither of which offer Pre-K3. There are no official estimates of how many seats would be needed but projections based on enrollment in schools which do offer full Pre-K suggest numbers of 24 at Key and 54 at Mann.
- Regardless of the type of school chosen, almost all of the students at a new GDS school would come from out of our area. Less than 100 students in DC public middle schools or high schools live in the Key school area. A 700-student school would thus have to draw most of its students from somewhere else.

Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that the City has delayed decisions about the schools. Everyone admits that Ward 3 has school overcrowding, but the most severe problems are at Deal Middle School and Wilson High School. Foxhall does nothing to address this and GDS's inaccessible location suggests that it is a poor solution to either problem, likely to generate major opposition from impacted parents whose children would be redistricted there. Moreover, the local Hardy Middle school is operating way below capacity, so it is hard to make the case for GDS as a new middle school.

With these facts you would think that our local politicians would be lobbying the City to put their Foxhall plans on hold until a proper planning process has been undertaken. Perplexingly, however, our local ANC and Councilmember Mary Cheh have been doing the opposite. In March, without any public hearings, the ANC 3D voted down the proposal of our

local ANC representative, JP Szymkowicz, to seek more planning information on the school from the City. In the last two months, Mary Cheh has emerged as the major proponent of the school and dismissive of any concerns about the school that have been raised by neighbors. Here some are quotes taken from of statements from her office:

"I will note that I have heard the suggestion that DCPS says the local community will contribute only a small number of students to the school, and that is not correct... even with Stoddert's addition, there will still be more than 400 seats needed across Stoddert, Mann, and Key."

"[The new school] will see many Foxhall families who currently drive shift to walking—in essence, it could actually reduce overall traffic."

"[Parking will not be a problem] I will note that the new school will not necessarily have onsite parking for staff [i.e., they will use public transportation]."

"[Destroying the heritage trees next to the Lab school] While there are several trees on that space, I anticipate DCPS [DC Schools] and DPR [DC Parks and Rec] will replace those trees where they are disturbed by a new school [and further] special and heritage tree law does not apply to governmental entities."

"There are no plans in place that would destroy, pave over, obliterate, or otherwise meaningfully reduce green space in the park; it is also likely that the vast majority of the new renovation would be untouched by construction, so no risk of wasted dollars on the current work to upgrade and beautify the park."

"I know you said you don't trust DCPS to stick to these plans, but I do not believe that would be the case. DCPS regularly works with the community to ensure schools best serve the neighborhoods as well as the community. DCPS has nothing to gain by not sticking to these concepts, and I trust they will do so."

In short, the concerns raised by many neighbors about the need for this school and the likely impact it would have on the new park, traffic, and parking are simply dismissed as over-reactions or due to "misinformation" on our part. We are told that the very same body that decided to place a school on our park with no public input or process, that signed an extension of the Lab School lease on midnight of Christmas Eve and didn't tell the public about it until 3 months later, and that ran up massive cost-overruns in renovating the Ellington school can now be trusted to build a new 550 student school with minimal destruction to the park even during construction.

Regardless of where one stands on the desirability of Foxhall
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school we should all want an open and fact-based planning process. If Mary Cheh believes that a 550-student school could be built on the Lab school parking lot without significantly damaging or intruding on the park, then she should be able to give us legitimate architectural drawings that show that--not a sketch put together by a DCPS planning group member. If she thinks not providing for Staff parking will solve the parking problem and not materially impact street parking in the neighborhood then show us data from other schools with similar policies.

Mary Cheh argues that even with an expanded Stoddert, space is needed for 400 more local students in the Key/Mann/Stoddert area. Where does she get this number? The Stoddert community believes that the Stoddert renovation can and should be able to solve all overcrowding at their school. Key and Mann are both currently under capacity, DC planning estimates a future need at Mann of only 52 students, Key enrollment has been flat, and a realistic estimate of additional Pre-K students at these two schools adds only 75. That doesn't add up to 400.

If Mary Cheh really believes that 400 is the right number, then why is she against even considering GDS as a site for the school or alternatively using GDS as a K-8 as many in the community want? If the GDS site is such a good solution to other Ward 3 overcrowding problems, why hasn't the City proposed it yet? If she were to admit that the 400-student figure is inflated, then she should tell us why she thinks the previously budgeted Key school conversion of trailer space into a

200-student new wing isn't sufficient to solve overcrowding at both Key and Mann. If she believes, as others have argued, that the 3.2-acre Key school lot is too small for a 500-student school, then why does she think one could easily be put on the 1.1 acre Old/Hardy Lab school lot?

The FCCA community is not being unreasonable. We believe that there are few people in this city that believe that it is right to use precious taxpayer dollars to build the first new school in Ward 3 in 75 years and to expropriate a park to do it, simply on the word of their local Councilmember.

It's time for Mary Cheh to come clean with us. If she truly believes that there is a need for a new school to accommodate 400 more students in lower Ward 3, then have an open and transparent planning process that shows that. Have the office of Planning and DC schools provide hard data to support the decision. And if that process does show a need for such a school, and she believes that school could be built on Hardy park in a way that would not materially damage the park, and there is no other suitable location, then show that with an open and transparent site-selection process.

The potential loss of our park and uncertainty as to where our students will go to school is eating at our community. If you agree with us that living in limbo is unacceptable, we urge you to write to Councilmember Cheh. Its time for real answers.

Bob Avery, FCCA President
Tom Wolfe, Friends of Hardy
Chairman

FCCA Membership as of **October 6, 2021**

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DeWitte, Conrad
Donahue, Brian & Julie
McCoy, Ellen
Orlove, Deborah & Brett
Pastor, Margy
Ross, Marsha & Pete

Advocate

Avery, Robert
& Katherine Samolyk
Brennan, Gabriele
& Michael
Farrell, Janet & Joe Drach
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Polk, Scott & Karen
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Bailey, Michael & Mari
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