

The West End Flyer

Serving the West End Neighborhood of Washington, D.C.

May 2021

Legislation Filed for Rebecca Coder Park *Small Part of Francis Field Would Memorialize Neighborhood Leader*

On May 1, 2021, Councilmember Brooke Pinto filed the “Rebecca Coder Park Designation Act of 2021” in the Council of the District of Columbia.

If passed by the Council and signed by the Mayor, it would designate a small section of Francis Field to be named in the memory of former Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner Rebecca Coder, who died in office on May 1, 2018, in her tenth year of representing the West End. She was then 49 years old, and had fought a long battle with ovarian cancer.

In a letter to the Council, Pinto stated: “The bill memorializes her successful efforts to provide passive recreation space in the West End neighborhood, specifically the portion of Francis Field that is now a small pleasant park area, where neighbors can walk dogs, sit

proved a plan to improve the park-like area of the field with private funding, and name it for Rebecca Coder as part of a broader partnership agreement with FFF. It was signed on December 30, 2019.



Rebecca Coder

A hearing on the Council bill introduced by Pinto will be scheduled later this year.

Rebecca, during her five terms as an ANC commissioner, was a key supporter of public facilities, including the new library and new fire station that were built in the West End during her term. She helped to keep Francis Junior High School from being closed, and the historic Stevens School building from being turned into apartments. She was also a founding board member of the Foggy Bottom West End Village which helps seniors to age in place.

Changing the former “prison yard” architecture of Francis Field was her first and favorite project. She was instrumental in developing a professional landscape architectural plan for the public park, and shepherding it through a 2007 zoning case. Her aim, and that of her colleagues in the long process, was to make the recreation space more useful and appropriate for the residential neighborhood that the West End was becoming and soon to be.

She embodied the community’s spirit of her time. She was young, smart, and fun to be around, and it helped to make her an effective advocate for the bright constituency she represented.

A year after her death, in 2019, the West End Library placed a plaque for her on its wall of honor, calling her a “Pillar of the West End.”

FFF intends to honor her, too, not only with a plaque in the park she created, but also by continuing her ideals and making Francis Field a laboratory for landscape architecture, urban forestry, and volunteer service in this vibrant precinct of our great city.



Redbuds in bloom, in Rebecca Coder Park area, April 12, 2021.

on benches, and enjoy this small outdoor space, created in 2009 under her leadership.”

The naming of this area for her and the placement of a small brass plaque was suggested by the Friends of Francis Field (FFF), which publishes the *Flyer*. She was the group’s first president.

Her colleagues on Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A passed a unanimous resolution in favor of the naming proposal on September 20, 2018.

The D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation ap-

Neighbors Question Mullett's Rowhouses Project To Return to Preservation Board for More Review

A condo development project for the rowhouses at 2519-2523 Pennsylvania Avenue was partially approved by the District's Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) at its April 22nd meeting. It involves two of the three rowhouse buildings designed by noted architect Alfred Mullett in 1889, which have been designated as District of Columbia landmarks. (See previous article and graphics in the April *Flyer*.)

However, complaints by neighbors about the lack of notice given for public review of the project convinced the HPRB to require the developer to return for another session "after more time for community discussion of the project."

A Zoom meeting is tentatively planned between the developer and nearby residents for May 11 according to Ann Franke, a resident of the Westbridge condominium located west of the project.

"Absence of community input has been a huge issue for us," she told the *Flyer*.

Franke and others have concerns about the four-story "carriage house" addition proposed for the rear of the building, which is shown in the architect's drawing

below. The addition also poses a zoning issue, which is now scheduled to be heard by the Board of Zoning Adjustment on September 15. It is also expected to be discussed at the ANC-2A meeting on May 19. (See



Architect's west elevation of project showing rear addition.

DPR Head Talks about Dogs and Francis Field Conditions

"Leash law complaints right now are probably the number one complaint across the city," Delano Hunter, director of the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation, said in answer to a question at the April 21 meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A.

Dogs off leash on Francis Field have been a topic at several of the commission's recent meetings. West End commissioner Joel Causey asked about the dog issue, and the poor field conditions for school teams.

Hunter and other D.C. department heads had joined Mayor Muriel Bowser in her talk with the ANC Zoom meeting on a wide range of topics.

Hunter stated that there had been "an explosion of new puppies" during the pandemic—and that "people were home to walk their dogs a bit more." Among the steps to be taken to address the off-leash issue is a public information campaign launching in May.

As to the poor field conditions, Hunter said "the usage of Francis Field probably indicates that we should

website for full agenda: anc2a.org.)

The project contemplates 15 residential units, with commercial space on the first floor.

consider artificial turf," but he added that it was "not possible at this moment," because of the ownership of about half of the field by the National Park Service. He agreed, however, to "engage the community and the Department of General Services on what is the best approach to maintaining the field."

It was the first time Hunter has spoken at an ANC-2A meeting since becoming DPR director in 2019.

A Note to Our Readers

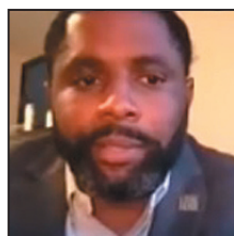
We revived the monthly *Flyer* in May 2020 for the Covid-19 health emergency which seems to be nearing an end. After this issue we hope to publish less frequently.

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Delano Hunter