

Mount Vernon Square

Neighborhood Association

Uniting our historic community since the 1970s

June 2006

MVSNA Meeting **Tuesday, June 20, 7:30 pm** **Metropolitan Community Church** (Corner of 5th and Ridge Streets, NW)

Agenda: Public Safety Report; Presentation by Bonstra/Haresign Architects and MMG Development on restoration of front façade & conversion into six condos at 442 M Street; Presentation by GTM Architects and Holland & Knight on 6th and L Streets development

Message from the President

This month, we all should be especially proud to be members of the Mount Vernon Square Neighborhood Association (MVSNA). It was a month where we all came together with positive results.

That bond was most visible when a house at 1242 New Jersey Avenue collapsed due to a contractor's failure to secure the foundation when digging out the basement. The Haney family, longtime residents of the block, lost everything and, as renters, they did not have insurance. The neighborhood rose to the occasion, with MVSNA contributing \$500 and raising generous contributions from Meeting Management Services Inc., an event planning organization located on the block, as well as the Metropolitan Community Church and several neighbors for a total of \$1,200 in assistance. Neighbors also provided house plants, clothing, bedding, and other items to help the Haney family get back on their feet. The Haney family continues to live with family members in the area, but hopefully the neighborhood's support will help them restart their lives.

As the "MVSNA in Action" column shows, our neighborhood recently joined together in a number of areas: obtaining sidewalk repairs, addressing an illegal rooming house and fraudulent construction, fighting drug activity, and seeking long-overdue lighting and other improvements for the park on New Jersey Avenue and O Street. These efforts are coming to fruition, with inspections, violation notices sent, sidewalks repaired, and drug dealers evicted. And, in the weeks ahead, we expect to see the lights on in the park for the first time in two years and further progress in addressing nuisance properties. I hope you will take the time to get involved in the MVSNA. As this month shows, when the community works together, there is so much we can achieve.



Town Hall Forum on Crime Held

At a June 15 Shaw town hall forum on crime, city leaders pledged to implement a 90-day plan to address the worsening crime problem in the greater Shaw-Mount Vernon Square neighborhood. At the forum, numerous members of the community voiced concern about increased gun violence, drug dealing, and the need for the management of low-income housing to have a no-tolerance policy for residents who are involved in criminal activity. The forum was chaired by Councilman Jack Evans. Police Chief Charles Ramsey and representatives from DPW, DCRA, and the D.C. courts were available to answer questions. Another forum is planned for September.

Sites Identified for Community Action

This month MVSNA members participated in a "Partnership for Problem Solving" session held by Officer Barns of the MPD Third District. The program trains community volunteers in the tools and methods for solving neighborhood crime and disorder problems. Participants selected two projects on which to focus: the park located at New Jersey Avenue and O Street and the 1200 Block of 4th Street. The park has been a magnet for public drinking, drug use, and other illegal activity. Two years ago, plans were developed to completely renovate the park. The plan was finalized but never put out for bid. Over the past few months, MVSNA has tried to restart the project. Short term goals are to get the lights turned on and, if possible, have the benches removed or replaced with a model that discourages sleeping. The Department of Parks and Recreation has ordered new light fixtures which are expected to arrive on June 19. The community will also focus on vacant properties and lots on the 1200 Block of 4th Street where crime has been allowed to flourish. Participants will work in conjunction with MVSNA's vacant property task force to address abandoned housing throughout the neighborhood.

MVNSA in Action

M Street Sidewalk: Thanks to the efforts of M Street residents, MVSNA, and Jack Evans' staff, the sidewalks on the 400 Block of M Street were repaired early this month following work by Washington Gas.

1103 5th Street: Third District MPD Officer Tommy Barnes reports the major person believed to be selling drugs in the house was evicted in early June. Other individuals living at the house, with the owner's cooperation, were served with eviction notices which are pending in court. MVSNA members have done a fantastic job of responding to Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew Lopez's request for statements conveying the impact of the drug and other illegal activities at 1103 5th Street on the neighborhood. The MVSNA sent a letter as well. Those letters will support a potential criminal action by the government that remains under investigation. When the house is vacant, the owner reportedly plans to renovate the house into three rental units. Officer Barnes reports that he will personally help the owner select tenants. Thank you, Officer Barnes and Mr. Lopez!

Lots at 4th and Ridge: MVSNA Vice President Si Kailian was successful in getting the developers and District government to trim the grass and weeds on the lots.

Speed Humps: Installation of speed humps on the 400 Block of M Street is expected by July 30, 2006 according to the District Department of Transportation.

444 M Street NW: Neighbors uncovered that the developer of the property illegally demolished the rear of the house. DCRA is investigating allegations of forged permits and bribery and has issued a stop work order.

Illegal Rooming House: MVSNA members continue to investigate what appears to be an illegal rooming house at 516 M Street. This week, DCRA sent a Notice of Violation to the owner via certified mail, which gives the owner a timeframe to correct the violations (otherwise known as abatement) and/or to appeal the notice. If the violation continues, the property will be referred to DCRA's Housing Code Enforcement Branch

2006 MVSNA Officers

President – Cary Silverman
carysilverman@comcast.net

First Vice President - Si Kailian
niello8@yahoo.com

Second Vice President – Sam Farmer
Farmer_sammy@yahoo.com

Treasurer - Jeff Parke
jeffersonparke@gmail.com

Corresponding Secretary - Camille Bonta
Camille_Bonta@yahoo.com

Upcoming Events

- **June 22** Vacant Property Walk-Thru
11 am; Meet at 4th and M Streets
- **July 5** ANC Meeting
6:30 pm; Africare 440 R Street, NW
- **July 18** MVSNA Meeting
7:30-9pm
Council Chairperson and Mayoral candidate Linda Cropp will speak about her vision for the city.

Have You Joined MVSNA?

Please support MVSNA by becoming a member, and providing a financial contribution. To join, go to www.mountvernonssquare.org or contact MVSNA President Cary Silverman at 202-247-5113 or president@mountvernonssquare.org. MVSNA needs your support to accomplish our community's goals!

The 200th member joined the MVSNA listserve on June 2. It is a great way to stay up to the minute on neighborhood happenings and to discuss what is going on in the community. To join, visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mvsna/>. Also visit MVSNA's new blog, *Life in Mount Vernon Square*, accessible through the MVSNA Website at www.mountvernonssquare.org.

Police Contacts

PSA 308 – Lt. Ralph Neal; (202) 673-6821

PSA 101 – Lt. Lofton and Lt. McCoy; (202) 727-4610

PSA 501 – Lt. George Caldwell; (202) 727-4503