Report of the Executive Director

During the past month, the Executive Director took the following actions under the Commission’s delegation authority. Unless otherwise noted, all projects are in Washington, DC.

1. Comments to the Council of the District of Columbia for an Alley Closing in Square 274 - S.O. 21-06612, 1250 U Street, NW. (8303)
2. Preliminary and final site and building plans for the LEARN Charter School Temporary Facilities, 100 Duncan Street, SW. (8308)
3. Preliminary and final site development plans for a T-Mobile Antenna Installation Modification at the the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, 10300 Baltimore Avenue, Beltsville, MD. (8309)

During the past month, NCPC staff determined that the following projects are exempt from Commission review, based on certain criteria. Unless otherwise noted, all projects are in Washington, DC.

1. Preliminary and final building plans for Building E Repairs at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center, 4000 Arlington Boulevard, Arlington, VA. (8305)
2. Preliminary and final site development plans for the Telephone Pole Security Cameras at the St. Elizabeths West Campus, 2701 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE. (8313)

Planning Updates

Monumental Core Streetscape Guide

On September 30, Senior Urban Planner Meghan Dowker participated in “Lighting Urban Nightscapes: A Global Conversation” an invitation-only, online conference sponsored by the Lighting Urban Community International, an international network of civic leaders and lighting professionals. Attendees from cities in Finland, France, the Netherlands, Hungary, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States shared information and discussed specific strategies, common solutions, and challenges regarding urban nightscapes.

Public Space Security Initiative Webpage

The Public Space Security Initiative has a new initiative webpage on the NCPC website. The webpage has curated all events and reports since the kick-off event, Open to the Public: Rethinking Security and Public Access in Public Space, in September 2019. Additionally, the newly posted Addendum provides findings from the Farragut Square Workshop and Open to the Public: What’s the Big Deal with a Little Security? online panel discussion. It is located at https://www.ncpc.gov/initiatives/publicspace/.

Beyond Granite

The “Beyond Granite” proposal submitted by the Trust for the National Mall in collaboration with NCPC and the National Park Service, was awarded a grant by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to fund a demonstration project of temporary commemorative works in the nation’s capital. The 27-month grant will support community outreach, development, and the installation of 8-10 temporary commemorative works. The goal of “Beyond Granite” is to elevate underrepresented national and local stories in the commemorative landscape.
National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission Meeting

The next National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission meeting is scheduled for October 5. The tentative agenda includes review of the site selections for the Republic of Texas Legation Memorial and the Fallen Journalists Memorial; modification design for the First Infantry Division Memorial; H.R. 4009, the Georgetown Waterfront Enslaved Voyages Memorial Act; S. 2571, the Flying Tiger Flight 739 Act; and amendments to Commission bylaws regarding DC Commemorative Works applications.

Implementing Executive Orders

Staff submitted NCPC's Implementation Plan for EO 14019, Promoting Access to Voting to the Office of Management and Budget. Staff is currently responding to EO 14008, On Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, which includes implementation of EO 13690, Establishing a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard.

Public Outreach

Assessing Equity in NCPC's Practices and Procedures

At the September Commission meeting, NCPC staff presented the agency’s approach for advancing equity in its operations and policy-making process. Current efforts include research and coordination with other federal and regional agencies, development of an internal team to refine the approach, the launch of training in the fall, and submission of an equity action plan to the Office of Management and Budget in January 2022.

Agency Featured Several 9/11 20th Anniversary Articles

NCPC staff participated in several news articles related to the impact of September 11 on security in Washington and other American cities. The Executive Director and Diane Sullivan, Director, Urban Design & Plan Review spoke with the Philadelphia Inquirer. Fast Company (Fast Co Design) interviewed Diane Sullivan and Mike Sherman, Director, Policy & Research Division. Diane Sullivan and Beth Miller, Director, Physical Planning Division spoke with Washingtonian Magazine.

Executive Director Presents at Harvard GSD Online Seminar

On September 28, the Executive Director participated as a guest speaker in the Harvard University Graduate School of Design online proseminar: Of the Public. In the Public. By the Public led by Toni Griffin. He focused on issues related to commemoration, security, and public space, with a focus on how recent events brought the two topics ever closer together. Other speakers included Stephanie Hankey, Executive Director, Tactical Tech and a 2022 Loeb Fellow; Justin Garrett Moore, Humanities in Place, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; and Barbara Brown Wilson (author of Resilience for All: Striving for Equity through Community-Driven Design).
NCPC’s Regional Outreach

The Urban Design and Plan Review Division completed NCPC’s first annual regional outreach initiative in September. The outreach included federal sites and installations in the region. The next phase of the initiative is currently underway and includes outreach to the National Park Service Park units. Overall, this has been a very valuable exercise that has reestablished contacts and inter-agency relationships, allowed NCPC staff to understand the upcoming years’ projects, and improved cross-coordination with the local jurisdictions. Staff will provide a brief update to the Commission in December reflecting on lessons learned and highlighting the projects anticipated for the year ahead.

NCPC Meets with NCC and NCA

On September 9, the Executive Director held a videoconference meeting with his counterparts Tobi Nussman, CEO, National Capital Commission in Ottawa, Canada and Sally Barnes, Chief Executive, National Capital Authority in Canberra, Australia. They discussed ongoing initiatives for commemoration and the impacts of COVID on agency operations, work programs and their communities.

Blog: Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

In honor of the diverse cultures and contributions of Hispanic and Latino Americans, Communications and Research Support Specialist Berat Mezghebe explored the legislative journey to approve the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of the American Latino.

Personnel

New Senior Planner Named

Meghan Dowker was named to fill the Physical Planning Division’s Senior Urban Planner position. Meghan is a registered architect and holds a master’s degree in landscape architecture. She brings private and public sector experience to the position. Meghan served as a team lead or team member on projects such as the SW Ecodistrict, the FBI Square Guidelines, and the Monumental Core Streetscape Guide and Construction Manual; served as a project officer on commemorative and urban design projects; and has collaborated on a number of interdivisional special projects. Meghan will transition into her new role as NCPC embarks on its FY 2022 work plan, closely working with her colleagues to advance the agency’s mission.