

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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COMMISSION MEETING

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OPEN SESSION

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THURSDAY,  
JANUARY 4, 2024

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The meeting convened via Videoconference,  
at 1:00 p.m. EST, Teri Hawks Goodmann, Chair,  
presiding.

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS  
PRESENT:

TERI HAWKS GOODMANN, Chair  
    Presidential Appointee (At-Large)  
ELIZABETH HEWLETT, Vice Chair  
    Presidential Appointee  
LINDA ARGO, Mayoral Appointee  
ANITA COZART, Office of the Mayor of the  
District of Columbia  
ARRINGTON DIXON, Mayoral Appointee  
RYAN GIACHETTI, Committee on Oversight and  
Accountability, United States House of  
Representatives  
BRYAN CLARK GREEN, Presidential Appointee  
PAUL MCMAHON, Department of Defense  
TAMMY STIDHAM, Department of the Interior  
MINA WRIGHT, General Services Administration

## NCPC STAFF PRESENT:

MARCEL C. ACOSTA, Executive Director

STEPHANIE FREE, Urban Planner

JEFF JAMAWAT, Urban Planner

JULIA KOSTER, Secretary to the Commission

BSRAT MEZGHEBE, Communications & Research  
Support Specialist

ELIZABETH MILLER, Director, Physical Planning  
Division

ANNE SCHUYLER, General Counsel

A-G-E-N-D-A

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CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS (No presentation)

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and Human Services -- National Institutes  
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5B 8448 United States Department of Health  
and Human Services, National Institutes  
of Health, The Children's Inn Renovation  
and Expansion

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ADJOURN

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 1:00 p.m.

3 CHAIR GOODMAN: Well, good  
4 afternoon. And welcome to the National Capital  
5 Planning Commission's January 4th, 2024, open  
6 session. Ms. Koster, would you please take the  
7 roll?

8 1. COMMISSION ROLL CALL

9 MS. KOSTER: Certainly.  
10 Commissioner Cozart?

11 COMMISSIONER COZART: Here.

12 MS. KOSTER: Thank you, Commissioner  
13 McMahon?

14 COMMISSIONER McMAHON: Good  
15 afternoon.

16 MS. KOSTER: Thank you.

17 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Stidham?

18 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Here.

19 MS. KOSTER: Thank you.  
20 Commissioner Argo?

21 COMMISSIONER ARGO: I'm here.

22 MS. KOSTER: Thank you. Vice Chair

1 Hewlett?

2 VICE CHAIR HEWLETT: Here.

3 MS. KOSTER: Thank you. Chair

4 Goodman?

5 CHAIR GOODMAN: Here.

6 MS. KOSTER: Thank you.

7 Commissioner Green?

8 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Here.

9 MS. KOSTER: Thank you, Commissioner

10 Wright?

11 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Here.

12 MS. KOSTER: Thank you.

13 Commissioner Dixon? Commissioner Dixon?

14 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Here.

15 MS. KOSTER: Thank you.

16 Commissioner Cash?

17 MS. KOSTER: And Commissioner Davis?

18 MS. KOSTER: And Commissioner

19 Giachetti?

20 COMMISSIONER GIACHETTI: Here.

21 MS. KOSTER: I'll note that Marcel

22 Acosta, the Executive Director, Anne Schuyler,

1 General Counsel, Diane Sullivan with the Urban  
2 Design and Plan Review Division, and Elizabeth  
3 Miller with Physical Planning are also in the  
4 meeting.

5 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you. Thank  
6 you, Ms. Koster. In noting the presence of a  
7 quorum. I'd like to call the meeting to order.  
8 Today's meeting is being live streamed and will  
9 be available in a few days as a video on NCPC's  
10 website.

11 If there's no objection, the agenda  
12 as posted is adopted, and the order of  
13 business. And now please join me as a short  
14 video clip, the Pledge of Allegiance, is  
15 played.

16 (Pledge of allegiance.)

17 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you. NCPC  
18 will continue to conduct its meetings online  
19 until the renovations in the Commission  
20 Chambers have been completed. I want to share  
21 how we will be conducting Commission business  
22 today. And following our staff presentations,

1 and any other testimony, I will ask for a  
2 motion and a second as appropriate.

3 During Commission deliberations, I  
4 will use the round robin format to ask each of  
5 the commissioners if they have any comments.

6 During the deliberations, commissioners should  
7 be on video unless you are experiencing  
8 technical difficulties.

## 9 2. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

10 So, Agenda Item Number 2 is the  
11 report of the Chair, and I just want to say  
12 Happy New Year. And it's wonderful to see all  
13 of you here today. As staff noted, we have a  
14 fairly light agenda. I think Commissioner  
15 Wright, who has been here for many, many years  
16 and is our veteran, said that she's never seen  
17 an agenda this light.

18 But we're excited to hear the  
19 presentations today. And I think as we  
20 consider the work of the Commission in the past  
21 year, I'm happy to let you know that the NCPC  
22 staff has recently released their 2023 year in

1 review. It highlights the Beyond Granite  
2 program and also the Pennsylvania Avenue  
3 Initiative which we'll hear about again today.

4 There are several other high profile  
5 projects that have been reviewed. And I  
6 encourage all of you to take a look at that.  
7 This has all been a reminder to me of how  
8 important the work is that we do.

9 I know that the General Services  
10 Administrator, Robin Carnahan, by letter, has  
11 advised me that Elliot Doomes, PBS  
12 Commissioner, and Melanie Gilbert, were new  
13 Commission member alternates along with Mina  
14 Wright and Kristi Tunstall Williams. So I do  
15 want everyone to be aware of that.

16 3. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

17 And Agenda Item Number 3 is the  
18 report of the Executive Director, Mr. Marcel  
19 Acosta. Marcel?

20 MR. ACOSTA: Thank you, Chair  
21 Goodmann, and Happy New Year. The public is  
22 invited to attend two upcoming meetings to

1 discuss the updated comprehensive plan  
2 introduction chapter and submission guidelines  
3 which the Commission reviewed last month.

4 An online meeting is scheduled for  
5 January 25th, and an in-person meeting on  
6 February 20th. Please visit our website to  
7 review the draft updates and to RSVP for the  
8 meeting.

9 I also have two personnel  
10 announcements. Management and Program Analyst  
11 Cana Williams has been with the agency since  
12 2016 and has recently accepted a position with  
13 the National Institutes of Health. We thank  
14 Cana for her service as our facilities and  
15 record manager over the past eight years and  
16 wish her the best of luck in her new role at  
17 NIH.

18 After 22 years as Commission Graphic  
19 Designer, Paul Jutton has retired. Paul has  
20 made every NCPC plan, webpage, newsletter, and  
21 public event engaging and visually interesting.  
22 He developed our current logo and was the

1 driving force behind the agency's recently  
2 launched online planning library and upcoming  
3 Centennial Exhibit which you'll learn about  
4 today.

5 We'll certainly miss Paul and wish  
6 him all the best in his future endeavors.

7 You do have my written report in  
8 your packet. I'm happy to answer your  
9 questions. Then, just by the way, in February  
10 we do expect a very busy meeting.

11 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you, Mr.  
12 Acosta. Does anyone on the Commission have a  
13 question for Mr. Acosta?

#### 14 4. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

15 Hearing none, we'll move on to  
16 Agenda Item Number 4, and that is the  
17 legislative update. Ms. Schuyler?

18 MS. SCHUYLER: Thank you, Madam  
19 Chairman. And Happy New Year to you and  
20 members of the Commission. I do have nothing  
21 to report today.

22 CHAIR GOODMAN: All right, any

1 questions for Ms. Schuyler?

2 5. CONSENT CALENDAR

3 Hearing none, we'll move on to  
4 Agenda Item 5 which is the consent calendar.  
5 And there are two consent calendar items. The  
6 first is for approval of the final site and  
7 building plans for the multi-level parking  
8 garage at the National Institutes for Health in  
9 Bethesda, Maryland.

10 The second is for approval of the  
11 final site and building plan at the Children's  
12 Inn renovation and expansion at 7 West Drive,  
13 Bethesda, also for the National Institute of  
14 Health.

15 Do the Commissioners have any  
16 questions regarding either one of these  
17 projects at this time?

18 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Move the  
19 approval.

20 CHAIR GOODMAN: Very good, thank  
21 you for that motion, Commissioner Dixon.

22 VICE CHAIR HEWLETT: Second.

1 CHAIR GOODMAN: And second, thank  
2 you Vice Chair. Ms. Koster, could you confirm  
3 the motion and the second and take a vote,  
4 please, by roll call?

5 MS. KOSTER: Certainly. The motion  
6 was made by Commissioner Dixon and seconded by  
7 Vice Chair Hewlett. With that, Commissioner  
8 Cozart?

9 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes.

10 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner McMahon?

11 COMMISSIONER McMAHON: Yes.

12 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Stidham?

13 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Yes.

14 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Argo?

15 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes.

16 MS. KOSTER: Vice Chair Hewlett?

17 VICE CHAIR HEWLETT: Yes.

18 MS. KOSTER: Chair Goodman?

19 CHAIR GOODMAN: Yes.

20 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Green?

21 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Yes.

22 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Wright?

1 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yes.

2 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Dixon?

3 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

4 MS. KOSTER: Thank you. Just double  
5 checking. Commissioner Cash? And Commissioner  
6 Giachetti?

7 COMMISSIONER GIACHETTI: Abstain.

8 MS. KOSTER: Thank you.

9 CHAIR GOODMAN: Okay, well thank  
10 you  
11 very much. The motion has carried.

12 For the remainder of the agenda we  
13 will hear information presentations from staff.

14 6A. Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative Update

15 Agenda Item Number 6A is an  
16 information presentation on the Pennsylvania  
17 Avenue Initiative. Mr. Jamawat, could you  
18 please proceed when you are ready?

19 MR. JAMAWAT: All right. Let me  
20 share my screen. Can you see my screen?

21 CHAIR GOODMAN: Yes.

22 MR. JAMAWAT: All right. Chair

1 Goodman and Commission Members, the purpose of  
2 today's information presentation is to provide  
3 --

4 (Audio interference.)

5 MS. KOSTER: Jeff, if you can, would  
6 you -- we did have some difficulty hearing you.  
7 So perhaps if you want, I'll ask Mr. Champ to  
8 pull up the slides for you, and then you can go  
9 ahead and give the presentation.

10 Mr. Champ, if you can go ahead and  
11 do that, we'll give you a minute or two.

12 Great, thank you. Looks good, see  
13 it. So Mr. Jamawat, I think go ahead and  
14 proceed. And we'll make sure that we can hear  
15 you during your presentation.

16 MR. JAMAWAT: Thank you very much.  
17 Good afternoon, Chair Goodman and Commission  
18 members. The purpose of today's information  
19 presentation is to provide an update on the  
20 Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative.

21 Next slide, please. The project  
22 area is a 1.2-mile segment of Pennsylvania

1 Avenue between the White House and the U.S.  
2 Capitol encompassing about 40 acres of  
3 adjoining public spaces, adjacent blocks, and  
4 intersecting streets.

5 Guided by the 1974 plan, the study  
6 area has complex jurisdictional structure with  
7 several federal and District agencies  
8 responsible  
9 for different aspects of the corridor.

10 In 2023, NCPC worked with GSA to  
11 secure the funding and enter into a partnership  
12 with the Park Service, District government, the  
13 Downtown D.C. Business Improvement District,  
14 and Events DC to prepare the Pennsylvania  
15 Avenue plan.

16 Next slide. In 2018, the Executive  
17 Committee published their findings and  
18 strategic action plan outlining the near,  
19 medium, and long term activities to prepare the  
20 new plan. The findings were the outcome of  
21 several foundational studies. The Committee's  
22 work led to several catalytic actions, and

1 after consulting with a multi-disciplinary  
2 panel of experts, the Committee agreed on the  
3 new vision for the avenue.

4 This direction was reinforced by the  
5 District ULI report in 2020 that underscored  
6 how investment in public space and civic  
7 infrastructure can help spur economic  
8 activities and revitalize downtown post-COVID.

9 In fact, we're just so delighted that the Mayor  
10 incorporated Pennsylvania Avenue into her  
11 economic development strategy for the District,  
12 including the forthcoming Downtown Action Plan.

13 Next slide. Federal and local  
14 stakeholders agree on a new vision that the  
15 avenue should be a beautiful street designed  
16 for people first. And the highest and best use  
17 is the avenue as a venue, elevated as America's  
18 stage for events of national and global  
19 significance.

20 These new events will supplement the  
21 existing local and regional events on  
22 Pennsylvania Avenue today. Also the avenue can

1 help reduce over-programming at the National  
2 Mall by hosting events that are more  
3 appropriate for its urban character, as well as  
4 bringing events and a critical mass of tourists  
5 closer to downtown.

6 Next slide. The partner agencies  
7 also agreed that the avenue needs to be a  
8 better street for daily life, a destination  
9 that prioritizes pedestrian, bike, and transit  
10 with more comfortable and engaging public  
11 spaces for people to enjoy every day, all day,  
12 and into the evening.

13 Next slide. As a reminder, in 2022  
14 the Commission released a vision and three  
15 early concepts for public comments by the end  
16 of the four and a half months comment period.  
17 NCPC received over 450 comments.

18 We also hosted public meetings and  
19 met one on one with a range of stakeholders,  
20 including in-person events on the avenue. We  
21 learned from each engagement that people are  
22 motivated, inspired, and are very excited about

1 the future of Pennsylvania Avenue.

2 Next slide. On behalf of the  
3 project partners, NCPC is seeking two  
4 consultant teams through two separate RFPS to  
5 develop critical components of the new plan.  
6 The first RFP was issued in September and  
7 focuses on the Implementation Program.

8 The consultant will develop the  
9 program of requirements for special events,  
10 perform economic analysis, and develop the  
11 business case for the new vision, and recommend  
12 a new stewardship entity to administer,  
13 operate, maintain the Avenue which is critical  
14 to the long term success. The proposals are  
15 being evaluated by the selection panel  
16 comprising representatives from each partner  
17 agency.

18 The second RFP was published in  
19 December and focuses on physical design of the  
20 corridor and public spaces, as well as  
21 infrastructure improvement to realize a vision  
22 of the Avenue as a venue and a great public

1 space for everyday use.

2 The proposals are due on Friday,  
3 March 1st. And we anticipate a large number of  
4 submissions that will inform the selection time  
5 line.

6 Next slide. This slide provides an  
7 outline of the tasks in each RFP leading up to  
8 the Commission review and agency approval of  
9 the new plan in Task 7. As you can see, the  
10 seven tasks are similar for each team, the IP  
11 Team focusing on the tasks in blue and the  
12 Design Team focusing on tasks in green.

13 This work will require close  
14 coordination among subject matter experts that  
15 represents both core disciplines. And by  
16 splitting the RFP into two pieces, we are able  
17 to maximize the expertise required to execute a  
18 comprehensive scope of work.

19 Both teams will collaborate and  
20 coordinate their work intuitively through  
21 different phases of the project. Staff will  
22 return to the Commission later this year to

1 share more detail on the selected consultant  
2 team and their work plan.

3 Next slide. Looking ahead at the  
4 time line, we are in the middle of the  
5 procurement period noted in yellow. We  
6 anticipate starting work with the first  
7 consultant team in February and the second team  
8 in early summer when we brief the Commission on  
9 the work plan.

10 The first step is to build on the  
11 three early concepts and public comments  
12 received and to continue meeting with  
13 stakeholders to refine these concepts. This  
14 will be the basis to initiate NEPA and Section  
15 106 in 2025, at which time the public will have  
16 multiple opportunities to provide input on the  
17 concept design activity.

18 Our goal is to present the new plan  
19 to the Commission for review in 2026, the year  
20 of America's 250th anniversary. And once  
21 approved, certain aspects of the new plan will  
22 require legislative action before

1 implementation.

2 While the plan is under development,  
3 the partners are also interested in learning  
4 from the fun and inspirational demonstration  
5 events taking place on the avenue, next slide,  
6 for example, the Capital Pride Festival in June  
7 and Walk with Amal in September.

8 We are also working with Destination  
9 DC and Park Service to advocate for special  
10 events on the avenue in 2026. This concludes  
11 my presentation. I will stay on to take any  
12 questions.

13 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you very  
14 much, Mr. Jamawat. We appreciate that are  
15 there questions from any Commissioners? Any  
16 questions?

17 Well, hearing none, then I'm going  
18 to start the discussion in round robin fashion.  
19 And we begin with Commissioner Mina Wright.

20 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Oh, I didn't  
21 know you were going to do that. I don't --

22 (Laughter.)

1                   COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Gosh, what a  
2 long strange trip it's been. It does feel like  
3 we've been at this for a long time, and I'm  
4 very sorry that I won't be here to see it come  
5 to fruition. But I have every faith in the  
6 team and in getting this done.

7                   I did not know, however, that the  
8 Mayor had included it in her economic  
9 development plan or, I don't know, maybe I  
10 garbled that, Jeff. What was the plan that she  
11 included it in?

12                  MR. JAMAWAT: The Comeback Plan and  
13 the Downtown Action Plan.

14                  COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Oh, yes.  
15 Okay. There are so many plans afoot that I get  
16 confused about which is which. But in any  
17 event, I understand that responses to an RFP  
18 are forthcoming. And I can't wait to see what  
19 happens next.

20                  CHAIR GOODMAN: Very good. Okay,  
21 and next on the list, I'm sorry, is  
22 Commissioner Dixon.

1                   COMMISSIONER DIXON:       Fine, thank  
2     you. The presentation, it's very exciting to  
3     see this happen. And I was on the first  
4     Pennsylvania Avenue Development Plan thirty  
5     years ago. So this, I think, it's good to see  
6     this change. I can't wait to see what they're  
7     going to come up with. Thanks for the  
8     presentation, well done.

9                   CHAIR GOODMAN:         Thank you,  
10    Commissioner Dixon.

11                  Commissioner Cash is not here, I  
12    presume.

13                  MS. KOSTER: That's correct, neither  
14    is Commissioner Davis.

15                  CHAIR GOODMAN:         Okay. Then  
16    Commissioner Giachetti?

17                  COMMISSIONER GIACHETTI: I have no  
18    comments, thank you very much.

19                  CHAIR GOODMAN:         Thank you,  
20    Commissioner Giachetti. Commissioner Cozart?

21                  COMMISSIONER COZART:         Good  
22    afternoon, and Happy New Year to everyone.

1 Appreciate the presentation and even more  
2 appreciate the great collaboration and  
3 partnership with NCPC about this. And yes,  
4 this was included in the Mayor's Comeback Plan  
5 which you can think of as kind of a  
6 comprehensive economic development strategy of  
7 sorts.

8 For the next five years, it takes  
9 care of the whole diamond of the District. And  
10 then the Downtown Action Plan is really the one  
11 that's focused most exclusively on our  
12 downtown.

13 So excited about particularly the  
14 energy and the visualizations that have been so  
15 strong. I'm excited about having additional  
16 consulting help for NCPC to strengthen those  
17 even more. Because in many ways, for the  
18 downtown, what's necessary is those  
19 visualizations that really help people think  
20 about what could be, what we can manifest, that  
21 kind of things.

22 So thank you all for the good work,

1 the partnership, I'm looking forward to what's  
2 ahead and what's in store.

3 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER COZART: I did have one  
5 question. Sorry, wrong section. If there's  
6 anything that the Commissioners can do to be  
7 supportive of this going forward, we'd be happy  
8 to know about that as well.

9 CHAIR GOODMAN: Good question,  
10 thank you, Commissioner Cozart. Did you want  
11 Mr. Jamawat to respond to that now, or perhaps  
12 Director Acosta?

13 COMMISSIONER COZART: However staff  
14 want to handle it is fine with me.

15 CHAIR GOODMAN: Okay. That's good.  
16 Well then, I'll move along. And thank you,  
17 Commissioner Cozart. And we'll have  
18 Commissioner McMahon please respond?

19 COMMISSIONER McMAHON: Thanks, Chair  
20 Goodmann, and good afternoon, everybody. Not a  
21 whole lot of comments, a great presentation.  
22 And as Commissioner Cozart says it's a, you

1 know, and Commissioner Mina, excuse me  
2 Commissioner Wright, a long-term effort here  
3 and continuously building on what we've done in  
4 the past.

5 And I think using, obviously, the  
6 250th Anniversary is a great lead in to try and  
7 get some work accomplished here, sooner than we  
8 typically do in this country of ours. So  
9 thanks again.

10 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Thank you,  
11 Commissioner McMahon. Thank you very much.

12 Commissioner Stidham?

13 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Thank you,  
14 and happy new year. We are excited for the  
15 collaboration and to explore the possibilities  
16 for Pennsylvania Avenue with everyone, and look  
17 forward to the project moving forward as we  
18 convene throughout the new year.

19 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you. Thank  
20 you, Commissioner Stidham.

21 Commissioner Argo?

22 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Nothing much

1 else to say except how wonderful it is to see  
2 the fruition that's coming here and the, you  
3 know, what appears to me to be a really  
4 superior collaborative effort to bring us to  
5 this point. So kudos to all that were  
6 involved.

7 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you,  
8 Commissioner Argo.

9 Commissioner Hewlett?

10 VICE CHAIR HEWLETT: Yes. Thank  
11 you, Mr. Jamawat, for your presentation. I  
12 echo the sentiments of everyone who has already  
13 spoken. I just think it's exciting, and just  
14 fascinating, and can't wait. Thank you.

15 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you, Vice  
16 Chair Hewlett.

17 And Commissioner Green?

18 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Thank you.  
19 Thank you for the presentation. I look forward  
20 to watching this project develop, and can't  
21 think of a more important street in America,  
22 and very much looking forward to the

1 development. Thank you very much.

2 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you,  
3 Commissioner Green.

4 And I just want to say and recognize  
5 the work of those Commissioners who have been  
6 here for a long time and have worked so hard on  
7 this, because I'm new. But it is an impressive  
8 project, and it was exciting today to hear  
9 about the progress that's been made on the  
10 signature project.

11 And, you know, we have once in a  
12 lifetime opportunities to elevate our nation's  
13 most important street in this way and to be  
14 recognized worldwide. And, you know, coming  
15 from a relatively small town in the Midwest,  
16 main streets are critical to the vibrancy, and  
17 the life, and the future of a community. They  
18 are where our stories are told.

19 And for those of us who live out  
20 here in the hinterlands, the main street,  
21 Pennsylvania Avenue is a place that's  
22 recognizable not just in our country but

1 worldwide. And so I feel particularly honored  
2 to at least be coming in on the tail end this  
3 incredible project.

4 I think what is probably more  
5 impressive than even the project itself is this  
6 partnership that has brought it to fruition.

7 And, again, something we learn in small towns,  
8 in large communities, and even in the nation's  
9 capital, is that partnership is the way of the  
10 future. We have to do this to survive.

11 And I just am edified by the group  
12 that has been working on this and the  
13 leadership that has been provided, not just by,  
14 you know, other agencies and departments but by  
15 pushing it along by the NCPC staff who have  
16 worked hard on this. So I just want to  
17 recognize them and thank them.

18 So now we're moving to this juncture  
19 where the consultants will on board, and we  
20 will continue to contribute to the shaping of  
21 this plan. I am also very pleased that the  
22 Mayor has included this in the downtown

1 economic development -- economic health plan  
2 and also the DC Comeback Plan.

3 I mean, I think this is just a  
4 wonderful, wonderful example of partnership  
5 befitting the nation's main street. So just  
6 want to congratulate everyone on the work done  
7 here and also the GSA for helping to secure the  
8 funding for this work. And we look forward to  
9 a future update, so thank you very much.

10 Are there any further comments or  
11 questions?

12 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yes, sorry.  
13 You sprung it on me, so I wasn't ready.

14 (Laughter.)

15 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: I do have one  
16 thing to say, or a final plea to make. And the  
17 people who've been on the team for the last  
18 eight years are sick of listening to me say  
19 this. But if there's anything I've learned in  
20 40 years it's that people are not necessarily  
21 good at, outside of our profession, people have  
22 a very difficult time imagining physical plans.

1           So spend some money, not just on,  
2   you know, Revit drawings or the like, hire  
3   yourself a really good artist who can do some  
4   beautiful watercolors, specifically, renderings  
5   to help people imagine what the avenue can be.  
6   It's just no better way to sell an idea.

7           And people are shy about admitting  
8   that they can't read a plan, or a section, or  
9   what have you. So make it easy for them and  
10   really invest in the imagery. I think that's  
11   what sold some of the concepts when we first  
12   got going with the three alternatives.

13           And I think when you get to a  
14   detailed plan, a buildable plan, I mean, okay,  
15   it's not going to be built overnight, but the  
16   legacy of this plan needs to be illustrated in  
17   some really elegant, beautiful pieces that one  
18   day might be in the history books just like the  
19   McMillan Plan and its brethren. So that's it.  
20   Thank you.

21           CHAIR GOODMAN:   Thank you very  
22   much, I couldn't agree with you more.

1           Are there any other comments from  
2 any Commissioners?

3           6B. Pollinator Best Practices Resource Guide

4           No further comments, hearing no  
5 further comments, we're going to move on to our  
6 next agenda item which is 6B. And it's a  
7 presentation on the Pollinator Best Practices  
8 Resource Guide.

9           Ms. Free is going to do the  
10 presentation, and I know that Ms. Sullivan will  
11 also be available to help answer questions at  
12 the conclusion if we have questions for staff.  
13 Thank you.

14           MS. FREE: Great, thank you. Can  
15 you hear me and see my screen?

16           CHAIR GOODMAN: Yes.

17           MS. FREE: Thank you, great. Good  
18 afternoon, Chair Goodman and Commissioners.  
19 The purpose of this information presentation is  
20 to brief the Commission on a new Pollinator  
21 Best Practices Resource Guide. The guide was  
22 developed by staff to clarify how NCPC

1 incorporates plants that support pollinators  
2 and its review of proposed projects.

3 The guide will be located on NCPC's  
4 website along with a number of other existing  
5 resource guides. Resource guides provide an  
6 overview of specific topics related to NCPC's  
7 authorities, comprehensive plan policies, and  
8 plan review processes for use by staff and  
9 applicants.

10 I'd like to underscore that resource  
11 guides do not create any new standard, and  
12 they're not policy documents. As pollinator  
13 best practices, a resource guide is purely  
14 intended to clarify existing guidance as it  
15 relates to our plan review and bring existing  
16 best practices together in one place that can  
17 be referred to by applicants, staff, and the  
18 public.

19 As you are aware, NCPC reviews  
20 landscape plans as part of site and building  
21 plan submissions. There is a lot of existing  
22 guidance and similarity about the importance of

1 native plant species, and their selection, and  
2 their benefits.

3 But more recently we have heard a  
4 lot about including plants that support  
5 pollinators in landscape plans. So staff  
6 developed the Pollinator Best Practices  
7 Resource Guide to clarify how NCPC utilizes  
8 federal guidance to support pollinator habitats  
9 in its review.

10 In this presentation I'll cover the  
11 resource guide topics which are listed here,  
12 and before I go into detail on what the  
13 guidance is I will speak about what pollinators  
14 are and why we need plants that support them.

15 First a brief reminder of what a  
16 pollinator is and a little bit of plant biology  
17 101. A pollinator is anything that helps to  
18 carry pollen from the male part of a flower to  
19 the female part of the same flower or another  
20 flower. The movement of pollen must occur for  
21 the plant to produce fruit, leaves, and other  
22 young plants.

1           Some plants are self-pollinated  
2 while many rely on external pollinators such as  
3 wind, water, or insects and animals for  
4 pollination. The focus of the resource guide  
5 in today's presentation are the best practices  
6 for selecting plants that support animal and  
7 insect pollinators, in particular, bees and  
8 monarch butterflies. But this also includes  
9 wasps, moths, birds, flies, and small mammals.

10           Pollinators are extremely important  
11 for the health and longevity of the human and  
12 natural environment. For example, at least 75  
13 percent of all flowering plants on earth are  
14 pollinated by insects and animals. This  
15 amounts to one in 1,200 food crops and 180,000  
16 different types of plants that help to  
17 stabilize soil, clean the air, supply oxygen,  
18 and support wildlife.

19           Despite how valuable pollinators  
20 are, recent surveys have shown disturbing  
21 population declines in insect pollinator  
22 species across Europe and the United States.

1 Beekeepers are losing an average of 40 percent  
2 of their managed  
3 European honey bee colonies every year. And  
4 Monarch butterflies have declined 85 percent in  
5 two decades. Overall the migrating Monarch  
6 populations are less than half the size they  
7 need to be to avoid extinction.

8 The cause of pollinator decline is  
9 attributed to several factors: development of  
10 natural habitats fragments pollinator habitat;  
11 invasive plant species degrade natural habitats  
12 by reducing plant biodiversity; urban,  
13 suburban, and agricultural landscapes offer  
14 limited nesting sites; diseases, parasites,  
15 exposure to pesticides, and the changing  
16 climate are all reasons for their decline.

17 In 2014, President Obama issued a  
18 presidential memorandum titled Creating a  
19 Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees  
20 and Other Pollinators, which established the  
21 Pollinator Health Task Force who was charged  
22 with developing a national strategy to promote

1 the health of honey bees and other pollinators.

2 Federal agencies used this guidance  
3 to establish their own policies to support  
4 pollinators. This includes a joint effort  
5 between GSA and CEQ titled Supporting the  
6 Health of Honeybees and other Pollinators, and  
7 then USDA's Field Office Technical Guidance on  
8 Conservation Planting and Wildflower Habitat  
9 Establishment. NCPC defers to these resources  
10 for the best practices when selecting plants  
11 that support pollinator habitats.

12 The Federal Environment element of  
13 the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital  
14 also includes policy guidance to include the  
15 introduction of plants that support pollinator  
16 species.

17 So with this federal guidance in  
18 hand the Resource Guide provides an outline of  
19 what NCPC can do in its plan and project review  
20 and what agencies can so as plan preparers to  
21 support pollinators. And simply put, we can  
22 plant more plants that support pollinators.

1           A healthy pollinator habitat  
2 consists of plants that will provide food,  
3 primarily in the form of pollen or nectar,  
4 shelter, nest eggs and materials, and/or larval  
5 hosts for pollinators, animals and insects.

6           As I mentioned, we already talk a  
7 good bit about native plants in our reviews.  
8 And I wanted to take a moment point out that  
9 there is a lot of overlap between native plants  
10 and plants that are good for pollinators.

11           Native plants are species that  
12 evolved and occur naturally in a particular  
13 region. Many of them have co-evolved with  
14 pollinators like bees and butterflies since  
15 many plants and pollinators rely on each other  
16 for survival.

17           Herbaceous flowering plants like the  
18 Purple Coneflower often come to mind when one  
19 thinks about a pollinator plant. And flowering  
20 plants like this are very important for  
21 pollinators, because they produce nectar which  
22 is a pollinator food.

1           However, native plants that support  
2 pollinators can also be trees, shrubs,  
3 perennials, vines, ground covers, grasses,  
4 sedges, and other uses. They provide some  
5 other benefits that I mentioned, like shelter,  
6 nest eggs, and larval hosts.

7           On this slide here we have a few  
8 images of native trees and shrubs that are  
9 popular hosts for butterfly and moth  
10 caterpillars in this region. That includes oak  
11 trees, maples, birches, and poplars.

12           One native pollinator-friendly plant  
13 that we have heard a lot about recently is  
14 milkweed. Milkweed is critically important,  
15 because it is the only plant species that  
16 Monarch caterpillars can eat. Therefore,  
17 without it the Monarch butterflies would go  
18 extinct.

19           The Monarch butterflies are  
20 important pollinators. They are the only  
21 butterfly species that completes the two-way  
22 migration across North America every year and

1 play a critical part in sustaining ecosystems  
2 along the way.

3           There are over 100 different species  
4 of milkweeds that are considered native to  
5 North America, one of which stands out,  
6 *Asclepias syriaca*, or common milkweed.  
7 According to the U.S. Forest Service, common  
8 milkweed is nature's mega food market for  
9 insects.

10           The Forest Service goes on to say  
11 that it is among the most important food plants  
12 for Monarch caterpillars. It has even been  
13 identified by the Xerces Society as a priority  
14 species for Monarch habitat restoration in the  
15 Mid-Atlantic.

16           Studies demonstrate that Monarch  
17 butterflies lay more eggs in total when a  
18 diversity of milkweeds are present than when  
19 compared the presence of a single species  
20 alone. They further suggest that planting the  
21 right milkweed species for the site has massive  
22 impacts on the quality of milkweed plants which

1 influences where the Monarchs choose to lay  
2 their eggs.

3 Therefore, the Resource Guide  
4 recommends that a diversity of milkweed  
5 species, including common milkweed, should be  
6 planted on federal landscapes as appropriate  
7 for the site conditions.

8 We also see a lot of native grasses  
9 and sedges proposed on plans which are often  
10 overlooked when it comes to pollinator  
11 benefits, because they are wind pollinated, and  
12 they do not produce nectar. However, these  
13 native species serve an important role in  
14 pollinator habitats.

15 They provide larval hosts and food,  
16 nesting materials and structure, and suppress  
17 weeds. Their bunching habit and extensive root  
18 systems also slow storm water, reduce erosion,  
19 and sequester carbon. And in addition, they  
20 support other wildlife habitats for birds and  
21 small mammals.

22 And here we have an example of four

1 native grass species that are larval hosts for  
2 skipper butterflies and for the nesting  
3 materials and structure for native bees. They  
4 also serve as the foundation for a designed  
5 plant community with texture, structure, and  
6 seasonal interest.

7 Sedges, or Carex species, are  
8 another type of native plant that are packed  
9 with environmental benefits. Some provide  
10 pollen or larval hosts for pollinators. Birds  
11 and small animals eat the seeds, and butterfly  
12 and moth caterpillars enjoy the leaves.

13 Sedges also provide habitat value to  
14 invertebrates, reptiles, and amphibians, and  
15 are very adaptable. They are very adaptable  
16 plants for storm water management. Many can  
17 even be mown and used in place of turf grass as  
18 seen here in the top image.

19 On the bottom image here, we have a  
20 rendering from the National Desert Shield and  
21 Desert Storm Memorial final submission which  
22 was reviewed by the Commission in December of

1 2022. A native Carex is proposed on the back  
2 side of the dune-like berms.

3 So in this next section of the  
4 presentation I'll briefly summarize the best  
5 practices for selecting plants that benefit the  
6 pollinators, and both meadow and mound meadow  
7 are designed landscapes. Sometimes we see  
8 meadow landscapes on plans which are largely  
9 fields that are dominated by wild flowers and  
10 grasses.

11 But more often, we are reviewing  
12 designed landscapes which includes cultural or  
13 commemorative landscapes, gathering spaces, and  
14 recreation areas. Here we have a planting  
15 diagram plan from the Bureau of Engraving and  
16 Printing project which has naturalized  
17 pollinator meadows around the periphery of the  
18 site.

19 Designed landscapes, basically like  
20 seating areas and bio-retention, are proposed  
21 closer to the building and in the parking  
22 areas, many of which are dominated by trees,

1 shrubs, perennials, and grasses that benefit  
2 pollinators.

3 For meadow landscapes, the Resource  
4 Guide summarizes guidance from the USDA's 2022  
5 Maryland Conservation Planting Guide and 2023  
6 Maryland Wildflower Habitat Establishment  
7 Guide. This guidance recommends that meadows  
8 consist of 100 percent native plant species  
9 with 85 to 90 percent wild flowers and 10 to 15  
10 percent grasses.

11 In a meadow where Monarch butterfly  
12 habitat is the primary purpose, at least one  
13 and a half percent native milkweed should be  
14 planted as food for the caterpillars, and 60  
15 percent of the wild flowers planted should be  
16 species that can provide nectar for the  
17 butterflies.

18 It also recommends that at least  
19 three plant species from each bloom period,  
20 that being spring, summer, and fall, are  
21 specified to provide consistent and adequate  
22 resources throughout the growing season.

1                   For non-meadow and designed  
2                   landscapes, the Resource Guide lists  
3                   recommendations on supporting the health of  
4                   honey bees and other pollinators. Here we have  
5                   an example of a designed landscape, the  
6                   Constitution Gardens Rehabilitation Project,  
7                   where such best practices would apply in NCPC's  
8                   review.

9                   Here best practices include choosing  
10                  plants native to the project's eco-region;  
11                  selecting the right plant for the site; the use  
12                  of some non-native plants, as long as they're  
13                  not invasive; selecting at least three plant  
14                  species from each bloom period; considering all  
15                  types of plants, such as trees, shrubs,  
16                  perennials, and grasses; responsible seed  
17                  acquisition; and taking care when selecting  
18                  cultivars.

19                  The Resource Guide also acknowledges  
20                  that NCPC must balance the need to maintain  
21                  historic, cultural, or commemorative  
22                  significance with the demands for ecological

1 sustainability. Here we have an example of a  
2 recently reviewed project, the Resilience  
3 Project at the U.S. Department of Homeland  
4 Security Headquarters. But the proposed  
5 landscape plan did not include milkweed,  
6 because milkweed was not identified in the  
7 site's cultural landscape report.

8 However, 50 percent of the plant  
9 material proposed provides other pollinator  
10 benefits consisting of native trees, sedges,  
11 shrubs, and perennials, with at least nine  
12 different plant species for each growing  
13 period.

14 So overall, the primary takeaway  
15 from the Resource Guide is that biodiversity is  
16 key to healthy pollinator habitats.  
17 Biodiversity is important to any healthy  
18 ecosystem. It provides resiliency in the event  
19 that a pest or disease, or climate changes  
20 develop that are detrimental to a specific  
21 species.

22 A healthy pollinator habitat will

1 provide food and shelter, larval host nesting  
2 materials or sites, which may be provided by a  
3 diversity of plant types. Native flowering  
4 plants are especially important as they produce  
5 nectar which attracts pollinators and  
6 encourages pollination.

7 And as discussed, common milkweed  
8 and other native milkweed should be planted to  
9 the fullest extent possible, and as appropriate  
10 for the site, to support Monarch caterpillars  
11 and butterflies who are critically important  
12 pollinators.

13 The Resource Guide includes  
14 citations throughout its text from credible  
15 resources such as the Penn State Extension and  
16 other state university research centers, the  
17 Xerces Society, the National Park Service, and  
18 the U.S. Forest Service, amongst others.

19 It also includes a section on  
20 additional applicant resources, many of which  
21 are listed here with links to federal  
22 documents, recommended plant lists and

1 mixtures, and studies on this topic.

2           And though information presentations  
3 are not available for public comment, staff has  
4 completed outreach with particularly interested  
5 parties, including individuals who have signed  
6 up to speak about supporting pollinators at  
7 Commission meetings. We did not receive any  
8 substantial comments and therefore hope the  
9 individuals will address any concerns and  
10 incorporate their comments into the guide.

11           So this concludes my presentation.  
12 I thank you for your time, and I am available  
13 to answer any questions.

14           CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you very  
15 much, Ms. Free, we appreciate the excellent  
16 presentation.

17           Do Commissioners have any questions  
18 at this time? Do Commissioners have any  
19 questions?

20           Well, hearing none, we're going to  
21 move on then to Commission discussion. And if  
22 you would, if you haven't turned on your

1 camera, please do. And I'm going to begin with  
2 Vice Chair Hewlett, if you could please share  
3 your thoughts on this presentation.

4 VICE CHAIR HEWLETT: Yes, thank you,  
5 Madam Chair.

6 I first of all would like to thank  
7 you, Ms. Free, for the presentation and also  
8 for your diligence in working with all the  
9 interested parties. And it's very important,  
10 and you listened intently, and you embraced  
11 some of the suggestions that we've heard from  
12 others. And I can't thank you enough for that.  
13 I think this is exciting, it's important, and I  
14 learned a lot during this entire process. So  
15 thank you.

16 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you, Vice  
17 Chair Hewlett.

18 I would like to ask Commissioner  
19 Green to please share your thoughts.

20 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Thank you very  
21 much for the presentation. It was terrific.  
22 And especially in light of some of the

1 questions we've had at recent meetings, it will  
2 be really wonderful to have this, this great  
3 report at hand for all future process subjects.  
4 So thank you very much for your work on this.

5 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you,  
6 Commissioner Green.

7 Commissioner Wright?

8 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: I don't have  
9 any comments, thank you.

10 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you.

11 Commissioner Dixon?

12 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I very much  
13 appreciate the report, and thank you very much.  
14 Thank you.

15 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you. Thank  
16 you Commissioner Dixon.

17 Commissioner Cash and Commissioner  
18 Davis, I will continue to move on, not seeing  
19 them present.

20 Commissioner Giachetti?

21 COMMISSIONER GIACHETTI: No  
22 comments, thank you very much.

1 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you,  
2 Commissioner Giachetti.

3 Commissioner Cozart?

4 COMMISSIONER COZART: Thank you to  
5 the staff for all their work on this, and for  
6 the presentation today.

7 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you,  
8 Commissioner Cozart.

9 Commissioner McMahon?

10 COMMISSIONER McMAHON: Thanks, and  
11 thanks to the staff for the great reports  
12 today. More importantly, and as reflected, to  
13 just explain, there are two consent items, they  
14 were consent and not for presentation from NIH.  
15 Both had long sections in it to discuss their  
16 efforts to provide this kind of --

17 (Simultaneous speaking.)

18 COMMISSIONER McMAHON: --  
19 environment for butterflies. So obviously the  
20 work they're doing with everybody who does work  
21 in the national capital region that comes to  
22 NCPC is listening. So I congratulate them and

1 look forward to seeing more of these in the  
2 future.

3 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you. Thank  
4 you, Commissioner McMahon.

5 And Commissioner Stidham?

6 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Thank you for  
7 the presentation. We were able to review and  
8 provide some comments. And I understand this  
9 is to be a living document, which I think is  
10 great, because I think that things will evolve  
11 as time goes on, especially with the fact that  
12 the monarch --

13 (Audio interference.)

14 MS. KOSTER: So Commissioner Stidham  
15 --

16 (Simultaneous speaking.)

17 (Audio interference.)

18 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Am I back?

19 MS. KOSTER: Yes, you're back.

20 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: I think it's  
21 important as other federal agencies develop  
22 their strategies based on that main strategy,

1 that we include that on the guidelines to be  
2 sure that we're covering all our bases and that  
3 this is a guide and it's used as we review  
4 these projects. So thank you for your work on  
5 this.

6 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you. Thank  
7 you Commissioner Stidham.

8 Commissioner Argo?

9 COMMISSIONER ARGO: I think it is  
10 really, really interesting and exciting  
11 thinking about the possibility. And the one  
12 thought, I don't want to take up time on this  
13 now, but is how I'm thinking about it, how we  
14 trickle down some of this information to really  
15 -- I live in Washington, D.C., talking about  
16 the, you know, literally getting information  
17 down at the neighborhood, you know, almost the  
18 ANC levels.

19 It could, I think, it is great  
20 information for people to have, especially as  
21 they think about work that's being done on  
22 their own property, as well as properties in

1 their neighborhoods. Thank you.

2 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you,  
3 Commissioner Argo.

4 And I'll just add a few remarks. I  
5 just want to, again, thank the staff for the  
6 good work that's been done on this, and thank  
7 the public that has come and consistently  
8 brought this to the attention of the NCPC. I  
9 think that their contributions help, you know,  
10 influence our work oftentimes.

11 Although this has been established  
12 work by the federal government, it still is  
13 good to hear from people about it. This is  
14 wonderful work, and I think it reminds us that,  
15 you know, we live in an interconnected world,  
16 and our interconnectedness relies on mutual  
17 respect, if you will.

18 And I know that all of these  
19 projects and programs that we are seeing will  
20 have landscaping. And there are things that we  
21 don't even measure yet. But the impact on  
22 workforce, and on people who visit and work in

1 these environments, you know, there's a lot of  
2 benefit from just being around national  
3 environments, not to mention the benefits to  
4 the pollinators and all the rest of the birds  
5 and the bees.

6 So I do appreciate this  
7 presentation, and it will be incredibly helpful  
8 to our applicants as they come before us.

9 And thank you, Commissioner  
10 McMahon, for pointing out the important  
11 projects that were in the consent agenda that  
12 included aspects of this landscape, so thank  
13 you, and landscape guidance. So thank you very  
14 much.

15 And are there any additional  
16 questions for Ms. Free?

17 6C. NCPC's 2024 Centennial

18 Hearing none, the last agenda item  
19 today is the information presentation on NCPC's  
20 Centennial. And Ms. Mezghebe will be making  
21 the presentation. Are you ready?

22 MS. MEZGHEBE: I am, can you all see

1 me, can you hear me?

2 CHAIR GOODMAN: Yes, we can see and  
3 hear you. Thank you.

4 MS. MEZGHEBE: Okay, wonderful.  
5 I'll get started. Good afternoon,  
6 Commissioners. 2024 is full swing, and NCPC  
7 turns the big 100 this year. We are all very  
8 excited about that. And I'm excited to share  
9 an overview of how we'll be celebrating this  
10 amazing milestone.

11 Our staff has put together a range  
12 of exciting and thoughtful products and events.  
13 Before I present them to you, I'd like to first  
14 share some reflections from former chairs and  
15 commissioners on their aspirations for  
16 Washington and the region that we gathered as  
17 part of our Centennial Oral History Project.

18 Please enjoy these reflections and  
19 I'll resume the presentation right after.

20 (Video played.)

21 MS. MEZGHEBE: Great, I'm just going  
22 to share my screen. Thank you, Tony.

1                   Okay, can you all see my screen?

2                   (Chorus of yes.)

3                   MS. MEZGHEBE: Wonderful. So I hope  
4 you enjoyed hearing from some of your  
5 predecessors. This quote stems from former  
6 chair Libby Rowe that you see up on the slide,  
7 also captures NCPD's awesome responsibility in  
8 the region over the past 100 years and into the  
9 future.

10                   It's been hard virtually. We wish  
11 you were all in person for all of us so the  
12 staff could be able to communicate how excited  
13 we are to celebrate this, to celebrate our  
14 centennial. But we've kept this sentiment  
15 center of mind as we have conceptualized how to  
16 commemorate this milestone. And I'll go ahead  
17 and walk you through.

18                   When considering our agency's  
19 history, we organized it into three time  
20 periods characterized by key Congressional acts  
21 that established or affected the agencies'  
22 authority and duties.

1           In 1924, Congress established the  
2 National Capital Park Commission, which later  
3 became the National Capital Park and Planning  
4 Commission, to acquire park land, preserve the  
5 natural scenery, and prevent pollution of Rock  
6 Creek Park and our rivers.

7           In 1962, the National Capital  
8 Planning Act gave NCPC its current name and the  
9 authority to plan for all of Washington, both  
10 local and federal.

11           And Home Rule, in 1974, established  
12 a unique shared system of planning between the  
13 District and NCPC.

14           Our centennial offers a unique  
15 opportunity to reflect on this history. More  
16 than that, it also offers a chance to examine  
17 the evolution of planning in Washington and the  
18 region, acknowledge inequities created by past  
19 planning practices, and consider lessons  
20 learned to inform planning today and into the  
21 future.

22           Our staff has planned a variety of

1 ways to engage diverse audiences on NCPC's  
2 historic role in the region's planning. We are  
3 kicking things off with an online event, called  
4 One Night, 100 Years, on the evening of January  
5 23rd. We're inviting six thought provoking  
6 professionals, who you can see listed here, to  
7 discuss a transformational plan developed by  
8 NCPC and its impact on the region.

9 Our speakers were asked to choose  
10 from our new online planning library which we  
11 developed for the Centennial and that I'll  
12 introduce shortly. This event will be a fun,  
13 fast round of presentations with diverse view  
14 points, and we encourage you all to attend.

15 Here we look at some of our other  
16 events that we have planned for the year to  
17 engage audiences generally interested in the  
18 region, as well as other members of the public  
19 with professional and academic interests in  
20 planning and our agency.

21 In April at the D.C. History  
22 Conference, we'll explore the complicated

1 legacy of a former NCPC chair, Harland  
2 Bartholomew, a national planning pioneer and  
3 also a proponent of efforts that resulted in  
4 institutionalized segregation and racialized  
5 displacement.

6 In May, at the American Planning  
7 Association's Federal Planning Division  
8 conference, we'll explore the impact of federal  
9 planning in the capital city and the region.

10 On June 6th, which is the actual day  
11 of our Centennial, we'll launch our physical  
12 exhibit, which I'll describe shortly, at the  
13 Martin Luther King Jr. Library with a speaker  
14 event. And the conversation will focus on the  
15 years from 1952 to '74 where debates in  
16 Washington about transportation, urban renewal,  
17 and civic engagements shaped the form of  
18 Washington and mirrored this broader national  
19 conversation.

20 And in September at the APA's  
21 National Capital Area Chapter Conference, we'll  
22 close out the year with a reflective panel

1 discussion on how past planning practices have  
2 shaped the region, lessons learned, and  
3 pathways for the future.

4 And in addition to our events, I am  
5 really excited to introduce our online planning  
6 library which is a collection of influential  
7 plans, legislation, and maps with an emphasis  
8 on the maps that shaped the region's  
9 development, with an emphasis on items from  
10 1924 to 1974. We developed this resource with  
11 the D.C. Office of Planning into our shared  
12 planning history up until 1974.

13 The library is designed to be an  
14 evergreen resource accessible to the public.  
15 At great effort, staff members identified 300-  
16 plus items, and the library currently houses  
17 over 100 items. As staff continued to conduct  
18 research on various projects, we will be  
19 updating current entries and adding new ones.

20 Staff also worked diligently to  
21 develop a robust library application that  
22 features easy navigation, filters, sorting, and

1 a key word search. We've soft launched the  
2 library and gotten really positive feedback on  
3 its usability and catalogue. We encourage you  
4 to browse the library and we look forward to  
5 hearing more from you and the public about this  
6 great tool.

7 I'll just walk you through an  
8 example of what you can find in the library.  
9 Here's the entry for a policy plan for the new  
10 year, excuse me, A Policy Plan for the Year  
11 2000, the Nation's Capital developed in 1961 by  
12 NCPC, and the National Regional Planning  
13 Council.

14 The viewer will find a description  
15 of the plan which you can see the region being  
16 defined by wedges and corridors of open space  
17 and development. Each entry has a carousel of  
18 images including this one.

19 So this entry, which shows how  
20 corridors would comprise a development hub  
21 linked by a rapid mass transit route and  
22 paralleled highway. There is also a link to a

1 Washington Post News article about the plan  
2 and, of course, a link to download the plan.  
3 There's lots more great material in the library  
4 and you are encouraged to check it out.

5 In partnership with the D.C. Public  
6 Library, NCPC is preparing exhibits to share  
7 stories from the past 100 years with the  
8 emphasis on the first 50 years of the agency's  
9 history leading up to Home Rule.

10 The physical exhibit will first be  
11 displayed at Martin Luther King Jr. Library in  
12 June of 2024 and then move to other  
13 neighborhood libraries. A companion digital  
14 exhibit will allow visitors a deeper dive into  
15 the scenes and stories presented in the  
16 physical exhibit.

17 The exhibit will explore NCPC's  
18 early years which include the agency's role in  
19 creating the region's incredible park system  
20 and open spaces. Washington was also a proving  
21 ground and laboratory for ideas about modern  
22 planning including zoning, comprehensive plans,

1 and the big ideas that led to highways and  
2 urban renewal in the new century.

3 A key proponent of these ideas was  
4 Harland Bartholomew, a national planning  
5 pioneer and former NCPD chair, whose legacy  
6 will also be explored in some of our events.

7 The exhibits will confront the  
8 consequences of these planning efforts,  
9 including displacement, often of African  
10 American communities, and sprawl. There was  
11 community opposition to many of these top-down  
12 sweeping plans.

13 The Commission reflected this  
14 struggle with a slow turn towards mass transit  
15 and historic preservation. Former NCPD Chair  
16 Libby Rowe was a champion of this evolution and  
17 planning.

18 Lastly, the exhibits will explore  
19 how planning became a shared responsibility  
20 with the District following Home Rule and how  
21 the Commission took on new and evolving issues  
22 and is still trying to achieve the balance

1 between local and federal interests. As you  
2 can see, there is lots that will be unpacked in  
3 the exhibits.

4 The final product I'll describe is  
5 our oral history project. As you saw from the  
6 video clip at the start of my presentation, we  
7 conducted oral history interviews with former  
8 chairs, commissioners, and staff regarding  
9 their experiences and reflections on working  
10 with the commission. These oral histories will  
11 serve as critical resources for future  
12 generations to better understand the unique  
13 history and evolution of planning in the  
14 nation's capital.

15 The public will be able to browse  
16 the complete transcript housed on our  
17 centennial website, and we're also creating  
18 additional compilation video clips with  
19 highlights from certain interviews. We'll  
20 share them with the public throughout the year.

21 We're promoting the centennial and  
22 engaging the public through social media

1 campaigns, our beloved Field Notes, and  
2 appearances at popular events. And we invite  
3 you to visit the centennial website to access  
4 all of our offerings, including the planning  
5 library and oral histories, and stay up to date  
6 on all of our events.

7 That concludes my presentation, and  
8 I'm happy to answer any questions.

9 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you very  
10 much, Ms. Mezghebe, and appreciate all the work  
11 that's going into this. And I will now ask the  
12 Commissioners if they have any questions.

13 Hearing none, we'll go ahead and  
14 begin discussion using round robin format. I'm  
15 going to begin with Commissioner Cozart,  
16 please.

17 COMMISSIONER COZART: You know, like  
18 the other Commissioners when you first call on  
19 them, I'm not ready. But here I am, and thank  
20 you all. This is an impressive lineup, and I'm  
21 excited to get a chance to kind of reflect.

22 And this may be a way for us to

1 continue to get more people interested and  
2 involved in the work of the Commission. So  
3 appreciate the thoughtfulness about it, the  
4 breadth of offerings, and excited to engage  
5 with you on as many of them as possible.

6 So thank you for your great work on  
7 this, and I'm glad that we're making time for  
8 this, this look back and look ahead.

9 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you,  
10 Commissioner Cozart. I appreciate your  
11 comments and your willingness to be first.

12 I will say, I just have to footnote  
13 this, we all have Ms. Koster to thank for the  
14 order of these discussion plans. I threw her  
15 under the bus. I apologize. But anyway, it's  
16 a new year, so I had to reveal that secret.

17 Anyway, Commissioner McMahan?

18 COMMISSIONER McMAHON: Well, I'm  
19 glad to volunteer to be number two.

20 (Laughter.)

21 COMMISSIONER McMAHON: But thank  
22 you. No, a great presentation and looking

1 forward to interesting year of looking back and  
2 looking forward for NCPC let by the staff.  
3 They've done great work.

4 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you very  
5 much. Commissioner Stidham?

6 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: I think this  
7 work is just great. I mean, the Commission has  
8 been around and done so much over the years,  
9 and I think that gets lost over time. I had  
10 the opportunity over the holidays, you know, to  
11 just look at the website and the compilation of  
12 the materials, the old plans, old documents, a  
13 few things I've been looking for myself,  
14 actually. So that was a huge task to pull all  
15 that together, and putting it into a timeline  
16 is just amazing work. So great work, and I  
17 look forward to the celebration to come.

18 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you,  
19 Commissioner Stidham.

20 Commissioner Argo?

21 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes, I echo all  
22 the compliments that we've heard. And I know

1 personally it makes me want to dive deeper into  
2 some of the things that we've heard about today  
3 just, you know, as a Commission member, as a  
4 long-time District resident, and to take -- and  
5 to think about some of the additional kind of  
6 practical applications to some of the things  
7 that have been presented to us and how we share  
8 some of them also more broadly.

9 So thank you, thank you for all the  
10 good work, staff. Thank you. That's it.

11 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you,  
12 Commissioner Argo. Thank you very much.

13 And Vice Chair Hewlett, please?

14 VICE CHAIR HEWLETT: Yes, I just  
15 want to thank you for the presentation as well.  
16 This is really an exciting time for us. And  
17 it's just to hear the history, just to -- and I  
18 too was -- my curiosity was piqued. So not  
19 only do we have the report that was sent, and I  
20 printed out, but it caused me to go back and  
21 look at some more.

22 As a newbie on the Board, I mean,

1 there's just so much more knowledge to acquire.  
2 And each time, you know, you stick your chest  
3 out a little bit further and further, because  
4 the Commission does so much. And it's  
5 important to preserve that history and to tell  
6 our story, to share that story so that everyone  
7 knows.

8 So thank you so very much for all  
9 the work you're doing. And I just can't wait  
10 starting with January when we watched the  
11 presentation.

12 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you, Vice  
13 Chair Hewlett. Thank you very much.

14 And Commissioner Green, please?

15 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Thank you very  
16 much. Now I look forward to these events this  
17 year. And this is going to be great  
18 experience. And thank you to the staff. I know  
19 it's been a lot of time and effort to pull  
20 these together. And I just really appreciate  
21 it and looking forward to it. Thank you.

22 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you,

1 Commissioner Green.

2 Commissioner Wright?

3 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Well, gosh,  
4 this is a huge opportunity to teach people what  
5 planning is about. Planning, this is heresy  
6 for this group, but people think planning is --  
7 and they don't understand it. And it sometimes  
8 is, let's face it. Some of it is pretty  
9 arcane, and pretty abstract.

10 And we're not very good as humans at  
11 thinking temporally, in other words, far into  
12 the future. It becomes more and more abstract,  
13 just like your physical vision, right. Things  
14 are far away, you can't see details, it becomes  
15 quite blurry.

16 And I think one of the things that  
17 really helps people to understand is negative  
18 examples. And by that I mean, you know, when  
19 you go to art school they teach you, at least  
20 where I went, they teach you to draw the  
21 negative space. It's a different way of showing  
22 people, of teaching artists how to look at

1 things. So when you're looking at a still  
2 life, you draw the air around it instead of the  
3 objects.

4 Why am I going off in this  
5 direction? Because we have to teach people.  
6 This is a great opportunity to show them  
7 examples of what happens in the absence of  
8 planning. Because sometimes people just don't  
9 get the examples that you give them. See,  
10 there was this great plan, and it came about,  
11 and this is what NCPC did about it, or this is  
12 the role that NCPC played in it.

13 I think some examples of what  
14 happens, what would happen were NCPC not to be  
15 around, were planning functions -- were  
16 planners to just drop of the face of the earth,  
17 what would happen, is a good way to illustrate  
18 why it's so important.

19 People get what it is when something  
20 bad is happening in their neighborhood. We all  
21 know what NIMBY is about. But in the larger  
22 picture, and in the composition of the city,

1 I'm not sure that Joe Q citizen is all that  
2 familiar. So this is a huge opportunity to  
3 educate and, yes, a little self-serving, garner  
4 support for the Commission.

5 And then I just want to make one  
6 more point. Because as I've been saying, I'm  
7 quite philosophical these days and reflective,  
8 and I think about will people in the future who  
9 have jobs like mine, and Commissioner  
10 McMahon's, and Commissioner Stidham's, the land  
11 owning agencies of the federal government are  
12 not always able or disposed to best practice,  
13 what we would call best practice in design and  
14 planning.

15 And without a really healthy and  
16 robust ecosystem in design and planning in the  
17 District, or the DMV in broader terms, our jobs  
18 would be that much harder. And I think that  
19 the DOD and the Park Service might agree with  
20 me.

21 Sometimes I have to use the  
22 NCPC/CFA/SHPO ecosystem, the review and

1 approval system, as a cudgel to beat my own  
2 colleagues into submission to do the right  
3 thing. So this is really, really important.  
4 And the centennial is a once in a lifetime  
5 opportunity to flex a little. And I encourage  
6 you to do that.

7 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you very  
8 much, Commissioner Wright. Thank you.

9 Commissioner Dixon?

10 COMMISSIONER DIXON: First, thanks  
11 to staff for the hard work that they've done  
12 already and more that they'll be doing. I also  
13 apologize to them for not being able or having  
14 the time or capacity to review some of -- some  
15 of the stuff I said that would have been maybe  
16 useful if I had been able to do that. But  
17 that's all done, that's done.

18 I'm also blessed and honored, or  
19 honored and blessed to have been part 30 years  
20 of the 100 years, and maybe more, on with the  
21 Commission and having known all of the speakers  
22 who a least spoke as former chairs, and others

1 who did not speak. But I think it's just, it's  
2 great that they documented it.

3 I believe we cannot, without looking  
4 back, we cannot move forward with vision in  
5 planning. We can't have vision in our planning  
6 if we don't look back with respect to what's  
7 happened to get us here.

8 I also think that this is a very  
9 significant statement of how we, as a very Home  
10 Rule-less community, have operated in a  
11 planning environment with the most powerful  
12 government in the world. And we've been able  
13 to come together in a planning operation that  
14 has respected those turfs, I think, in a very  
15 sensitive manner.

16 I think that we've been able to do  
17 that. And I think that's a very, very powerful  
18 image, one that could be used in many places  
19 now  
20 across the globe where powerful forces can  
21 control small areas where people are somewhat  
22 Home Rule-less, as we have been. I say Home

1 Rule-less, we have Home Rule, but we're still  
2 looking for a stronger form of it. So I thank  
3 them for the work. I'm looking forward to all  
4 this. Hopefully I'll be able to participate  
5 and see this as it goes forward. And I will  
6 be, I'll be here. Thank you.

7 CHAIR GOODMAN: Thank you,  
8 Commissioner Dixon.

9 And Commissioner Giachetti?

10 COMMISSIONER GIACHETTI: Thank you  
11 very much. You know, this is a very exciting  
12 opportunity, but no comments or questions from  
13 me. Thanks, everybody.

14 CHAIR GOODMAN: Great, okay. Well,  
15 thank you, Commissioner Giachetti.

16 And I just want to begin by, again,  
17 just thanking the staff. You know, when you  
18 think about the backbone of so many federal  
19 agencies, and some of what you all participate  
20 in and work for, you know the kind of work that  
21 goes into maintaining federal agencies, and  
22 staff, and departments, and all of the work.

1 So I do want to just really congratulate the  
2 staff who have worked so hard on this.

3 And I also want to thank, as a  
4 newbie, as Commissioner Green said, as a  
5 newbie, I want to thank the Commissioners who  
6 have been here for a long time, Commissioner  
7 Wright, Commissioner Dixon and others,  
8 Commissioner McMahon, others who have been here  
9 for many, many years, and also our partners  
10 from the District. You know, your leadership  
11 is important too, at least to me as a new  
12 chair.

13 And I've spent much of the last  
14 year, you know, past is prologue, as  
15 Commissioner Dixon mentioned, and I've spent  
16 the last year reading a lot about McMillan, and  
17 a lot about L'Enfant, and the planning that  
18 went into this tremendous place we call our  
19 national capital.

20 But now I'm looking forward to this  
21 year to be able to consume the products that  
22 our staff have created that bring the 20th

1 century to light and demonstrate how, you know,  
2 folks just like us have worked hard to be  
3 consistent with that aspirational vision of  
4 America and of our national capital.

5 And I do acknowledge, and we've  
6 learned a lot, we've learned about many of the  
7 inequities that have occurred through planning  
8 in the past. And we're working hard to, I  
9 think, amend those, to create capital and  
10 planning projects and programs of the future  
11 that are going to address those inequities and  
12 also keep the concept of beauty in mind that  
13 was part of the original design of this place.

14 I also think we need to continue to  
15 keep an eye on the resiliency, the climate  
16 resiliency piece of this to make sure that what  
17 we're planning, and building, and protecting  
18 here is protected. So all of those things come  
19 to mind as I look forward to this year  
20 anniversary. But mostly I just want  
21 to thank staff and thank, you know, the  
22 Commissioners who have served for such a long

1 time, and Commissioners who were here before  
2 us. And I'm looking forward to being part of  
3 the conversation with the public about this and  
4 talking about the challenges and the  
5 opportunities ahead.

6 So I just want to thank you for the  
7 presentations today, all of you, and for a  
8 lovely new year, and a short meeting to begin  
9 the year. Because next month is going to be  
10 really an exciting, again, an exciting meeting  
11 in planning. But it'll be a little longer, I  
12 think.

13 So hearing no other questions, does  
14 anyone have any more comments or questions  
15 before we conclude?

16 This concludes our open session.  
17 And the next meeting will be on February 1st at  
18 1:00 p.m. And I look forward to seeing all of  
19 you at that time. And if there's no further  
20 business, the meeting will stand adjourned.

21 (Whereupon, the above-entitled  
22 matter went off the record at 2:15 p.m.)

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This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Commission Meeting

Before: NCPC

Date: 01-10-24

Place: teleconference

was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate complete record of the proceedings.

*Neal R Gross*

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Court Reporter

**NEAL R. GROSS**

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