

THE NORTHWEST CURRENT

VIM AND VINEGAR



Bill Petros/The Current

Wilson High School's drama department, under the direction of Harriet Bronstein, opened "Urinetown: The Musical" on Thursday. Performances will continue through Saturday.

CFO attorney faults parks contract

■ **Council:** Oversight hearing elicits further contract details

By **ELIZABETH WIENER**
Current Staff Writer

A \$4.2 million contract to manage construction of 19 park and recreation facilities is "void," the top lawyer for the city's chief financial officer testified Monday at a D.C. Council roundtable.

And case law indicates that the city will not owe Banneker Ventures any money for work already done, acting general counsel Stephen Lyons told D.C. Council members investigating the murky contracting controversy.

He acknowledged that other city lawyers, including Attorney General Peter Nickles, dispute that conclusion.

"But our position is, it's not a valid contract," Lyons said. Because

it did not come to the council for approval, "the parties should have understood the contract is void," he said.

"So the work must stop?" asked Ward 2 Council member Jack Evans.

"If contracts are void, the money should be returned," Lyons said.

Banneker Ventures, a small, four-year-old company chosen as project manager for the various parks project. See **Parks**/Page 44

Residents query Wilson plan's impact

By **CAROL BUCKLEY**
Current Staff Writer

Days before a federal review board is scheduled to evaluate modernization plans for a revamped Wilson High School, the local advisory neighborhood commission attempted once again to make its concerns about the project known to planners and city officials.

Although school-related groups like the Wilson Management Corp. worry about matters such as programming and accessibility inside the 1935 school, neighborhood impacts dominated the reservations residents expressed about the multimillion-dollar renovation plans during the meeting. Commissioners did, however, add language to their resolution supporting the school community's efforts to alter renovation plans and urging the city to respond to the community's concerns.

The design, scheduled for concept review tomorrow See **Wilson**/Page 11



Bill Petros/The Current

Residents charge that the stadium funnels game noise deep into the neighborhood. Parking and pedestrian safety are among other concerns.

Guy Mason grounds see rodent invasion

By **IAN THOMS**
Current Staff Writer

Rats have infested the grounds of the Guy Mason Recreation Center, according to the center's director.

"We knew we had a problem, but we didn't know to what extent," said director Bob Haldeman. "Every side of Guy Mason has rat holes. ... When I turn the lights on at night to work on the ballfield, I see rats scurrying all over the place."

During last week's meeting of the Glover Park advisory neighborhood commission, Haldeman and Gerard Brown, who heads the Health Department's rodent control division, alerted residents to the problem and laid out some of their plans to combat it.

In addition to ongoing extermination efforts, said Haldeman and Brown, Guy Mason needs more and bet-



Bill Petros/The Current

Officials hope to continue extermination efforts and add several more rat-proof trash receptacles, but they also hope to reduce litter around the field.

ter trash receptacles. They said the center, located at 3600 Calvert St., could use several more BigBelly receptacles, which not only contain large volumes of waste but also prevent rats from entering. The officials See **Rats**/Page 8

Hardy parents await news on middle school's future

■ **Georgetown:** Rhee seeks to ease tension over remarks

By **JESSICA GOULD**
Current Staff Writer

If it isn't broken, why fix it? Or, as Hardy Middle School parent Keenan Keller said, "You don't kill the goose to lay the golden egg."

Last month, Schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee told the Citizens Association of Georgetown that she expects to roll out a new plan for Hardy Middle School this winter. Now some parents are bracing

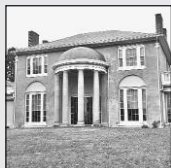
themselves for changes to a school that they say is doing just fine, thank you very much.

Hardy, located at 1819 35th St., serves sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders from across the city. And according to recent test scores, the majority of Hardy students appear to be doing well. On the annual D.C. Comprehensive Assessment System last spring, 73 percent of Hardy students scored proficient in reading, and 69 percent met the target in math.

The school has also gained recognition for its arts program, See **Hardy**/Page 12

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- **Residents see new Diner in Cleveland Park as asset.** Page 13.



SPORTS

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PASSAGES

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Residents report problems with visitor parking passes

By **BRADY HOLT**
Current Correspondent

A District Department of Transportation program intended to make it easier for Ward 3 residents to accommodate guests on their permit-only streets hit snags after some households received parking passes intended for their neighbors and many others got none.

The Transportation Department rolled out a visitor parking pass program last month, with each household on a block with restricted parking eligible to receive one free visitor permit that would be valid for a year.

The permits, which are marked with numbers that tie them to particular households, are designed to be used by drivers who regularly visit a particular house — such as a nanny or decorator. They supplement the temporary passes available at police stations, said Transportation Department public parking program manager Damon Harvey, speaking Monday to the Cleveland Park-

Woodley Park advisory neighborhood commission.

But commissioners complained to Harvey that many of their constituents had failed to receive their promised permits and others had received more than one.

Harvey said he had identified 10 individual blocks — mostly in Woodley Park — on which no households had received their passes because of an error by the contractor that was mailing them out. He said residents who don't own cars may also have fallen through the cracks.

"You don't have a car, so you don't exist," commission chair Anne-Marie Bairstow jokingly told commissioner Trudy Reeves, who didn't get her visitor pass.

Anyone who hasn't received a pass can contact him directly to request one, Harvey said, offering his direct phone number: 202-671-0493. Residents on the 10 blocks Harvey already identified will get their permits early next month, he said. See **Parking**/Page 29

City sustainability project debuts in Ward 3

By **LAURA L. THORNTON**
Current Correspondent

The D.C. Office of Planning has granted residents of Forest Hills, North Cleveland Park and Van Ness a unique opportunity to develop a plan to make their neighborhood more sustainable, and officials held a "visioning workshop" last week to begin the process.

The area will serve as the proving ground for the city's "Neighborhood Sustainability Indicators Pilot Project," a new initiative modeled on programs in several cities across the nation and Canada.

The Forest Hills area was chosen due to its mixed-use zoning and because residents had already shown a strong interest in sustainability, according to Andrea Limauro, a Ward 3 community planner for the city. See **Green**/Page 8

The week ahead

Wednesday, Nov. 18

The D.C. State Board of Education will hold its monthly meeting, which will include presentations from the Office of the State Superintendent on Education on the District's "High Risk" Corrective Action Plan and the Common Core College and Career Readiness Standards. The board also will vote on a resolution designating December as AIDS Awareness Month. The meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. in the board's chambers at One Judiciary Square, 441 4th St. NW.

■ The Ward 3 Democratic Committee and the Ward 3 Republican Party will co-sponsor a bipartisan debate, "The Hard Path Forward," on whether the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan should be increased or reduced. The event will be held from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in Room 21, Building 39, University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law, 4200 Connecticut Ave. NW.

Thursday, Nov. 19

The D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board will hold its monthly meeting. The agenda includes consideration of historic landmark nominations for the Fort View Apartments, 6000-6050 13th St. NW; Jesse Reno School, 4820 Howard St. NW; and Janney Elementary School, 4130 Albemarle St. NW. The board also will consider a revised concept plan for an addition at 1743-1755 N St. The meeting will begin at 10 a.m. in Room 220 South at One Judiciary Square, 441 4th St. NW.

■ The D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation will hold a community meeting to discuss plans for the renovation of the Guy Mason Recreation Center. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. at the Guy Mason Recreation Center, 3600 Calvert St. NW.

■ The Kalorama Citizens Association will hold its monthly meeting, which will include a presentation by at-large D.C. Council member David Catania on D.C. health issues. The agenda will also include discussion of the National Park Service's environmental assessment on the slope abutting Walter Pierce Park as it relates to an ongoing archaeology project. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. at the Good Will Baptist Church, 1862 Kalorama Road NW.

Friday, Nov. 20

The advocacy group DC VOICE will hold a town-hall meeting for wards 1 and 2 on its Ready Schools Project. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. at All Souls Unitarian Church, 1500 Harvard St. NW. Reservations are requested; contact skashim@dcvoice.org.

Saturday, Nov. 21

The D.C. Superior Court and the D.C. Child and Family Services Agency will sponsor the 23rd annual Adoption Day from 10 a.m. to noon at the Moultrie Courthouse, 500 Indiana Ave. NW. The event will include an adoption ceremony for more than 30 children, and social workers will be on hand to talk with anyone interested in fostering or adopting a child in D.C.

■ The Wisconsin Avenue Beautification Project will hold a fall cleanup from 2 to 6 p.m. Volunteers will pick up trash and leaves along Wisconsin Avenue, starting at Fessenden Street and proceeding south to Tenley Circle. Participants are asked to bring gloves, rakes and trash bags. For more information, call 202-966-8837 or e-mail k.colombant@yahoo.com.

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RATS

From Page 1

also expressed interest in buying or leasing a trash compactor.

But perhaps more importantly, said Brown and Haldeman, the center's many users need to recognize their part in the infestation and change their behavior.

"The rats that you see on this ballfield are supported by this ballfield," said Brown.

Coaches, players and parents bring large amounts of food to the field on game days, and though they might throw the bulk of their trash away, most of the center's receptacles are unsealed and often overflow, said Haldeman. He and Brown said that users of the dog park also contribute to the problem — as do the many Dumpsters behind Glover

Park businesses, and pedestrians who toss trash over the fence along Wisconsin Avenue and onto the center's grounds.

"If we don't change our behavior, we'll be here 10 years from now talking about the same thing," said Brown.

Haldeman intends to solicit donations from local community groups and businesses to pay for the improved trash receptacles. And he said that from now on, the permit agreement to use the ballfield will require teams and groups to properly dispose of their waste — which, if receptacles are full, means taking their trash with them, said Haldeman.

Advisory neighborhood commissioners said they would be happy to help.

"We do have some resources here," said commissioner Brian

Cohen.

Commissioner Horace Kreitzman asked Haldeman and Brown to return to the commission's December meeting with more concrete plans.

"Get a plan together by next meeting and we can give you some money," said Kreitzman.

A representative of Friends of Guy Mason said his group would also like to contribute.

Brown said the Health Department has made Guy Mason a priority. He said waiting for natural remedies, like a cold winter, would be a mistake. When rat populations survive through a temperate winter, they can grow exponentially.

"We plan to get this on the fast track," said Brown, "because if it doesn't get really, really cold, like the last couple winters, we're in big, big trouble."

GREEN

From Page 3

the Office of Planning.

The project involves residents working together to come up with a list of "indicators" that define what sustainability means to them as a community, Limauro said. Two different types of indicators will be used: sustainability indicators and actionable indicators.

Sustainability indicators will include data from the city government — such as residents' access to public transportation, and neighborhood electricity and water usage — that can show "the community how it is performing right now" in terms of its sustainability efforts, "and how the community is performing through time," as data is tracked in the future, Limauro said.

Actionable indicators, meanwhile, will be "the new data formed when residents mobilize" through actions like composting, carbon-reduction drives or solar power co-ops, he said.

Both indicators will help residents track their progress on the path to becoming more sustainable.

"This is about the community getting together to increase the number of sustainable activities," Limauro said. "People know they should do them, but [there needs to be] a way to do them together as a community — this might lead to a participatory ripple effect ..."

At Saturday's "visioning workshop," held by the city's Office of Planning and the Department of the Environment, officials began gathering input from interactive quizzes. The quizzes determined, for example, that the community is particularly interested in "green" sources of energy.

The program is one of many recent initiatives that shows the city moving in a sustainable direction. The D.C. Clean and Affordable Energy Act of 2007, introduced by Ward 3 Council member Mary Cheh, created a market for renewable energy in the city, making it more accessible to residents, said Environment Department representatives.

And according to the Brookings Institution, D.C. is the most walkable city in the nation. In the Forest Hills area, residents walk an average distance of a quarter of a mile to get from their homes to public transportation, according to the Environment Department.

Community members attending Saturday's workshop were enthusiastic about the new pilot project.

"I think the examination of our area is potentially very enlightening,

and having Mary Cheh behind it, with all her initiatives, makes the possibility of this very great," said advisory neighborhood commissioner Tom Whitley.

Marlene Berlin, who heads the Connecticut Avenue Pedestrian Action group, wants to see the commercial zone of Connecticut Avenue become more economically sustainable, with a focus on "creating a central area here that would entice people to walk to Van Ness to do

"I think the examination of our area is potentially very enlightening ..."

— Tom Whitley

their shopping," rather than driving to Maryland.

Nina Dodge of the Politics and Prose Climate Action Project is hopeful that the pilot program will encourage a "competitive fervor with the rest of the city," and that neighborhood students might study the program for school and science projects.

The chair of the Politics and Prose project, John Macgregor, is interested in implementing a rating system for individual buildings that could help residents become more energy efficient. The effort might even be useful in the real estate market, he suggested: The more energy-efficient the house, the more desirable it might be to buyers.

Tom Quinn of Ward 3 Vision said he is "supportive of the Office of Planning taking a global problem and trying to solve it locally," but would like to see more attention paid to smart-growth principles and transit-oriented development.

Several community members suggested increasing bicycle lanes in the neighborhood.

Others said residents who have achieved success in some area of sustainability — such as retrofitting their homes — should share their stories with the entire community.

The next step in the project will be to finalize the list of indicators that Forest Hills residents will use to measure their progress in reaching their sustainability goals. The Office of Planning and Department of the Environment will hold meetings for this in January and February.

In the meantime, residents are invited to join the technical advisory committee, which will help guide the process of soliciting residents' input for the project.

Contact Limauro at andrea.limauro@dc.gov for more information, or visit the project's Web site at sustainable-dc.com.

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