

Small Cells in Georgetown

-Joe Gibbons, Chair, ANC2E

This past June, I received an email from CAG President Pamla Moore suggesting that the Small Cell issues deserve a community meeting. In Pamla's words, "community meetings that engage the public are of value when an issue has such a high degree of impact on our community." I immediately contacted Elsa Santoyo, Chair of CAG's Historic Preservation and Zoning Committee, for help. Together we set up planning meetings with ANC2E Commissioners, CAG Board members and the Georgetown BID. We contacted the City Tavern Club for the use of their beautiful and historic venue and club President Zana Metelski ensured that our Small Cell Town Hall would be ADA accessible and compliant for our entire community.

The purpose of our Small Cell Town Hall was to have an open and engaging discussion around "What's it going to look like and where will they be?" using the Draft Small Cell Design Guidelines issued by DDOT's Public Space Regulation Division.

We were fortunate to secure DC Interim Chief Technology Officer Barney Krucoff, to present the wifi component of Small Cells and a map of projected locations of the poles in Georgetown. Chief Krucoff brought in an actual wifi component to show the size and characteristics of the antennas. The unit with its 4 antennas is approximately 4 feet long. AT&T and Verizon were also invited to attend and participate.

DDOT itself will review all applications to ensure adherence to these guidelines. Any applications that **are not consistent, as determined by DDOT**, with these guidelines will require review and approval by the Public Space Committee and will include review and comment by ANC2E, Old Georgetown Board/Commission of Fine Arts, and Historic Preservation Office.

In addition we presented information from the DDOT Master License Agreement which all Small Cell providers must sign. A Small Cell provider may install an antenna pole no closer than ten (10) feet from the front of any door, balcony, or window of a residence. All street tree trimming requirements will be handled by DDOT similar to the procedures followed by the other utility companies.

The Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) presentation explained that their antennas will be mounted with Small Cell providers. OCTO called it a "Ride Along" and this will allow for "One Touch" Cost Savings." This installation model will also be utilized with the DC Street Light Project with DDOT.

Chair Santoyo presented approximately nineteen slides describing what Small Cells and how this new cellular technology and its installations will affect our historic streetscapes and view sheds.

AT&T and Verizon each explained that the procedures for issuing the public space permits will only allow for one Small Cell installation per carrier per block. This was a contentious point because if AT&T, for example, obtains a DDOT public space permit to install their Small Cell

equipment on an historic block or alley what happens to the reception quality of the other carriers, such as Verizon. That question went unanswered.

For a summary of "What's Next": Please check out our website www.smallcelltownhall.com for more information and to provide comments to ANC2E, CAG and the Georgetown BID.

The Town Hall meeting lasted approximately an hour and half. I was told by the City Tavern Club that halfway through the meeting they had to add more chairs. So it seems that Pamla was correct in her original assessment: our community wanted this opportunity to learn more and express their concerns.

Many thanks to the City Tavern Club for the generous use of their beautiful, historic venue.