



**Barracks Row Main Street Working Group Meeting Notes:
Tuesday March 19th 2019 at 7:00 pm
Location: 700 Pennsylvania Avenue SE
7TH Floor Conference Room**

Introductions:

There were over 25 attendees, including Barracks Row business owners, neighbors, and representatives of the Barracks Row Main Street (BRMS), Eastern Market Main Street, CHAMPS, the Marine Barracks, and the Mayor's Office. A list of attendees is attached to these minutes.

Proposed time & date for the next working group meeting:

Attendees agreed that the third Tuesday of every month at 7 pm is a good date and time for future meetings. Pending no schedule conflict with another meeting or lack of space.

Election of the Co-Chair of the Barracks Row Working Group:

Gaynor Jablonski of the District Restaurant Group and Tom Johnson of the Hill Restaurant Group agreed to serve as co-chairs for this group.

The List of the top challenges for operations on Barracks Row Main Street & Ideas' for the improvement of the 400 block of 8th street.

- Rats
- Businesses closing (currently, there are 13 vacancies)
- Sidewalks that are in bad shape
- No planter beds or a cohesive streetscape
- Appearance (especially the 400 block)
- Lack of attention to the history of Barracks Row (Barracks location was personally picked out by President Thomas Jefferson; home of John Phillips Sousa; "*Where History Meets the Hill*")
- Relevancy (since the emergence of Barracks Row, many neighborhood rows/communities have been created – there is now increasing competition across all quadrants of our city)
- Lack of overall awareness of the existence of Barracks Row, its history and relevance to Capitol Hill
- Crime
- Need for more MPD presence
- Lack of Identity
- Cluster of sometimes not-positive activities by the bus stop in front of Starbucks – can this bus stop be moved?
- Patrons being aggressively accosted by homeless persons (there is DC code that defines "aggressive panhandling" – discuss this at our next meeting)
- The BRMS website is always outdated (Martin noted that a new website has been created and is now online; please visit it at <https://www.barracksrow.org/>)

- Brian asked for more police presence. Currently a MPD officer is assigned to 8th Street, one during the day and one in the evening. Officer Fernandez is the Barracks Row liaison, and should be invited to our next meeting.

Solutions to the Challenges

- Leverage the collective power and outreach of BRMS, EMMS, CHAMPS, Capitol Hill BID, and the Marine Barracks on an ongoing basis.
- **Question:** “Who is the ‘market’ for Barracks Row? **Answer:** EVERYONE! *“There’s a lot to love on Barracks Row.”*”
- Signage that promotes BR businesses and restaurants (*“What you need to know about Barracks Row...”*)
- Editorial calendar
- One consultant hired who can “tie things together”
- Focus on and promote the unique history of Barracks Row (first “Main Street” in DC: Jefferson personally selecting the site for the Barracks; the iconic John Phillips Sousa, etc.)
- Recognize the “changing identity” of Barracks Row and the demographics of surrounding neighborhoods to be more family-oriented and family-friendly
- Improve safety and security
- The Eastern Market Plaza re-design includes the possibility of moving the bus stop in front of Starbucks to 8th Street alongside the Metro Plaza. A transportation study is underway by DC government. A 2014 transportation study recommended that the flow of traffic on D Street be reversed (on both sides of 8th Street) and this is still under consideration.
- Create a media/social media campaign that promotes Barracks Row on an ongoing basis, with stories/testimonials from neighbors, Hill historians, etc. that make it personal
- Community Connections (801 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE) currently provides outreach to homeless persons in our community, but needs additional funding to increase its services. Attendees can contact Councilmember Charles Allen to encourage more funding for this NGO.
- A comprehensive plan for BRMS for ongoing outreach to business owners and interested neighbors would be helpful:
- Many attendees offered their extensive listservs to facilitate this outreach.
- Many years ago, BRMS was awarded a \$230,000 grant from DC government, derived from the Performance Parking Fund, to create enclosed planter boxes on 8th Street. The grant was rescinded; and Ms. Williams from the Mayor’s Office will follow-up to see if any funds are available to fulfill this commitment.
- BRMS is proposing that a MPD sub-station be located on the 400 block of 8th Street. Martin has written a letter on behalf of BRMS, and will email this tomorrow morning to the attendees of this meeting. It was suggested that this letter/petition be posted online, where interested parties can sign on in support with their name, zip code, and why they support this proposed sub-station.
- Councilmember Charles Allen will be attending the ANC meeting on April 9 at 7 pm at the Hill Center, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
- Captain Collen McFadden from the Marine Barracks suggested that the Marines could conduct a once-a-month cleanup of Barracks Row that engages businesses and neighbors.
- Barracks Row could host an October Festival that allows people to roam within a perimeter with adult beverages. The inaugural event could be just one block to test it out. (November 6 is the birthday of John Phillips Sousa – close enough on the date!)
- Grants for up to \$80,000 for demonstration projects (\$20K per business) to purchase and utilize compactors are available from the DC Government. If multiple businesses “team up” on these grants, it is worth 20 points in the grant grading. Applications are due in **early April 2019**. For more information, please visit <https://dslbd.dc.gov/compactor>

Action Items

1. Invite Officer Fernandez from MPD to our next meeting, to provide an update on increasing police presence on Barracks Row.
2. Visit the updated BRMS website at <https://www.barracksrow.org/>.
3. Write/email to Charles Allen to request additional funding for Community Connections (801 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE) to provide wrap-around services to homeless persons on 8th Street; Councilman Charles Allen's email is callen@dccouncil.us.
4. Describe DC's code on "aggressive panhandling"
5. Create a media/social media campaign that promotes Barracks Row on an ongoing basis, with stories/testimonials from neighbors, Hill historians, etc. that make it personal
6. BRMS letter requesting a MPD substation on the 400 block of 8th Street – disseminate to meeting attendees; post online where interested parties can respond with their name; zip code; and why they think this is a good idea; and disseminate the online letter to everyone's listservs and outreach venues.
7. Ms. Williams from the Mayor's Office will follow-up on any potential funding to create enclosed, plant-filled planter boxes across the spectrum of Barracks Row.
8. Anne – write a brief history of Barracks Row, connections to President Jefferson and John Phillips Sousa, etc.

Metro Park Plaza Renovations

N/A – We did not have the time to address at this meeting. This might be revisited at the next meeting of the Barrack's Row Working Group.

Event Collaborations for 2019

1. Organize a once-a-month Barracks Row cleanup facilitated by the Marines, neighbors and businesses.
2. Consider planning an October/early November festival, initially on one block where attendees can roam with adult libations (John Phillips Sousa's birthday is on November 6).
3. Work with Marines to make our Summer Sunset ?? more collaboration with Barrack's Row Main Street Businesses.

Possible Future Agenda Items

- How Barracks Row can take better advantage of our alternate modes of Transportation
- Marketing Barracks Row Main Street to the Greater Washington Region
- Collective Snow Removal
- Eastern Market Metro Park Transportation Study Review

Note: We did not get the opportunity to review and discuss the above, but I will adding a few of the items to the next meeting agenda.

Additions:

Clarification

On March 20, Kirsten ran into Officer Fernandez and discussed some of this meeting's issues with him:

- Aggressive panhandling has to be witnessed by a police officer to generate an arrest.
- Panhandlers have to stay 10 feet away from an ATM, but there are no restrictions on distance from a bus stop.
- Panhandlers have to stay 10 feet away from a Metro station. (Thanks Kirsten!)

Barrack's Row Announcements

- Martin announced that there are three potential new leases for 8th Street currently under development by BRMS.