



## **ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3/4G**

**Serving Chevy Chase, DC and surrounding neighborhoods**

5601 Connecticut Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20015

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**RESOLUTION TO WITHDRAW DC COUNCIL MEMBERS EVANS AND GROSSO'S BILL #21-175 "ACCESSIBLE PARKING AMENDMENT ACT OF 2015" IN FAVOR OF A FAIR, TRANSPARENT AND DEMOCRATIC PROCESS CONDUCTED BY THE NEW BOWSER ADMINISTRATION'S DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DDOT), DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS (DPW) AND IN COLLABORATION WITH THE DC COUNCIL FOR ADDRESSING ALLEGED FRAUD AND ABUSE OF DISABILITY PLACARDS OCCURRING AT DISTRICT METERS SINCE 2012.**

**WHEREAS**, Washington, DC is our nation's capital, home to more than 650,000 Washingtonians and tourist destination to 18 million visitors each year; and

**WHEREAS**, the District of Columbia's legislative body, the DC Council, has repeatedly demonstrated a strong commitment to progressive legislation such as the Human Rights Act, legalizing marijuana and same sex marriage, banning the disclosure of criminal records on hiring applications, establishing paid sick and safe leave and increasing the minimum wage; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2012, the District of Columbia under the Gray Administration undertook the five-year Age-Friendly DC initiative along with 55 other US cities, to create an urban environment that allows seniors to remain active and healthy AND for DC to become recognized among the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities in 2017; and

**WHEREAS**, in the District, currently persons with disabilities who possess disability tags or placards can park at any blue topped meter across the District without incurring any parking fees and for double the allotted time and at any unmetered space for an unrestricted amount of time as well as enjoy reduced fees on METRO trains and buses; and

**WHEREAS**, under Council Member Evans and Grosso's bill, the "Accessible Parking Amendment of 2015", residents will be required to pay full parking fees for the first time in DC's history though they can park for double the posted time at designated meters; and

**WHEREAS**, persons with disabilities would now be required to locate an available red topped meter among DDOT's limited supply of specially designated meters for persons with disabilities to use; and

**WHEREAS**, one red top meter will be installed at the end of every block in the Central Business District near curb ramps which could mean a further walk than necessary for persons with mobility challenges; while at the same time offering no extra privileges at regular meters across the District and further subjecting persons with disabilities to compete for the 10% of the city's meter pool that is designated for their use or pay expensive private parking garage rates; and

**WHEREAS**, the US Census Bureau's 2013 American Community Survey indicated that 33.9% of District residents with disabilities live in poverty. This is 15% higher than the poverty rate for the D.C. population as a whole and it's 11.5% higher than the rate for people with disabilities nationwide; and

**WHEREAS**, at no time since 2012 has DDOT conducted its customary and well-attended public town hall meetings across the District with persons of disabilities to present the extent of the problem, its negative impact on the District and to invite the public's input on how to resolve the situation;

**WHEREAS**, Bill 21-175 repeals a widely used free parking benefit in the Central Business District for disabled drivers, yet requires no public outreach prior to the new policy being enacted into law and signed by the Mayor; and

**WHEREAS**, without conducting a fair, transparent and democratic process at the outset, the District government fails to provide an equal opportunity for the disability community and its allies to weigh in on and propose a variety of alternative solutions for consideration. As stakeholders who would be directly or indirectly impacted by this program, they are entitled to the same opportunity as anyone else has had in the District to shape this new transportation policy and council program; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the DC government's testimony at the June 4 hearing, at no time since 2012, has DPW conducted a sincere and targeted enforcement campaign of the alleged violators – 90% of whom were reported by DPW Director, Bill Howland, to be MD and VA drivers in the L'Enfant Plaza area along Constitution Avenue, yet the Evans/Grosso bill extends the footprint across the entire Central Business District; and

**WHEREAS**, DPW's Director admitted to a problem in the system that replaced chalking tires. The new digital timing device requires manual entry of a vehicle's tag number but can only be viewed by that device. During the day/evening shift change, the data is lost and violators are getting away without penalty; and

**WHEREAS**, the state of MD provides free parking at designated meters with an added stipulation that all drivers with disabilities must carry a doctor's certificate – the size of a business card - with them at all times and must have the person who possesses the certificate in the car when using a designated space. MD police officers have exclusive enforcement authority. Any police officer can request to see a certificate and issue a \$250 fine for refusal or failure to comply which seems a preferred alternative than doing away with an accommodation for the majority on account of a few bad actors; and

**WHEREAS**, at the June 4 hearing, Councilmember Evans who chairs the Committee on Finance and Revenue indicated that the District's revenue has doubled in eight years and the city does not need the additional revenue B21-175 would provide. In addition,

he is not opposed to continuing the existing free parking privileges provided that the red top parking meters are more evenly distributed in Wards 2 and 6;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, in recognition of these considerations, ANC 3/4G adopts the following resolution.

**THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED:**

ANC 3/4G requests that Council Member Jack Evans and co-sponsor Council Member David Grosso withdraw the current Bill 21-175, and lend their full support to the new leadership of the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) and incoming leadership for the DC Department of Public Works (DPW) under the Mayor Bowser Administration that took office in January 2015.

In our view, it is imperative that the Transportation and Enforcement agents of the District of Columbia government are given ample opportunity now to conduct a fair, transparent and democratic process and that DPW's technical glitch is resolved to begin targeted enforcement of serial violators.

We recommend that DDOT engage the disability community and its allies across the city through a series of public town hall meetings as is customarily undertaken for major transportation policy decisions and projects that impact the general public. The Connecticut Avenue Livability Study, the Oregon Avenue Reconstruction Project, the LED Lighting Task Force and the 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW Priority Planning Study are some of the public engagement projects that DDOT has undertaken within and adjacent to our ANC's boundaries. These meetings were well organized and well attended, having pertained directly to our constituents' interests and quality of life. Public input was welcomed and incorporated into the final plan.

We ask that DDOT, DPW and the DC offices serving persons with disabilities consider alternative proposals to limited parking and charging fees such as the state of Maryland and European Union countries that continue to offer free, metered parking for persons with disabilities.

Finally, we would appreciate a public progress report by year's end as far as your public engagement, parking enforcement and an alternative solution more aligned with our city's core progressive values.

The Commission approved this resolution by a vote of **5 to 0** at its meeting on June 22, 2015, which was properly noticed and at which a quorum was present.

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By Randy Speck, Chair

By Chanda Tuck Garfield, Secretary