

# THE NORTHWEST CURRENT

## KIDDING AROUND



Bill Petros/The Current

**Chevy Chase resident Isabel Price-Cabezas, 3, feeds a baby goat during Saturday's Neighborhood Zoo Day in Friendship Heights at the Lisner-Louise-Dickson-Hurt Home.**

## Walgreens redesign faces challenges

■ **Zoning:** Latest delay will allow commission feedback

By **CAROL BUCKLEY**  
Current Staff Writer

A proposed Walgreens store at the corner of Connecticut Avenue and Veazey Terrace has neighbors worried about views and possible traffic snarls — even after store representatives made radical design

changes to respond to community concerns.

Attorney Christine Roddy told the local advisory neighborhood commission that she would request a brief hearing continuance from zoning authorities to allow the community more time to inspect the proposal. But commissioner Karen Perry led the panel in demanding more time from Walgreens and resolved to ask the Board of Zoning Adjustment for a hearing date no

earlier than February.

At yesterday's hearing, Roddy dropped her objections to the commission's request. The board set a Feb. 24 hearing date.

The original design, which featured surface parking around a suburban-style store, was scrapped due to community feedback. Under the new design from Mark Orling of Rust, Orling and Neale, architects pushed the store almost to the lot  
See **Drugstore**/Page 54

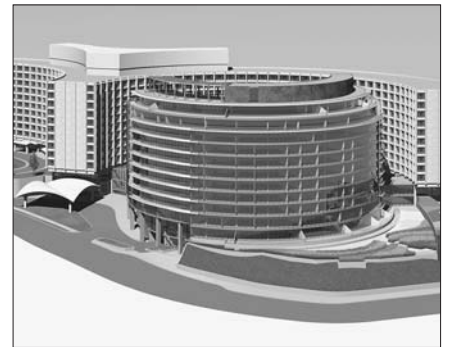
## Hilton condo addition wins approval

By **ELIZABETH WIENER**  
Current Staff Writer

The D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board last week granted conceptual approval for a new apartment tower at a renovated Washington Hilton hotel on Connecticut Avenue. The board also noted a draft agreement between the city and the Hilton's new owners designed to ease parking and loading problems that have irked the surrounding community for decades.

But the draft agreement came as a surprise to many neighbors who are unhappy both with the hotel's expansion and with the longstanding operational problems. Though some agreed that the agreement would help lessen the impact of the hotel, which has loomed over historic neighborhoods north of Dupont Circle since 1965, they said city officials worked out the deal behind closed doors.

The preservation board's 6-0 vote on Thursday  
See **Hotel**/Page 51



Courtesy of Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP

**A new residential tower at the Hilton, shown in the foreground of this rendering, would echo the curves of the original 1965 structure.**

## Hearst, Sharpe get test-score bonuses

■ **Schools:** Staff members get up to \$10,000 in second year of \$1 million city initiative

By **JESSICA GOULD**  
Current Staff Writer

For decades, Hearst Elementary School principal Bernarda Tally has plucked out melodies on the same piano she's had since she was a teenager. Now, Tally said, she's ready to get a new one. The reason? She can finally afford it.

On Oct. 23, educators at seven D.C. Public Schools received a total of \$1 million in performance bonuses for boosting student achievement in the 2007-08 school year as part of the Fenty administration's Together Everyone Achieves More (TEAM) program.



Bill Petros/Current File Photo

**North Cleveland Park's Hearst Elementary was one of seven schools citywide where staff members received rewards for high performance.**

The program, a collaboration between the public school system, the Washington Teachers' Union and the nonprofit group New Leaders for New Schools, rewards the staff at schools that show a 20 percent  
See **Schools**/Page 30

## Power, role of city council focus for at-large hopefuls

■ **Election:** Relations with Fenty draw forum attention

By **CHRIS KAIN**  
Current Staff Writer

Candidates for the two at-large D.C. Council seats on the Nov. 4 ballot waxed politic at a forum last week over the current balance of power between the District's legislature and Mayor Adrian Fenty's administration.

The question provided a focal point for Thursday's forum, hosted by the Ward 3 Democratic

Committee and the Ward 4 Democrats but open to all candidates. Under the District's home rule charter, one of the two seats up for election is reserved for a non-Democrat.

The forum drew Democratic nominee and incumbent Kwame Brown; Republican incumbent Carol Schwartz, a write-in candidate; Republican nominee Patrick Mara; independents Michael Brown, Dee Hunter and Mark Long; and D.C. Statehood Green Party nominee David Schwartzman.

Former Ward 3 Council member  
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# Classified Ads

## DRUGSTORE

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line and moved almost all parking to an underground garage. The result, said Orling and developer Randall Clarke at the meeting, is a pedestrian-friendly store with an urban feel.

The new design requires three variances from the city for lot occupancy, amount of parking and loading-dock height, according to Walgreens representatives. But before the neighborhood commission will support those variances, Perry said, store representatives must address residents' concerns.

Some concerns focused on the aesthetics of the site, now a gas station. A tree behind the gas station currently shields residents in a neighboring high-rise from looking directly at the pumps.

Clarke said his firm is hiring an arborist to look at the tree, and the tree would be saved if possible. "But I can't make any promises," he added.

The sound of mechanical equipment, said Perry, would disturb those same residents. After Orling said the most likely place for that equipment is the roof, Perry urged him to find a way to put the equipment inside the structure. Such a solution would be more expensive, she allowed, but "Walgreens can afford it," she said.

Much comment from nearby residents centered on potential traffic problems. The proposed 27-spot under-

ground parking area empties onto Veazey Terrace, as do the garages of a nearby Giant Food and high-rise apartment building. Residents Carol Delaney and Joan Goodrich said shoppers and delivery trucks would increase already-present traffic jams, especially during rush hour when lines to the traffic light can build up to 20 cars long.

Clarke acknowledged that the traffic situation could present problems but urged the audience to wait and see the findings of an ongoing traffic study. "Then we'll know what we're dealing with," he said.

Goodrich also pointed out that Clarke's assurances about Walgreens' trucks — that they would deliver only once a week, likely in the late morning — did not address deliveries from other vendors.

Commissioners asked Walgreens representatives to provide a landscaping plan along with the traffic study results. The architect's renderings currently show little vegetation, and commission chair Jane Solomon asked Orling to put in as much greenery as he could — even in unexpected spots.

"It's perfect for a green roof," said Solomon, who requested other environmentally friendly features such as abundant bike parking and, if not a green roof, then solar panels.

It also fell to Solomon to soften the blow of the commission's resolution, which will slow Walgreens' progress. "We're not trying to be unfriendly to Walgreens," she said. "We just want to make sure there's time for everyone to weigh in."

## ELECTION

From Page 1

ber Kathy Patterson moderated the forum, and she posed the first question. She noted the efforts of council members throughout her tenure to solidify the council's standing as a strong, equal branch of government, and then added that some argue it has suffered since Fenty took office. Patterson then asked whether the candidates believe the council enjoys an equal status today.

Michael Brown offered the initial response. "Yes, the council should be — frankly, is — an equal branch," he said. He cited a lack of oversight by the council and suggested that the council needs to establish its own vision for the District.

"There's nothing wrong with asking questions," he said. "The council can also have its own vision. ... We'll make sure we stand up for issues and have the vision to move forward."

Long said he believes the council should be equal, but he stressed the existence of different roles for the legislative and executive branches.

The legislature, he said, has the responsibility to set the vision for the government and the District as a whole. "It's up to us to be the visionaries," he said. "It's up to the executive branch to be the administrators."

Schwartz said the law establishes the council as an equal branch, and she cited the strength of her own oversight efforts as the head of various committees during her years in office. Schwartz also noted that she and colleagues have scuttled mayoral nominations and challenged proposed contracts, resulting in concessions that saved the city money.

"We flex our muscle," she said. "We've held up appointments. We've held up contracts."

Schwartz acknowledged that doing so is more difficult when the mayor is popular and is frequently backed by The Washington Post's editorial page. She claimed it was her unwillingness to go along with mayoral initiatives — such as the takeover of the school system — that led to The Post's decision not to back her re-election.

"I didn't say yes to everything the mayor wanted to do," she said. "I still think that the majority of the council are very strong on speaking up to make sure that the council is an equal branch."

Picking up on Schwartz's comments about The Post, Mara reminded attendees that the newspaper's editorial page endorsed him in the primary and the general election. In response to the question, he noted the branches' different roles but said they should have equal weight. He also spoke of the frequency of 13-0 votes on the council, reiterating a campaign theme about the need for more political diversity.

He said the council needs to "flex muscle" in the area of fiscal responsibility and seek out areas of the government that can operate more efficiently.

"It's important to use oversight to make sure agencies are operating efficiently and effectively," Mara said. The council is too often failing to do so, he said.

Schwartzman provided some of the most fiery comments of the evening in his response about the council's status as an equal branch.

"Is it now? No. The council is being abused by the mayor, big-time," he said.

Schwartzman challenged the notion that the mayor remains particularly popular, referring to working-class sections of the city where he said many object to Fenty's "top-down" decision-making and actions that run counter to civil liberties and workers' rights. "I have been campaigning there. That's what I hear,"

he said.

"The council has not been standing up firmly to the abuse," Schwartzman added. "Too many are backed by the same corporate money that got the mayor into office. ... We expected a new regime."

Kwame Brown — who, as chair of the Committee on Economic Development, has complained about a lack of details from the deputy mayor for planning and economic development about proposed deals — joked that he is not one of the mayor's favorites on the council. "I didn't get baseball tickets or anything," he said.

On a more serious note, he stressed the need to hold administrators accountable but also for the executive and legislative branches to work cooperatively.

"You want to work together," he said. "But when it's time to ask the tough questions, it's time to ask the tough questions."

In later responses, the incumbent council member said he has drawn ire for his refusal to push land sales absent information that establishes a public benefit. "You have to have signed documents in front of you and have everything in writing," he said.

Hunter arrived midway through the forum, having missed the start and Patterson's initial question. But in an interview afterward, he said that he sees the current council as effective and viable. As an aide to three council members over the years, Hunter said, he observed firsthand the council's evolution into a co-equal branch.

But he also noted the continuing strength of the mayor's office.

"It's unfortunate that the mayor is taking an adversarial role," Hunter said, when a more patient approach would accomplish his agenda. "Historically in this town, the mayor carries the big political stick."

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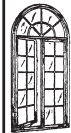
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