



Thursday, April 15, 2019

Dear ACC Supporter,

What's in a Name?

East of the River or East End, Swampoodle or NoMa. What we call things can potentially change over time. When people have a say in what anything is called in the public sphere, we usually call this marketing or public relations process "branding." But what if the issue of naming goes right to the heart of the identity of a community?

The African American community, in particular, has experienced its own evolution in "self-naming rights" during a turbulent era that sparked fiery debates and a deeper understanding of the cultural ties that bind it to history. Whether it meant re-appropriating or "taking back" and repurposing a term with negative connotations (e.g., the N-word) – however explosive or benign the consequences – or, taking on a self-affirming designation, as in "African American", adopted at this stage of historical residence like all other cultural groups that have a say in self-definition, the ultimate quest is for self-empowerment.

The Anacostia Coordinating Council (ACC), in association with civic leaders, stakeholders, and interested communities, is hosting a proactive discussion and series of forums that will recall this spirit of examination. Few of the recent discussions seem to embody the issue we want to highlight more than that of whether a part of the city should be referred to as "East of the River", "River East", "Washington East", or "East End" . Hopefully, we can create a framework that creates community and enfranchisement and not disenfranchisement and displacement.

What we propose is a series of moderated discussions, informed by historians, academics, professionals, and personal reflections, that seek to determine whether input from the ground up, so to speak, can influence a positive course of change and action for self-determination at the local level. By using a concrete example in "East of the River" or "East End", we hope to focus community skills in community engagement in serious dialogue.

The reason for this letter is to enlist your participation and support in this initiative.

What we are asking for is the sponsorship, endorsement, and financial support of this effort. Your participation by lending your name and logo, input, outreach and promotion of events is very much encouraged and appreciated.

If your organization or company can offer your financial support, it would go toward the production of the series and enhance the experience for all attendees with refreshments, and other options as funds allow.

The first in this series is called **"East of the River - East End" to be held at Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church**
1720 Minnesota Avenue, SE
Wednesday, May 29, 2019
6:30pm - 8:30pm



AGENDA:

(Light Refreshments Served)

Moderators: (Ward 7) and (Ward 8) moderators, to be announced.

Scribes: (Ward 7) and (Ward 8) scribes, to be announced.

- 1) Opening Prayer (ACC Faith Pastor)
- 2) Welcome (Garden Memorial)
- 3) Greetings (Councilmembers Gray and T. White)
- 4) Purpose of the Meeting (ACC)
- 5) General Discussion and Next Steps
- 6) Adjournment

In future segments, we hope to cover:

- History of the term East of the River
- History of the term East End
- “Chocolate City”
- Steps to Branding a Community
- And other related topics as identified

In addition, for your consideration, we have included an event flier, and a background draft statement that informs this series.

Finally, we believe there exists a space in public discourse far beyond the confines of limiting and trendy terms such as “identity politics”. We would like you to be a part of this emerging discussion and help to solidify our residents in this conversation.

Thank you for your consideration, participation, and support.

As always, for community progress,

Philip E. Pannell
Executive Director
Anacostia Coordinating Council

Donations are tax-deductible and ACC's IRS number is 52-1591131.

Attachments



NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY & PRESERVATION MEETING

EAST OF THE RIVER *or* EAST END


Words matter. Cultural and neighborhood themes and identifiers are associated with a social, political, or specific demographic or geographical areas. This meeting intends to solidify a designation for Wards 7 & 8.

**GARDEN MEMORIAL
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
1720 MINNESOTA AVENUE, SE

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 2019

6:30PM - 8:30PM

In Attendance for the Discussion:
COUNCILMEMBER VINCENT GRAY, WARD 7
COUNCILMEMBER TRAYON WHITE, WARD 8



BACKGROUND: At a meeting of the Bellevue Civic Association on Saturday, January 5th, 2019, a presentation concerning community identity, cultural relevance and historical significance, caused us to engage in a conversation about the terms East of River vs. East End.

DRAFT STATEMENT: Gentrification can and will be many things to different people. But, one thing for sure, words matter, and the cultural and neighborhood themes, slogans, identifiers and personal and group nuisances, are significant determinants as defined "...a factor which decisively affects the nature or outcome of something".



In this case the nomenclature(s) as associated with a social, political, educational, or certain demographic or geographical areas, i.e. East of the River or East End, bear witness to the need to know how one can effect one's own destiny.

Thus, words do matter, and having an official designation helps to further solidify a neighborhood's identity and resilience, in its struggle for self-preservation.