

The West End Flyer

Serving the West End Neighborhood of Washington, D.C.

July 2020

Pinto Begins Term as Councilmember *Marks First Change for Ward 2 in 29 Years*

In winning the special election held on June 16, Brooke Pinto fills the remainder of the term of Jack Evans, who, on January 17, 2020, resigned the Ward 2 Council seat he had held for 29 years.

Pinto, a virtual unknown before she announced her candidacy, was sworn in on June 27. She is shown



Ward 2 Councilmember Brooke Pinto on her first day in office.

in the photo above outside the office she will occupy in the Wilson Building on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Now 28 years old, she became the youngest member ever to serve on the District Council, and will hold the office at least until January 2, 2021. She is also the odds-on favorite to win a full, four-year term in November.

Pinto, a lawyer who has worked as a D.C. assistant attorney general, won the Democratic primary election for the same office on June 2, defeating seven other candidates.

She will next compete in the November 3 general election against Republican candidate Katherine Venice and any minor party or independent candidates who qualify for ballot status or are written in.

According to the most recent voter registration figures, 66.1% of Ward 2 voters are registered as Democrats, and 10.8% are registered as Republicans.

This election year, with most polling places closed

because of the Covid 19 pandemic, has been complicated and confusing.

After stating that ballots had to be requested for the June 16 special election, the Board of Elections (BOE) changed its policy and mailed ballots to all registered voters in Ward 2—which it had not done for the primary on June 2.

Pinto received 3,142 votes in the primary election, and 4,554 in the special election.

Turnout in our West End precinct was respectable. In the primary election, Precinct 4 had a turnout of 30.12% compared to 26.82% for the Ward in total.

In the special election, Precinct 4 turnout was 22.12% compared to 22.53% Ward-wide.

Local favorite Patrick Kennedy, chair of the Foggy Bottom/West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC-2A), ran second in the primary, and decided not to campaign actively in the special election.

According to the BOE, 98.44% of all 10,753 Ward-wide ballots cast in the special election were mailed in—a remarkable figure.

Chef Geoff Opens in West End

Geoff Tracy has rebranded the Café Deluxe at 2201 M Street, which he purchased only about eight months ago. It was one of a chain of four locations. Now it's "Chef Geoff's, West End."



"Chef Geoff's, West End."

He says the change of name and menu is a bid to survive the pandemic, not to expand his restaurant group.

"This is the most dramatic thing to happen to the restaurant industry in a hundred years," he explained to the *Flyer*. "Every restaurant is a long shot right now."

Tracy, who lived at The Gibson Condominium in the West End in the late 1990s, has owned as many as seven restaurants at one time. He's pared the count to

Continued on Reverse

Vacancies Ahead on Neighborhood Commission

Ballot Petitions for November 3 Election Due August 5

Our Foggy Bottom/West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC-2A) is facing a serious talent drain and will need some candidates to step forward.

This important arm of the District government is non-partisan, non-paid, and locally elected. It advises District agencies on local matters and issues that include transportation, recreation, liquor licensing, zoning, and many other concerns.

Our commission has eight elected members, each of whom represents a small area

of the neighborhood. They serve two-year terms, and generally meet about ten times a year.

All eight seats are up for election this November. Three incumbents have said they will not be seeking re-election. Two, James Harnett and Detrick Campbell, were elected while students at George Washington University. In their districts, turnover is normal and expected.

William Kennedy Smith, who represents the Watergate area, announced at the June 17 meeting that he would not be running for a fourth term. Smith is a for-

mer chair, and one of only two current commissioners who is a neighborhood homeowner. His experience and command of issues will be missed.

Patrick Kennedy, the ANC-2A chair who ran for the Ward 2 council seat (see front page), announced



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A currently holds its monthly meetings by Zoom video conference.

Restaurants in Survival Mode

Continued from Front Page

four. Another Chef Geoff's is on New Mexico Avenue in Wesley Heights. His company also owns Lia's in Chevy Chase and Tortilla Coast on Capitol Hill. The Café Deluxe brand is extinguished for now.

Other restaurants in the West End face the same pandemic-related problems. This is a challenge for our neighborhood, where the major industry is hospitality. Until recently, our many hotels and restaurants employed hundreds of skilled and entry-level workers.

The West End has something that Georgetown and Dupont Circle do not—wide sidewalks for outdoor cafés. However, there's been little organization to promote the area as a dining district, indoors or out.

Welcome back to the neighborhood, Chef Geoff. Maybe you can provide some ideas or leadership.

his resignation as chair at the June meeting.

As the *Flyer* goes to press, he has not yet stated if he will run for a fifth term. Several community leaders are encouraging him to do so, "to preserve continuity and the institutional memory," as one put it.

Kennedy was an effective and highly respected chair, and his depth of knowledge would also be greatly missed. He is the longest serving member. None of the other four commissioners who may remain have yet served a full, two-year term.

Potential candidates for the ANC who wish to be on the November ballot must file petitions by August 5 with the Board of Elections. The number of required signatures has been reduced from 25 to 10 this year.

ANC-2A has been meeting by Zoom video conference since March, and will meet again that way on July 15, at 7 pm. Harnett will chair on an acting basis, and is likely be elected to that job until his term ends in December. Agenda and details at: www.anc2a.org.

Friends of Francis Field

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