

DC Nightlife Commission Meeting – Meeting Minutes

Meeting Title: DC Nightlife Commission Meeting

Date: November 18th, 2025

Time: 6:30PM-8:00PM

Location: John A. Wilson Building

Recorded By: Mariah Coilton

1. Call to Order

2. Program Updates:

Streetary Program

- The Streetary Program, created during the COVID-19 pandemic to allow outdoor dining, is transitioning to a permanent framework.
- Temporary Streetary permits expire November 30.
- Businesses with active applications may keep existing structures in place during the review process.
- Permanent guidelines emphasize design flexibility rather than rigid standards.
- The DRC will continue to provide technical assistance.
- Debris removal assistance is available:
 - Removal for non-renewing businesses begins December 1.
 - Deadline to apply for removal assistance: November 1.
- Virtual office hours are held on Mondays.
- The program is open to new applicants, including businesses not previously enrolled.

2. Great Streets Retail Grants

- The Great Streets Retail Grant Program supports corridor revitalization and long-term economic growth.
- Applications open December 12 and close January 16.

- Businesses may receive up to \$90,000 for capital improvements, including interior and exterior renovations.
- Eligibility is limited to businesses within 15 designated corridors.
- Additional programs discussed:
 - Manufacturing Grants for breweries and manufacturers
 - Emerging Retail Initiative, offering up to \$20,000 for pop-ups and test concepts

3. Regulatory & Structural Updates

3.1 Office of Nightlife Restructuring

- The Office of Nightlife was restructured into ward-based liaison roles.
- This change aims to provide more localized, on-the-ground support.
- Ward liaisons will assist businesses with permits, agency coordination, and access to resources.

3.2 Insurance & Fair Swipe Initiatives

- Dramshop Legislation: Insurance premiums remain high due to “unlimited medical liability” language. Efforts to reintroduce liability caps are ongoing.
- Fair Swipe Initiative: Proposed legislation to prohibit credit card swipe fees on taxes and tips, with potential savings of up to 30% for businesses. The initiative did not receive a hearing this year but is expected to be reintroduced.

4. Interactive Discussion & Case Analysis

4.1 Streetary Fees & Street Closures

- Commissioners discussed potential future revisions to Streetary fees. The current rate remains \$28 per square foot, with no confirmed changes at this time.
- Business owners raised concerns regarding Connecticut Avenue St closures, citing reduced foot traffic.
- The closures were originally implemented for public safety.

- MPD (Commander Savoy) maintains jurisdiction, and a stakeholder walkthrough is planned.

4.2 Illegal Venues & Permit Delays

- Legitimate operators expressed concerns about illegal venues exploiting pop-up loopholes and operating without required safety measures.
- A case example highlighted a 15-month permit delay for a compliant business due to administrative and scheduling challenges.
- Commissioners noted the contrast between lengthy permitting processes and the rapid establishment of illegal venues.

4.3 Small Business Support

- Great Streets funding may be used to offset permit-related and renovation costs.
- Atlas Brewery announced a ten-year anniversary event on Small Business Saturday, inviting past grant recipients to network.

5. Timeline & Upcoming Dates

- Streetary permits expire: November 30
- Debris removal begins: December 1
- Great Streets applications: December 12 – January 16
- Information sessions begin: November 16
- Next Commission Meeting: Scheduled for April 2024, avoiding Nashville conference week

6. Ongoing Support & Strategic Goals

- Ward liaisons will continue assisting businesses with permits and agency coordination.

- Data collection efforts, including nightlife economic impact data, will be used to support advocacy.

- Key goals include:

- Addressing insurance costs through Dramshop reform
- Advancing Fair Swipe legislation
- Resolving street closure concerns
- Streamlining permitting processes for compliant businesses

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the DC Nightlife Commission meeting was adjourned.