

Tommy Wells Hands Out 1st Livable, Walkable Awards

Contributed by Charles Allen
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Councilmember Wells Hands Out 1st Annual Livable, Walkable Community Awards

(Washington, DC) — Last night, cold temperatures and a couple of inches of snow couldn't deter the residents gathered at the East Hall of Eastern Market where Ward 6 Councilmember Tommy Wells handed out the inaugural Livable, Walkable Community Awards.

"Coming on the heels of the report that DC is the most 'walkable' city in the country, beating out cities like New York City, it's time to honor and recognize the individuals and organizations that help make this a reality in our community every day," stated Mr. Wells.

The recipients were:

Livable, Walkable Neighbor Award — Ms. Naomi Monk

A long time resident of Southwest DC, Ms. Monk has shown leadership in community organizing. In particular, she has focused on public safety issues and working with our police officers and neighborhood Police Service Area to fight crime and make the streets and neighborhoods safe to walk. As a witness to the growing economic development in that area, she's been a constant advocate to protect and improve pedestrian access and rights. In addition, Ms. Monk has helped her community keep up with the latest breaking news for years. "If you're not on Ms. Monk's email list, or gotten one of her late night emails, you've been missing out. She has built a large network of Southwest and city residents and puts an emphasis on information sharing — she's a one person email listserv and blog combined," commented Mr. Wells. He added, "As one of the individual's who nominated Ms. Monk stated, she has emphasized the responsibility of all of us to make our community livable and walkable."

Livable, Walkable Community Organization Award Capitol Hill Community Garden Land Trust

The Capitol Hill Community Garden Land Trust is a community based non-profit that serves as an umbrella group for community gardens in the neighborhood. The group has been active in the ward for many years and takes possession of properties to maintain as community gardens and allows donors to contribute and deed their land for this purpose. Pat Taylor, president of the organization, accepted the award. Mr. Wells commented, "Pat and the members of her organization serve as a resource for neighborhoods wanting to create community gardens and get neighbors involved in creating vital green space across the Ward."

Livable, Walkable Business Award - Ginkgo Gardens

"When the Girl Scouts and Brownies of Troop 5083 decided to ask Ginkgo Gardens owner Mark Holler for help in reclaiming the grounds around the Southeast Branch Library, I'm not sure they fully knew what they were getting. Not only did Mark jump in to help, he also provided all the landscape designs, donated a lot of the materials and the rest at cost, and contributed free labor. The result is a branch with incredible patios, walkways and an inviting new way for all of us to experience the library," said Mr. Wells. Ginkgo Gardens is an urban gardeners' oasis located near the freeway on 11th Street, SE. Mr. Holler and his business have also stepped in to help take care of the trees on Pennsylvania Ave during drought, and stepped up in countless other ways to help their neighbors and their community.

Livable, Walkable Public Service Award - DC Fire and EMS

"Most of the neighborhood around Eastern Market woke up on Monday, April 30th to the smell of smoke and the sight of the unthinkable. In the early morning hours, our 134-year-old market had caught fire," stated Mr. Wells. He continued, "As bad as our loss was, it was the brave men and women of the fire department that saved the structure and ensured we'd have something left to rebuild. Over the last year, our firefighters have battled many blazes and their rapid response and the risk to their lives and safety is something for which we are all thankful. There's not a person here who doesn't appreciate the sacrifice they make without a moment's hesitation." Councilmember Wells presented the award to Chief Dennis Rubin and also acknowledged the four firemen recently injured while battling a blaze in several row houses on Capitol Hill, asking everyone to keep them in their thoughts and prayers.

In late October, Councilmember Wells made a call for nominations to residents of the District asking the question,

“What does livable, walkable mean to you and who best represents what it takes to make it a reality?” Over 75 individuals and organizations were nominated for the award in the four categories. This was the first year for the awards and celebration and Councilmember Wells plans to make it an annual event.