

## **What is the Public Space Committee?**

The Public Space Committee makes final determinations on applications for various uses of public space and areas within building restriction lines. The Committee is responsible for assuring that the temporary and permanent uses of public space for public and private purposes are consistent with the laws and policies of the District government. The Public Space Committee is staffed by DDOT's Public Space Management office and meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of every month.

The Committee's make-up and oversight authority has evolved since it was first established in 1939, responding to changes in the type of public space applications and issues facing the District's public space. Today, it operates under a Mayoral Order that authorizes the Committee to make final determinations on the approval or denial of applications certain public space applications. The Committee is made up of five members representing four District agencies:

1. Planning, Policy, and Sustainability Administration (DDOT), Chair;
2. Transportation Operations Administration (DDOT);
3. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs;
4. Office of Planning; and,
5. Secretary of the District of Columbia.

*DCMR Title 24: Public Space and Safety*, broadly defines the authority of the Committee to review and recommend to DDOT approval or denial of a public space application for a use that goes beyond what is allowed by existing regulations. It charges the Committee with determining whether or not what is being requested will adversely affect the interest of the public or violate any of the following criteria:

- (a) The proposed additional use will not endanger the public;
- (b) The proposed additional use will not substantially interfere with pedestrian or vehicular traffic; and,
- (c) The proposed additional use will not increase the area of public space that the applicant for the permit is authorized to use by other law or regulation. (DCMR 12-100.1)

Other sections within *DCMR Title 24* and *DCMR Title 12: Building Code* also identify specific public space applications that must be go before the Committee, as well as the criteria for review. The Committee makes the final determination to grant or deny public space applications for the following:

- Public space rental permits. (DCMR 24-200, 201, 203, and 204)
- Permits for sidewalk cafes. (DCMR 24-210, 301, and 305)
- Permits for benches, trash receptacles, street furniture and amenities, and public art in the Downtown Streetscape Area. (DCMR 24-1108.1 and 1108.10)
- Installation of markers by the Make a Difference Foundation in a location outside of the Downtown Streetscape Area. (DCMR 24 – 116.2(b))
- News media public space permits during an Inauguration. (DCMR 24-805.2)

The Committee makes recommendations to grant or deny a permit issued by DCRA for the following public space items:

- Foregone construction (DCMR 12- 3202.4.2.5)
- Signs for churches or non-profit institutions (DCMR 12-3107.9.5.4 and 3107.9.5.5)
- Refrigeration systems extending into building restriction areas or public space. (DCMR 12-120.2.2.1)

Decisions of the Public Space Committee are final. For additional information about the Public Space Committee, or to electronically receive Public Space Committee informational notices, send requests to: [publicspace.committee@dc.gov](mailto:publicspace.committee@dc.gov).