



## Glover Park Hardware Going...Going...Maybe Not Gone

*Randy Rieland*

If you asked people in Glover Park what they'd like to see on the Wisconsin Avenue strip, it's a good bet not many would say two drug stores.

But that's what we'll have soon when a new Rite Aid moves into 2251 Wisconsin Avenue, pretty much across the street from the CVS. For the past 10 years that space has been occupied by Glover Park Hardware. It closed in mid-January after it lost its lease.

The store's owner, Gina Schaefer, said she found out in November that the landlord, Chesapeake Realty Partners, was not going to renew the lease and instead had chosen to rent the space to another business. That surprised Schaefer because she thought they had reached an agreement—although she says she did start to get suspicious when there was one delay after another in closing the deal.

Schaefer speculated that even though the Glover Park store was one of nine Ace Hardware franchise outlets she owns in DC and Baltimore, she lost out to a “nationally accredited tenant” because it would, in the eyes of the bank, bring more value to the property if Chesapeake Realty wants to sell the building. Chesapeake, based in Owings Mills, MD, is constructing an 82-unit apartment building in what used to be the parking lot behind the former hardware store and Washington Sports Club.

Glover Park ANC Commissioner Jackie Blumenthal confirmed that a Rite Aid will be going into the space. “Losing an Ace Hardware store is a big setback for the community,” she said. “Ace to Rite Aid is a terrible tradeoff.”

Blumenthal pointed out that as much as people in the neighborhood may want to see more independent businesses on Wisconsin Avenue, the relatively small Glover Park business community has very little leverage



Cheri Meyer

in influencing who outside property owners rent to. By contrast, she said, the much more robust business community in Georgetown, is working together to try to slow the pace of national brands replacing independent businesses there.

“We have some really good business people here,” Blumenthal added. “But you’d like to have a really dynamic business community. It’s adequate, but it’s getting less interesting.”

For her part, Schaefer wants to try to stay a part of it. She’s looking at another property elsewhere on Wisconsin but she didn’t want to reveal a location. As of this writing, no deal has been done. She regrets that she lost the space in the heart of the Glover Park

business district. “It was a great store,” she said, noting that before it lost its parking lot to the apartment construction project, Glover Park Hardware ranked behind only her Tenleytown operation in terms of business.

Schaefer also said she’s been touched by the outpouring of support she’s heard from Glover Parkers. Someone actually wrote, “Can we lay down in the street for you?”

“It does make you feel good to know that the community was bummed about this because we definitely were bummed. We have absolutely loved this neighborhood.”

Schaefer said the store’s 24 employees will be shifted to her other hardware stores, including the ones in Tenleytown and Woodley Park.