



WARD 4
MURIEL
BOWSER COUNCILMEMBER

FOCUS ON



December 18, 2008

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Dear Neighbors,

In response to the recent homicide that occurred at a Ward 4 (5400 Block Blair Road NE) group home Sunday, December 14, I called on the City Administrator, Dan Tanagerini, demanding a full investigation of this group home. Additionally, I requested a full review of all group homes in Ward 4. I want the District of Columbia government to provide more vigorous oversight of group homes as well as review current oversight policies and procedures related to placement and supervision. We will provide greater oversight of group homes to ensure that such a tragedy does not occur again.

We have a large number of group homes in Ward 4 and I will continue to work with community leaders, residents and the government to ensure that adequate oversight of group homes is enforced. We must ensure that these vulnerable residents have support, services and the supervision needed to live safely in residential facilities. I believe these measures will not only provide a safe environment for the residents of these homes, but also for our communities.

Muriel

A National and a Regional Experience

On Monday, December 15, I had the honor to vote in the United States Electoral College for the next President and Vice President of the United States of America, Barack Obama and Joe Biden. I was joined by Council Chairman Vincent C. Gray and Mr. Jerry S. Cooper who also served as electors for the District of Columbia. Mayor Adrian M. Fenty presided over the meeting of the District's electors at the John A. Wilson Building, which was organized by the Secretary of the District of Columbia Stephanie Scott.

The vote was recorded on six "Certificates of Vote," which are paired with the six remaining original "Certificates of Ascertainment." We signed, sealed and certified the packages of electoral votes and immediately sent them to the President of the Senate, the Archivist of the United States and other designated Federal and State officials. December 24 is the deadline for receipt of Electoral Votes. The President of the Senate, the Archivist of the United States, and other designated Federal and State officials must have the electoral votes in hand by the 24th.

Yesterday I was nominated as 2nd Vice Chair of the Transportation Planning Board, for the 2009 year. The TPB was created in 1965 by the region's local and state governments to respond to federal highway legislation in 1962 that required the establishment of a "continuing, comprehensive and coordinated" transportation planning process in every urbanized area in the United States. Federal Highway and transit

legislation required the establishment of planning bodies when it became clear that the construction of major transportation projects through and around urban areas needed to be coordinated with local and state jurisdictions now known as the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).

Legislative corner

Here are some highlights from Tuesday's legislative session, which concluded Council period 17.

At Tuesday's legislative meeting, the Council voted on a measure that modified a law passed two weeks ago "Inaugural Celebration Extension of Hours Public Safety Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2008", which changed the alcohol serving end time to 4 am instead of 5 am as originally passed. Additionally, the new measure requires licensees to register if they want to take advantage of the extended hours. While Councilmember Bowser applauds Councilmember Wells' attempts to improve the measure, she remains concerned about the public safety implications for all night drinking, especially in night clubs where the Chief of Police has expressed the most concern. The Council voted 9 to 4 to approve the revised regulations Councilmember Carol Schwartz, Phil Mendelson, and Jim Graham joined Councilmember Bowser in her vote against this measure.

The Council also passed emergency legislation with a vote of 11-2 to increase parking meter rates from \$1 to \$2 per hour downtown and by 25 cents per hour in other parts of the city. The revenue from the meter rate increase will fund social housing programs such as: the Local Rent Supplement Program, the Home Purchase Assistance Program, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. While Councilmember Bowser does not object to the rate increase she however, has concerns about the ad-hoc allocation procedures of the additional revenue that will be generated due to the meter rate increase. "There should be a systematic disbursement of the additional revenue through the budgetary process," said Councilmember Bowser. Councilmember Bowser was joined by Councilmember Phil Mendelson in her vote against this legislation. "These programs have to compete on a level playing field," said Councilmember Bowser.

Final Council Action on the Disposition of 6425 14th Street NW

The disposition approval of this property located at 6425 14th Street NW will add the property to the city's surplus and thus allows for the surplus to be developed into 26 mixed-income condominiums and also develop 54 single-room-occupancy units for senior housing at 1330 Missouri Avenue, NW. Both projects will have at least 51% of the units dedicated to affordable housing. These projects are being maintained for affordable housing through a joint effort with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

The Tewkesbury, at 6425 14th Street, is a 26-unit apartment building that has sat vacant since the 1980s in the middle of the stable Brightwood community. Over time, the property has become an eyesore in an otherwise well-kept neighborhood. Councilmember Bowser would like to thank Mayor Adrian M. Fenty, Councilmember Carol Schwartz, Councilmember Kwame Brown, the Brightwood Community Association and the Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4A, who have worked diligently to bring this blighted property into compliance. The Councilmember made a promise to rid the community of this nuisance property and is moving quickly to have this building restored to the grandeur the neighborhood once knew.

Dates to remember:

Council recess December 23-31, 2008

Swearing-in Ceremony- Council of the District Columbia, State Board of Education, and Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners
January 2, 2008, Walter Washington Convention Center

Legislative Meeting is January 6, 2009

Please visit the new DC Council website for more details at: www.dccouncil.us.

Volunteer opportunity

Experience Corps is an award-winning national program that engages volunteers in meeting their community's greatest challenges. Experience Corps/DC has assembled over 90 volunteers who tutor in 9 DC Public Schools, including Whittier and West Elementary School in Ward 4. Members receive comprehensive training, support, and can serve between 5 and 16 hours per week.

All that is needed is a willingness to work with children who will respond to a caring adult in their lives. Tutoring is a rewarding and personally satisfying experience.

If you are interested in volunteering at Whittier, West or any elementary school, please contact Lamont McCreary at Experience Corps at 202-332-4200 x126, or e-mail him at lmccreary@centronia.org.

District and DOJ enter settlement agreement

Attorney General Peter J. Nickles announced that the District has entered into a settlement agreement with the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) to resolve the department's review of the accessibility of the District's Homeless Shelter Program under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). According to a January 2008 survey, 23 percent of the District's homeless residents have a physical disability, 19 percent have a severe mental illness, and 2 percent have HIV or AIDS.

The settlement involves a multi-million dollar comprehensive plan to ensure that all District homeless shelters are ADA accessible within five years. The plan will also identify programmatic and policy changes to the Homeless Shelter Program to ensure ADA compliance within three years.

DOJ's review of the Shelter Program was initiated in 2006. The settlement provisions allow for a 45-day public hearing and comment period on the best ways to achieve ADA compliance for the Shelter Program. The District will provide notification to the public of the hearing and comment period within three months.

New hours for WMATA sales office- December 28

The Northern sales office located at 4615 14th Street NW, announced new hours, Beginning Monday, December 28, 2008, the new hours are Monday-Friday, 8:30 am-4:00 pm and Saturday-Sunday, 9 am-1:00 pm. For additional information you may visit www.MetroOpensDoors.com or 202-637-7000.

Conversion to digital- February 2009

If you own a television and still use an antenna you will be required to use a digital converter by February 17, 2009. You may purchase these from retail stores such as Best Buy or Radio Shack. The cost is \$59.99. You may get \$40 discount coupons by calling 1-888-388-2009 or go on-line to www.dtv2009.com. You can get up to two coupons per household.

Just think of the converter as your new "rabbit ears"; you will still only receive the same stations you receive now. If you are a Comcast Cable customer you don't need to do anything at this time since Comcast will continue broadcasting in analog for those who receive the Basic Tier. RCN is phasing out its analog service and you will have to rent a converter box from RCN. The first box will be free and additional boxes will cost \$2.50. Satellite Customers (Dish TV, Direct TV) already have access to digital television through their converter boxes and will not have to make any changes.