



WARD 4
MURIEL
BOWSER COUNCILMEMBER

FOCUS ON



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Muriel Bowser

Councilmember, Ward 4
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 110
Washington DC 20004
202-724-8052-voice
202-741-0908
mbowser@dccouncil.us

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Dear Neighbors,

Last week the District of Columbia Auditor released a report on the Certified Capital Companies program which is managed by the District Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking (DISB). The report revealed that millions of dollars in District funds intended for creating jobs in the District was wasted. Only 31 new District jobs at a cost of \$76 million. Created in 2004, the Certified Capital Companies program (CAPCO) was intended to stimulate the growth of small and start-up businesses in the District of Columbia.

I am deeply troubled by the findings in the Auditor's report, as it appears that the District has wasted \$76 million, with only 31 jobs created, or more than \$2 million per job created, this program is one of the most costly in District history.

The Auditor is recommending that the Council of the District of Columbia terminate the CAPCO program. Commissioner Hampton presented testimony before the committee on Public Services and Consumer Affairs, Friday, March 13th to discuss the agency's 2008 performance. I expect to gather additional information prior to the agency's budget hearing scheduled for April 22nd. If needed my committee will perform its own investigation into the CAPCO program and take immediate action.

As Chairman of the Committee on Public Services and Consumer Affairs the committee that has oversight of DISB, I will hold this agency accountable for this major waste of taxpayer funds.

Muriel

Legislative Corner

Last week Councilmember Bowser sent a letter to the editor of the Northwest Current, in response to an article published regarding the redevelopment of the “Curtis Chevrolet Site” on Georgia Avenue.

Dear Editor:

Recently, the Northwest Current published an article detailing the upcoming and exciting redevelopment of the old Curtis Chevrolet site located along historic Georgia Avenue in Ward 4. I fully support the speedy redevelopment of this site as I believe it is the first salvo to what will be an economic renaissance in Ward 4. For too long, much of this Great Street has been blighted, vacant and in need of the very vitality that this redevelopment will usher in.

The project will create over 400 much-needed, multi-family residential units and 20,000 square feet of neighborhood-serving retail but its benefit to Ward 4 residents cannot be measured in square footage alone. Because Georgia Avenue is an important transportation corridor that links residential neighborhoods with the District’s downtown to the south and Silver Spring, Maryland to the north this project will serve to catalyze economic development in all of Ward 4. In conjunction with the Great Streets revitalization plans, Georgia Avenue will receive new roads, new trees, new green space, and redesigned storefronts. Soon, Georgia Avenue will be a beacon for investment, for coffee shops, hardware stores, restaurants, and ice cream shops. It will be a street for walking, meeting neighbors, communing and entertaining; it will be a destination, not just a thoroughfare.

The speedy redevelopment of the Curtis Chevrolet site is the first of many, pivotal pieces to solving the puzzle of an underachieving corridor. In my opinion, our Ward is the best in the City. It is safe, affordable, and comfortable; we have strong neighborhood associations, parks, pools, schools; restaurants, and jazz clubs. I have no intention of changing the fabric of what makes ours the best Ward in town. But, I feel strongly that the time is now to enhance Georgia Avenue, to provide jobs, commercial options, and economic self-sustainability.

Best Regards,

Muriel Bowser

Public Service Commission Oversight Hearing- update

The Committee on Public Services and Consumer Affairs held its annual oversight hearing over the Public Service Commission on Friday, March 13. In response to a recent increase in complaints over high utility bills from Ward 4 residents, Councilmember Bowser questioned the Commissioners about what they can do about high utility costs. The Public Service Commission opened a formal investigation into these complaints on February 16th. Pepco is internally investigating the matter, and is expected to report its findings to the Office of the People’s Counsel on March 27th. Councilmember Bowser will continue to monitor these important issues.

Anti-Crime Bill Hearing- update

Today Councilmember Bowser attended a public hearing on the “Omnibus Anti-Crime Amendment Act of 2009” and the “Public Safety and Justice Amendments Act of 2009”. The Committee on Public Safety and the Judiciary heard testimony from the Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department, the Attorney General for the District of Columbia, and the US Attorney for the District of Columbia, as well as several representatives of community groups and members of the public.

The legislation being considered by the committee seeks to reduce gang violence, promote effective gun control, increase the stringency of drug laws, and empower the police to fight crime, while maintaining constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties. During her questioning, Councilmember Bowser emphasized the importance of focusing resources on gang activity in the District and getting guns off the streets. Councilmember Bowser looks forward to a continued dialogue with her fellow committee members, other branches of government, the police, and the public on the issues addressed by these bills. The committee currently expects that another public hearing on these bills will take place in the spring.

**Joint Public Hearing: Committee on Public Services and Consumer Affairs and the Committee on Economic Development-
District of Columbia Auditor's Report on CAPCO**

Friday, April 3, John A. Wilson Building, Room 120

Committee on Public Services and Consumer Affairs 2009 Budget Hearing schedule, Chairperson, Muriel Bowser.

Wednesday, April 1, John A. Wilson Building, Room 500

10:00 am- 12:00 pm, Office of the Tenant Advocate

1:00 pm- 5:00 pm, Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs

Wednesday, April 22, John A. Wilson Building, Room 412

10:00 am- 11:30 am, Office of the People's Counsel

11:30 am- 2:00 pm, Public Service Commission

3:00 pm- 5:30 pm, Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking

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

Increase in Unemployment Benefits

The Department of Employment Services (DOES) has announced a plan that includes an increase in the weekly unemployment benefits and an expansion of city services to help residents filing unemployment claims and looking for work. The new benefits for unemployed residents include additional Compensation. A supplemental \$25 weekly benefit as outlined in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) will be automatically added to unemployment payments. These payments will be retroactive to February 17, 2009 the day the AARA was signed by President Obama.

The DOES unemployment telephone lines (202-724-7000) are open from 8:00 am to 7:30 pm Monday-Thursday, 8:00 am – 4:30 pm Friday, and 8:00 am – 1:00 pm Saturday. For more information on how to file a claim; visit: www.unemployment.dc.gov.

Tax filing Deadline Approaching

The individual income tax filing deadline is less than 30 days away and the District of Columbia Office of Tax and Revenue (OTR), is encouraging everyone to file your tax return electronically for an accurate return and a faster refund. Residents who file electronically will get their refunds in a few days compared to weeks, for individuals who file a paper return.

In addition, OTR customer service representatives are also available to assist taxpayers in preparing their income tax return and provide information about electronic filing. OTR's Walk-In Service Center is open Monday-Friday 8:30 am to 5:30 pm. The center is located at 941 North Capitol Street, NE, on the first floor, or you may call (202) 727-4TAX (4829).

Lifeguards Needed

The DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is accepting applications for certified American Red Cross lifeguards during summer 2009. DPR is offering free training and certification for new lifeguards. Training classes are currently underway and will continue throughout the spring. All lifeguard applicants must be 15 years of age or older.

Interested applicants should submit a DPR Summer 2009 Preliminary Employment Application and the standard DC Employment Application (DC2000). Additional information and forms are available in the "Summer Employment" section of DPR's website, DPR.DC.GOV. For more information about becoming a lifeguard or other summer employment opportunities with DPR, please call (202) 673-7603.

Disaster Preparedness Workshop- March 20th

The District of Columbia's Homeland Security Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA) will host a training session on Friday, March 20th at 3:00 pm at the Emery recreation Center, 5801 Georgia Avenue NW.

This workshop is an answer to our Ward 4 residents concerns for preparation, should a natural disaster occur. You will receive information from district agencies, along with free items to be used during a disaster and the opportunity to participate in a simulation of a potential disaster. For more information or to register visit www.dccommunitypreparedness.org or call 202-338-7153 ext. 212.

Winter Futsal Championships this Weekend

The DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) will host the DPR Winter Futsal Championships on Saturday, March 21, 2009, at the Riggs LaSalle Community Center at 501 Riggs Road, NE, from 9 am - 5 pm. Over 300 players from across the country will play on 21 teams, hoping to earn the District of Columbia Cup.

Futsal is an indoor version of soccer, played by two teams of five players. Futsal is also played with a smaller ball with less bounce than a regulation soccer ball. The rules create a game with emphasis on improvisation, creativity and technique as well as ball control and passing in small spaces. For more information about the event, contact DPR's Athletic Programs Administration, (202) 671-1700.

DHCD holds Public Hearing

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) will hold a Public Hearing on the "Draft Fiscal Year 2010 Consolidated Annual Action Plan for the District of Columbia". The purpose of the hearing is to provide residents with an opportunity to express your views on the Plan and budgets to be submitted to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The Hearing will take place on Tuesday, March 24 at 6:30 pm at the Old Council Chambers, 1st Floor, 441 4th Street. For more information you may contact Eileen Flowers at 202-442-7216 or eileen.flowers@dc.gov.