



WARD 4
MURIEL
BOWSER COUNCILMEMBER

FOCUS ON



July 18, 2008

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Dear Neighbors:

The last official DC Council legislative session on Tuesday, July 15, 2008 was very busy. DC Council begins its Summer recess today and the next legislative session is on September 16th. Our office will be open throughout the Summer recess. Our office contact information at the end of this newsletter.

Here are some highlights of Tuesday's session:

There were four new pieces of legislation to support economic development in Ward 4:

The **Residences at 4100 Georgia Avenue** broke ground in the Summer of 2007 and will house 72 affordable rental apartments and 10,000 square feet of much needed retail space. **Yes! Organic Grocery Store** is slated to be the primary retail tenant. I introduced legislation on Tuesday to exempt a new, full service grocery store (or substantially renovated full-service grocery store) within the boundaries of ANC 4C07 from the current Ward 4 moratorium on new Class B alcohol licenses. This legislation will enable a full-service grocery store to apply for a Class B alcohol license within ANC4C07. I look forward to a full vetting in the community and support of ANC4C before final DC Council action.

I also introduced a bill to expand the definition of priority development area to include the Fort Totten neighborhood commercial center which will create an economic incentive for a full-service grocery store to locate in the **Fort Totten Square** project (formerly Tiger Mart) at South Dakota Avenue and Riggs Road, NE. A prominent grocery store chain has submitted a letter of intent for this site and this measure treats this important Riggs Park center like other revitalized areas in the City.

Two additional important items for the Ward 4 economic development agenda were unanimously approved - the **Kennedy Street Revitalization Plan Approval Resolution of 2008** and the **Upper Georgia Avenue Great Streets Redevelopment Plan**. Each plan lays out a strategic land use plan that will help guide development and growth in these areas over the next 5-10 years. These plans suggest a vision for these commercial corridors that will make them destination places that are pedestrian friendly and provide for the density where businesses can thrive. Please visit my website www.murielbowser.com for a PDF of the committee report on each plan. They are located on the home page in the left column.

I co-introduced legislation with Ward 3 Councilmember Mary M. Cheh to ensure public participation as neighborhoods weigh whether or not to become a recognized historic district. This legislation requires a **formal process whereby the residents within a given proposed historic district can indicate their preference** for historic district designation. The Historic Preservation Office (Office of Planning) is charged with implementing this public participation process.

I voted to support the reprogramming of capital funds for contracts for this Summer's **school facilities modernization and stabilization**. There are ten Ward 4 schools affected by the approval of these contracts. Phase I will begin the conversion of schools who will become PreK-8th grade schools – 12 schools in all. Phase II is the receiving schools' blitz to ready them for additional students this Fall. The Summer blitz repairs include space reconfiguration, adding restrooms, elevators and science rooms for schools currently without. Included in this funding are renovations and upgrading for Coolidge High School gymnasium including adding air conditioning.

I voted to support the **Firearms Control Emergency Act of 2008** in response to the recent decision by the Supreme Court to allow the registration and storage of handguns for self-defense in the home. In agreement with the predominate will of DC residents, Tuesday's legislation will preserve the most restrictive handgun regulations within the parameters of the Supreme Court decision and will be in effect for 90 days. The legislation has four components: 1) it lifts the prohibition to register handguns for personal protection within the home, 2) defines the boundaries of "home", 3) authorizes the Chief of Police to perform ballistic testing on hand guns at registration and makes testing a requirement, 4) clarifies safe-storage and trigger-lock requirements. There is no right to carry handguns on the streets in the District. That has not changed. Automatic and semi-automatic weapons will continue to be banned throughout the City.

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

Muriel

District announces additional unemployment compensation benefits

Mayor Adrian M. Fenty announced earlier this week that an agreement has been reached with the U.S. Department of Labor to pay additional unemployment compensation benefits under the provisions of the **Supplemental Appropriation Act, 2008, Title IV – Emergency Unemployment Compensation, Public Law 110-252**. This act provides as many as 13 weeks of additional benefits to individuals whose claims against the District of Columbia expired on or after May 1, 2007, and have exhausted all of their benefits. These additional benefits are payable beginning the week ending July 12, 2008. The weekly benefit amount for these additional benefits would be the same as previously received under the regular unemployment compensation program.

The Department of Employment Services, which administers the District's Unemployment Compensation Program, will begin mailing notices on July 21, 2008, to all individuals whose claims against the District expired on or after May 1, 2007, and have been paid all of their benefits. A notice will provide eligible claimants with instructions on how to file for additional benefits if the individual is currently unemployed. For more information please contact: the Department of Employment Services at (202) 724-7000 or by email: does@dc.gov.

DC minimum wage increase begins July 24

Effective July 24, 2008, the minimum wage for employees in the District of Columbia will increase from \$7.00 per hour to \$7.55 per hour. The increase coincides with the federal minimum wage increase to \$6.55.

The DC Minimum Wage Act Revision Act of 1992 set the District's minimum wage at the minimum wage set by the US Government, plus \$1. "This increase will give some relief to our families working hard to provide for their families," said Councilmember Bowser. Currently, there are 32 states – and the District of Columbia – with minimum wage rates higher than the federal minimum wage. For additional information, contact the Department of Employment Services, Office of Wage Hour at (202) 671-1880.

Volunteers needed at LAYC's evening program at 801 Shepherd St, NW

The Latin American Youth Center (LAYC) is facilitating the Evening Reporting Center for referred youth via the DC Superior Courts and the Department of Youth Rehabilitative Services (DYRS) Monday to Friday from 4pm to 8pm and Saturday 9 am to 3pm at the Patrol Services Bureau at 801 Shepherd Street, NW.

The program will serve young people throughout the Washington DC metro area. The goals include: reengaging youth back into basic education institutions (GED programs, high school, college), and occupational trades training. There is also a job readiness program that will include resume writing, interviewing skills, occupational goal setting and internship opportunities.

LAYC needs volunteers beginning August 1, to help with: homework, tutoring, life skills, job readiness, mentoring and occupational internship opportunities. If you are interested in becoming a tutor or mentor, please attend an orientation meeting at the Ward 4 Boys & Girls Club in the right hand side of 801 Shepherd Street, NW on Tuesday, July 22, 2008 at 6pm. Please RSVP to Robert S. Leggon, Program Coordinator / Manager at Robert@layc-dc.org or call 202-744-4113-Cell, 202-319-2806 Ext 28-Office. Refreshments will be served.

DDOT responds to traffic concerns and will install new multi-stop controls

We received notice from DDOT that recent traffic studies have revealed the need to improve residents' ability to navigate the intersection at 14th and Sheridan Streets, NW and also 14th and Fort Stevens Drive, NW. In the interest of public safety, DDOT will soon begin to install multi-stop controls at both of these intersections to stop traffic on both streets. For more information, please contact Kathleen Penney, Chief Engineer for DDOT at 202-671-2800 or Kathleen.penney@dc.gov.