

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

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SURPLUS HEARING ON FLETCHER-JOHNSON
REDEVELOPMENT SITE

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WEDNESDAY
MARCH 20, 2019

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The hearing was convened in the Upper
Gymnasium of the DC Scholars Public Charter
School, 5601 East Capitol Street, SE, Washington,
D.C., at 6:30 p.m., Claudia Barahona, Department
of General Services, presiding.

PRESENT

CLAUDIA BARAHONA, Department of General
Services
WENDELL FELDER, Office of the Deputy Mayor
for Planning and Development
TIWANA HICKS, Department of General Services
ANGIE RODGERS, Office of the Deputy Mayor for
Planning and Development

ALSO PRESENT

EBBON ALLEN, Fletcher-Johnson Task Force
BEN BAHN, Ward 7 Resident
DELIA HOUSEAL, ANC 7E06
DEAVIE LEWIS, Ward 7 Resident
KAREN SETTLES, Ward 7 Resident
SHARON SHANKLIN-BROWNE, Benning Ridge Civic
Association
EBONI-ROSE THOMPSON, Ward 7 Education Council
T.N. TATE, Fletcher-Johnson Task Force
KEITH TOWERY, Marshall Heights Civic Association
JIM VOLTZ, Ward 7 Resident

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 6:38 p.m.

3 MS. BARAHONA: All right, we're going
4 to get started. So, good evening, and welcome to
5 the Fletcher-Johnson Community Surplus Hearing.

6 This is conducted pursuant to D.C.
7 Code 10-801. My name is Claudia Barahona. I am
8 with the District of Columbia Department of
9 General Services.

10 Thank you all for taking the time out
11 of your schedules to be here tonight. I just
12 want to make sure that all of you guys have
13 signed in.

14 If you have not, please sign in in the
15 back. This will be helpful when we are
16 transcribing as well as making sure that we have
17 all of the comments that are made tonight.

18 I also want to recognize the ANC
19 Commissioners that are here. ANC Commissioners,
20 would you like raise your hand? Any tonight?
21 Yes, there's one.

22 And I want to make sure that the ANC

1 Commissioner for the SMD is recognized,
2 Commissioner T.N. Tate. Thank you to all of you
3 for all of your hard work and what you do for the
4 community.

5 Lastly, I want to thank DC Scholars
6 for letting us use this facility. It's a
7 wonderful facility and I just want to make sure
8 we thank them for this.

9 Tonight's community Surplus Hearing is
10 being recorded and a transcript of this recording
11 will be included with the surplus package that
12 will be submitted to D.C. Council.

13 The purpose of this Hearing is to
14 receive comment on the proposed surplus
15 designation of the Fletcher-Johnson Middle School
16 site, located at 4650 Benning Road, Southeast in
17 the heart of the Marshall Heights Community.

18 Designating a property's surplus needs
19 that the Government no longer requires the
20 property for District-operated public use. So
21 what does that mean?

22 That means that the District has

1 decided that it can't be a DCPS school, a fire
2 station, a police station, or any District Agency
3 office space.

4 Please note that the proposed non-
5 governmental future use of the property are being
6 discussed through our RFP process led by DMPED.

7 The Community Disposition Hearing is
8 scheduled for April 6th here in his room at DC
9 Scholars.

10 Angie Rodgers and Wendell Felder can
11 provide more information on this process after
12 today's Community Surplus Hearing has concluded
13 and both of them are at the back.

14 Before opening up the floor to
15 comments, I would like to share some background
16 information about the Fletcher-Johnson site and
17 the structure of today's Hearing.

18 Fletcher-Johnson first opened its
19 doors in 1977 to about 1000 students annually.
20 The facility had a focused care center, a
21 community center, and support services.

22 It also in 2008 was the location for

1 the swing space for H.D. Woodson. The building
2 was finally vacated in 2011.

3 The District proposes that the
4 Fletcher-Johnson site should be designated as a
5 surplus government property because it no longer
6 needed -- excuse me, it is no longer needed as a
7 school and no other government use has been
8 identified.

9 In order to officially designate a
10 surplus, a former school must first be offered to
11 a public charter school or its existing tenants
12 according to the Landrieu Act.

13 The Deputy Mayor for Education
14 released a request for offers under the Landrieu
15 Act in 2014. Offers were received and evaluated
16 but no award was made.

17 This Surplus Hearing is the next step
18 in the process of designating the site as
19 surplus.

20 After we receive all the comments and
21 written statements from this evening, the
22 District will complete a package to D.C. Council

1 which will include a surplus analysis,
2 resolution, and all public comments made tonight.

3 Once received, the Council will call
4 the Hearing and you will have yet another
5 opportunity to provide input and testify in front
6 of the Council on the surplus resolution.

7 The Council will then consider and
8 vote on the proposal to designate this property
9 as surplus.

10 Currently in this neighborhood, there
11 are a number of community facilities within the
12 approximately one mile of Fletcher-Johnson,
13 including three elementary schools, one middle
14 school, a library, and three community recreation
15 centers.

16 To date the District Government has
17 not identified any public use for the Fletcher-
18 Johnson site and proposes that it be designated
19 as surplus. But first we want to hear from you.

20 Please focus your comments on the
21 surplus designation of the property. The
22 discussion of any future private development will

1 be at the Community Disposition Hearing, which
2 will be a community meeting that will be held by
3 DMPED on April 6th.

4 If you have any questions about the
5 disposition process, Wendell can address those
6 after the Community Surplus Hearing.

7 If you have prepared written
8 statements, please feel free to provide them to
9 me after the Hearing and they will be
10 incorporated into the official record.

11 If you are interested in providing
12 public comments, please form a line in front of
13 the mic or in front of the podium and provide
14 your testimony or remarks on the surplus of the
15 former Fletcher-Johnson Middle School site.

16 When you introduce yourself, and this
17 is really important for the transcriber, please
18 spell out your first and last name and state the
19 organization you represent, if any.

20 Each person will have a total of three
21 minutes to deliver their comments. If comments
22 exceed the three minutes, we kindly request that

1 a written draft be submitted so we can fully
2 capture the remarks.

3 Please also respect the person who is
4 speaking and avoid interrupting so we may all get
5 the benefit of hearing each person's comments.
6 You can also send comments to me.

7 My name is Claudia Barahona and my
8 email is claudia.barahona@dc.gov. I'm sure you
9 think that's hard so if you'd like that
10 information, we also have that in the back with
11 my email address.

12 And you may also send it to Wendell's
13 email, who is back here. We will be taking
14 comments until March 27th so on March 27th we
15 will be closing the official record of the
16 Surplus Hearing.

17 Additionally, there are also note
18 cards and pencils at the sign-in table should
19 anyone prefer to submit a comment in writing.
20 Please be sure to write your name on the card.

21 All right, is there anyone here that
22 would like to start with comments? I am opening

1 the record on any comments for the Surplus
2 Hearing.

3 MS. LEWIS: I have a question.

4 MS. BARAHONA: Sure.

5 MS. LEWIS: I wanted to address you
6 said that there are three elementary schools, one
7 middle, one library, and three rec centers here
8 in...is it Ward 7?

9 MS. BARAHONA: Yes. Currently they're
10 within a mile from Fletcher-Johnson.

11 MS. LEWIS: A one-mile radius, okay.

12 MS. HOUSEAL: I guess I'll kick us
13 off. I didn't prepare so this may not be as
14 organized but I'd like to introduce myself.

15 Good afternoon or evening, my name is
16 Delia Houseal, I am an ANC Commissioner for
17 single-member district 7E06. I am also the Chair
18 of ANC's 7E. But tonight I'd like for my
19 comments to really reflect my role as a community
20 member.

21 And so I'm going to start off just by
22 saying thank you for the opportunity to provide

1 feedback on the Fletcher-Johnson site.

2 As an ANC Commissioner, and most
3 importantly, a member of the community, I'd like
4 to request that the Fletcher-Johnson site be used
5 in a way that really reflects the community's
6 needs.

7 And so we think about what we want to
8 do with this site given that now we're looking at
9 the site not being surplus. I do think there
10 is some criteria that I'd like to leave you all
11 with as you sort of go through this process.

12 So the one is community-responsive
13 development and for me what that means is that to
14 date I feel like the D.C. Government has done a
15 fantastic job of really engaging the community
16 throughout this process.

17 I would encourage you to continue
18 engaging the community throughout this process,
19 whether that's community leaders, community
20 members.

21 We also have a Fletcher-Johnson
22 taskforce that I think plays a very critical role

1 in this process. And so we would encourage you,
2 I would encourage you, to continue working with
3 those individuals.

4 The second one is that I ask for
5 consideration to be given to using this space in
6 a way that fulfills the needs of the community.

7 And what I mean by that is we realize
8 that, hey, there's no real government use for it
9 but when you look around our community, we have
10 plenty of needs.

11 And so we think about what this space
12 could be used for and we want to think about
13 things in a way that fulfills our community
14 needs. So, those things include increased
15 employment, opportunities, access to healthy
16 foods, access to quality of retail.

17 Right now, we don't have a place where
18 we can go and buy toilet paper without going to
19 the pharmacy or the grocery store and so I think
20 that's incredibly important looking at the
21 demographic makeup of our community.

22 And then thirdly, I'd like to request

1 that the site be utilized in a way that really
2 respects the cultural significance of that site.
3 I think the site has a huge history, I think you
4 alluded to some of that.

5 It's also adjacent right to the
6 Woodland Cemetery and I think that whatever the
7 use for the site, however the site is used, it
8 really highlights the rich cultural history of
9 the site and the many African Americans and
10 others who have contributed to the development of
11 this area.

12 And so I believe that's it. Thank you
13 for the opportunity and I look forward to
14 submitting a more formal written statement.

15 MS. BARAHONA: Thank you. Go ahead.
16 Please form a line.

17 MS. THOMPSON: Good afternoon -- good
18 evening I guess.

19 My name is Eboni-Rose Thompson, I am
20 here in my role as the Chair of the Ward 7
21 Education Council and an Executive Member of the
22 Fletcher-Johnson taskforce.

1 The primary purpose of the Ward 7
2 Education Council is to support schools and
3 families in pursuit of a high-quality education
4 for all children.

5 Many will argue a quality education
6 goes beyond the classroom and I am here to argue
7 that when we think about educating the whole
8 child, it goes beyond just providing another
9 academic option.

10 It is for this reason we have urged
11 for this project not to be considered for a new
12 school site and to be moved from DNE's portfolio
13 and now under DMPED's portfolio.

14 When I think about my own childhood
15 growing up here in Ward 7, and I would ask you to
16 think about yours as well, it is so much more
17 than what schools I attended that come to mind.

18 Now, I am proud to say that I went to
19 Plummer Elementary from Pre-K through 5th Grade
20 which was my neighborhood school, and that is
21 still my neighborhood school today.

22 I think about spending Sundays at

1 church and then heading down to Phillips on the
2 Wharf to eat with my mom, grandma, and sisters
3 and then walk to the Waterfront with my grandad.

4 I think about going to ballet in the
5 evenings after school or gymnastics on Saturdays
6 and during the summer. I think about many times
7 that I had a fever and my grandparents spent the
8 night at D.C. General with me.

9 I had a rich and amazing childhood
10 growing up in Ward 7. Unfortunately, so many of
11 the experiences that made my childhood rich
12 aren't available to the children in my community
13 today.

14 I am here to reinforce that rich and
15 vibrant childhoods are possible and we hope will
16 soon be accessible within our community.

17 That support for vibrancy is the
18 opportunity that is the Fletcher-Johnson site,
19 and that site, which is now under the purview of
20 DMPED, we hope will leave the D.C. Government
21 inventory.

22 The fact remains that in Ward 7

1 Fletcher-Johnson still sits vacant and blighted,
2 remaining in the DGS inventory. The community
3 has consistently expressed the need for a
4 broader economic vision for the Fletcher-Johnson
5 campus.

6 At present we are in the midst of our
7 third round of community meetings during which we
8 continue to reinforce our collective vision for
9 the Fletcher-Johnson site.

10 As we look around the city to see how
11 other sites have been handled, there's one site
12 that draws clear parallels, Hine Junior High
13 School near Eastern Market. It's 3.5 acres.

14 Also, it closed two years after
15 Fletcher-Johnson in 2008.

16 It has already been redeveloped into
17 a seven-story mixed-use development including
18 61,000 square feet of retail space, part of which
19 houses a brand-new Trader Joe's, which I actually
20 purchased groceries from today, 150,000 square
21 feet of office space, mixed-income housing, a
22 public plaza for community gatherings, and

1 underground parking.

2 A major difference between the two
3 sites being the stagnant inequities in needs and
4 resources already present between the Capitol
5 Hill Eastern Market communities in Ward 6 and the
6 Marshall Heights and Benning Ridge communities in
7 Ward 7.

8 Our neighbors have publicly and
9 consistently expressed that many of the
10 investments needed to benefit the greater good in
11 Ward 7, limiting the buildings used for a public
12 purposes when we have schools, a new police
13 station, and other D.C. Government offices, does
14 fill an unmet need.

15 Simultaneously, we have only three
16 sit-down restaurants, two grocery stores, and
17 remain the only ward without an art space.

18 At this juncture, the community has
19 reached a consensus in its vision for a community
20 hub that meets our needs and we looking forward
21 to continuing to work with the Deputy Mayor for
22 Planning and Economic Development to move our

1 collective vision forward.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. VOLTZ: My name is Jim Voltz, V-O-
4 L-T-Z, and I live at 5308 Bass Place in Marshall
5 Heights. I moved in last May and I love the
6 neighborhood but I miss having a grocery store so
7 I really think it would be great to have more
8 retail.

9 Not Dollar Stores or Subways but a
10 retail store like a grocery store where you can
11 buy groceries, a nice restaurant where you can
12 sit down. We have Denny's but it would be nice
13 to have something else that's family-friendly.

14 And I really think we should honor
15 John Payne, whose property this was back in the
16 turn of the century, because the property is the
17 former Payne Cemetery.

18 Now the graves have been removed but
19 it was one of the five black cemeteries we had in
20 Washington, and I really think it's a good
21 history and it should be on a plaque or something
22 that explains to people what that land was and

1 is.

2 And also, this is a little bit beyond
3 that but I also think we need other things that
4 mention it so our neighbors and other people who
5 want to visit know more about the neighborhood by
6 having historical information about Eleanor
7 Roosevelt and her role in developing Marshall
8 Heights.

9 And even the visit of Queen Elizabeth
10 in 1991. I think those are things that would
11 make people proud and that people should know
12 about. And it would start with that property
13 which was John Payne's cemetery.

14 And also if we're having housing I'd
15 like it to be mixed-income and have it be multi-
16 use, as the last speaker said, and I want it to
17 be something that's a destination, something
18 upscale.

19 Because I think most people, well, I
20 know, that most of my friends think of Southeast
21 as boring or crime-ridden or there's nothing
22 there and it would be nice to have a destination,

1 something very nice so people would say, that's a
2 great place, you've got to go see it.

3 And it would really improve the
4 spirits of the neighborhood. Money's been
5 invested in the rest of the city in many ways to
6 make it beautifully landscaped and add amenities
7 and I think this is an opportunity to do
8 something here in our community.

9 Thank you.

10 MR. BAHN: Hi, my name is Ben Bahn,
11 that's B-A-H-N and I'm with 4614 B Street. I
12 just want to echo some of the comments that we've
13 heard before.

14 I'm relatively new to the
15 neighborhood, I moved in last year and I always
16 tell people we're living in a service desert.
17 There isn't a decent pizza place, a place to sit
18 down and have a cup of coffee, no decent places
19 to sit outside.

20 And that's one of the things I liked
21 about the place I used to live, which is in North
22 Virginia, and I think that's something we

1 desperately need here, as you've heard before.
2 We are in desperate need of more retail options.

3 There's not a decent grocery store
4 around, as I said there's no coffee shop, there's
5 not a place to sit down and have a beer and a
6 burger.

7 My brother lives about a mile away on
8 Benning near the golf course, so northeast, and I
9 see him fairly frequently but when we get
10 together we always go down to H Street because
11 there's nothing where he lives and there's
12 nothing where I live.

13 And I think that if we create a more
14 upscale, as Jim was saying, retail set up, it
15 will also attract more people to the
16 neighborhood.

17 Because nobody wants to live in a
18 place where you have to drive a few miles to go
19 to the grocery store or where there's only one
20 dry cleaner, and it's a pretty lousy dry cleaner
21 at that.

22 So this is what I think we need and I

1 think if the City listens, this is what the City
2 will do.

3 And I want again to say that we need
4 some open space and public space where somebody
5 can sit down with their kids and have a coffee
6 and maybe talk to their neighbor, something like
7 that.

8 And that's what I'm asking for.

9 MS. LEWIS: Good evening, my name is
10 Deavie Lewis, first name is D-E-A-V-I-E, last
11 name is Lewis. I don't have a statement prepared
12 right now but I will prepare something before the
13 deadline.

14 But I just want to say that I agree
15 with all of the comments of everyone that has
16 spoken before me and with this first speaker, the
17 young lady that spoke, I grew up here in Ward 7
18 and I went to the public schools right here.

19 My parents put me in ballet, I
20 performed at Lisner Auditorium. I took ballet
21 classes on Benning Road at the school there, I
22 took piano lessons, I got to go on lots of trips

1 through the schools here in D.C.

2 And I feel that it's important and the
3 young people today aren't actually, like the
4 other speaker has said, benefitting from the same
5 opportunities that we had because the services
6 aren't available to the parents and the schools
7 in order for the children to benefit from that.

8 So, some of the things, in addition to
9 the things that have already been mentioned,
10 right now that I think would be important are for
11 the school to provide employment services to help
12 people learn how to get a job, how to fill out a
13 resume, things like that.

14 Culturally, it would be nice if we had
15 a space where children and older adults would be
16 able to go and maybe take dance classes, learn
17 sewing, creative arts types of things that aren't
18 available now.

19 As well as all of us can't emphasize
20 enough the fact that in our ward, there's nowhere
21 that we can really go and have choices in terms
22 of where we could go and have a nice meal out as

1 there are in other parts of the city or in
2 Northern Virginia where I used to live, where
3 it's understood that everything is just really
4 accessible and convenient.

5 So, if the powers that be could just
6 be considerate and imagine the opportunities that
7 we would like to see right here in our ward as
8 there are in other parts of the city, we would
9 all be better for it.

10 Thank you.

11 MS. BARAHONA: Thank you.

12 MS. SHANKLIN-BROWNE: I can breathe
13 now, the taskforce members have arrived.

14 And before they speak I'd just like to
15 make it known I am Sharon, S-H-A-R-O-N, last name
16 Shanklin, like Franklin just S-H-A-N-K-L-I-N,
17 hyphen, B-R-O-W-N-E, and I'm the President of the
18 Benning Ridge Civic Association.

19 Fletcher-Johnson also borders Benning
20 Ridge. Benning Ridge stretches a long way. And
21 the only thing I want to say is that to the
22 people, the residents, that came up thus far,

1 there is a group which mainly right now consists
2 of the taskforce and this taskforce has been
3 together since 2014.

4 And we are aware, here's Commissioner
5 Tate that you were looking for earlier, she's our
6 leader, and Keith Towery and then Eboni spoke
7 earlier. They're part of the Executive
8 Committee.

9 I think it's important that the people
10 that are here and that are just meeting us for
11 the first time understand that this group has
12 been together since 2014 and we've been at this
13 since that period of time.

14 Everything that has been mentioned has
15 been covered. So I think Eboni used the term the
16 collective vision, and that's a product she was
17 talking about, some of those very same things
18 that you all are mentioning.

19 When you talk about ballet and that
20 kind of thing, we envision a center similar to
21 the Ward 8 ARC, that being the hub I believe.

22 That building is 300,000 square feet

1 so you can dream all day all night about what you
2 would like to see there, but most of the things
3 that have been mentioned is somewhat what this
4 group had envisioned along with those who have
5 been apart since 2014.

6 The only other thing that I would like
7 to say is that we don't want to wait forever.
8 You're just one agency and I know you have to go
9 back and gather your data based on what you've
10 heard this evening, but I'm just going to ask
11 that it be sent to its appropriate place in a
12 timely manner.

13 And I think Eboni spoke about Hine.
14 Yes, Hine sat there for a minute but it didn't
15 sit forever. This school now has been sitting on
16 that hill vacant for a very long time.

17 So we want to see the same type of
18 progress and hope that every agency that is
19 involved moves expeditiously to make sure that
20 the residents here can see their vision come to
21 fruition.

22 Now, that being said, I am a major

1 Washingtonian and, yes, we think we are special
2 people because we know the history that exists in
3 this city.

4 My moved over here in Ward 7, I grew
5 up in 5, and to the gentleman that talked about H
6 Street, I can assure you H Street did not look
7 like it looks now.

8 We do want this part of Ward 7 to take
9 on that same similar landscape and become a
10 place, as someone said, to make it a destination
11 for people to come to so we can stop crossing the
12 bridge and go into other places outside of our
13 ward.

14 We spend a lot of money outside of our
15 ward. So I'm done and I hope that now we're
16 letting my Commissioner -- she's not my
17 Commissioner but she's my leader for the
18 taskforce. My Commissioner may be in a little
19 later.

20 MR. TOWERY: Hey, how are you all
21 doing?

22 Sorry I'm a little late, we're

1 planning for Marshall Heights Day and I had to go
2 present to the Marshall Heights Community
3 Development Organization about what we have
4 planned for this year, May 18th.

5 So, I'm here today just to give a
6 testimony about why we are in support of the
7 Fletcher-Johnson property to no longer be used
8 for public purposes and to be declared by the
9 Mayor as surplus.

10 We want to thank DGS for holding this
11 public hearing and recognize the contribution of
12 the community, particularly the Fletcher-Johnson
13 Taskforce, ANC 7E, and the Marshall Heights Civic
14 Association.

15 I strongly agree with the Ward 7
16 community at large that the Fletcher-Johnson land
17 reuse process will benefit the existing residents
18 of Marshall Heights and all future
19 Washingtonians.

20 This public hearing is required by the
21 D.C. Code, Chapter 10-801. I also support the
22 Fletcher-Johnson Taskforce's actions and mission

1 to ensure that the Ward 7's vision for the site
2 becomes a reality.

3 Given the financial resources required
4 to repurpose this property, the District's
5 facilities and proximity to this property and the
6 community support of surplusizing this property,
7 the most pragmatic solution for this property's
8 productive use is to declare the property as
9 surplus and proceed with the proposed
10 disposition.

11 Within walking distance of this
12 property are many public uses and amenities
13 including the Benning Road Metro Station, the DMV
14 on Benning, our newly renovated Capital View
15 Library, JC Nalle Elementary, CW Harris
16 elementary, KIPP Charter Middle School, Malolo
17 Bed and Breakfast, and the Benning Park
18 Recreation Center.

19 Additionally, the District has
20 invested significantly in affordable housing and
21 related amenities in the neighborhood, such as
22 the Ward 7 short-term family housing, also known

1 as The Horizon, the Mayor's aggressive initiative
2 to help family secure long-term housing, the SOME
3 properties, Catholic Charities, Sasha Bruce, The
4 Umbrella Group, various group homes, D.C.'s only
5 youth drug and substance abuse rehabilitation
6 home on Astor Place, Southeast and various
7 Housing Authority properties.

8 Fletcher-Johnson first opened in
9 January 19, 1977 and served more than 1000
10 students annually until it was closed in 2008.
11 It included an early childhood provision, a
12 health center, and a community center.

13 Since its closure in 2008, the
14 community continues to express our strong desire
15 to see some economic development take place on
16 this site.

17 By the schoolboard reopening it as a
18 swing space, there were significant concerns
19 regarding the air quality in the building
20 including the potential presence of asbestos and
21 use of other building materials that are no
22 longer used due to improved health and safety

1 standards.

2 In terms of the surrounding land, many
3 long-term residents are still skeptical that all
4 human remains have been removed from the
5 historical and defunct cemetery.

6 The Government released an RSO for
7 reuse of this site in 2014 where our offers were
8 received and evaluated, resulting in no award.

9 Since no awards were made, D.C. Code,
10 the Chapter 38-1802.09 requirement was satisfied
11 and the community advocates for the property to
12 be moved to DMPED's portfolio.

13 The community has and continues to
14 express at public meetings and Hearings regarding
15 land reuse of this site. Our chief objection is
16 that we do not want a charter school on the
17 ground.

18 Instead, the community would like to
19 see the Fletcher-Johnson land reused, RFO, to
20 encompass themes surrounding healthcare, adult
21 job development, and art hubs and community,
22 large community space, and our commercial retail

1 space.

2 The property remains vacant and under-
3 utilized. Our surrounding neighborhoods
4 frequently use the tennis courts and basketball
5 courts. KIPP Middle School uses the parking lot
6 and soccer fields.

7 Besides those usages, there are no
8 current plans for the property to be used by the
9 District.

10 As we are going through the RFP
11 process with DMPED, we want to ensure that the
12 community vision for the use of the property is
13 clear and originates from Ward 7 residents.

14 The Fletcher-Johnson Taskforce was
15 assembled for this very purpose and members of
16 the taskforce and other Ward 7 leaders submit
17 this testimony for your consideration and records
18 today.

19 And I have a few copies that we've
20 signed. Thank you.

21 MS. TATE: Good evening, everyone.
22 First, I'd like to thank our Vice Chair, Keith

1 Towerly, for his testimony. I know Eboni went up.
2 My name is T.N. Tate, I'm the Chair of the
3 Fletcher Johnson Taskforce.

4 I'm also the ANC Commissioner for
5 7E04. I'm going to do less of a testimony and
6 more of a story. I'll be a short story, but it's
7 going to be a story.

8 Four years ago we set out to make sure
9 that the reuse of Fletcher Johnson was in the
10 best interest of our communities.

11 We set out to assure that the RFP
12 process was fair, transparent, and reflective of
13 our voices, and I'm sure everyone remembers our
14 voices, however, our voices were scattered.

15 After many community engagement
16 meetings and at risk of Fletcher Johnson being
17 used for other purposes, such as the KIPP Charter
18 School and just other things that it was supposed
19 to be potentially used for, we realized that we
20 all wanted the same thing, which was a community
21 hub.

22 We wanted to make sure that hub would

1 serve as a catalyst for economic development.

2 We realized we were all in agreement
3 as to what the reuse of Fletcher Johnson would
4 look like, a community hub with urgent care
5 centers, adult learning programs, and just a
6 place where folks can come to and pretty much
7 gather together as a community.

8 We also realized that since we were
9 saying the same thing, why not say it together?

10 And so in saying it together I would
11 say for the first time in Ward 7 history, we all
12 came together in one voice for the same vision
13 and the community vision was established for what
14 we wanted Fletcher Johnson to look like.

15 And when I say community, I mean that
16 every Chair of every ANC, every Chair of every
17 Civic Association across Ward 7 signed onto one
18 letter that sent the same message as to our
19 vision for the reuse of Fletcher-Johnson.

20 Following that, our Council Member, Vincent C.
21 Gray, got on board.

22 He held a strategy session in June to

1 help us solidify that vision and thus the
2 taskforce was established. What lies ahead for
3 us, more challenges, more advocacy, but one thing
4 is clear, we all want that reuse to be for the
5 best interest of our community.

6 We need an ARC, we need a community
7 hub, we need urgent care desperately. So, in
8 saying that and in closing, the Fletcher-Johnson
9 community taskforce will continue to speak
10 collectively.

11 What we set out to do is to assure
12 that the community's input is reflected in the
13 final RFP. End of story.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. ALLEN: Good evening, everyone.

16 My name is Ebbon A. Allen, I am the Advisory
17 Neighborhood Commissioner for 7E03. I'm also an
18 alumnus of the Fletcher-Johnson Educational
19 Center, Class of 1993.

20 Basically, I am in full support with
21 the Fletcher-Johnson Taskforce. I'd like to
22 commend all the leaders of the Fletcher-Johnson

1 Taskforce and basically Fletcher-Johnson is
2 definitely dear to me.

3 It was a school that inspired me.

4 A lot of my classes, a lot of my
5 friends, we have a lot of great memories,
6 however, the school was shut down over some years
7 ago and so I basically have been thinking and
8 attending meetings over the years and just trying
9 to find out how I can support as far as the
10 movement and the actual facility being used and
11 re-utilized.

12 So, basically, again, I think it
13 should be a community hub just like the ARC and
14 so I think the community would definitely benefit
15 from that.

16 I think we have a food desert right
17 now in our ward and so we need a lot of
18 developments and a lot of resources for our
19 community.

20 And so hopefully DGS will be in full
21 support that we do not want a charter school and
22 so we definitely want something that's going to

1 bring vibrant communities to this side of Ward 7.

2 And again, please consider that we
3 need this right now. A lot of us are tired of
4 waiting, of going to different places through the
5 city. We want these facilities to be in use
6 right in our backyard.

7 And again, I thank you for your time.

8 MS. BARAHONA: Do we have anyone else?

9 I want to respect everyone's time and also
10 respect anyone that might be a little late so I'm
11 going to give a five-minute break just to make
12 sure if anyone else wants to be on record that
13 might be a little late.

14 So let's do a five-minute break to
15 respect anyone that might be running late, and
16 after that, I'll close the record and we can talk
17 a little bit about what the next steps are,
18 coming from the Deputy.

19 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
20 went off the record at 7:16 p.m. and resumed at
21 7:25 p.m.)

22 MS. BARAHONA: Thank you again. I

1 just wanted to make sure that if anyone else has
2 anything they wanted to say on the record, we've
3 got you on record before we close.

4 Anyone else?

5 MR. FELDER: Can you just repeat for
6 the public the day on which we have to submit a
7 written testimony in the event they didn't
8 prepare?

9 MS. BARAHONA: All written testimony
10 can be submitted to me via my email which is
11 claudia.barahona@dc.gov. If anyone would like to
12 come and take a picture of my information, it is
13 here as well.

14 And the record will close on March
15 27th so that is March 27th that the record will
16 close.

17 Again, is there anyone else that would
18 like to provide testimony today about the surplus
19 of the former Fletcher-Johnson Middle School?

20 MS. SETTLES: So my name is Karen
21 Settles, I'm a former Commissioner of 7F and this
22 process started as I was Commissioner.

1 So I just wanted to give my support to
2 this project as a ward-wide project for Ward 7,
3 and how much we need it. And as everybody knows,
4 I'm called Fletcher-Johnson the ARC of Ward 7.

5 That's how much respect and honor I
6 want to give to our future ARC I would say. I am
7 in support of the land being changed over so that
8 the residents of Ward 7 can have an opportunity
9 to make planning for what's needed in Ward 7 that
10 we are very much so lacking.

11 And again, this meeting is
12 specifically for -- could you tell me?

13 MS. BARAHONA: The surplus of
14 Fletcher-Johnson.

15 MS. SETTLES: And that means?

16 MS. BARAHONA: That the Government has
17 no public use of this space so there's no use for
18 a DCPS school, for a fire station, there's no
19 public use for the land.

20 MS. SETTLES: And what proceeds this?
21 I want to know step by step the results of this
22 meeting.

1 MS. BARAHONA: Let me get you all --

2 MS. SETTLES: I apologize for being
3 late.

4 MS. BARAHONA: It's okay. So after
5 this meeting, all of this information is going to
6 be collected and prepared for Council. And the
7 package will go to Council with a surplus
8 resolution, all the comments, all of the surplus
9 analysis.

10 Then Council will agendize a Hearing
11 where you guys will have an opportunity to speak
12 again in front of Council. And then they will
13 consider the resolution for surplus.

14 MS. SETTLES: So is this the full City
15 Council that we testify before?

16 MS. BARAHONA: The Committee, which
17 will be the Facilities and Procurement Committee.

18 MS. SETTLES: Okay, I wanted to just
19 know the specifics.

20 MS. BARAHONA: That's a perfectly fair
21 question, no problem.

22 MS. SETTLES: Thank you.

1 MS. BARAHONA: Do we have anyone else?
2 All right. So, can you guys hear me? Thank you
3 for your participation, I just want to make sure
4 that we conclude the Surplus Hearing and thank
5 you for coming again. This will close the
6 record.

7 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
8 went off the record at 7:30 p.m.)
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13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22

A

able 22:16
above-entitled 36:19
 40:7
abuse 29:5
academic 13:9
access 11:15,16
accessible 14:16 23:4
acres 15:13
Act 5:12,15
actions 27:22
actual 35:10
add 19:6
addition 22:8
Additionally 8:17 28:19
address 7:5 8:11 9:5
adjacent 12:5
adult 30:20 33:5
adults 22:15
Advisory 34:16
advocacy 34:3
advocates 30:11
affordable 28:20
African 12:9
afternoon 9:15 12:17
agency 4:2 25:8,18
agendize 39:10
aggressive 29:1
ago 32:8 35:7
agree 21:14 27:15
agreement 33:2
ahead 12:15 34:2
air 29:19
Allen 1:17 34:15,16
alluded 12:4
alumnus 34:18
amazing 14:9
amenities 19:6 28:12
 28:21
Americans 12:9
analysis 6:1 39:9
ANC 1:18 2:18,19,22
 9:16 10:2 27:13 32:4
 33:16
ANC's 9:18
Angie 1:15 4:10
annually 4:19 29:10
apart 25:5
apologize 39:2
appropriate 25:11
approximately 6:12
April 4:8 7:3
ARC 24:21 34:6 35:13
 38:4,6
area 12:11
argue 13:5,6
arrived 23:13
art 16:17 30:21

arts 22:17
asbestos 29:20
asking 21:8
assembled 31:15
Association 1:20,21
 23:18 27:14 33:17
assure 26:6 32:11
 34:11
Astor 29:6
attended 13:17
attending 35:8
attract 20:15
Auditorium 21:20
Authority 29:7
available 14:12 22:6,18
avoid 8:4
award 5:16 30:8
awards 30:9
aware 24:4

B

B 19:11
B-A-H-N 19:11
B-R-O-W-N-E 23:17
back 2:15 4:13 8:10,13
 17:15 25:9
background 4:15
backyard 36:6
Bahn 1:17 19:10,10
ballet 14:4 21:19,20
 24:19
Barahona 1:10,12 2:3,7
 8:7 9:4,9 12:15 23:11
 36:8,22 37:9 38:13,16
 39:1,4,16,20 40:1
based 25:9
basically 34:20 35:1,7
 35:12
basketball 31:4
Bass 17:4
beautifully 19:6
Bed 28:17
beer 20:5
believe 12:12 24:21
Ben 1:17 19:10
benefit 8:5 16:10 22:7
 27:17 35:14
benefitting 22:4
Benning 1:19 3:16 16:6
 20:8 21:21 23:18,19
 23:20 28:13,14,17
best 32:10 34:5
better 23:9
beyond 13:6,8 18:2
bit 18:2 36:17
black 17:19
blighted 15:1
board 33:21

borders 23:19
boring 18:21
brand-new 15:19
break 36:11,14
Breakfast 28:17
breathe 23:12
bridge 26:12
bring 36:1
broader 15:4
brother 20:7
Bruce 29:3
building 5:1 24:22
 29:19,21
buildings 16:11
burger 20:6
buy 11:18 17:11

C

C 33:20
call 6:3
called 38:4
campus 15:5
Capital 28:14
Capitol 1:9 16:4
capture 8:2
card 8:20
cards 8:18
care 4:20 33:4 34:7
catalyst 33:1
Catholic 29:3
cemeteries 17:19
cemetery 12:6 17:17
 18:13 30:5
center 4:20,21 24:20
 28:18 29:12,12 34:19
centers 6:15 9:7 33:5
century 17:16
Chair 9:17 12:20 31:22
 32:2 33:16,16
challenges 34:3
changed 38:7
Chapter 27:21 30:10
Charities 29:3
charter 1:9 5:11 28:16
 30:16 32:17 35:21
chief 30:15
child 13:8
childhood 13:14 14:9
 14:11 29:11
childhoods 14:15
children 13:4 14:12
 22:7,15
choices 22:21
church 14:1
city 15:10 19:5 21:1,1
 23:1,8 26:3 36:5
 39:14
Civic 1:19,21 23:18
 27:13 33:17
Class 34:19
classes 21:21 22:16
 35:4
classroom 13:6
Claudia 1:10,12 2:7 8:7
claudia.barahona@d...
 8:8 37:11
cleaner 20:20,20
clear 15:12 31:13 34:4
close 36:16 37:3,14,16
 40:5
closed 15:14 29:10
closing 8:15 34:8
closure 29:13
Code 2:7 27:21 30:9
coffee 19:18 20:4 21:5
collected 39:6
collective 15:8 17:1
 24:16
collectively 34:10
Columbia 1:1 2:8
come 13:17 25:20
 26:11 33:6 37:12
coming 36:18 40:5
commend 34:22
comment 3:14 8:19
comments 2:17 4:15
 5:20 6:2,20 7:12,21
 7:21 8:5,6,14,22 9:1
 9:19 19:12 21:15 39:8
commercial 30:22
Commissioner 3:1,2
 9:16 10:2 24:4 26:16
 26:17,18 32:4 34:17
 37:21,22
Commissioners 2:19
 2:19
Committee 24:8 39:16
 39:17
communities 16:5,6
 32:10 36:1
community 2:5 3:4,9,17
 4:7,12,21 6:11,14 7:1
 7:2,6 9:19 10:3,15,18
 10:19,19 11:6,9,13,21
 14:12,16 15:2,7,22
 16:18,19 19:8 27:2,12
 27:16 28:6 29:12,14
 30:11,13,18,21,22
 31:12 32:15,20 33:4,7
 33:13,15 34:5,6,9
 35:13,14,19
community's 10:5
 34:12
community-responsi...
 10:12
complete 5:22

concerns 29:18
conclude 40:4
concluded 4:12
conducted 2:6
consensus 16:19
consider 6:7 36:2 39:13
considerate 23:6
consideration 11:5
 31:17
considered 13:11
consistently 15:3 16:9
consists 24:1
continue 10:17 11:2
 15:8 34:9
continues 29:14 30:13
continuing 16:21
contributed 12:10
contribution 27:11
convened 1:8
convenient 23:4
copies 31:19
Council 1:20 3:12 5:22
 6:3,6,7 12:21 13:2
 33:20 39:6,7,10,12,15
course 20:8
courts 31:4,5
covered 24:15
create 20:13
creative 22:17
crime-ridden 18:21
criteria 10:10
critical 10:22
crossing 26:11
cultural 12:2,8
Culturally 22:14
cup 19:18
current 31:8
Currently 6:10 9:9
CW 28:15

D

D-E-A-V-I-E 21:10
D.C 1:10 2:6 3:12 5:22
 10:14 14:8,20 16:13
 22:1 27:21 30:9
D.C.'s 29:4
dance 22:16
data 25:9
date 6:16 10:14
day 25:1 27:1 37:6
DC 1:9 3:5 4:8
DCPS 4:1 38:18
deadline 21:13
dear 35:2
Deavie 1:18 21:10
decent 19:17,18 20:3
decided 4:1
declare 28:8

declared 27:8
definitely 35:2,14,22
defunct 30:5
Delia 1:18 9:16
deliver 7:21
demographic 11:21
Denny's 17:12
Department 1:1,10,12
 1:14 2:8
Deputy 1:13,15 5:13
 16:21 36:18
desert 19:16 35:16
designate 5:9 6:8
designated 5:4 6:18
designating 3:18 5:18
designation 3:15 6:21
desire 29:14
desperate 20:2
desperately 20:1 34:7
destination 18:17,22
 26:10
developing 18:7
development 1:14,15
 6:22 10:13 12:10
 15:17 16:22 27:3
 29:15 30:21 33:1
developments 35:18
DGS 15:2 27:10 35:20
difference 16:2
different 36:4
discussed 4:6
discussion 6:22
disposition 4:7 7:1,5
 28:10
distance 28:11
district 1:1 2:8 3:22 4:2
 5:3,22 6:16 9:17
 28:19 31:9
District's 28:4
District-operated 3:20
DMPED 4:6 7:3 14:20
 31:11
DMPED's 13:13 30:12
DMV 28:13
DNE's 13:12
doing 26:21
Dollar 17:9
doors 4:19
draft 8:1
draws 15:12
dream 25:1
drive 20:18
drug 29:5
dry 20:20,20
due 29:22

E

earlier 24:5,7

early 29:11
East 1:9
Eastern 15:13 16:5
eat 14:2
Ebbon 1:17 34:16
Eboni 24:6,15 25:13
 32:1
Eboni-Rose 1:20 12:19
echo 19:12
economic 15:4 16:22
 29:15 33:1
educating 13:7
education 1:20 5:13
 12:21 13:2,3,5
Educational 34:18
Eleanor 18:6
elementary 6:13 9:6
 13:19 28:15,16
Elizabeth 18:9
email 8:8,11,13 37:10
emphasize 22:19
employment 11:15
 22:11
encompass 30:20
encourage 10:17 11:1,2
engagement 32:15
engaging 10:15,18
ensure 28:1 31:11
envision 24:20
envisioned 25:4
established 33:13 34:2
evaluated 5:15 30:8
evening 2:4 5:21 9:15
 12:18 21:9 25:10
 31:21 34:15
evenings 14:5
event 37:7
everybody 38:3
everyone's 36:9
exceed 7:22
excuse 5:6
Executive 12:21 24:7
existing 5:11 27:17
exists 26:2
expeditiously 25:19
experiences 14:11
explains 17:22
express 29:14 30:14
expressed 15:3 16:9

F

facilities 6:11 28:5 36:5
 39:17
facility 3:6,7 4:20 35:10
fact 14:22 22:20
fair 32:12 39:20
fairly 20:9
families 13:3

family 28:22 29:2
family-friendly 17:13
fantastic 10:15
far 23:22 35:9
feedback 10:1
feel 7:8 10:14 22:2
feet 15:18,21 24:22
Felder 1:13 4:10 37:5
fever 14:7
fields 31:6
fill 16:14 22:12
final 34:13
finally 5:2
financial 28:3
find 35:9
fire 4:1 38:18
first 4:18 5:10 6:19 7:18
 21:10,16 24:11 29:8
 31:22 33:11
five 17:19
five-minute 36:11,14
Fletcher 32:3,9,16 33:3
 33:14
Fletcher- 6:17
Fletcher-Johnson 1:3
 1:17,21 2:5 3:15 4:16
 4:18 5:4 6:12 7:15
 9:10 10:1,4,21 12:22
 14:18 15:1,4,9,15
 23:19 27:7,12,16,22
 29:8 30:19 31:14
 33:19 34:8,18,21,22
 35:1 37:19 38:4,14
floor 4:14
focus 6:20
focused 4:20
folks 33:6
Following 33:20
food 35:16
foods 11:16
Force 1:17,21
forever 25:7,15
form 7:12 12:16
formal 12:14
former 5:10 7:15 17:17
 37:19,21
forward 12:13 16:20
 17:1
Four 32:8
Franklin 23:16
free 7:8
frequently 20:9 31:4
friends 18:20 35:5
front 6:5 7:12,13 39:12
fruition 25:21
fulfills 11:6,13
full 34:20 35:20 39:14
fully 8:1

future 4:5 6:22 27:18
38:6

G

gather 25:9 33:7
gatherings 15:22
General 1:1,10,12,14
2:9 14:8
gentleman 26:5
give 27:5 36:11 38:1,6
given 10:8 11:5 28:3
golf 20:8
government 1:1 3:19
5:5,7 6:16 10:14 11:8
14:20 16:13 30:6
38:16
governmental 4:5
Grade 13:19
grandad 14:3
grandma 14:2
grandparents 14:7
graves 17:18
Gray 33:21
greater 16:10
grew 21:17 26:4
groceries 15:20 17:11
grocery 11:19 16:16
17:6,10 20:3,19
ground 30:17
group 24:1,11 25:4 29:4
29:4
growing 13:15 14:10
guess 9:12 12:18
Gymnasium 1:9
gymnastics 14:5

H

H 20:10 26:5,6
H.D 5:1
hand 2:20
handled 15:11
hard 3:3 8:9
Harris 28:15
heading 14:1
health 29:12,22
healthcare 30:20
healthy 11:15
hear 6:19 40:2
heard 19:13 20:1 25:10
hearing 1:3,8 2:5 3:9,13
4:7,12,17 5:17 6:4 7:1
7:6,9 8:5,16 9:2 27:11
27:20 39:10 40:4
Hearings 30:14
heart 3:17
Heights 1:21 3:17 16:6
17:5 18:8 27:1,2,13
27:18

held 7:2 33:22
help 22:11 29:2 34:1
helpful 2:15
hey 11:8 26:20
Hi 19:10
HICKS 1:14
High 15:12
high-quality 13:3
highlights 12:8
hill 16:5 25:16
Hine 15:12 25:13,14
historical 18:6 30:5
history 12:3,8 17:21
26:2 33:11
holding 27:10
home 29:6
homes 29:4
honor 17:14 38:5
hope 14:15,20 25:18
26:15
hopefully 35:20
Horizon 29:1
Houseal 1:18 9:12,16
houses 15:19
housing 15:21 18:14
28:20,22 29:2,7
hub 16:20 24:21 32:21
32:22 33:4 34:7 35:13
hubs 30:21
huge 12:3
human 30:4
hyphen 23:17

I

identified 5:8 6:17
imagine 23:6
important 7:17 11:20
22:2,10 24:9
importantly 10:3
improve 19:3
improved 29:22
include 6:1 11:14
included 3:11 29:11
including 6:13 15:17
28:13 29:20
incorporated 7:10
increased 11:14
incredibly 11:20
individuals 11:3
inequities 16:3
information 4:11,16
8:10 18:6 37:12 39:5
initiative 29:1
input 6:5 34:12
inspired 35:3
interest 32:10 34:5
interested 7:11
interrupting 8:4

introduce 7:16 9:14
inventory 14:21 15:2
invested 19:5 28:20
investments 16:10
involved 25:19

J

January 29:9
JC 28:15
Jim 1:22 17:3 20:14
job 10:15 22:12 30:21
Joe's 15:19
John 17:15 18:13
Johnson 6:18 32:3,9,16
33:3,14
junction 16:18
June 33:22
Junior 15:12

K

Karen 1:19 37:20
Keith 1:21 24:6 31:22
kick 9:12
kids 21:5
kindly 7:22
KIPP 28:16 31:5 32:17
known 23:15 28:22
knows 38:3

L

L-T-Z 17:4
lacking 38:10
lady 21:17
land 17:22 27:16 30:2
30:15,19 38:7,19
Landrieu 5:12,14
landscape 26:9
landscaped 19:6
large 27:16 30:22
Lastly 3:5
late 26:22 36:10,13,15
39:3
leader 24:6 26:17
leaders 10:19 31:16
34:22
learn 22:12,16
learning 33:5
leave 10:10 14:20
led 4:6
lessons 21:22
let's 36:14
letter 33:18
letting 3:6 26:16
Lewis 1:18 9:3,5,11
21:9,10,11
library 6:14 9:7 28:15
lies 34:2
liked 19:20

limiting 16:11
line 7:12 12:16
Lisner 21:20
listens 21:1
little 18:2 26:18,22
36:10,13,17
live 17:4 19:21 20:12,17
23:2
lives 20:7,11
living 19:16
located 3:16
location 4:22
long 23:20 25:16
long-term 29:2 30:3
longer 3:19 5:5,6 27:7
29:22
look 11:9 12:13 15:10
26:6 33:4,14
looking 10:8 11:20
16:20 24:5
looks 26:7
lot 26:14 31:5 35:4,4,5
35:17,18 36:3
lots 21:22
lousy 20:20
love 17:5

M

major 16:2 25:22
makeup 11:21
making 2:16
Malolo 28:16
manner 25:12
March 1:6 8:14,14
37:14,15
Market 15:13 16:5
Marshall 1:21 3:17 16:6
17:4 18:7 27:1,2,13
27:18
materials 29:21
matter 36:19 40:7
Mayor 1:13,15 5:13
16:21 27:9
Mayor's 29:1
meal 22:22
mean 3:21 11:7 33:15
means 3:22 10:13
38:15
meeting 7:2 24:10
38:11,22 39:5
meetings 15:7 30:14
32:16 35:8
meets 16:20
member 9:20 10:3
12:21 33:20
members 10:20 23:13
31:15
memories 35:5

mention 18:4
 mentioned 22:9 24:14
 25:3
 mentioning 24:18
 message 33:18
 Metro 28:13
 mic 7:13
 middle 3:15 6:13 7:15
 9:7 28:16 31:5 37:19
 midst 15:6
 mile 6:12 9:10 20:7
 miles 20:18
 mind 13:17
 minute 25:14
 minutes 7:21,22
 mission 27:22
 mixed-income 15:21
 18:15
 mixed-use 15:17
 mom 14:2
 money 26:14
 Money's 19:4
 move 16:22
 moved 13:12 17:5
 19:15 26:4 30:12
 movement 35:10
 moves 25:19
 multi- 18:15

N

Nalle 28:15
 name 2:7 7:18 8:7,20
 9:15 12:19 17:3 19:10
 21:9,10,11 23:15 32:2
 34:16 37:20
 near 15:13 20:8
 need 15:3 16:14 18:3
 20:1,2,22 21:3 34:6,6
 34:7 35:17 36:3 38:3
 needed 5:6,6 16:10
 38:9
 needs 3:18 10:6 11:6
 11:10,14 16:3,20
 neighbor 21:6
 neighborhood 6:10
 13:20,21 17:6 18:5
 19:4,15 20:16 28:21
 34:17
 neighborhoods 31:3
 neighbors 16:8 18:4
 new 13:11 16:12 19:14
 newly 28:14
 nice 17:11,12 18:22
 19:1 22:14,22
 night 14:8 25:1
 non- 4:4
 North 19:21
 northeast 20:8

Northern 23:2
 note 4:4 8:17
 number 6:11

O

objection 30:15
 offered 5:10
 offers 5:14,15 30:7
 office 1:13,15 4:3 15:21
 offices 16:13
 official 7:10 8:15
 officially 5:9
 older 22:15
 Once 6:3
 one-mile 9:11
 open 21:4
 opened 4:18 29:8
 opening 4:14 8:22
 opportunities 11:15
 22:5 23:6
 opportunity 6:5 9:22
 12:13 14:18 19:7 38:8
 39:11
 option 13:9
 options 20:2
 order 5:9 22:7
 organization 7:19 27:3
 organized 9:14
 originates 31:13
 outside 19:19 26:12,14

P

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
 2:1
 p.m 1:10 2:2 36:20,21
 40:8
 package 3:11 5:22 39:7
 paper 11:18
 parallels 15:12
 parents 21:19 22:6
 Park 28:17
 parking 16:1 31:5
 part 15:18 24:7 26:8
 participation 40:3
 particularly 27:12
 parts 23:1,8
 Payne 17:15,17
 Payne's 18:13
 pencils 8:18
 people 17:22 18:4,11
 18:11,19 19:1,16
 20:15 22:3,12 23:22
 24:9 26:2,11
 perfectly 39:20
 performed 21:20
 period 24:13
 person 7:20 8:3
 person's 8:5

pharmacy 11:19
 Phillips 14:1
 piano 21:22
 picture 37:12
 pizza 19:17
 place 11:17 17:4 19:2
 19:17,17,21 20:5,18
 25:11 26:10 29:6,15
 33:6
 places 19:18 26:12 36:4
 planned 27:4
 planning 1:14,15 16:22
 27:1 38:9
 plans 31:8
 plaque 17:21
 plays 10:22
 plaza 15:22
 please 2:14 4:4 6:20 7:8
 7:12,17 8:3,20 12:16
 36:2
 plenty 11:10
 Plummer 13:19
 podium 7:13
 police 4:2 16:12
 portfolio 13:12,13
 30:12
 possible 14:15
 potential 29:20
 potentially 32:19
 powers 23:5
 pragmatic 28:7
 Pre-K 13:19
 prefer 8:19
 prepare 9:13 21:12 37:8
 prepared 7:7 21:11
 39:6
 presence 29:20
 present 1:11,16 15:6
 16:4 27:2
 President 23:17
 presiding 1:10
 pretty 20:20 33:6
 primary 13:1
 private 6:22
 problem 39:21
 proceed 28:9
 proceeds 38:20
 process 4:6,11 5:18 7:5
 10:11,16,18 11:1
 27:17 31:11 32:12
 37:22
 Procurement 39:17
 product 24:16
 productive 28:8
 programs 33:5
 progress 25:18
 project 13:11 38:2,2
 properties 29:3,7

property 3:20 4:5 5:5
 6:8,21 17:15,16 18:12
 27:7 28:4,5,6,8,12
 30:11 31:2,8,12
 property's 3:18 28:7
 proposal 6:8
 proposed 3:14 4:4 28:9
 proposes 5:3 6:18
 proud 13:18 18:11
 provide 4:11 6:5 7:8,13
 9:22 22:11 37:18
 providing 7:11 13:8
 provision 29:11
 proximity 28:5
 public 1:9 3:20 5:11 6:2
 6:17 7:12 15:22 16:11
 21:4,18 27:8,11,20
 28:12 30:14 37:6
 38:17,19
 publicly 16:8
 purchased 15:20
 purpose 3:13 13:1
 31:15
 purposes 16:12 27:8
 32:17
 pursuant 2:6
 pursuit 13:3
 purview 14:19
 put 21:19

Q

quality 11:16 13:5
 29:19
 Queen 18:9
 question 9:3 39:21
 questions 7:4

R

radius 9:11
 raise 2:20
 re-utilized 35:11
 reached 16:19
 real 11:8
 reality 28:2
 realize 11:7
 realized 32:19 33:2,8
 reason 13:10
 rec 9:7
 receive 3:14 5:20
 received 5:15 6:3 30:8
 recognize 2:18 27:11
 recognized 3:1
 record 7:10 8:15 9:1
 36:12,16,20 37:2,3,14
 37:15 40:6,8
 recorded 3:10
 recording 3:10
 records 31:17

recreation 6:14 28:18
redeveloped 15:16
REDEVELOPMENT 1:4
reflect 9:19
reflected 34:12
reflective 32:12
reflects 10:5
regarding 29:19 30:14
rehabilitation 29:5
reinforce 14:14 15:8
related 28:21
relatively 19:14
released 5:14 30:6
remain 16:17
remaining 15:2
remains 14:22 30:4
 31:2
remarks 7:14 8:2
remembers 32:13
removed 17:18 30:4
renovated 28:14
reopening 29:17
repeat 37:5
represent 7:19
repurpose 28:4
request 5:14 7:22 10:4
 11:22
required 27:20 28:3
requirement 30:10
requires 3:19
Resident 1:17,18,19,22
residents 23:22 25:20
 27:17 30:3 31:13 38:8
resolution 6:2,6 39:8
 39:13
resources 16:4 28:3
 35:18
respect 8:3 36:9,10,15
 38:5
respects 12:2
rest 19:5
restaurant 17:11
restaurants 16:16
resulting 30:8
results 38:21
resume 22:13
resumed 36:20
retail 11:16 15:18 17:8
 17:10 20:2,14 30:22
reuse 27:17 30:7,15
 32:9 33:3,19 34:4
reused 30:19
RFO 30:19
RFP 4:6 31:10 32:11
 34:13
rich 12:8 14:9,11,14
Ridge 1:19 16:6 23:18
 23:20,20

risk 32:16
Road 3:16 21:21 28:13
Rodgers 1:15 4:10
role 9:19 10:22 12:20
 18:7
room 4:8
Roosevelt 18:7
round 15:7
RSO 30:6
running 36:15

S

S-H-A-N-K-L-I-N 23:16
S-H-A-R-O-N 23:15
safety 29:22
Sasha 29:3
sat 25:14
satisfied 30:10
Saturdays 14:5
saying 9:22 20:14 33:9
 33:10 34:8
scattered 32:14
scheduled 4:8
schedules 2:11
Scholars 1:9 3:5 4:9
school 1:9 3:15 4:1 5:7
 5:10,11 6:14 7:15
 13:12,20,21 14:5
 15:13 21:21 22:11
 25:15 28:16 30:16
 31:5 32:18 35:3,6,21
 37:19 38:18
schoolboard 29:17
schools 6:13 9:6 13:2
 13:17 16:12 21:18
 22:1,6
SE 1:9
second 11:4
secure 29:2
send 8:6,12
sent 25:11 33:18
serve 33:1
served 29:9
service 19:16
services 1:1,10,13,14
 2:9 4:21 22:5,11
session 33:22
set 20:14 32:8,11 34:11
Settles 1:19 37:20,21
 38:15,20 39:2,14,18
 39:22
seven-story 15:17
sewing 22:17
Shanklin 23:16
SHANKLIN-BROWNE
 1:19 23:12
share 4:15
Sharon 1:19 23:15

shop 20:4
short 32:6
short-term 28:22
shut 35:6
side 36:1
sign 2:14
sign-in 8:18
signed 2:13 31:20
 33:17
significance 12:2
significant 29:18
significantly 28:20
similar 24:20 26:9
Simultaneously 16:15
single-member 9:17
sisters 14:2
sit 17:12 19:17,19 20:5
 21:5 25:15
sit-down 16:16
site 1:4 3:16 4:16 5:4,18
 6:18 7:15 10:1,4,8,9
 12:1,2,3,7,7,9 13:12
 14:18,19 15:9,11 28:1
 29:16 30:7,15
sites 15:11 16:3
sits 15:1
sitting 25:15
skeptical 30:3
SMD 3:1
soccer 31:6
solidify 34:1
solution 28:7
somebody 21:4
somewhat 25:3
soon 14:16
Sorry 26:22
sort 10:11
Southeast 3:16 18:20
 29:6
space 4:3 5:1 11:5,11
 15:18,21 16:17 21:4,4
 22:15 29:18 30:22
 31:1 38:17
speak 23:14 34:9 39:11
speaker 18:16 21:16
 22:4
speaking 8:4
special 26:1
specifically 38:12
specifics 39:19
spell 7:18
spend 26:14
spending 13:22
spent 14:7
spirits 19:4
spoke 21:17 24:6 25:13
spoken 21:16
square 15:18,20 24:22

stagnant 16:3
standards 30:1
start 8:22 9:21 18:12
started 2:4 37:22
state 7:18
statement 12:14 21:11
statements 5:21 7:8
station 4:2,2 16:13
 28:13 38:18
step 5:17 38:21,21
steps 36:17
stop 26:11
store 11:19 17:6,10,10
 20:3,19
stores 16:16 17:9
story 32:6,6,7 34:13
strategy 33:22
Street 1:9 19:11 20:10
 26:6,6
stretches 23:20
strong 29:14
strongly 27:15
structure 4:17
students 4:19 29:10
submit 8:19 31:16 37:6
submitted 3:12 8:1
 37:10
submitting 12:14
substance 29:5
Subways 17:9
summer 14:6
Sundays 13:22
support 4:21 13:2
 14:17 27:6,21 28:6
 34:20 35:9,21 38:1,7
supposed 32:18
surplus 1:3 2:5 3:9,11
 3:14,18 4:12 5:5,10
 5:17,19 6:1,6,9,19,21
 7:6,14 8:16 9:1 27:9
 28:9 37:18 38:13 39:7
 39:8,13 40:4
surplused 10:9
surplusing 28:6
surrounding 30:2,20
 31:3
swing 5:1 29:18

T

T.N 1:21 3:2 32:2
table 8:18
talk 21:6 24:19 36:16
talked 26:5
talking 24:17
Task 1:17,21
taskforce 10:22 12:22
 23:13 24:2,2 26:18
 27:13 31:14,16 32:3

34:2,9,21 35:1
Taskforce's 27:22
Tate 1:21 3:2 24:5
 31:21 32:2
tell 19:16 38:12
tenants 5:11
tennis 31:4
term 24:15
terms 22:21 30:2
testify 6:5 39:15
testimony 7:14 27:6
 31:17 32:1,5 37:7,9
 37:18
thank 2:10 3:2,5,8 9:22
 12:12,15 17:2 19:9
 23:10,11 27:10 31:20
 31:22 34:14 36:7,22
 39:22 40:2,4
themes 30:20
things 11:13,14 18:3,10
 19:20 22:8,9,13,17
 24:17 25:2 32:18
third 15:7
thirdly 11:22
Thompson 1:20 12:17
 12:19
three 6:13,14 7:20,22
 9:6,7 16:15
timely 25:12
times 14:6
tired 36:3
TIWANA 1:14
today 13:21 14:13
 15:20 22:3 27:5 31:18
 37:18
today's 4:12,17
toilet 11:18
tonight 2:11,17,20 6:2
 9:18
Tonight's 3:9
total 7:20
Towery 1:21 24:6 26:20
 32:1
Trader 15:19
transcriber 7:17
transcribing 2:16
transcript 3:10
transparent 32:12
trips 21:22
trying 35:8
turn 17:16
two 15:14 16:2,16
type 25:17
types 22:17

U

Umbrella 29:4
under- 31:2

underground 16:1
understand 24:11
understood 23:3
Unfortunately 14:10
unmet 16:14
Upper 1:8
upscale 18:18 20:14
urged 13:10
urgent 33:4 34:7
usages 31:7
use 3:6,20 4:5 5:7 6:17
 11:8 12:7 18:16 28:8
 29:21 31:4,12 36:5
 38:17,17,19
uses 28:12 31:5
utilized 12:1 31:3

V

V-O- 17:3
vacant 15:1 25:16 31:2
vacated 5:2
various 29:4,6
vibrancy 14:17
vibrant 14:15 36:1
Vice 31:22
View 28:14
Vincent 33:20
Virginia 19:22 23:2
vision 15:4,8 16:19
 17:1 24:16 25:20 28:1
 31:12 33:12,13,19
 34:1
visit 18:5,9
voice 33:12
voices 32:13,14,14
Voltz 1:22 17:3,3
vote 6:8

W

wait 25:7
waiting 36:4
walk 14:3
walking 28:11
wanted 9:5 32:20,22
 33:14 37:1,2 38:1
 39:18
wants 20:17 36:12
ward 1:17,18,19,20,22
 9:8 12:20 13:1,15
 14:10,22 16:5,7,11,17
 21:17 22:20 23:7
 24:21 26:4,8,13,15
 27:15 28:1,22 31:13
 31:16 33:11,17 35:17
 36:1 38:2,4,8,9
ward-wide 38:2
Washington 1:9 17:20
Washingtonian 26:1

Washingtonians 27:19
Waterfront 14:3
way 10:5 11:6,13 12:1
 23:20
ways 19:5
WEDNESDAY 1:6
welcome 2:4
Wendell 1:13 4:10 7:5
Wendell's 8:12
went 13:18 21:18 32:1
 36:20 40:8
Wharf 14:2
wonderful 3:7
Woodland 12:6
Woodson 5:1
work 3:3 16:21
working 11:2
write 8:20
writing 8:19
written 5:21 7:7 8:1
 12:14 37:7,9

X

Y

year 19:15 27:4
years 15:14 32:8 35:6,8
young 21:17 22:3
youth 29:5

Z

0

1

10-801 2:7 27:21
1000 4:19 29:9
150,000 15:20
18th 27:4
19 29:9
1977 4:19 29:9
1991 18:10
1993 34:19

2

20 1:6
2008 4:22 15:15 29:10
 29:13
2011 5:2
2014 5:15 24:3,12 25:5
 30:7
2019 1:6
27th 8:14,14 37:15,15

3

3.5 15:13
300,000 24:22
38-1802.09 30:10

4

4614 19:11
4650 3:16

5

5 26:5
5308 17:4
5601 1:9
5th 13:19

6

6 16:5
6:30 1:10
6:38 2:2
61,000 15:18
6th 4:8 7:3

7

7 1:17,18,19,20,22 9:8
 12:20 13:1,15 14:10
 14:22 16:7,11 21:17
 26:4,8 27:15 28:22
 31:13,16 33:11,17
 36:1 38:2,4,8,9
7's 28:1
7:16 36:20
7:25 36:21
7:30 40:8
7E 9:18 27:13
7E03 34:17
7E04 32:5
7E06 1:18 9:17
7F 37:21

8

8 24:21

C E R T I F I C A T E

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In the matter of: Fletcher-Johnson Surplus Hearing

Before: DCDMPED

Date: 03-20-19

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