Department of Housing and Community Development Ward 3 Check-In Meeting
July 16, 2015

Woodrow Wilson Senior High School
3950 Chesapeake Street NW
Washington, DC 20016

This report details key information regarding the July 16, 2015 Check-in Meeting for Ward 3. The DC Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) hosted this event.

Event Overview

Starting April 8, 2015, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) held eight community Check-In events throughout the District of Columbia. These public events updated residents, business owners, and community stakeholders on DHCD's current and future projects, and attendees were encouraged to share their thoughts and concerns with DHCD. There were eight sessions, one in each ward. This report concerns the event in Ward 3, which was the sixth for this series.

The DHCD team promoted this event in several ways, including flyers, posters, social media, and postal mailings. DHCD Director Polly Donaldson gave remarks detailing interagency collaboration, DHCD initiatives, and general agency updates. DHCD staff briefed attendees on current and future projects in their community. Multiple representatives from DHCD were present to provide context, present on their particular program areas or areas of responsibility, answer questions, and connect with community leaders. Participants asked questions of the Director and DHCD staff.

Participant survey results can be found in Appendix A. The scribes' records and raw conversation notes can be found in Appendix B. Audience feedback notes in the Discussion Analysis section are edited for clarity, but generally follow the trajectory of emerging themes from the conversation.

Discussion Analysis

Following presentations on DHCD initiatives, event attendees asked questions of DHCD leadership and staff. Two themes emerged from the questions and audience feedback: the importance of preserving and creating affordable housing and the District government's role in promoting economic development and opportunity. These themes are reflected in the following summary.

Preserving and Creating Affordable Housing

The majority of participants at the check-in meeting expressed concern about the availability of affordable housing units in the District. Attendees questioned DHCD representatives about the agency's role in preserving current affordable units and about the agency's power to create additional affordable units. There were many questions asked about the Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) requirements, Area Median Income (AMI) levels, and plans for the Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF). Event attendees expressed a clear preference that the District preserve current units and create many more affordable housing units.

> Audience Feedback
> - What is Inclusionary Zoning? How is it connected to zoning and leasing decisions? What are the plans for Inclusionary Zoning developments in Ward 3?
> - What is the time frame for people moving into affordable housing units under Inclusionary Zoning? Once the unit is built, how long until it is occupied? What steps do recipients need to take to move into these units?

- The impact of IZ equity on affordable housing funding is limited, as the equity amount is limited for resale purposes and is linked to affordability requirements in the area.
- How many of DHCD's properties are sold to for-profit developers compared to non-profit developers? How are these decisions made?
- What happens to money raised from Property Acquisition and Disposition Division sales? Does this money stay within DHCD to fund its work, or does it go back into the District's general coffers?
- What is the role of eminent domain, especially in creating new affordable housing opportunities? Could the District use this authority to compel properties to build affordable units?
- What is the Area Median Income (AMI) for the District and the area? How is it determined? Does including the surrounding metropolitan area in AMI calculations skew the levels for the District?
- Does the District allocate Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF) spending by AMI levels? Are there dedicated spending requirements to provide for people at certain income levels?
- What about using the HPTF money allocated to serving the population earning 30-50 percent of AMI for senior affordable housing? There are a lot of seniors who struggle to stay in their homes and find it difficult to afford senior housing programs.
- There is a rumor that landlords are guaranteed a 12 percent profit margin for providing affordable housing units. Why is such a substantial profit margin guaranteed? Can this be changed so that affordable housing costs are reduced?
- What are the District's plans under the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA)? How are properties identified?
- When was the District Opportunity to Purchase Act (DOPA) passed? What has been done so far? Have the regulations been written?
- The landlord of a rent control building can file a hardship petition with the city to raise tenant rents, and the landlord can raise rents while the District government deliberates on the filing. This means that landlords can essentially raise rents for a few months without city oversight, even if the city ends up denying the petition. There needs to be a faster response time from the city on these petitions to protect tenants. Is there a database for tracking rent control apartment units in the District? Are the units tracked by neighborhoods or wards?
- Does DHCD have the funding to audit or fully assess rent control hardship petitions from landlords who want to end rent control restrictions?
- How will the HPTF serve the most vulnerable populations in the District? Is there a designated portion of these funds that have to serve particular groups?
- What is the DC Council doing to end homelessness and advance affordable housing? How does DHCD work with the Council?
- What about Museum Square and the treatment of its Chinese-American tenants? Will their affordable units be protected from development?

- We've heard that 8,000 units are under threat of losing their affordable housing status. We need a strategy to act and fill this gap. What can residents do to support affordable housing efforts?

Promoting Economic Development and Opportunity

Another theme of the evening's event was interest in the District's government's role in economic development and opportunities for residents. Residents expressed concern about economic inequality, development decisions and the impact these developments have on residents, and quality-of-life issues.

<u>Audience Feedback</u>
- The District should take more steps to help former convicts and returned citizens access public housing and services.
- Some homeless people do not seem to want to live in shelters. How can they be helped, even if they choose to live on the streets instead of in shelters?
- What is the role of the DC Council in development decisions? In particular, what role is the Council playing in the delayed approval of the proposed Whole Foods development near the 9:30 Club in NW?
- How can we make our homes safer? For example, why is asbestos removal not covered by the abatement program? Why is only lead removal covered?
- How is the new Healthy Homes program advertised? How will people know to take advantage of this program's offerings?
- What are the specifics of the Small Business Technical Assistance program? What is the relationship between this program and other city agencies?

Action Items

DHCD will employ feedback from residents and stakeholders to guide its policy priority areas and communication procedures to better serve the community through a dialogue and process that benefits everyone in the District. There were several lessons learned from this event that could serve upcoming events and future work with DC residents:

1. Event participants asked several questions about specific programs that were not directly DHCD's responsibility. At future meetings, DHCD could provide information about how to find out more about District government services, such as a directory of city agencies.

2. Many participants expressed interest in helping these senior citizens and underserved populations. At these events, DCHD could provide information about neighborhood social services available to these groups.

3. There was confusion among attendees about how decisions were made within the District government. DHCD could alleviate this by providing a brief overview of the District government's structure and the Department's role in that structure at upcoming meetings.

Appendix A: Survey Results

Participants were surveyed about their priorities and how they heard about the event. Those results are below.

How familiar are you with DHCD services and programs?		
Response	**# of Responses**	**% of Responses**
Very familiar	0	0%
Familiar	1	33%
Somewhat familiar	2	67%
Not familiar	0	0

Most to least important priorities in your community (1=Most important; 6=Least important)		
Issue	**Responses**	**Average Ranking**
Redeveloping or restoring abandoned buildings	6, 4, 4	4.6
Access to storefront façade improvement and small business technical assistance	5, 5, 6	5.3
Access to first-time home-buyer incentives	4, 3, 5	4
Housing that accommodates the needs of the elderly	3, 6, 2	3.6
Access to affordable housing for purchase (single-family and multi-family)	2, 1, 3	2
Access to affordable rental housing	1, 2, 1	1.3

How do you prefer to hear about news, events, and other opportunities from DHCD?		
Response	**# of Responses**	**% of Responses**
Postal mail	0	0%
E-mail	2	50%
DHCD's website	1	25%
In-person meetings	0	0%
Social media	1	25%

How did you hear about the community meeting?		
Response	# of Responses	% of Responses
Email	2	67%
A friend or relative	1	33%
Social media	0	0%
Flyer or poster	0	0%
Other	0	0%

What is your preferred social media network?		
Response	# of Responses	% of Responses
Facebook	0	0%
Twitter	1	100%
Instagram	0	0%
Other	0	0%

Appendix B: Notes

The information below is from the scribe's notes at the event and reflects questions asked by the audience.

- What is Inclusionary Zoning? How is it connected to zoning decisions and leasing? What are the planned Inclusionary Zoning developments in Ward 3?
- What's the timeframe of people who move into affordable housing units under Inclusionary Zoning? Once the unit is built, how long until it's occupied?
- How many of DHCD's properties are sold to for-profit developers as compared to non-profit developers?
- What happens to money raised from Property Acquisition and Disposition Division sales? Does this money stay within DHCD to fund its work, or does it go back into the District's general coffers?
- What is the role of eminent domain, especially in creating new affordable housing opportunities? Could the District use this authority to purchase properties to build affordable units?
- What's the role of the Council in development decisions? In particular, what role is the City Council playing in the delay in approving the proposed Whole Foods development near the 9:30 Club in NW?
- What is the Area Median Income (AMI) for this area? How is it determined? Does including the surrounding metropolitan area skew the AMI levels for the District?
- Does the District allocate Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF) spending by Area Median Income levels? Is there dedicated spending for people at certain incomes?
- What about using the HPTF money allocated to serving the population earning 30% to 50% of AMI for senior affordable housing? There are lots of seniors who need housing.
- There's a rumor that landlords are guaranteed a 12% profit margin for providing affordable housing units. Why is such a substantial profit margin guaranteed? Can this be changed so that affordable housing costs are reduced?
- What are the District's plans under the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA)?
- When was the District Opportunity to Purchase Act (DOPA) passed? What's been done so far? Have the regulations been written?
- The landlord of a rent control building can file a hardship petition with the city to raise tenant rents while the city is still deliberating on the petition. This means that landlords can essentially raise rents for a few months without city oversight, even if the city ends up denying the petition. We need a faster response time from the city to protect tenants.
- The District needs to take more steps to help former convicts and returned citizens access public housing.
- The impact of Inclusionary Zoning equity on affordable housing funding is limited, as the level of IZ equity is limited for resale purposes and it is linked to affordability requirements in the area.

- Is there a database tracking rent control apartment units in the District? Are the units tracked between neighborhoods or wards?
- Does DHCD have the funding to audit or thoroughly assess rent control hardship petitions from landlords who want to end rent control programs?
- How will the HPTF serve the most vulnerable populations in the District? Is there a designated portion of the funds that have to serve particular groups?
- The homeless people don't seem to want to live in shelters. How can we help them, even if they chose to live on the streets instead of in shelters?
- What is the District Council doing to end homelessness and advance affordable housing? How does DHCD work with the Council?
- What about Museum Square and the treatment of its Chinese-American tenants?
- 8,000 units are under threat of losing their affordable housing status. We need a strategy to act and fill this gap.
- What can people do to support the threatened 8,000 affordable housing units?