

Nov. 28, 2022
Washington DC

Gilles Stucker
Director of Strategic Initiatives
Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning & Economic Development
1350 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 317
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Gilles;

Thank you for talking with me about the public surplus hearing notice you issued Nov. 15th concerning our Community Center-Library site. I am writing as an individual commissioner in anticipation of our meeting tonight to list some of the questions I hope you will address. I likely will have additional questions as the discussion proceeds.

The notice you issued says that your office will conduct a one-hour hearing the evening of December 15th to "obtain community input...to inform the Mayor's determination whether a portion of the real property is no longer required for public purposes."

Among my questions:

- 1) Given that the site currently serves multiple and crucial public purposes, how will your office assure as part of the surplussing process that those purposes continue to be served at the site and are enhanced through redevelopment?
- 2) You have told me orally that the city intends to retain public ownership of those portions of any redevelopment at the site that houses the Library and Community Center. Will the proposal you put before the community at the surplus hearing stipulate that? Will the surplussing proposal your office sends to the Council stipulate that?
- 3) Your notice talks about "a portion of the real property" no longer being required for public purposes. Will the proposal you put before the community at the public surplus hearing specify what portion or, at minimum, what percentage of the real property will be retained for public purposes, and what portion or percentage you seek to surplus? Will the surplussing proposal your office sends to the Council include this information.
- 4) Your notice says that "[f]uture redevelopment proposals for the Property must incorporate a new Chevy Chase Neighborhood Library and a new Chevy Chase Community Center." Will the proposal you put before the community at the public surplus hearing specify at least a minimum amount of space to be allocated to each public function? Will the surplussing proposal your office sends to the Council?

- 5) During the Commission's Oct. 20, 2022 public meeting, you repeatedly cited the final Chevy Chase Small Area Plan (SAP) as authority for the steps your office was taking and is planning to take. But I see no mention in the SAP's "Reimagined Civic Core" chapter on pages 28 through 31 to surplussing any of the site. If I am correct about this, doesn't the approach your office is taking to the redevelopment of the site deserve a more thorough public airing than is possible in a one-hour community hearing?
- 6) Besides modernizing and improving the Library and the Community Center, both the SAP and our Commission on any number of occasions have advocated for affordable housing at the site. I believe that the law your notice cites in calling for a public surplus hearing requires that a minimum of 30 percent of housing built on sites that the District surpluses meet various affordability standards. But if I understand it correctly, the 30-percent requirement only applies to sites on major transit – or transit priority -- corridors. Our Commission has just come from a public meeting where the District's Department of Transportation (DDOT) has told us that it no longer considers Connecticut Avenue on with the Community Center-Library site fronts to be a "transit priority corridor." Does this mean the 30-percent requirement doesn't apply? You have told me orally that it will apply. Will that requirement be included in the proposal you put before the community at the surplussing hearing? Will it be included in any surplussing proposal you advance to the Council?
- 7) Our Commission has also [called for](#) a substantial share of the units at the Community Center-Library site to be affordable for families at 50 percent or less of median family income. Will this requirement be included in the proposal you put before the community? Before the Council?
- 8) Our Commission has gone to considerable lengths to press for affordable housing that works for families with units of three bedrooms or more. But, if I understand it correctly, the law you cite in calling for the surplussing hearing, DC Code 10-801, is silent on affordable unit size. Will the proposal you put before the community at the surplussing hearing include a requirement for a certain share of affordable three-bedroom plus units? Will the proposal that you advance to the Council?
- 9) From its [February 2020 assessment](#) of then-proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments forward, this Commission has expressed skepticism that the city's favored approach to development, Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) and now Inclusionary Zoning Plus (IZ Plus), can produce either much affordable housing or much deeply affordable housing. It has asked the city to try an alternative approach such as the social housing proposal now being considered by the Council. Will the proposal you put before the community and Council include a requirement that alternative approaches such as social housing be pursued in advance of traditional IZ or IZ Plus?
- 10) Besides a modernized Library and Community Center and family-friendly affordable housing, both the Commission and the SAP call for open space at the site. The SAP says, among other things, "[g]iven the high utilization of the

existing playground, basketball court and central courtyard, it will be important to include these recreational spaces into the new site and building design. Well designed, accessible, and inclusive public open spaces will reinforce this site as a community anchor and important gathering place for meetings and civic conversation.” Will the proposal you put before the community and send to the Council include a requirement for substantial open and recreational space at a redeveloped site?

Absent inclusion of the requirements I suggest above, you appear to be asking both the community and the Commission to give our office and whatever development team wins the project a blank check to propose what they will for a site that the SAP quite rightly calls the “anchor of the Chevy Chase neighborhood both in function and location.” Blank checks don’t square with democratic discussion, community engagement or local goodwill.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Gosselin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Peter Gosselin
Commissioner – District 6
ANC 3/4G