



Government of the District of Columbia
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3/4G

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COMMISSIONERS

3/4G-01 - Lisa R. Gore, Chair 3/4G-02 - John Higgins, Treasurer
3/4G-03 - Randy Speck, Vice Chair 3/4G-04 - Michael Zeldin 3/4G-05 - Connie K. N. Chang
3/4G-06 - Peter Gosselin, Secretary 3/4G-07 - Charles Cadwell

Minutes
ANC 3/4G Special Meeting
Community Center-Library Redevelopment
October 20, 2022
Zoom Meeting 7:00 – 8:32 pm
[Meeting Link](#)

00:00:00 **Introduction of Commissioners**

Commission Chair Lisa Gore (3/4G-01) called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Also present were Commissioners John Higgins (3/4G-02), Randy Speck (3/4G-03), Michael Zeldin (3/4G-04) Connie K.N. Chang (3/4G-05,), Peter Gosselin (3/4G-06) and Charles Cadwell (3/4G-07). Gore declared a quorum (being four commissioners present).

00:05:32 **Zoom Meeting Procedures**

Chair Gore described the Commission’s virtual meeting procedures.

00:06:24

Introduction of the Subject and the City Officials

Vice Chair Speck said the community and the Commission have been working on what to do with the Chevy Chase Community Center and Library for several years and have reached the point where “we’re going to start planning in detail.” He said the evening’s meeting would focus on procedure and schedule, not substance. “We’re not going to talk about what’s going to be in the Community Center, Library and housing; we’re going to talk about how we’re going to decide what’s going to be in those components.” He said that money has been allocated in the current city budget to fund the first stages of the process. He introduced Gilles Stucker, the director of strategic initiatives for the office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED), Brent Sisco, the capital projects planning and design officer for the DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and Richard Reyes-Gavilan, executive director of the DC Public Library system (DCPL)

00:08:16

Initial Remarks by Gilles Stucker, DMPED

Gilles Stucker, DMPED’s director of strategic initiatives, said he has been with the city for 15 years. He began by working on housing, standing up the city’s inclusionary zoning (IZ) and affordable dwelling unit (ADU) programs. He moved to DMPED six or seven years ago and has been involved in a series of large projects, including the Franklin School, McMillan Reservoir and Wharf developments.

Concerning the Community Center-Library site, which the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan (SAP) re-named the “Civic Core,” “we’re contemplating having an RFP (request for proposal) that would be joint between DMPED, DCPL and DC DPR...I think it’s the most economical way to proceed with the development.”

He said that the SAP and the ANC’s involvement has been helpful “in understanding the community’s interests in how the site is developed.” He said the three city agencies already have been working with each other for the past several months “to make sure we’re familiar with each other’s needs and start looking at the space requirements that each of us has.”

00:11:41

Initial Remarks by Richard Reyes-Gavilan, DCPL

Richard Reyes-Gavilan, DCPL’s executive director, said the way in which the Community Center-Library site is expected to be redeveloped is “relatively new for us.

“Obviously, we have done mixed-use libraries in the past, but I’ll say that this is the first opportunity for the library, I think, to take a more active and engaged role in the development...”

Reyes-Gavilan said that he and Chair Speck talked in the past about how the local library and the Community Center could work together to save space and avoid overlapping facilities. He indicated DCPL would continue working towards these aims, but added “we will not compromise on our program.

“Hopefully, we are not compromising on the civic importance of what libraries are, even as physical spaces.” He said he hoped the architects for the new structure at the site will be inspired by the libraries DCPL has built in recent years.

00:14:06 **Initial Remarks by Brent Sisco, DPR**

Brent Sisco, a capital projects officer with the department since 2008, said that he has worked well with the Commission on earlier planning efforts for the site. “You’ve given us some incredible feedback from the community,” he said. “I have no doubt that this is going to be an amazing project.”

00:15:29 **Q&A from Commissioners and the Community**

Vice Chair Speck said that prior to the COVID pandemic, the Commission and DPR took several key steps toward renovating the Community Center. These included conducting a number of community meetings and fielding a survey that attracted almost 1,000 respondents. He asked the city officials what they thought the ANC should be doing now, given that residents’ expectations may have changed since the pandemic and the scope of the project has grown.

Speaking generally, both Sisco and Stucker said public engagement is important. Stucker, the DMPED official, then described a “couple of (public engagement) touchpoints that are part of the process that are standard for our projects.” He said his agency is required by law to conduct a “surplus” public meeting to determine whether some or all of a piece of public property should be used for a private purpose, in this case, he indicated, providing housing. Following this meeting, it issues a request for proposals (RFP) from architects and development firms and then conducts a “disposition” public meeting at which those who responded to the RFP present their plans and can be questioned by residents. He said that,

also at this stage, DMPED asks the ANC to provide comments. In addition, DCPL and DPR will review and comment on the plans.

Reyes-Gavilan said that because the library system has erected a large number of facilities in recent years, it has a well-honed process for collecting public input on its own. “Obviously in these instances, we’ve been going it alone,” he said. Speaking of the Community Center-Library site he said “This is going to require a very different approach” because of the involvements of DPR and DMPED. “I don’t think we’d necessarily be meeting with the public to talk about the library, “ but instead would collaborate with the other agencies to provide “as much public engagement as possible.”

Commissioner Chang asked for further explanation about what was involved in the “surplus” process. Stucker used the example of a school that the city did not think it needed any longer. He said a surplus meeting would be held to find out the community’s views, after which the city could make the property available for other purposes. Chang said that in the case of the Community Center and Library both are public purposes that the community and Commission want to see continued. Stucker said that the city is seeking to surplus only a portion of the site to be used for housing.

Asked by Speck about timing, Stucker said that the city wants to issue the RFP in “early 2023.” He said that DMPED typically gives development teams 60, 90 or more days to make proposals and respond to questions from city officials. Then the city launches “a selection process internal to the government” where agencies with a stake in the process or relevant expertise such as transportation, review the proposals. Only after that does the community and the Commission get to hear about the proposals and comment on them.

Speck asked if this means the city intends to issue an RFP in the first quarter of 2023, get responses in the second quarter and make a selection by the fall of 2023, prior to the Oct. 1st start of the new fiscal year. Stucker said that was roughly correct. If the selection is only made as the fiscal year is winding down, how then, Speck asked, will the city know what to include in its fiscal 2024 budget for the project? All three city officials described a sort of iterative process, where the agencies will allocate money based on the services they expect the new facility to provide and adjust as the proposal process goes along.

Speck said that the ANC does not want the housing that it expects to be part of the project to subsidize the Community Center and Library. He said the Commission expects DPR and DCPL to fully finance their new facilities at the site.

Chair Gore asked whether the agencies already have money allocated for the site. Reyes-Gavilan said that DCPL has about \$24 million or \$25 million. Sisco estimated that DPR has about \$19 million.

Commissioner Higgins said he assumed these sums would go to financing the two public institutions that will continue to be at the site. He asked how the affordable housing that the Commission has said it would like to see developed at the site would be financed. Stucker said the city and federal government has a variety of financing mechanisms that the development team chosen for the project could apply for.

Chair Gore asked whether, after the surplus meeting, the issue had to go to the District Council. Stucker said that both the surplus and disposition issues have to go back to the Council.

Commissioner Gosselin said that while the ANC supports redeveloping the site as a multi-purpose building or buildings with a community center, library and affordable housing, the Commission must ensure the community has a voice in the process and asked where in what the city officials had described the opportunity for that would be provided. Stucker said that from the city's point of view, the small area planning process had provided residents with much of that opportunity. Speck said that the proposal for the site has been public discussion since 2020. Chang cited the report by the ANC's Taskforce on Racism as also vetting the proposal.

Gosselin asked how the city officials envisioned the ANC being involved in the drafting of the RFP and the project as it proceeds. Stucker said commissioners can talk with officials of the library system and DPR who will convey to DMPED what they want in the request. He said the Commission can also participate in the surplus and disposition meetings and issue a resolution about its likes and dislikes about the proposals that development teams submit.

Commissioner Cadwell said that much of the discussion during the SAP process was about new development maintaining the "look and feel" of the neighborhood and about parking. He asked whether the RFP will include design guidelines about look and feel and what the city intended to do about parking. Reyes-Gavilan cited DCPL's track record for choosing quality designs that respect neighborhoods, but acknowledged that the joint redevelopment of the site by several agencies is new for his agency. He called it a "marriage" and said of design decisions "certainly it will be more complicated there's no getting around it."

Citing the fact DMPED, DCPL and DPR already have been meeting, Commissioner Chang asked whether the agencies will share their top design goals and program requirements for the new facility with the public so residents have a starting point for understanding the project. Stucker said the city sees the starting point as the SAP and the District's Comprehensive Plan.

Chang said the Commission surveyed residents about redevelopment of the Community Center, but that was in 2017 and a great deal has changed since then. She suggested that city agencies and the ANC cooperate on a new survey in advance of the RFP being issued.

Gore supported Chang's request, saying "I think in general, the city and some agencies don't do a really good job of looking at the project from a communications standpoint and how do you bring the community around." Gore said she would like to see the city and the ANC engage in a "collaborative" public engagement process with a survey, mailers, robocall updates and so forth. She said while the ANC hears calls for it to engage more fully with the community, it doesn't have the resources to do so, especially not on a project like this one.

Stucker was asked whether there is a target completion date for the project. He said there isn't, but that it typically takes two years from the time the Council approves a development plan to the start of construction and two to three years for construction.

The DCPL and DPR officials were asked what will happen to services now housed in the Community Center and Library during the construction phase. Reyes-Gavilan said that the library system often arranges for interim services, but cautioned that funds for those services come out of the project budget. Sisco said he will convey the Commission's concern that programs – especially dancing and fencing – find interim homes.

1:31:45

Adjourn

APPROVED at a regular public meeting notice of which was properly given, and at which a quorum of four (4) of seven (7) members was present on December 12, 2022, by a vote of 7 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions.



Lisa R. Gore, Chair



Peter Gosselin, Secretary