



Department of Human Services  
Office of the Director | 64 New York Avenue N.E., Suite 600 | Washington, DC 20002

**Ward 5 Short-term Family Housing Advisory Team Meeting**  
**Thursday, October 5, 2016**  
**Rhode Island Ave. NE Main Street Office**  
**2300 Rhode Island Ave. NE, Suite 202 - Washington, DC 20018**  
**7 pm – 8:30pm**

**Ward 5 Advisory Team Members**

Name	Inviting Organization	Affiliations	Attendance
Michael Morrison	ANC 5B	Commissioner 5B03 (site location); Advisory Team Co-Chair	Present
Ursula Higgins	ANC 5B	Chairperson ANC 5B; Commissioner 5B02	Present
Edward M. Johnson	ANC 5B	President, Edward M. Johnson & Associates, P.C. (Architects, Planners and Zoning Consultants)	Present
Kyle Todd	ANC 5B	Rhode Island Ave. Main St., Executive Director; Woodridge resident	Present
Henri Makembe	ANC 5B	Ward 5 Council on Education 3rd Vice President; 5B03 Candidate	Not Present
Daniel Schramm	Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association	Acting President, Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association	Present
Sherri Morgan	Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association	Community Member	Not Present
Jeff Steen	Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association	Community Member; 5B03 Candidate	Present
Shawn Hilgendorf	Councilmember McDuffie's Office	Legislative Counsel, Committee on the Judiciary, DC Council	Present
Amber Harding	Councilmember McDuffie's Office	Community Member, Staff Attorney, Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless	Present
Jamila Larson	Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH)	Executive Director and Co-Founder, Homeless Children's Playtime Project	Not Present
Jay Melder	Department of Human Services (DHS)	Chief of Staff, Department of Human Services; Team Co-Chair	Present
Wanda Sherrod	Department of General Services (DGS)	Program Manager: Health and Human Services Cluster	Present

### Additional Support Staff Present

Amoy McGhee	R. McGhee & Associates (Architects)	R. McGhee & Associates (Architects)
Raqueeb Albaari	R. McGhee & Associates (Architects)	R. McGhee & Associates (Architects)
Lionell Gains	Mayor's Office of Community Relations & Services (MOCRS)	Ward 5 Outreach & Services Specialist
Hakeem Rogers	Mayor's Office of Community Relations & Services (MOCRS)	Ward 5 Outreach & Services Specialist
Kathy Harris	Department of Human Services (DHS)	Administrator, Family Services Administration
Kandis Driscoll	Department of Human Services (DHS)	Special Assistant

### Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Purpose and Scope of Advisory Team
3. Update on the Short-term Family Housing (STFH) Process in Ward 5
4. Identifying Community Issues
5. How to Get Advisory Team Input on Design
6. Summary of Next Steps & Adjourn

### Meeting Minutes

#### 1. Welcome and Introductions

- The meeting began at 7:06pm.
- Introductions were made of the Advisory Team Members and co-chairs
  - Co-Chair Jay Melder asked members of the group to introduce themselves, and state why they believed it was important for them to participate in the meeting.

#### 2. Purpose and Scope of the Advisory Teams

- Co-Chair Jay Melder discussed the purpose and scope of the Advisory Team.

##### Purpose: (Slide 3)

1. Coordinate community feedback and input opportunities on issues and concerns related to the development of Short-term Family Housing and share information.
2. Provide feedback on concerns related to residents' quality of life during construction
3. Develop Good Neighbor Agreements.

##### Scope: (Slide 4)

- In-scope for the Advisory Team:
  - Gathering community input on exterior design.
  - Listening and responding to concerns and questions regarding quality of life issues during construction and how the program impacts the community.

- Coordinating the sharing of information amongst stakeholder groups. Information shall not include anything that may be construed to relate to active litigation.
- Working with the program service provider to establish shared expectations for both the community and the program regarding being “good neighbors.”
- Out-of-scope for the Advisory Team:
  - Program Components and Rules and Regulations relating to the Short-term family housing program.
  - Legislative or judicial processes relating to the Short-term family housing program.
  - Any question, concern, or comment about active litigation is off the table.

Co-Chair Melder’s Comments:

- There are a lot of myths about what Short-term Family Housing is and who people experiencing homelessness are; we are looking forward to busting these myths during our time together.
- We consider the community a partner in this work, and want to work with you throughout this process.
- About Open Meeting Law – According to the DC Board of Ethics and Government Accountability (BEGA), this Advisory Team does not fall under Open Meeting Law. However, our intention is to be completely transparent. The whole purpose of this activity is information sharing. We want you to share this information.

**3. Update on the Short-term Family Housing (STFH) Process in Ward 5**

Advisory Team Milestones: (Slide 5)

1. Launch Advisory Team
2. Provide input on facility design
3. Receive BZA application and presentation (formally presented to ANC)
4. Receive Final design and construction timeline presentation
5. Develop a good neighbor agreement with Short-term Family Housing program

Ward 5 Project Process: (Slide 6)

- July – request for proposal for architects
- September – architects awarded
- October – Community Input on design
- October – development of test fit & approval
- November – BZA submission
- December/January/(February\*) 2017 – BZA hearing
- Late Fall 2017 – Estimated construction start

Wanda Sherrod's Comments (Department General Services):

- The Architects and Engineers have just been awarded; the Department of General Services (DGS) conducted the usual request for proposal (RFP) process, which includes evaluation.
- The architects have experience in historic preservation.
- In October, the architects will begin to understand the program and conduct a test fit.
- In November, they will begin work on schematics, adding more dimensions to the concept plan.
- \*The Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) hearing will likely be held in January/February.

Community Representatives' Questions and Comments:

- Where was the RFP for this project advertised?
  - **Wanda Sherrod's Response:** *A Request for Qualification was solicited in FY'16 by the Department of General Services (DGS). Pre-qualified architectural and engineering vendors were contacted about the Request for Proposal (RFP).*
- What information will be used for the development and approval of the test fit?
  - **Wanda Sherrod's Response:** *The Short-term Family Housing facilities must accommodate the programmatic needs of the Department of Human Services (DHS). This includes dwelling space for the families, as well as 30% or more area for program space. To make sure that this is appropriate in size, we conduct a test fit.*
- What happens between late Fall and the time before construction begins?
  - **Wanda Sherrod's Response:** *During this time, there will be site design work from concept through schematics, an application filing with the Board of Zoning Adjustments (BZA), a BZA hearing, and applications for building permits.*
- Are there restrictions or limitations that help protect the existing building?
  - **Wanda Sherrod's Response:** *The plan is not for the existing building to come down; it is eligible to be a historic site so the District would like to preserve it. The existing building will be a part of the new plans. There is a process that requires the architects to work with the Historic Preservation Office. In addition, the site has an Office of Unified Communications radio antenna which cannot be taken down; otherwise, the District would have to build another one. As a result, DGS has to determine how this tower will fit with the planned site.*
- Would it be expensive to move the tower?
  - **Wanda Sherrod's Response:** *There is a cost to relocating the tower, but that is why there will be a test fit, first, before this option is considered.*

**Identifying Community Issues (activity led by Commissioner Morrison)**

- The goal of the exercise is to come to a consensus on top issues that the community (represented by Advisory Team) would like to bring to the attention of this group for discussion, more information, consideration, etc.

***[Advisory Team Members were asked to create a list of concerns and issues that need to be addressed with the community. Issues raised by the Advisory Team will be addressed in writing by the District of Columbia and shared publically.]***

Co-Chair Melder's Comments:

- We want to hear your concerns. We can have conversations about your concerns and do it in a focused way.
- This program is designed for families and that means that they have a minor child; about 48% of parents are under the age of 24 and have a minor child under the age of 4. About 40% of the children are in elementary school. The average family size is about 2.5 persons. Family homelessness is 100% an economic issue; these are families who are not resourced right now for stable housing.

Co-Chair Morrison's Comments:

- I haven't engaged the community that much around the details of the planned site; we know that the site is for families and mothers with children, but I really haven't had information to share.
- In regards to community support, there is a perception that this project has been put on us, even when considering the Mayor's community meetings that were hosted. It is my understanding that the Rhode Island Ave. site might have been mentioned, but there was not a substantive process to engage community members.
- At the May community meeting there were a diverse set of perspectives. For the community as a whole, there is an understanding that this is something that needs to be done and each ward is willing to take its fair share.
- The closer you go to the planned site, the more concerned residents will be about the impact of the site.
- Residents may be concerned about people hanging out in front of the building and smoking, among other things.
- Similar concerns are about more people being in the area. I think it would be good to keep things on Rhode Island Ave, rather than on 17<sup>th</sup> street, so that people are not too impacted by extra traffic.
- There is a fear that people have when they hear "homeless shelter." It is important to help residents of the shelter integrate into the community in a positive way, without negative influences impacting them or the community. We have to be concerned about the impact that these types of activities will have not only on the community but the residents of the shelter.

- Still, if you look at the men's shelter on New York Ave NE, it was already there and that did not stop the new developments happening in that area.

Community Issues Raised by Advisory Team Members:

- Public safety
  - This includes the way in which problem behavior is addressed by the program and community.
  - There are real public safety concerns when you move a large group of people into the neighborhood.
- Impact of the shelter on the community, including traffic (both vehicular and pedestrian), police activity, noise, and school enrollment.
- The safety of the families who will live at the program
- Noise
- Langdon Park safety
- Parking
- Trash in a public space
- Preserving historic landmarks
- Aesthetics of the building; no more gray buildings, it is making the neighborhood darker
- Density of the facility and how it fits into the neighborhood
- Amount of open and green space for families and the community, especially for residents who live directly next to the planned site.
- Green space and line of trees on Rhode Island Ave to buffer pollution and improve air quality
- Have the shelter be as non-communal as possible, have it be a home-like environment with private bathrooms
- Integrate programming with community and residents
- Ensure employment opportunities for the families in the shelter, particularly with some of the local area businesses.

Community Representatives' Questions and Comments:

- This could be an opportunity to address the larger public safety concerns that already exist in the neighborhood. A partnership with MPD and increased street lighting could also help.
  - ***Shawn Hilgendorf's Comment:*** *The security camera subsidy program is also something that the District works on, so having cameras will be important.*
  - *In addition, the District has been working to improve the lighting on Rhode Island Ave, including the new LED lights that were installed.*

- Families will want to go to the library, and visit other new things in the community; we want to make sure that these paths are safe and well lit.
- A lot of businesses are concerned that tax dollars are being spent to support these types of projects and are not being invested in small businesses. Local Certified Business Enterprises (CBEs) are not getting this business. Minority firms are not getting business in these areas, which is undermining our tax base. We are subsidizing government projects, which is evidenced by high utility bills. We want to make sure that the government is using these funds to spend money in the community. In addition, the quality of the air has caused the highest rate of asthma in the community.
- How will you make sure the facility is large enough?
  - **Co-Chair Melder's Response:** *There is a law that dictates what the space requirements are and we plan to exceed those requirements. The rooms have to have a private room with a private entrance. Generally, the rooms must also be 280-300 square feet, and will have 3-4 beds. We can also look at the floor plans developed for sites in other wards.*
- Is there an opportunity to partner with the Department of Employment Services? This project is a good opportunity to have families engage with the community and get transportation when needed.
  - *Kyle Todd offered to help host job fairs for families in the community.*
- Can families be restricted from the facility if there are violations and they are involved in problem activity?
  - **Co-Chair Melder's Response:** *Yes, families can be transferred to another program if necessary. We don't want to leave a family in a situation where they don't have anywhere else to go. Families who experience homelessness are more concerned about raising their kids and are not typically engaged in criminal activity. In fact, the Washington Post did an article about how there is no data to support the idea that there are greater public safety concerns when families experiencing homelessness move into a neighborhood. There will be security and social workers on sight.*
  - **Community Representative's Response:** *There are multiple shelters around the city, including in Columbia Heights. My experience is that families are concerned about meeting their kid's nutrition and education needs. They often go out and look for a job, and they have curfews in a lot of programs. The idea of people hanging out is not a big concern. There are also visiting hours at the shelter.*
- I want to make sure there are appropriate aesthetics on the interior and exterior of the planned site. When you have a good quality building, you give people an incentive to take care of the facility.

***[Advisory Team concludes listing topics of concern]***

#### **4. How to Get Advisory Team Input on Design**

Input: (Slide 8)

1. Gather meaningful input from stakeholder groups on what is important to them in building design.
2. Advisory Team holds listening session with Design Team to give input on design.
3. Design Team presents draft design to community and receives feedback.

Input, continued: (Slide 9)

- What aspects of the facility does your stakeholder group want the design team to focus on or consider while during the site massing process?
- What exterior design attributes would your stakeholder group want reflected in the final design, and provide examples?
- What exterior design elements would your stakeholder group absolutely not want included as part of the final design, and provide examples?
- What other aspects of the design and site should the program or design team take into account while designing the Ward 3 Short-term Family Housing (STFH)?

Next Steps & Adjourn: (Slide 9)

- Make sure we have the best email address for you (see Kathy Haines)
- Next Meeting: First Week in October-a doodle poll will be sent out to the group to determine the best time
- Website: [mayor.dc.gov/homewarddc](http://mayor.dc.gov/homewarddc)
- Thank you for participating!

Co-Chair Comments:

- **Co-Chair Morrison:** A real community forum would be good to really get broader input.
- **Co-Chair Melder:** We want to try to create as much opportunity as we can to provide feedback on design. We will absolutely bring designs to the community for input.

Community Representatives' Comments:

- It would be helpful to have categories broken out about what people should be commenting on; something that gives more detail about what the desire is. What process is going to be used to determine the top priorities?
  - **Co-Chair Melder's Response:** *Our hope is that the representatives in this room can serve as conduits for the rest of the community. We would suggest going to your community stakeholders and asking them what their priorities are, and then reporting that information back to us.*
- Should we be soliciting feedback prior to the meetings or after?



- ***Co-Chair Melder's Response:*** *There are questions regarding site design on the slides that we want you and your stakeholders to start thinking about. It would be helpful to think about these questions before the next meeting. Thank you for coming and for participating in the meeting tonight.*

***[Adjournment at 8:32 pm]***

DRAFT