



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

Ward 6 Short-term Family Housing Advisory Team Meeting
Thursday, September 22, 2016
1101 4th Street SW, Room W-254 - Washington, DC 20024
7 pm – 8:30pm

Ward 6 Advisory Team Members

Name	Inviting Organization	Affiliations	Attendance
Andy Litsky	ANC 6D	ANC 6D Chairperson; SMD 6D04 Commissioner; Advisory Team Co-Chair	Present
Stacy Cloyd	ANC 6D	SMD 6D02 Commissioner (site location)	Present
Lucy Rojansky	ANC 6D	Amidon-Bowen PTA President	Present
Marilyn Melkonian	ANC 6D	President & Founder of Telesis	Present
Robin Walker (for Andrenia Walker)	Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (SWNA)	Community Representative, Greenleaf Gardens Extension	Present
Katelynd Mahoney	Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (SWNA)	Community Representative	Present
Vyllorya Evans	Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (SWNA)	Community Representative	Not Present
Charles Allen	Councilmember Allen's Office	Ward 6 Councilmember	Present
Bob Hall	Councilmember Allen's Office	President and Board of Directors, Capital Park IV Condominiums	Present
Deborah Shore	Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH)	Executive Director and Founder, Sasha Bruce Youthwork	Present
Jay Melder	Department of Human Services (DHS)	DHS Chief of Staff; Advisory Team Co-Chair	Present
Greer Gillis	Department of General Services (DGS)	DGS Director	Present

Additional Support Staff Present

Naomi Mitchell	Councilmember Allen's Office	Community Liaison
Jackie Stanley	Department of General Services (DGS)	DGS Community Outreach Coordinator
Wanda Sherrod	Department of General Services (DGS)	DGS Program Manager: Health and Human Services Cluster
Kathy Haines	Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services (DMHHS)	Capital City Fellow

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Purpose and Scope of Advisory Team
3. Update on STFH Process in Ward 6
4. Identifying Community Issues and Concerns
5. Review Programmatic Needs and Launching Advisory Team Input on Site Design
6. Summary of Next Steps & Adjourn

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

- The meeting began at 7:15pm
- Ward 6 Advisory Team Co-Chair Jay Melder provided an overview of homeless services in the District.

Co-Chair Melder's Comments:

- We are here because we must close DC General. It is too old and does not reflect that values our community has for how we serve DC families.
- Our goal is to make homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring through three strategies. This is possible, but requires resources and new programs like short-term family housing.
- One: The first part of our strategy is to prevent homelessness through increasing affordable housing, and increasing access to jobs. In September of 2015 the Department of Human Services (DHS) launched its Prevention Program. In a year 1,300 families who originally came seeking shelter were referred to this program, and ultimately only 10% ended up in shelter.
- Two: The second part of our strategy is to offer safe and dignified short-term housing when families need a safe place to stay immediately. That is the goal of short-term family housing or emergency shelter. It needs to be a place that is dignified, service-enriched, where families are connected to the resources they need to get back into permanent housing in the community.
- Three: The third part of our strategy is helping families who experience homelessness, exit homelessness quickly and achieve permanent housing. Every family faced with homelessness has their own unique strengths and challenges. It takes a lot of skilled social workers to help. Sometimes it only takes a week for family to exit homelessness. Sometimes much longer. Some families have a great deal of active rental debt, poor credit scores, and other significant rental barriers that can make the finding housing extremely challenging, and we have built partnerships and programs to help lessen those barriers for families.
- For families with very serious challenges, Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) may be the most appropriate long-term housing option. We also have Targeted Affordable Housing (TAH) as an option and Rapid Rehousing (RRH, for families that just need a short-term rental subsidy with wrap-around services). Our exit rates from shelter have

increased dramatically in the past 2 years; more than 2,000 families have exited shelter into permanent housing. This is a sign that the system is working, but also a sign that a lot of families in our community are struggling to afford housing and maintain stable housing and need additional support.

Community Representatives' Comments:

- How do you define “short-term” and how do you enforce it?
 - **Co-Chair Melder’s Response:** *We are one of three jurisdictions in the United States that have a “right to shelter” law, which obligates the District to provide emergency shelter for residents who otherwise do not have a safe place to be. For families in shelter, we do not set a time limit, but length of stay is a measure that we track to assess how healthy the system is and how quickly families are able to overcome housing barriers and achieve permanent housing. Some families have higher barriers to housing than others. Sometimes the head of household has a job but they may have lost an apartment, and they are offered temporary housing until they can increase their income further and are able to move on to permanent housing. Other families might have tens of thousands of dollars of active rental debt, less than perfect credit, no work histories, and need more support and stronger connections to employment programs to increase family income and reduce their debt, which can take months. So some families can be in short-term housing for a year or more. The goal is for the average length of stay in emergency shelter to be less than 90 days. We are not there yet—it’s a five year plan we are working—but we are making real progress.*
- Definition of “permanent” housing – are these places where they could fall behind in rent again? Are we giving them a house like in Salt Lake City?
 - **Co-Chair Melder’s Response:** *Yes, we are following the Salt Lake City “housing first” model. Permanent housing means simply housing—like anyone one of us in the room enjoys, whether we have an ownership stake, a lease agreement, or maybe in multi-generational setting—that the family has safe and legal access to. Now, we have permanent housing resources that help families achieve it, such an affordable housing voucher (e.g. HUD Section 8, or LRSP), permanent supportive housing (which is an affordable housing voucher coupled with case-management services) and we have rapid rehousing (which is a time-limited housing subsidy that enables a tenant to find housing on the private market).*
- How many of the families in shelter are TANF long-stayers/about to lose their benefits after 60 months?
 - **Co-Chair Melder’s Response:** *The 2011 law that creates a time-limit on TANF benefits after 60 months has always been extended, and benefits have continued (for good reason). There is a working group now working on a policy for TANF extensions and exemptions, and experiencing homelessness is one of the factors being considered for protection under that new TANF policy. There is a great deal of work to do on the TANF side and the Council will hold a hearing in*

October of 2016. We are working with TANF participants, advocates and Council to create a TANF policy that works for District families. About 95% of the family shelter population are receiving TANF or are TANF eligible. The TANF caseload is about 13,000 families and about half of these families have been enrolled in TANF for longer than 60 months.

Commissioner Litsky's Comment:

- Part of tonight's goal is to document our concerns and to learn what the Administration is promising.

Introductions

- Introductions were made of the Advisory Team Members

Councilmember Allen's Comments:

- Jay Melder outlined this robust strategy for addressing homelessness in our city. We need to helicopter up a little bit and see what that goal is. We don't want to re-hash what led us to here, but we have been able to hit the reset button. Andy is right, Southwest is a neighborhood that knows how to make this work and is committed to making this work. Everyone in Southwest that I have talked to has talked about how to make this site successful. There were tough questions, but they are thoughtful questions that we should be able to answer. With the people here and the networks you connect to, Ward 6 is going to show the city how to do this, and how to do this right. We are building a more just and humane system. It will also show in the way that we ensure that we have a quality community health center that serves both the families who will live on the site, and the community. Having Randall on board as well is also important. Everyone here is a leader in their community. You will help give voice to the community. This will be a meaningful conversation. My expectation is that as thoughtful individuals, we will have a dialog that leads us to a place we are all proud of. You all bring a valuable perspective to this. I am excited about this. The rest of the city will look at us and say you got it right.

2. Purpose and Scope of 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.

3. Update on STFH Process in Ward 6

Advisory Team Milestones: (Slide 5)

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

Ward 6 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 2017 – BZA hearing
- Fall 2017 – estimated construction start
- 2019 – program opening

Community Representatives’ Comments:

- What is your definition of a test fit?
 - **Wanda Sherrod’s Response:** *Test fit is the beginning of the design process. It helps us determine whether the entire program fits into a building and site, including what needs to be present for DHS casework.*
 - **Director Gillis’ Response:** *How many rooms can we fit on a floor plan? Do we need space for laundry facilities? How much will remain on the floor plate? We will be testing different options.*
- Can you share program information with us as well?
 - **Co-Chair Melder’s Response:** *We will provide those specifications; this is a question in every ward.*

4. Identifying Community Issues and Concerns

Assignment: As the design team masses the site, think about the design elements you would or would not like included. We know where the site is going to be. Please consider the challenges we have there with massing based on what the building borders, and the functions of the buildings next door (of those there now, or will soon be there). What should we direct the architects to focus on?

Community Representatives' Comments:

- Maintain Delaware Ave. viewshed. Capitol Park – the remnants of the Delaware Ave viewshed – the new building should be situated to respect that viewshed. We are not as concerned with issues like safety and lighting. This is an opportunity to build community in an area of Southwest that is really devoid of much life right now. We are looking to the future to the Randall School right now. Capitol Park is fenced off, and we don't want that. We see this as an opportunity to engage with I Street SW, Delaware Ave. SW, and Randall School. This is already a mixed-use facility by definition, with a community health clinic and housing. Why can't we make it slightly more mixed use than that? Why can't we put a commercial art gallery that complements the Randall School next door, then the entrance to the health clinic, and coffee shop on I Street SW, with the residential entrance on Delaware Ave. SW. Will the building be completely demolished?
- Make it mixed-use. We can engage the community, add commercial space, and maybe create some employment opportunities for the people living in the housing. There are so many reasons why mixed-use works. Since we are already doing mixed use, let's make it an 18-hour a day mixed-use building. It would be great to sit at a coffee shop there; this would only enhance safety. These are first thoughts. We are committed as partners for community building.
- Keep interesting features, make a courtyard, watch deliveries and trash. We should consider whether there is a way to reuse some of the interesting parts of the façade, perhaps by putting them inside or out. There should be family restrooms and indoor homework space. Also smoking space outside, separate from space where kids hang out. Take a look at N Street Village in DC; there is a courtyard there set back from the street. You don't see people hanging out. I used to work at Bread for the City and that is something we didn't think enough about in our renovation. Also parking for staff and residents, space for trash trucks, food drop-offs, and dumpsters. Food and diapers are very attractive to rats. Dumpsters should be safe and secure. Make sure that H Street SW doesn't become a dead space.
- Engage all sides. On another project, we emphasized the need to engage the project from all sides. The Capital Park IV Condominium Association surrounding the site doesn't want it to be one or two-sided. They do not want to have a "backside" that faces them.
- Add a child-care provider. There are no home-based day-care providers in zip code 20024. There are only federally-run daycares with priority for federal employees. Only one church on I Street SW has a daycare, and this cannot accommodate all the children. Others supported the idea that adding childcare would be helpful.

- Courtyard. The idea of an inside place that is outdoors (e.g. courtyard) accessible to the community is important. If you've been to N Street Village in NW DC, it is a garden, easy to walk in, people come and sit. It will be important for people to have space outside. If you don't build it in, people will sit outside anyway.
- Playground. Playground area for the very young kids could be only accessible through the housing facility – something where parents can really monitor their children. While we talk about the interior, we recommend there be computer labs for older kids.
- Review the plans for neighboring Randall School. This will be a new neighbor on the other side of the family housing site that is already designed. This building is designed by Bing Thom, who also did Arena Stage, and will bring first class architecture for Randall School. Also note that 1st Street SW is split between DC government and the project. The design was made with street-level entrances around the perimeter of Randall School. There are gardens and front doors to engage with 1st Street SW. Also they have coordinated deliveries and other activities with the art museum. Randall School also has outdoor space, and once onboard, it might be useful for both architectural firms to work together.
 - Suggestion - bring in Bing Thom Architects: With the Telesis project (Randall School), Bing Thom architects came and explained what they wanted to do. We should invite Bing Thom to come and meet with this group. We don't want a facility that ignores what is already planned for this area, and Bing Thom came up with this great design. We should spend a few hours on site with this architect.
 - Both the ANC and SWNA have been very involved with architects on projects in this area. This will be a wonderful building next door. It would be good to engage with them.
 - **Wanda Sherrod's Response**: *Could we get a copy of the plans for the Randall School before the next meeting? That would also help us show the BZA how we are interacting with other proposed structures in the community.*
- Consider the National Park grass to the north: I also wanted to mention as we think about design, that there is a desire to make sure there are different entrances for the clinic and the shelter. This is unique in that there is a federal piece of land to the north, but we can't build on it. We are trying to convince the federal government to give it to the District. Early on, we might want to speak with the National Park Service. While there may not be a transfer, we can see if there are ways that this space can be incorporated into the design.
- Inside: location of the stairs. Outside: lighting, sidewalks. If you have to evacuate, make sure that you think about the stairs in relation to the rooms. Outside there are huge increases in pedestrian traffic. Work with DDOT early on to provide better lighting, sidewalks. There will be 500 new residences with the adjacent Randall School project.
- Crosswalk, north side of South Capitol and I Street SW. The ANC has previously discussed the need for a crosswalk on the north side of South Capitol and I Streets SW. We are connecting a homeless shelter, recreation center, and school directly with a McDonalds across South Capitol Street, but no crosswalk between the two. Jaywalking is already common between the two sides, and is extremely unsafe.

- Engage H Street SW, behind the site. No one goes back there, except to visit the Blind Whino space. While there is more traffic due to the outdoor field renovations, the whole area needs a lot of work.
- Concern about school enrollment. Amidon-Bowen Elementary School serves 342 students (up from 240 a few years ago) and enrollment is increasing. The special education population makes up about 30% of the school. PARCC scores are about 5% on grade level. [In 2012,] it was listed as one of the 40 lowest performing schools in DCPS [one of 21 Elementary Schools on the list]. The school is expected to be a social worker, and take care of all of these troubles, but also to teach, all on a limited budget. We don't have the resources for even an additional handful of children that might come in. We need counseling services in the school or adjacent to school hours. It's not enough to do this in the shelter. It would be hard to know how many living in the short-term housing would opt-in to Amidon-Bowen and for how long. Money attaches to students, then to the school at a certain point. It is a priority that we want to take care of all of our children at the school. There isn't any more room in the DCPS budget. This project must bring resources for the school too.
 - **Co-Chair Melder's Response:** *This is an issue in every ward. We are engaged with the Deputy Mayor for Education on this. We can provide the federal information on the protections for students experiencing homelessness, which you may already have. We can give you figures on how many children in DC General Emergency Shelter attend their local schools. We will continue to work with the education system on the funding issue.*
- Impact on Greenleaf Gardens. With Greenleaf across the street from the site, we need to think about the potential impact and ensure there is good coordination.
- Greater transparency on process. The more transparency that there is from the government side, even if it is in the "out-of-bounds" category, the easier it will be for us to put our expertise to use with innovative problem solving. The more information we have, the more we truly understand where you are coming from and what you have to do. Even if there is budget, there may be other ways we can address this issue. Add to the list that complete transparency is important.
- Private bathrooms. If this building is a blank slate, it must have private bathrooms.
 - **Co-Chair Melder's Response:** *There was a bill introduced last year on this, it went through a long legislative process, with amendments added, and ultimately a minimum standard was set for certain specifications in regards to short-term family housing, including bathrooms. DHS' commitment was to exceed that standard. In the three designs that have already been completed and approved by BZA, we have eliminated the need for congregate bathrooms (which is what DC General has) and we have maximized private en suite bathrooms and private access family bathrooms (family bathrooms are private, with private access, but not connected to your room).*
 - **Community Representatives' Response:** *This is better than it could be, but the law is a floor. I think you are aware of this community's feelings. What you've said is a no-go. No-go's are also loitering and littering. For day care, there are*

public-private partnerships possible. Providers have contacted the ANC and we have directed them to the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). Two program things are important: swing space for the community health center and transparency around the RFP for shelter operators.

5. How to Get Advisory Team Input on Design

Input: (slide 10)

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 11)

- What logistical 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 6 STFH?

6. Summary of Next Steps & Adjourn

Next Steps & Adjourn: (Slide 12)

- Make sure we have the best email address for you (see Kathy Haines)
- Next Meeting: First Week in October
- Website: mayor.dc.gov/homewarddc
- Thank you for participating!

Community Representatives' Comments:

- We are not subject to open meeting laws?
 - **Co-Chair Melder's Response:** *This meeting is not, per BEGA. But our intention is to be completely transparent. For the next meeting, Kathy will send a Google poll avoiding debates, post-season baseball, and high holy days.*
- Can we see the RFP for the architects?
 - **Director Gillis' Response:** *We can share the scope of work for the RFP, but because it is still in the competitive award phase, there may be some things we can't share.*

[Adjournment at 8:45 pm]