



Councilmember Phil Mendelson's

At-Large Update

**Councilmember
Phil Mendelson
(At-Large)**

January 29, 2009

Wasted Dollars

In late December the Council was criticized for voting down a proposed contract to run the D.C. Lottery. Supporters of the contract lamented that the Council was putting politics before fiscal prudence by rejecting a new vendor who, purportedly, would increase net revenues to the city by at least \$5 million annually.

The vote was 8-5. I voted "no" because I did not have satisfactory answers for the many questions that had arisen regarding the selected partnership. This partnership had been formed solely for the purpose of meeting the local, small, disadvantaged business requirement of the solicitation. The local component of the partnership had zero record of performance, and there not only were questions about its ability to perform, but also the reputation of its principals in other dealings.

The Executive lobbied hard. Its position was that the potential \$5 million annual revenue gain was paramount.

I find this position ironic given the Executive's actions, over the past 18 months, with rental property at 225 Virginia Avenue, SE. This former Washington Star printing plant was leased by the District for the purpose of consolidating police operations currently located at five scattered sites, some of which are dilapidated

and in the path of economic development.

At the first of the year, the District passed the \$11 million mark in rent and other costs associated with this still-empty building.

The nascent Fenty administration was briefed fully on the proposed lease before taking office. Mayor-elect Fenty could have stopped the lease but he did not, and it was approved by the Council while he was still a councilmember.

In June 2007 the administration offered a detailed defense of the economics of the deal. By August, however, and without any explanation, the Executive pulled the plug. The most frustrating part of this about-face was the lack of a plan for either the police facilities or the leased space.

The city treasury pays \$546,000 per month for the empty, 421,000 square foot building. This is more than the \$5 million annual gain from the lottery contract (\$417,000 per month).

Councilmembers had a reason for voting down the proposed lottery contract. But there is no reason for the money out the door - month after month - for an empty building.

Meanwhile the scattered MPD operations are still unaddressed.

Constituent Services Corner

An ex-offender came into Councilmember Mendelson's office requesting help to reinstate his driver's license because it had expired during his prison sentence. He was attempting to secure employment and the job required a valid driver's license.

The constituent was able to raise the funds to pay the requisite penalties and fees to reinstate his license, but ran into a roadblock when he reached the DMV. Multiple organizations had contributed checks to the individual to help him regain his license, but the DMV refused to accept the multiple checks to pay the fees.

Our office organized a conference call with the DMV and representatives of the organizations who had written the checks. As a result of the call, a process was put into place to pay the fees and award the man his license so he could apply for the job.

Bureaucracy in the District can drive you up a wall. Call Councilmember Mendelson's office, we'll steer you in the right direction.

Get the At-Large Update Delivered to Your Computer!

Every two weeks, or as the news of the Council warrants, Phil sends out a copy of his newsletter, the At-Large Update. To receive this newsletter in your inbox, simply send a note to jshedlock@dccouncil.us or call (202) 724-8779 and ask to be placed on our list!

Mendelson Elected AMPO President

Councilmember Mendelson was recently elected President of the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO). Phil served as President of this national organization in 2007, and the term that began on January 1st, 2009 will be his second stint at the helm of the nonprofit.

AMPO is a membership organization established in 1994 to serve the needs and interests of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) nationwide. MPOs have responsibility for planning, programming and coordination of federal highway and transit investments. The Transportation Planning Board at the Council of Governments is this region's MPO.

AMPO offers its member MPOs technical assistance and training, conferences and workshops, frequent print and electronic communications, research, a forum for transportation policy development and coalition building, and a variety of other services. The nine-member AMPO Board of Directors is directly elected by the membership, including the President and Vice President. The majority of the Board seats are held by local elected officials who are active members of their respective MPOs and play a vital leadership role in the affairs of AMPO.

"As the nation's capital, the District should be a model for other urban governments," stated Mendelson. "I am honored that my peers have elected me to lead AMPO once again. I hope to use this position to both share the District's successes as well as incorporate best practices from jurisdictions across the country to further prepare the District for current and future challenges in transportation and transit-related issues."

Upcoming Hearings of the Judiciary Committee

Friday, February 6th at Noon, Room 412
"Delegation of Subpoena Power to the Chief of Police Pursuant to Mayor's Order 2008-154"

Thursday, February 12th at 10:30am, Room 123
"Bills 18-10, "Disclosure to the United States District Court Amendment Act of 2009", 18-68, "Office of Administrative Hearings Amendment Act of 2009", and PR 18-55, "Hearing Procedures for the Washington Humane Society Approval Resolution of 2009"

February 25th, March 4th, and March 9th:
Performance Oversight Hearings on All Agencies Under the Committee's Purview (Details on the order of proceedings to can be found by visiting www.dccouncil.us/mendelson/news.htm)

Call (202)724-7808 for more information.



The Office of Councilmember
Phil Mendelson (At-Large)

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 402
Washington, DC 20004

(202)724-8064 (p)
(202) 724-8099 (f)

www.dccouncil.us/mendelson

Need Money for College??

Are you or a family member thinking of going to college, but are faced with the daunting task of navigating all of those financial aid forms? Participate in College Goal Sunday and get expert help in ensuring you have the best access to funds for your education!

Sunday, February 8th

2-5pm

THEARC (19th & Mississippi, SE)

or

MLK Library (9th & G, NW)

www.collegegoalsundayusa.org

Attention ANC Commissioners!

Every quarter, I host a meeting with ANC Commissioners across the District to update them on important issues affecting our city. Please join me on January 29th at 6:30pm at the John A. Wilson Building for the first meeting of the year. For more information, contact us at (202) 724-8064. I hope to see you on the 29th, or at future meetings!