



OFFICE OF CHAIRMAN MENDELSON COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

CONTACT:

Lindsey Walton
202.724.8140

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MENDELSON CRITICIZES AWARD OF ANACOSTIA HOUSES

WASHINGTON, DC – Council Chairman Phil Mendelson issued the following statement today:

The city's announcement that it has awarded \$1.6 million and six properties in Historic Anacostia to two inexperienced, non-profit organizations is a waste of money and violates the law. The Mayor had an alternative: a non-profit with experience in historic preservation that had offered to rehabilitate four of the sites (the ones with houses) free.

There are six properties. Two are vacant lots and four have historic houses in dilapidated condition.

Earlier this year, Mayor Bowser allowed legislation to become law – Bill 21-837 adopted unanimously – that directs the Mayor to transfer title to the four houses to the L'Enfant Trust. Instead, the city has announced it will transfer the houses to a different developer.

The law requires no payment from the Trust for the four houses. Instead, the city will pay as much as \$1.6 million to the inexperienced non-profit. We're paying for something we could have gotten free.

The law requires rehabilitation of the houses to historic district standards. The L'Enfant Trust has experience in historic preservation and it has already renovated houses in Historic Anacostia. Instead, the Mayor is awarding the houses to an entity with no experience in historic preservation.

The law also requires that after renovation the houses be sold as workforce housing. That the affordability is not more deeply discounted is broadly supported by the Anacostia community. Instead, the solicitation of the properties specified that the homes be sold for \$145,000-\$250,000 (or 50% Area Median Income). Placing more income-restricted housing East of the River does not produce a net gain for a neighborhood that is demanding income diversity.

Last December the L'Enfant Trust submitted an unsolicited proposal to the Mayor's Office of Public Private Partnerships seeking to acquire and renovate the houses through the P3 process – a competitive bidding process, initiated by the private sector rather than the government. Instead, the P3 office ignored the proposal.

The city has held these properties for years. Last summer, the city issued a solicitation to "stabilize" one of the houses for disposition in five years. Only when Councilmembers introduced legislation last fall to give the four houses to the L'Enfant Trust did the Bowser Administration reverse course.

The course this Administration is now taking – to ignore the legal transfer of title, to unnecessarily spend precious dollars, to disregard the Anacostia community, and to award the houses to an inexperienced developer – is not governing in the best interest of the District.