



## **SURPLUS SCHOOL REUSE PROCESS**

### **September Public Meetings Summary of Community Feedback**

The following is a summary of feedback received in discussions and through questionnaires at the Fletcher Johnson Community Vision Casting meeting held on October 9, 2014.

**Discussion Notes**  
**October 10, 2014**  
**Fletcher Johnson Community Vision Casting Meeting**

**Key Messages:**

- Desire for community centered programs
- Vision of having a community hub that can provide space for community/civic organizations operating in the neighborhood
- Desire for access to programs by community members of all ages
- Frustration with a lack of quality schools in Ward 7
- Desire for neighborhood right in charter schools
- Frustration with the RFO process and the legal right of first offer to charter schools
- Call to keep the legacy and name for Fletcher Johnson
- Desire for education (especially literacy) focused programming
- Support for a new DCPS adult, elementary or middle program
- Support for a UDC Community College partnership
- Request that hub contain, arts, music and dance programs
- Request that Applicants reach out to providers already serving the Ward 7 community
- Emphasis on inclusion of Ward 7 residents in design and delivery of programs: desire for the community hub at Fletcher Johnson to be 'home-grown'

**Summaries**

**Comments/Questions on Vision for Fletcher Johnson Site**

- There should be an elementary and middle school with cultural and arts aspects, like Duke Ellington. The school should also partner with the Levine School of Music or the Washington Ballet.
- Meeting space is a needed. Many groups in the community including the ANC, the steel band, and civic associations need a place to meet and hold events. This meeting space should also have a commercial kitchen and a grand hall.
- Concern about demolishing the building because there was a graveyard at the site. An internal demolition is acceptable.
- There should be a framework developed for what residents really want. Concern that incoming tenants will take away from the residents of Ward 7.
- Desire for the community hub at Fletcher Johnson to be a point of pride for the Ward 7 community.
- Respect the name – Fletcher Johnson stands for someone and something. Any reuse must keep the legacy.

- Concern over adding another charter school to the community. Many parents expressed frustration that the charters schools in the area do not serve all of the neighborhood kids.
- Anger that a right of first offer to charter schools is required due to action by Senator Landrieu.
- Comment that the only way to retain residents, families is if we break the cycle of intergenerational low literacy. Before development, we should give great weight to education, every kind of literacy (environmental, financial, basic literacy). People won't be able to be self-reliant without basic education skills.
- Desire for school to operate on Saturdays and Sundays and weeknights after hours, and for programming that can serve the community (Fletcher Johnson used to offer such programs).
- Desire for workforce development programs in addition to educational programs.
- Residents are seeking the same opportunities at their neighborhood schools as other people have in other parts of town. Don't want to have to send their kids across town to have good opportunities
- Request that ANCs are kept informed/committed. Council members should publish their information.
  - Concern that ANCs weren't notified. However, DME clarified that all ANCs were informed of meetings and process and would continue to be informed.
- Concern that community voice will not actually be reflected in the process or in the ultimate award.
- Question as to why DCPS does not plan to reopen a school at this site.
  - DME clarified that DCPS looked at a range of information and determined that this particular building wasn't something that they needed for younger grades. DCPS wants to have a program (alternative or adult focused) based on the needs in the community.
- The site should be used for educating multiple ages; parents can learn in the same place as kids.
- Questions were asked about what happens if no one is awarded the building.
  - DME clarified that the law requires with charter right of offer, at least some portion has to be maintained for a charter for up to a year.
- Question as to what happens if a proposal meets the criteria but the community doesn't like it.
  - DME stated that community feedback is part of the community process and taken into consideration. In the RFO scoring 20% is given to community engagement.
- Question as to whether the city is responsible for repairing the building before it is released.

- DME stated that the site will be offered in “as-is” condition and that the awardee will be responsible for renovating the site.
- Specific uses identified by community members included:
  - Grocery store;
  - Health clinic;
  - Grand hall/ballroom with seating capacity of 500;
  - Meeting space for:
    - Groundwork DC
    - Neighborhood Steel band
    - Ward 7 Arts Collaborative
    - Other community entities that are in search of space
- Some community members raised questions about the cost per square foot to develop the site.
  - There was a request for a feasibility study to get a better understanding of what is needed in the neighborhood of Fletcher Johnson.
  - There was also a request to have information on the cost per square foot of developing the property
- Many stated that children in neighborhood should have a right to the school – not a lottery.
- There was a lot of concern that Maryland students (evidenced by Maryland tags observed in the neighborhood) are attending DCPS and public charter schools in the area.
- A developer suggested he could work with the community on a proposal.
  - Some were resistant of this idea stating they were creating their own proposal.
  - Others seemed to welcome the idea.
- There were questions about the field at Fletcher Johnson and the terms of the agreement for the field.
  - The ANC member for the area was very concerned that she was not aware of the terms of the lease with KIPP for the field. She believed Council members made the deal without community consent.
    - Request for clarification of what the terms of the lease are.
- Representative from an affordable housing developer interested in building senior housing asked the community for feedback.
  - There was little interest in having this at Fletcher. But a desire to see additional senior housing in the community.