



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 round of public meetings held on September 9, September 10, September 11, and September 15, 2014 on Gibbs, Fletcher-Johnson, Mamie D. Lee and MC Terrell.

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Discussion Notes
September 9, 2014
Gibbs Surplus Meeting

Key Messages

- Interest in adult education, vocational and technical programs
- Interest in specialized programs such as Montessori, Dual Language, STEM, and CTE programs
- Concern about impact of incoming charter school on enrollment at surrounding neighborhood schools

Comments/Questions

- Question about condition of Gibbs and who would be responsible for renovating the building. Also questions about what type of rent charter schools pay.
- Criticism of closing Gibbs in the first place. Comment that it was an asset to the community and that now kids have to go to Brown, which is difficult to get to.
- Concern about increasing use of technology (in place of textbooks) and how this impacts students once they go to college.
- Question about why no other agency need was identified, particularly since there is a need for housing for homeless residents.
- Presentation focused on data about local community, which leads to impression that you expect incoming charter school to serve the local community. This raises the question as to why DCPS has decided it does not have a use for the building.
- Question about why the city authorizes charter schools if they don't have a proper facility to move into.
- Questions about number of adult education students in the city, number of adult education programs, and whether there are charter operators that focus on adult education.
- Interest in seeing an adult program that will support adults to fill out job application, create resume, and offer basic computer skills training. Also GED classes and other workforce readiness programs.
- Comment that early childhood and adult programming should be combined.
- Question about whether an incoming charter operator will respond to community needs and interests.
- Comment about poor condition of building on campus of Miner Elementary and question about how DCPS can be encouraged to utilize the space.

Discussion Notes
September 10, 2014
Fletcher Johnson Surplus Meeting

Key Messages:

- Interest in adult education program
- Support for a UDC Community College partnership
- Building was widely viewed as an “opportunity” for Ward 7:
 - Strong support for an “ARC” like use - (arts/cultural center)
 - Residents see the reuse of Fletcher Johnson as an avenue to enrich/elevate the community, ignite commercial revitalization
 - Building location is a huge asset due to significant transportation barriers in other parts of Ward 7 (rest of Ward not well-connected by public transportation)

Comments/Questions

- Resistance to having a charter operator run a program as opposed to DCPS. Discomfort with losing access to the building (by DCPS) once it is leased to a charter.
- Interest in having UDC-Community College locate a program at Fletcher-Johnson.
- Question about how long building has been vacant and whether there has been an appraisal of the property value.
- Comment that vacant Davis building should be used for adult education, not Fletcher Johnson. Instead, Fletcher Johnson should house something like the Children’s Hospital, the Arc (multi-functional – arts, ballet, community events/conferences, enrichment activities, etc.) – in other words, services for the community that work for everyone.
- Disagreement around what type of adult education should be provided: GED/literacy and workforce vs. higher education satellite campus.
- Question as to whether it makes sense to have more than one adult education program in this space.
- Questions about what the age range is for adult education programs.
- Interest in having a multi-use co-location that can include Arc as a component, particularly given size of building. Interest in building serving as an anchor to leverage private commercial interest (e.g. restaurants, business incubator, etc). Desire to see adult education opportunities other than simply GED and vocation education.
- Interest in having arts space and other government services, as opposed to a charter school, located in the building, particularly given accessibility of building in terms of transportation.
- Interest in prioritizing post-secondary campus, e.g. UDC-CC.
- Interest in using this building as an economic development opportunity – incubator on site to serve as both job provider and economic engine to attract other commercial interests.
- Comment that ensuring the community blesses the project will ensure sustainability.

- Question about how much money is budgeted for this project and who oversees the project.
- Question about feasibility of co-locating education, workforce and arts programs in the same space and whether there is funding to pay for all of this.

Discussion Notes
September 11, 2014
Mamie D. Lee Surplus Meeting

Key Messages:

- Concern over plans for current Mamie D. Lee students. Desire to see building that is outfitted to serve special needs students continue to serve such students
- Interest in early childhood and elementary programs given population trends in neighborhood
- Interest in programs/services for seniors and community access to green spaces

Comments/Questions

- Concern over saturation of schools in the area not being considered as part of the scoring process. Concern over undermining current schools in the area. Desire to see a plan that fits in with landscape of existing schools.
- Concerns that the district and community have no leverage to hold charter schools accountable for their plans to work and/or share space with the community. Desire to see considerable weight given to community partnership plans in the RFO process.
- Question about where current students will go if River Terrace is not ready and charter is moving in. Related question about whether an incoming charter school would be able to absorb students who current attend the school.
- Question about whether there is any coordination between this process and authorization process.
- There was an interest in dual language (given surrounding population), STEM programming.
- Interest in including in the RFO an option for a special education provider, or preference for charter schools that can serve special education students.
- Concern that Mamie D. Lee families were not consulted in the process to close and relocate to River Terrace. Desire to keep program at Mamie D. Lee.
- Concern that the Mamie D. Lee families are not being kept informed of the plans for River Terrace. Some said they did not receive information on programs and timing of the move, and are unsure of whether all current Mamie D. Lee students will transition to River Terrace.
- Desire for a transition plan for Mamie D. Lee families who will be transitioning to River Terrace.
- Concern that no one has received an update over the summer on SIT processes for River Terrace or Roosevelt.
- Question about what happens when there is not a good match. Will the city continue to look for a charter or does the city offer the land for purchase?
- Comment that no development is wanted in the area.
- Potential community uses identified:
 - Senior use and/or senior center
 - Fitness/Exercise
 - Retain community garden

- Leaving green space outdoors open for community use
- How can we enforce Community Benefit Agreements?
- Small business office use – municipal use
- Adult Education – move the Roosevelt STAY

Discussion Notes
September 15, 2014
MC Terrell Surplus Meeting

Key Messages:

- Interest in adult education programming
- Interest in middle/high school
- Interest in exercise and nutrition programs for community members
- Interest in access to classes outside of normal school hours

Comments/Questions

- Desire to see community involved throughout this process.
- Interest in seeing an adult education charter school program.
- Comment that RFO should include adult education and job training. Help for adults seeking their GEDs, literacy support, workforce development.
- Representative from Byte Back, a nonprofit requested to be considered, and allowed to compete with charters in first round.
- Interest in having a middle/high school program due to lack of options in neighborhood.
- Interest in having extracurricular activities at school for community: e.g. nutrition and exercise programs. School needs to be open for a range of things and not just during normal school hours.
- Representatives from Somerset presented information on their program, including courses offered to parents (bullying, study skills, computer classes, help with resumes). Community member asked which grades Somerset serves and said she would like to see MC Terrell used as a middle school.