



FOGGY BOTTOM NEWS

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www.savefoggybottom.com

February 17, 2010

Halt Stevens School Project Powerbroker-ing

Dear Neighbors,

I would like to update you on a matter that is important to the Foggy Bottom Association, to our community-at-large, and to me, as FBA president and a resident. Troubling information has come to light that Equity Residential, chosen by the Deputy Mayor of Planning and Economic Development to redevelop the Historic Stevens School into a dorm-like rental apartment, is making every possible effort to force its project through the District's approval process despite strong and continued community opposition.

After tremendous neighborhood outcry over the award of the development project to Equity, Council members Jack Evans, Kwame Brown, and Marion Barry—all on the Economic Development Committee—came to our aid and made it clear that **the Equity deal would not pass** through their committee. CM Brown, Chair of the Committee, told an FBA membership meeting audience that the deal would be dead on arrival in his Committee. At that point, it seemed that the deal was completely dead. We remain thankful for the support of Council members Evans, Brown and Barry.

The disappointing news is that Equity, in the face of the failed project, hired a well-connected lobbyist to pressure the District's decision-makers to relent. As reported in the "Current," we know that this lobbyist has already met with CM Evans' office and the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development. The good news is that CM Evans has indicated his steadfast support for the neighborhood's opposition to the Equity project. The bad news is that Equity recently indicated to the FBA that it is being given the green light by the Deputy Mayor's Office to move ahead with its project, despite no community support.

At this juncture, along with other community leaders, **we need to strongly emphasize to the District's decision-makers that we do not want this project.** In the coming weeks, ANC Commissioner Florence Harmon will be arranging meetings with community leaders to shore up and gain the support of District officials on this important matter. Also, **I encourage neighbors to send letters of support to me personally (ashercorson@gmail.com), so that I can assemble and give them to our District officials.**

It will take a little more work to ensure that we prevent this inappropriate dorm-like development from being built on the Historic Stevens site. With the continued support of our Council members, the hard work of community leaders, and your individual efforts, our goal is to convince the Deputy Mayor to stop moving forward on this ill-conceived project.



— Asher Corson, FBA President

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT? IT DOESN'T ADD UP Historic Stevens School Redux

The mantra of the DC Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development is "economic development," as one would expect. (Planning gets lost in the shuffle.) DMPED touts "job creation" and "tax revenues" as it has "disposed" of many choice, large public assets, public school campuses included. The concept of Public Good—where a good or service for which the benefit received by any one party does not diminish the availability of the benefits to others, and where access to the good cannot be restricted—seems to be off the radar screen of the Mayor's office as well. Generally speaking, construction jobs last for a couple years maximum,

the properties go for fire-sale prices, and the builders often return to the till to ask for, and receive, years of tax forgiveness. **We see neither "economic development" nor "public good" with this approach.**

Stevens, for example, had continuously operated for 139 years. It was the first school opened in the District for freed black slaves, and at the time of Fenty's election to office fulfilled EVERY criteria he laid out in his play book for optimal DC public schools—size of classes, teacher, parent, student participation, safety—something he must have overlooked. Despite resounding public support ranging from full teacher, parent, student, FBA, ANC, business community, and

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THE FOGGY BOTTOM NEWS

Foggy Bottom Association
Post Office Box 58087
Washington, DC 20037-8087
Editor-in-Chief: Susan Trinter
foggybottomnews@yahoo.com

The *Foggy Bottom News* is published by the Foggy Bottom Association as a service to its members and provides information on FBA and neighborhood news, programs, activities and other events of interest to FBA members. Contributions and story ideas are welcome, but the *FBN* reserves the right to edit or hold pieces as space requires.

The Foggy Bottom Association was formed by a group of citizens in 1955 and was formally incorporated in 1959. Attendance at FBA meetings is open to all residents of Foggy Bottom and the West End.

FBA Officers:

PRESIDENT – Asher Corson
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PRESIDENTS' DAY LAMENT

"Tomorrow is Just Your Future Yesterday"

— FROM LATE NIGHT WITH CRAIG FERGUSON

⇒ ⇒ FOGGY BOTTOM NEWS (continues on next page)

Historic Stevens School Redux *(cont'd)*

residents to sustain it, Fenty's new Chancellor Rhee basically thumbed her nose at the community.

At the 11th hour, Stevens was added to the RFP (request for proposal) covering public schools properties for development led by a charter school, a public law. Remarkably, a white knight, Living Classroom Foundation (LCF), entered the competition for Stevens on short notice and, in less than a month, attempted to put together financials for the property with nothing but an initial walk-through to assess costs like asbestos remediation matters. There was no basis for valuation and none the city shared. LCF had already proven itself in the District serving at that time over 20,000 underserved students with award-winning after school programs and had been selected by the Kellogg Foundation to develop more workforce programs.

The Crossroads School is a public, tuition-free charter middle school operated by Living Classrooms Foundation on its East Harbor Campus through a

contract with the Baltimore City Public School System. The curriculum focuses on the fundamentals of reading, writing, and math with a hands-on, interdisciplinary approach. Technology, cooperative learning, critical thinking, and real-world application of knowledge are also considered to be fundamental to the core curriculum. LCF furthermore honors the black history of the Baltimore neighborhood while teaching important skills and trades, and has achieved a top record with its students. Public good incarnate.

The Stevens plan LCF proffered included an adjacent mixed-use project with office rental development, an off-street playground and a design that would mesh the WE neighborhood with the K Street corridor. The mixed-use was essential to sustaining the cost of renovation and upgrade of Stevens. It also included a "zero-to-four" program in support of the K-Street workforce. LCF would build, operate and transfer the upgraded and operating development to the District after an agreed

upon number of years: a dream deal providing real economic development for the community and the city. In classic DC fashion, LCF received a pro forma letter of rejection. No call, no discussion, no interest, no nothing.

Stevens is now being held hostage while DMPED continues to operate in the shadows and to ignore community wishes—perhaps with the hope that we, the taxpayers and advocates of important history will forget and our potential dream become a nightmare (*see letter from FBA President in this issue*). The plight of Stevens is symbolic of the larger shell game and doublespeak District government perpetuates—and we perpetuate by not speaking up.

For further background and history on Stevens School see FBN archives for articles dated: 2/13/08, 2/11/09, 2/18/09, 2/25/09 and peruse Historic STEVENS Coalition (on the menu bar) all at www.savefoggybottom.com.

~ S. TRINTER

E V E N T S

WEST END LIBRARY FRIENDS' HALF-PRICE BOOK SALE:

SAT. FEB 27, 10:30AM – 3:30PM

1101 24th St., NW (24th & L Streets)

The West End Library Friends' half-price sale of used and contributed books is a continuation of our previous sales held in October and December, 2009.

Bargains galore! Prices range from \$.25 to \$2.50 for the majority of those on sale. Special volumes will be appropriately priced. DVDs and an abundance of CDs and video tapes are available, as well as \$1.50 "surprise boxes" covering a variety of topics. West End Library Friends' tote bags and T-shirts will also be on sale. All proceeds from this sale will go toward the D.C. Public Library citywide 2010 Summer Reading Program.

Mark your calendars now and help support this worthy cause.

"JOURNALISM — TODAY AND TOMORROW"

SAT. FEB 27, 1:30PM – 2:30PM

WEST END LIBRARY, 1101 24th St., NW (24th & L Streets)

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