



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, NE | Washington, DC 20002
First Floor Training Room

The Board of Directors of the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority will conduct a public hearing to receive comments on proposed rules, which, if adopted, would replace existing rules and establish a new Fire Protection Service Fee, effective April 12, 2010.

Each individual or representative of an organization who wishes to present testimony at the hearing is requested to furnish his or her name, address, telephone number and name of organization (if any) by calling (202) 787-2330 or emailing the request to Lmanley@dcwasa.com no later than 5p.m., Monday, March 15, 2010. Oral presentations by individuals will be limited to five (5) minutes. Oral presentations made by representatives of an organization will not be longer than (10) minutes.

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Gateway II Uncertain Again

DDOT Headquarters to Lease Outside of Anacostia

BY VIRGINIA AVNIEL SPATZ



Anacostia Gateway (left), at MLK Drive and Howard Road SE, abuts District-owned abandoned gas station, site of stalled "Gateway II" project.

A Failure to Communicate

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 8A, along with others in the community, learned through the media of Gateway plans. Charles Wilson, president of the Historic Anacostia Block Association (HABA), says he e-mailed the Business Journal story to neighbors, who "were all disappointed with news" and were awaiting many answers from the mayor's office.

This points to one of the "fundamental problems related to this decision," says Veronica Davis, partner at Nspiregreen, LLC, and Ward 7 blogger. "The decision was made without any justification or communication to the community ... residents are left sitting idle wondering what comes next."

Anthony Muhammad, chair of ANC 8A, notes that the development of the Gateway corner is included in the comprehensive plan for the area, and he credits DDOT's relocation elsewhere to "harsh words between the mayor and the councilmember."

Muhammad adds that the old gas tanks are a "disaster waiting to happen," suggesting that Homeland Security should be consulted about safety of the adjacent office building and surrounding residents.

"The city doesn't respond to ANC concerns. We never get any real cooperation with Anacostia – period," Fuller concludes.

"As someone who is pushing for the District to create a comprehensive District Facilities Plan, it is disappointing that the District is now seeking to lease from private development instead of moving forward with this project on District-owned property," Davis explains. "I think the community needs to pay close attention to changes of ownership and/or development plans for the property where the Gateway II was supposed to be built to ensure their vision is incorporated in any future plans."

Wilson hopes that neighbors together can develop more organized efforts to share economic development news, "getting the word out about what's coming and any roadblocks."

Ward 8 Councilmember Marion Barry did not respond to a request for comment ★

Anacostia will have an abandoned gas station as its "gateway" for the indefinite future. Anacostia Gateway and Gateway II were to bring over 350,000 square feet of offices, with ground floor retail, to the corner of Good Hope Road and Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE.

"We were hoping that this building – bringing so many employees – would help revitalize Historic Anacostia," says Greta Fuller (ANC 8A03), whose single member district encompasses Gateway. "Instead, we're stuck with an eyesore, because they have not even razed the old gas station on the [Gateway II] property.

The 60,000 sq. ft. Anacostia Gateway has been occupied by a District agency since early 2009. With only one-sixth of the proposed commercial space complete, however, the District is investing elsewhere. The Washington Business Journal reported on Feb. 26 that capital funds set aside for the adjacent Gateway II Government Center were used in other ways; the District will be leasing existing commercial space for the proposed tenant.

The mayor's office did not respond to inquiries, and the Department of Real Estate Services website simultaneously declares DDOT as the Gateway II tenant and suggests otherwise:

"The Anacostia Gateway Government Center will house the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) headquarters. Bids were received for construction but were determined to be too high. In addition, the needs of the agency have significantly changed. The District is currently re-examining the needs of the agency."