



Government of the District of Columbia
**Advisory Neighborhood
Commission 6C**

August 2, 2017

The Hon. Phil Mendelson
Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Suite 504
Washington, D.C. 20004

Re: Follow-up to Committee of the Whole roundtable on DCRA in February 2017

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

We write¹ to follow up on your February 21, 2017 roundtable on DCRA and to the written and oral testimony we provided to the Committee of the Whole.

First, ANC 6C once again thanks you for convening that roundtable. Holding it in the first place sends an important message to the agency and to the Mayor. In addition, the Committee received valuable input from a wide range of concerned residents.

ANC 6C urges you to build upon the foundation laid by the February roundtable. Specifically, we hope that you and you Council colleagues will continue to press—both privately and through public hearings—for increased accountability and improved performance from DCRA.

As noted in our February testimony, one question meriting further attention is whether DCRA makes full and consistent use of the fine schedules for construction and housing violations, both in terms of the initial amount in the notice of violation and with respect to the sums ultimately collected. Although the regulations have an escalating schedule of fines for repeat violators—see 16 DCMR § 3201—our sense is that higher fines are rarely (if ever) imposed. Worse, even when DCRA imposes fines, it appears that they frequently forgive some or all of the fine amount.

We again urge the Committee look into this issue to determine whether the laws are being applied as written, and whether DCRA's practices adequately deter future violations. Our sense is that they do not. Given that this issue lends itself readily to concrete fact-finding and statistical

¹ On June 14, 2017, at a duly noticed, regularly scheduled monthly meeting of ANC 6C, with a quorum of 6 out of 6 commissioners and the public present, the Commission voted 6-0 to adopt the positions set forth in this letter.

analysis, ANC 6C strongly recommends that the Committee refer this issue to the Auditor for investigation and reporting.

Last, and most importantly, we emphasize our lack of confidence in Director Bolling's stewardship of DCRA and her willingness to bring about urgently needed reforms. Despite receiving increasingly vocal criticisms from numerous ANCs and individual citizens, Director Bolling has achieved no meaningful improvements in DCRA's day-to-day conduct of public business. Instead, as noted in our written testimony subsequent to the March 16, 2017 DCRA oversight hearing, Director Bolling and her staff have casually—and wrongly—dismissed citizens' legitimate concerns. Worse, as noted in our April 13 written testimony, Director Bolling has misled the Committee through materially false statements about DCRA's policies and practices.

Thank you for giving great weight to the views of ANC 6C.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen J. Wirt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karen Wirt
Chair, ANC 6C

Cc: Councilmember Charles Allen
Councilmember Anita Bonds
Councilmember Mary Cheh
Councilmember David Grosso
Councilmember Robert White, Jr.
Councilmember Elissa Silverman