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**Council Approves Measure Shifting Parks and Recreation Projects to the Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization**

**Washington, DC**— Councilmember Harry “Tommy” Thomas, Jr., Chair of the Council’s Committee on Libraries, Parks and Recreation, thanked his colleagues today for voting unanimously to support legislation he submitted at the Council’s December 15, 2009 legislative session shifting management responsibility of Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) projects from Banneker Ventures to the District’s Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization (OPEFM). Councilmembers Marion Barry, Kwame Brown, and Mary Cheh were co-introducers of the measure.

More than a dozen DPR capital project contracts were routed circuitously via memorandums of understanding from the agency through the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development to the DC Housing Authority. The Council has held a series of joint public oversight roundtables on the contracts, which Councilmember Thomas has chaired, to unravel: why the contracts were channeled to the DC Housing Authority; who made the decision; whether selection of Banneker Ventures as the project manager was competitive; and to what extent funds were reallocated to projects not included in DPR’s FY2010 budget.

When introducing this measure at the December 15<sup>th</sup> session, Councilmember Thomas noted that moving management of the projects to OPEFM is not ideal, but a necessary, one-time measure to place capital funds back within Council oversight according to the law, as well as fulfill promises made to residents regarding improvements to parks and recreation facilities. “The Council is committed to following the law and ensuring public dollars are spent appropriately and judiciously” said Councilmember Thomas.

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