



The Thomas Connection

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Building Bridges, Finding Solutions

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In this Issue....

Resolution Calls for Federal Aid Request for Snowstorm Costs

Thomas Holds Rally to Protest Closure of Edgewood Safeway

Judge Orders Sinclair Skinner to Appear Before Council Roundtable

Thomas Meets With Ward Leadership to Discuss FY2011 Budget

The Newsletter of Ward 5 Councilmember Harry "Tommy" Thomas, Jr.

RESOLUTION CALLS FOR FEDERAL AID FOR SNOWSTORM COSTS

At the Council's Committee of the Whole meeting on Tuesday, February 16, 2010, Ward 5 Councilmember Harry "Tommy" Thomas, Jr. introduced the "Sense of the Council on Requesting Federal Disaster Assistance for the 2010 Snow Storm and Subsequent Damage Resolution of 2010."

The resolution notes that the back-to-back blizzards, which surpassed a 100-year record of snowfall, caused damage to homes, businesses, and, reportedly, to 40 percent of the District's snow removal equipment. The blizzards also caused the city to exceed its FY2010 snow removal budget—even while large mounds of snow remained, impairing the visibility of motorists and pedestrians.

The resolution also notes that the District set a precedent in requesting, and receiving, federal disaster assistance under the administration of Mayor Anthony A. Williams pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. If a federal disaster were declared for the District, residents with snow damage would be eligible to apply for federal aid, including grants to cover temporary housing costs, emergency home repairs, and other serious disaster-related expenses. Low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration would also be available to cover residential and business losses not fully compensated by insurance.

"As each day passes, our ability to request Federal Disaster Assistance diminishes," said Councilmember Thomas. "It is my hope that the Administration will make a formal request—we have nothing to lose and everything to gain," said Thomas.

THOMAS HOLDS RALLY TO PROTEST CLOSURE OF EDGEWOOD SAFEWAY

Councilmember Thomas joined with civic leaders and more than 40 residents of the Edgewood community on February 16, 2010 to protest the closure of the Safeway located at 514 Rhode Island Avenue, NE. The store's last day of operation is March 6, 2010.

In his remarks at the rally, Councilmember Thomas was critical of the short notice—only about 30 days—that Safeway provided to his office and residents about the planned closure. He stressed that if Safeway had consistently re-invested in the store, it would not have lost its competitive edge after Giant opened its store across the street in the Rhode Island Plaza. Of particular concern, the Councilmember noted, is negotiating with Safeway to offer transportation and other options for Edgewood residents who wish to continue patronizing Safeway. He also commented that Ward 5 residents want and deserve quality grocery options, and that he was committed to finding an alternative grocer to occupy 514 Rhode Island Avenue, NE.



Councilmember Thomas held a rally on February 16, 2010 to protest the closure of the Safeway at 514 Rhode Island Avenue, NE.

COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS' 2010 WARD 5 EVENTS*

March 6	Ward 5 Expo
September 3	Harry Thomas, Sr. Day
September 25	Ward 5 Leadership Meeting
October 29	Halloween – Recreation Centers
November 22	Thanksgiving Turkey Give-Away
December 16	Ward 5 Holiday Open House
December 18	Breakfast With Santa

**Dates subject to change.*

JUDGE ORDERS SINCLAIR SKINNER TO APPEAR BEFORE COUNCIL ROUNDTABLE

On February 26, 2010, D.C. Superior Court Senior Judge Stephen Filtering issued an order compelling Sinclair Skinner to appear before the Council's the Joint Public Roundtable on the Contracting Process Related to Parks and Recreation Projects on March 24, 2010. Mr. Skinner, although subpoenaed, had failed to appear before the Joint Public Roundtable at its January 27, 2010 hearing.

The Joint Public Roundtable had requested Mr. Skinner's appearance at the January 27 hearing as part of its inquiry into more than a dozen Department of Parks and Recreation capital project contracts that 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 Housing Authority selected Banneker Ventures as the project manager for all of the capital projects, which in turn awarded all engineering contracts to Mr. Skinner's firm, Liberty Engineering.

After Mr. Skinner's failure to appear, on February 2, 2010, the Council adopted the Enforcement of Subpoena of Sinclair Skinner Resolution of 2010. Based on the power of the Court, and the reasons set forth in the Council resolution, Judge Eilperin issued his order, which also stipulates that the failure of Mr. Skinner to appear on March 24, 2010 will result in a \$5,000 for that day and an additional fine of \$1,000 for each day thereafter.



Councilmember Thomas chairs the Committee on Libraries, Parks and Recreation.

THOMAS MEETS WITH WARD LEADERSHIP TO DISCUSS FY2011 BUDGET

Councilmember Thomas met with the Ward's civic and ANC leaders on Saturday, January 30, 2010 at the North Michigan Park Recreation Center to discuss the FY2011 budget process and current revenue estimates for FY2011.

The FY2011 budget process begins April 1, 2010 when the Mayor transmits the Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Request Act of 2010 and the Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Support Act of 2010 to the Council. On April 12, 2010, the Council's Committee of the Whole receives a public briefing from the Mayor on the proposed budget. Individual committee budget oversight hearings commence on April 13, 2010 and conclude on May 7, 2010. Committee mark-ups occur May 11 through 13, 2010. On May 25, the Committee of the Whole and Council consider the Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Request Act of 2010 and the Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Support Act of 2010. The second reading of the Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Support Act of 2010 follows on June 15, 2010.

Councilmember Thomas also briefed Ward leaders on the Chief Financial Officer's (CFO) most recent budget estimates for FY2011. The District faces a budget gap of between \$203 and \$233 in the current fiscal year, with the projected deficit grow to between \$556 and \$606 by fiscal year 2011. To address this, on February 2, 2010 Councilmember Thomas joined with Chairman Gray and other colleagues to pass the "Fiscal Year 2010 Balanced Budget and Spending Pressure Control Plan Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2010" The resolution requires the Executive to provide the Council with a gap closing plan by February 10, 2010 and monthly reports on its progress to control overspending.



Councilmember Thomas met with Ward leadership on January 30, 2010 to discuss the FY2011 budget.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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