



The Thomas Connection

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Building Bridges, Finding Solutions

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

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THOMAS MEETS WITH MPD AND QUEENS CHAPEL CLUB OWNERS

Ward 5 Councilmember Harry "Tommy" Thomas, Jr. hosted a meeting on February 23, 2011 with MPD Chief Cathy Lanier, other top police and Alcohol Beverage Regulation Administration (ABRA) officials, and owners of the Queens Chapel Road area night clubs. The purpose of the meeting was to proactively discuss and address club-related public safety concerns before the arrival of warm weather when club patronage historically increases.

In addition to Chief Lanier, Assistant Chief Diane Groomes, Patrol Services Commander Melvin Scott, 5D Commander Lamar Greene, and ABRA General Counsel Martha Jenkins participated in the meeting. Owners from DC Star, Oxygen, The Scene, and The Stadium Club were present. All area businesses were invited.

Chief Lanier stressed the importance of cooperation between club owners and MPD to create a safe environment for club patrons, and limiting clubs' impact on nearby neighborhoods. Commander Greene discussed the importance of clubs retaining appropriately staffed security details, training club bouncers in safety techniques and strategies, maintaining working video camera systems, and encouraging club patrons to leave the Queens Chapel Road vicinity after establishments close for the night. ABRA General Counsel Martha Jenkins stated to club owners that failure to cooperate with MPD or ABRA will result in a show-cause hearing.

"My goal in holding this meeting was to be proactive and ensure that the clubs and MPD develop a comprehensive action plan before patronage increases in the spring and summer months," said Thomas. "This meeting was a positive step forward in creating a strong working relationship between the Queens Chapel Road establishments, MPD, ABRA, and the surrounding communities."

THOMAS SEEKS COMMENTS ON WARD 5 WALMART SITE PLAN

Councilmember Thomas is seeking comments from Ward 5 residents and other interested parties on the proposed design for the Walmart project planned for New York Avenue and Bladensburg Road, NE, which includes nearly 400,000 sq. ft. of retail. The developer of the site, WV NW LLC, a subsidiary of Walker Developments, Inc., submitted its large tract review application to the Office of Planning on February 18, 2011. Large tract reviews are required for commercial or mixed-use development projects of 50,000 square feet or more.

"We must make certain that the design of the Ward 5 Walmart project is world class," said Thomas. The current site plan is available at <http://www.harrythomas5.org/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/nyavewalmartprojectsiteplan.pdf>. Design comments can be submitted to ward5walmartdesign@dccouncil.us.

"The intersection at New York Avenue and Bladensburg Road is a gateway location which deserves a visionary project that will set architectural standards for generations to come," stated Thomas.



Councilmember Thomas is seeking comments on the proposed site plan for the Ward 5 Walmart.

COUNCILMEMBER'S MARCH-AUGUST 2011 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Saturday, March 12** Ward 5 Community Development Expo and Small Business Showcase
- Monday, April 25** Easter Egg Hunt
- Monday, August 22** Back-to-School Day
- Saturday, August 27** Harry Thomas, Sr. Day

NEW LAW REQUIRES STATUS REVIEW OF CITY WORKERS WHO SUCCESSFULLY CHALLENGED DISMISSALS

At the February 15, 2011 legislative session, Councilmember Thomas introduced emergency legislation calling for a status review of separated District government employees who have successfully challenged their terminations and were granted the ability to return to service. The Council voted in support of the measure.

"During Council hearings and roundtables, a number of separated District employees testified that their reinstatement orders had been ignored," said Councilmember Thomas. District regulations allow separated District employees to appeal their terminations, and reinstatement is a possible outcome. Separated employees also have alleged that District agencies have filed appeals, without merit, to exhaust their financial resources and create frustration.

The Reinstated Government Employee Review Emergency Act of 2011 requires the Executive, within 120 days, to review the status of all employees separated from the Government of the District of Columbia since January 3, 2007 with a current decision favoring reinstatement from a statutorily recognized entity, including the Public Employee Relations Board, Office of Employee Appeals, Office of Administrative Hearings, and the Courts of the District of Columbia. After the review is complete, the Executive has a period of 45 days to issue a report to the Council on the status of these employees, and what actions the District plans to take.

"I am concerned that agency appeals of cases involving employee reinstatement may be causing the District to incur unnecessary costs and delaying the rightful return of workers to their jobs," said Thomas. "During lean fiscal times, appealing and delaying the return of workers who have successfully challenged their dismissals may not be the best use of taxpayer dollars."



Councilmember Thomas introduced emergency legislation to require a status review of city workers who have successfully challenged their terminations.

ROUNDTABLE REVIEWS WORKFORCE AND LOCAL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION IN CONVENTION CENTER HOTEL PROJECT

On February 28, 2011, the Committee on Economic Development, chaired by Councilmember Thomas, and the Committee on Housing and Workforce Development, chaired by Councilmember Michael Brown, held a joint roundtable to review workforce and local business participation in the construction of the new convention center hotel.

The \$372 million project is being financed with public and private funds, and is expected to create 650 construction jobs and 800 permanent hospitality jobs. Hensel Phelps has been selected as general contractor for the project.

At the hearing, Hensel Phelps testified that 55 percent of construction contracts to date have been awarded to certified small or disadvantaged business enterprises. The participation goal is 35 percent. With regard to workforce participation goals, the firm has exceeded its goals for unskilled laborers' hours and apprentice hours, but has not met its goals for journey workers or skilled laborers (see table below).

Councilmember Thomas urged Hensel Phelps, the DC Department of Employment Services (DOES), and the DC Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) to identify what has been working with regard to exceeding unskilled laborer and apprentice goals and apply those best practices to the other worker categories. He also called upon the city agencies to ensure that workers and firms hired for the project represent all wards of the city.

"The Marriott Marquis Hotel provides a tremendous opportunity to connect our residents to jobs and careers," said Thomas. "We need to leverage this project to the greatest extent possible and link our residents to the jobs it will create."

CONVENTION CENTER WORKFORCE GOALS (as of January 2011)

DC Resident Hours	Goals	Actual
Journey worker	25%	7%
Apprentice	60%	65%
Skilled laborer	60%	9%
Unskilled laborer	60%	70%

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