



November 12, 2008

November Program: DC's Fiscal Condition: Planning for Hard Times. C100 has an unusually compelling guest speaker for November's membership meeting, which is also the occasion of our Annual Meeting and elections. We are pleased to present:

Ed Lazare, Executive Director, D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute.

DC Fiscal Policy Institute conducts research and public education on budget and tax issues in the District of Columbia, with an emphasis on issues that affect low- and moderate-income residents. Through analyses used by policy makers, the media, and the public, DCFPI seeks to inform public debates on budget and tax issues. Its areas of work include:

- * analyzing the impact of tax and other revenue policies on the District's long-term fiscal health and on the equity of its tax system;
- * working to ensure that programs serving low- and moderate-income residents are well designed, * effective, and adequately funded; and
- conducting research on income and poverty trends in the District and on serious problems facing low-income residents, such as the growing shortage of affordable housing.

DCFPI was established in 2001 by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Please plan to join us at noon, on Wednesday, October 19, at the Sumner School, 17th and M Streets, NW. If you want lunch, please email Treasurer Buck Clark buck@clarkerealtypartners.com or call 202-628-8030.

ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

C100's annual business meeting and elections will take following the program, at which we will elect Officers for one-year terms and trustees for two-year terms. All incumbent officers will be standing for re-election:

Laura Richards – Chair
George R. Clark – Vice Chair
Richard Houghton – Secretary
Francis (Buck) Clarke – Treasurer

Trustees **Kent Cooper, Charles Robertson, Mary Pat Rowan, Richard Westbrook** and **John Yago** are running for re-election. Trustees **Eric Graye** and **George Oberlander** are term-limited and **Michael Berman** declined to stand for re-election because of work commitments. **Evelyn Wrin, Nancy MacWood** and **Kevin Locke** have agreed to run for the vacant positions. **Carroll Greene**, who was appointed last spring to fill an unexpired term, also will be standing for election. Outgoing trustees will be recognized at the December board meeting, to which all members are invited. The candidates' resumes will be posted on the website and available at the meeting.

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Thanks to Nominating Committee **Chair Ward Bucher** and **Anne Sellin** for producing a slate with a good balance, a good balance measure by geography, interest area and age.

The C100 board voted to approve three new members, who will be introduced at the November Annual Meeting.

CONGRATULATIONS, C100 MEMBERS

To **Charles Robertson**, honored at the Mayor's Historic Preservation awards ceremony and to **Dorothy Douglass**, on her election as the Ward 7 school board representative.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE: FRIENDS OF DEMOCRACY, TO ARMS

The Fenty administration's plans for remaking the District go further than creating a uniform high-density built environment. The administration also wants to take away much of the transparency and separation of functions of the planning and zoning process. Consultant Paul Zucker's dangerous proposals remain before the D.C. City Council for action. While you may not have heard about them since his report was filed several months ago, they are dead. Zucker recommends creating a single Planning and Zoning Commission within the executive branch. The ZC is an independent body under Home Rule Act. It is a quasi-judicial, on-the-record forum that makes judicially reviewable decisions. Zucker's proposal would result in most or all zoning decisions being made off-the-record and not subject to review.

The "great weight" deference give to Advisory Neighborhood Commission opinions essentially would be abolished under the Zucker framework. While paying lip service to the "great weight" standard, he recommends that "the Office of Planning should fully consider and address the ANCs' positions *while at the same time offering a District-wide perspective.*" Recommendation 22 (emphasis added). He notes that the ZC and Board

of Zoning Adjustment are required to give great weight to both OP and the ANCs. If Zucker's main framework were adopted, however, there would be no separation between the zoning and planning authorities.

Zucker's proposals are the same ideas he brought to the District. This means that months of hearings and meetings with stakeholders across the city made no impact. Calls by C100 and others for an independent Planning Commission went unheeded. It became clear early on that when Zucker wanted the public's opinion, he would give to us.

Why bring this up now? Because the same mindset underpinning Zucker's proposals is manifest in the ongoing work of the Zoning Review Task Force, which is generating proposals that will reduce transparency and public participation in the zoning process. Examples of this thrust are OP proposals to abolish special purpose zoning "overlay" districts—be they arts overlays or neighborhood commercial overlays—and replace them with open-ended development guidance, goals and incentives with a built-in bias toward greater density. In short, even though Zucker's proposals have yet to receive formal action by the Council, OP is attempting to implement the thrust of his ideas through the Zoning Review process.

C100 has advocated for years in favor of greater transparency and public participation in all aspects of the planning process. We care about the built and natural environment. We also believe in democracy.

***Note:** Members of C100 and other citizen groups will meet with OP later this month regarding the Zoning Review process.*

THIRD CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST, REDUX

The Mayor's Agent hearing of the Church's petition to demolish its landmarked Brutalist building went forward as scheduled last month,

but was adjourned without reaching the merits and will resume on November 25. The Church submitted evidence supporting its contention that economic hardship required demolishing the structure. The Mayor's Agent adjourned the hearing to allow opponents to review and respond to the evidence. OP Director Harriet Tregoning, who is sitting as Mayor's Agent in this case, denied the motion of the D.C. Preservation League to recuse herself, and said her decision would explain why her participation as decisionmaker did not pose a conflict of interest.

Plans for a C100/DCPL-sponsored charette on adaptive reuse of the building are going forward. More to come.

Barry Church Bill Hearing Cancelled; Cheh Bill Lives. Hearings were cancelled on the bill introduced by Councilman Marion Barry (Ward 8) that would effectively exempt churches from D.C. historic preservation laws. The bill is dead for this session and will have to be re-introduced next year. C100, DCPL and others had planned a full-court press against the bill. Here's hoping its RIP for good. Nevertheless, the bill introduced by Councilwoman Mary Cheh (Ward 3) imposing rigorous owner-approval procedures for creating historic districts remains alive and the subject of C100's opposition. C100 believes the existing public process is sufficient and that the proposed statutory amendments could operate to prevent the designation new districts.

D.C. PARKS IN GOOD HANDS

Councilman Harry Thomas, Jr., (Ward 5), challenged C100 to propose projects encouraging innovative use of D.C. parks, particularly projects involving youth. Councilman Thomas, who chairs the Committee on Libraries, Parks and Recreation, and Clark E. Ray, director of the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation, provided C100 members a comprehensive view of parks policy and planning at the October membership meeting. Both demonstrated an encyclopedic grasp of the

city's resources, possibilities and areas of needed improvement.

Fresh Confirmation of /Smart Growth Link-Developer Links. A browse through a back issue of *Building*, a magazine of the Building Industry Association in the Maryland National Capital Area, revealed this frontal assault on proponents of multi-faceted communities, including areas of low-density:

"When citizens see no difference between expensive unplanned growth and revenue-generating smart growth, they will probably oppose all growth Private businesses and organizations as well as public agencies are developing and implementing strategies designed to cope with this continuing and lethal link to beneficial growth," asserts Michael Fickes, in "Get Smart—Growth is Coming" on *Building's* July/August issue. He credits Holland&Knight partner Bob Harris with using "connections at the Washington, DC chapter of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to assemble ... the Smart Growth Alliance," which named Harris as its first director. The Alliance developed its Smart Growth Recognition program to "anoint" worthy projects, "So that when the no-growth folks come out, you can say this is smart growth—if you oppose this, you are opposing smart growth, something every politician in the region favors" quoting Bethesda developer Jack Lester.

Visions 2009. The Trustees will determine and announce guidelines for the 2009 awards in December. The formal nominations process will open in January.

Upcoming Meetings:

December 10, 2008. Members and friends are invited to an **Open Trustees Meeting** and Holiday Celebration at the Cosmos Club. As is customary, there is no December Membership Meeting.

January 21, 2009. By popular demand, **Sally Berk** reprises her National Building Museum retrospective historic DC.