

November 30, 2007

MENDELSON STATEMENT REGARDING MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITIES

"Learning about today's announcement, I am unsure about what can be considered "new" news regarding the progress of the Consolidated Forensics Lab and the relocation of various public safety facilities. We learned of the probability of Bowen Elementary School being used to house the First District Police Headquarters at an oversight hearing I held on this issue on September 20th of this year. We also knew then that the administration was looking for suitors for the property at 225 Virginia Avenue, SE; nothing new was announced about this today.

We are still cutting a check for over \$540,000 each month for an empty building. We still do not have a suitable location for a number of other public safety agencies. We continue to be told that the completion of the lab is on schedule – I am unconvinced. More specifically:

- Occupancy of a completed Consolidated Forensics Lab at the end of 2011 means construction must be done around May of 2011. This allows time for test fits, move-in, etc.
- Construction will take about 30 months, thus ground must be broken in January of 2009.
- Assuming the administration works with the community and closes Bowen Elementary and moves to relocate the First District, ground cannot break on that property until the school is closed and ready. The fact is that school ends and Bowen will be "empty" in mid-June, 2008.
- If the First District is to move by January of 2009, this only leaves 6 months to build out the Bowen site (July 1 to January 1 = 6 months). Build out typically takes about 1 year.

Releasing an artists rendering that was done months ago is not a substitute for a shovel in the ground. I am skeptical that this ground will be broken on time. I will not be satisfied until the lab is completed. Until then we hamper our ability to effectively and efficiently fight crime in the District of Columbia."