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June 16, 2013

RE:

Proposed Resolution 20-312, Webb School Surplus Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2013
Proposed Resolution 20-313, Webb School Surplus Emergency Approval Resolution of 2013
Proposed Resolution 20-314, Webb School Lease Approval Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2013
Proposed Resolution 20-315, Webb School Lease Emergency Approval Resolution of 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

We are submitting this testimony on behalf of the Trinidad Neighborhood Association (TNA). We are a community-based, volunteer-driven 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in the Trinidad neighborhood of the District of Columbia. Additionally, the Friends of Trinidad Recreation Center (FOTRC) is a committee under the TNA umbrella and is an officially sanctioned "Friends" group by the District government.

We would like to express our concern with the proposed surplus and lease of the Webb School property. We want to be clear that we support KIPP DC and welcome them into the community at the former Webb Elementary School. Our concerns relate to the specifics—as we understand them on very short notice—of the disposition of the property, as well as with the relationship going forward between FOTRC, KIPP DC, DPR, and DGS with regard to the playing fields located between Webb School and Trinidad Recreation Center.

The playing fields between the school and recreation center is comprised of a portion of Parcel 0141 Lot 47 Square 4079; Lot 819 Square 4079; and a portion of Square 4079 S. The odd subdivision of the lots—a relic of the square's previous industrial use—has not been an issue in the past because of shared-use agreements between DPR and DCPS, both District agencies. The resolutions referenced above, with minor differences in language and punctuation, all refer to the disposition of the following from DGS to KIPP DC:

"...more specifically designated for tax and assessment purposes as a portion of Parcel 0141, Lot 47 and Square 4082, Lot 807 (the Property)."

It is our opinion that Parcel 0141 Lot 47 of Square 4079, the Property, should be subdivided before disposition to KIPP DC in order to ensure that a potentially negative land use law precedent is not set. We understand the following, from the Webb School Surplus Analysis:

The Property, as defined, comprises approximately 191,647 square feet or 4.40 acres of land area. This is an estimate based on the defined area within Parcel 141/47. There is a baseball field and general athletic field to the rear of the building and school playground. The athletic field/playground is also comprised of abutting lot (Lot 57, Square S-4079) which is owned and used by the DC Department of Parks and Recreation. The field space, although it is within Parcel 141, Lot 0047, is not a part of the lease transaction. In conjunction with the proposed lease transaction, a subdivision will be completed which will exclude the field space currently within PAR 0141 Lot 47 from the Property.

Our concern is that no specific language, or even addendum, exists either within or as an accompaniment to the proposed resolutions. If subdivision before disposition is considered impossible at this time, we request specific language be added to the proposed resolutions that clearly stipulates the forthcoming subdivision and is specific in that it includes the dimensions and boundaries of both the lot for disposition to KIPP DC and the lot that will remain as part of the playing fields. Additionally, we request that a timeline for the subdivision be explicitly included.

Regarding the relationship going forward between FOTRC, KIPP DC, DPR, and DGS with reference to the playing fields located between Webb School and Trinidad Recreation Center, we would also like to see specific terms delineated in the lease resolutions. If this is not possible at this time, or if that language is not appropriate for the resolutions, we request that FOTRC/TNA be included as a party to all discussions relating to the lease terms and shared-use agreement(s) for the playing fields. Again, while we welcome KIPP DC to Trinidad, greatly appreciate their commitment to the renovation and upkeep of the playing fields, and understand their need for use of the fields, we want to ensure that this lease agreement does not lead to a contentious situation like that of the Maret School and the Jelleff fields in Georgetown.¹

We would like to reiterate that we welcome KIPP DC into the neighborhood and the greater community. Our concerns here are with the District government's handling of this disposition, including the perception of the lack of outreach. We were informed not only of this roundtable hearing, but also of the details of the disposition and lease, on the afternoon of Thursday, June 13, 2013. This left little time to gather facts and respond accordingly, and it also did not leave enough time for board and community members to make the necessary arrangements to attend the roundtable on Monday morning. We ask that the District government consider us with all seriousness as a community partner in this matter and in others in the future.

We thank you for taking the time to read our testimony and for including it in both your deliberations and in the public record.

Sincerely,

Trinidad Neighborhood Association, Executive Board

Danielle Jo Bays, Chair
Robert Mann-Thompson, Treasurer
Jaime Fearer, Secretary
Laura Casperson
Chuck Roberts
Bernadine Okoro

¹ For background on the Maret School and the Jelleff fields, please refer to:
<http://georgetownmetropolitan.com/2010/02/02/anc-round-up-the-great-jelleff-battle-of-2010/>