



OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR FOR
OPERATIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Government of the District of Columbia | Executive Office of Mayor Muriel Bowser

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Transmitted by Email

November 5, 2019

Jonah Goodman
Vice Chair
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4C
P.O. Box 60847
Washington, DC 20039
Email: 4C@anc.dc.gov

SUBJ: DC Agency Review of the House Fire on August 18th at 708 Kennedy Street

Dear Commissioner Goodman:

This letter is in response to your letter, dated September 11, 2019, in reference to the above subject. This letter has been coordinated with the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA), the Office of Unified Communications (OUC) and the Mayor's Office of Community Relations and Services (MOCRS) to provide a consolidated response to your resolutions as listed below. Additionally, this response incorporates the results of the government's internal investigation.

(1) Results of all investigations into this fatal fire, local and federal, criminal as well as those investigating government response, should be made public to the full extent possible;

- **Response:** The District of Columbia engaged the consulting services of Alvarez & Marsal Disputes & Investigations, LLP to internally investigate the incidents leading up to the fire. The complete report ("Report") is available on the Office of the City Administrator's [website](#).

(2) following investigations into this fatal fire, every relevant agency should provide tangible and confirmable reforms to insure housing in DC is safe and healthy going forward;

- **Response:** All relevant agencies are currently reviewing their procedures and processes to ensure compliance with the recommendations outlined in the Report.

(3) that at DCRA, the practice of closing inspection cases that remain unresolved be addressed vigorously, across all inspection categories, not only in the case of fire hazard;

- **Response:** DCRA has put in place Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to address this issue.

(4) that DCRA, and if appropriate, the fire department, commit to benchmark timeframes for initial inspections, obtaining warrants, warrant inspections, and consequences and confirmation that issues have been rectified, and that reporting of actual timelines achieved be made public;

- **Response:** DCRA is reviewing this recommendation in coordination with relevant recommendations from the Report and will implement any necessary processes and procedures to ensure inspections are timely completed.

(5) that 911 call center publicly commit to benchmark dispatch times, and reporting of actual times be made publicly available, and training to specifically include communication with MPD;

- **Response:** The Office of Unified Communications (OUC) strives to quickly and accurately dispatch the right resources to all emergency scenes, including those in unique situations where emergencies are being sent via radio from an incident scene to the dispatchers. The agency continues to review what happened in this situation to evaluate what can be learned and to determine what can be done better. It is important to note the 60-90 second standard referenced by many during this incident is from the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA), and it has not been fully adopted by the 911 industry. Additionally, that NFPA standard applies to calls made to 911; it does not include the dispatching portion of call management, nor is it applicable to calls for service made over radio communications. It is also important to emphasize it took seven minutes from the initial radio notification from MPD to the arrival of the first FEMS unit at the scene - which is well within the District's average response time.

The OUC's performance reports dating back to FY08 can be found on the OCA's [website](#). Additionally, performance information provided in preparation for and during public oversight hearings with the Council of the District of Columbia's Judiciary and Public Safety Committee can be found on the Council's [website](#).

(6) that MOCRs provide updates at ANC meetings on outstanding inspection cases, including where they currently stand and expected next steps;

Response: The Mayor's Office of Community Relations and Services (MOCRS) is committed to ensuring community leaders, stakeholders and neighbors are kept abreast of legislative updates, initiatives, and pertinent information, to include updates received by agencies on proposed resolutions.

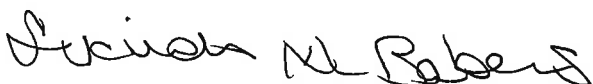
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: the D.C. City Council and the Mayor should divide DCRA, so that the agency of the government that handles building inspections, which determines the health and safety of residents, even to the point of life and death, can focus on those core responsibilities. Such a division, into the Department of Buildings, where building inspections would fall, and the Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection, was proposed previously by Council Chair Phil Mendelson, January 23, 2018, as the Department of Buildings Establishment Act; and

- **Response:** The Administration does not support the proposed Council Bill to divide DCRA. We believe the current organizational structure is best suited to address the needs of the residents of the District.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: as this and other similar addresses are identified, housing support and other services are offered to the residents to ensure that they have safe and healthy housing going forward.

- **Response:** The District Government has been working closely with the individuals impacted by the fire to provide housing and other necessary services. If you are aware of individuals whose needs are not being met, please contact me at lucinda.babers@dc.gov or 202-724-7423.

Sincerely,



Lucinda M. Babers
Deputy Mayor