



ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3E

TENLEYTOWN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PARK FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS

c/o Lisner-Louise-Dickson-Hurt Home 5425 Western Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20015

www.anc3e.org

**Resolution on Appropriations for
Renovations for the Ben W. Murch Elementary School**

WHEREAS

The Benjamin Murch Elementary School, which serves residents of ANC 3F, ANC 3E and ANC 3/4G, as well as of other Wards, is an important public asset that attracts and retains District families, as do neighborhood public schools across the District, and is in critical need of renovations and modernization; and

Murch has received the bare minimum in physical improvements since its construction in 1929 and has never had a full renovation or any substantial modernization; and

The Murch enrollment has increased by 18 percent over the past three years, overshooting DC Public Schools (DCPS) projections and making it the second-largest elementary school in the District at 626 students – on the way to 700 in next 2-3 years, despite a designed maximum capacity of 488, which includes 20-year-old “temporary” structures; and

New apartment buildings at Park Van Ness and 5333 Connecticut Ave. NW within the Murch boundaries may put even more pressure on the school’s enrollment; and

The Murch space-per-student ratio is 76 square feet-to-1, half the 150 square feet-to-1 ratio listed in DCPS guidance and the most crowded DCPS school; and

The DCPC Master Facilities Plan for 2013 rated only two schools lower than Murch for Educational Facility Effectiveness, one of which has been fully renovated and the other closed, and identified Murch as one of five “High Need” schools, the other four of which have begun renovations; and

The District’s budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 included \$3.062 million for Murch renovation, as well as \$17.351 million in FY2016 and \$12.168 million in FY2017; and

The Mayor and the Council choose to delay Murch renovations by one year by failing to appropriate any funds for the project in FY2014 despite earlier assurances to the Murch community and the District that funding for the project would begin in FY2014; and

The parents of Murch students have contributed thousands of hours and hundreds of thousands of dollars over the decades in ongoing efforts to support high-level instruction and maintain at least a passable level of building maintenance; and

The Murch building's physical deterioration is so severe that the District is carrying a substantial legal risk of a safety incident harming a child, faculty member or parent or visitor;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

That ANC 3E calls on:

The Department of General Services (DGS) to report to the Murch School Improvement Team (SIT) and to ANC 3E the identity of its liaison officer for the SIT; and

The Mayor and the Chancellor of Public Schools to acknowledge that capital investment at Murch is long overdue to meet population growth in the area and to ensure the diversity and vitality of the school community; and

The Council to appropriate at least the \$3.062 million budgeted for Murch renovations for FY2015; and

The Council to consider, assess and appropriate a portion of the funding targeted for Murch for FY2016 instead in FY2015 in order to accelerate renovations and make up for time lost due to the failure to appropriate promised funding in FY2014; and

The Council to explore and employ the use of contingency funds or capital investment funds available in FY2014 to start the modernization process immediately; and

The Council to employ combined modernization funding for Murch's renovations in order to expedite what will be an arduous and distracting construction process for students and staff; and

The Council, DGS and DCPS to review the amount of money allocated for Murch renovations to assess its sufficiency in light of the severity of Murch's needs, the probability of an expansion being necessary to accommodate space for instruction, parking or other needs, and cost overruns at other sites; and

The Mayor, the Council, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, the Chancellor of DC Public Schools, and the Director of DGS to demonstrate active involvement in Murch renovations in order to adhere to a schedule that includes:

- Initiation of renovation planning processes immediately in FY2014; and
- Full design and acquisition actions in FY2015; and
- Groundbreaking in summer 2015; and
- Completion of and move-in for renovated and expansion facilities by December 2016.

ANC 3E approved this resolution at its March 13, 2014 meeting, which was properly noticed and

at which a quorum was present. The resolution was approved unanimously by a vote of 4-0-0. Commissioners Jonathan Bender, Matthew Frumin, Tom Quinn and Sam Serebin were present.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Frumin', written over a horizontal line.

ANC 3E

By Matthew Frumin, Chairperson