Latest Ward 3 shelter plan debated

By MARK LIEBERMAN
Current Staff Writer

Council Chairman Phil Mendelson, Ward 3 Council member Mary Cheh and D.C. Department of Human Services director Laura Zeilinger fielded a diverse range of questions and criticisms about the shelter plan at a community meeting last Thursday. More than 250 residents attended the contentious meeting, often erupting into applause or boos at the testimony from the government officials. Two weeks ago, Mendelson put forward a citywide homeless shelter plan that looked markedly different from the one proposed by the mayor in February. Mendelson and the council want to install Ward 3’s on the city-owned site of the 2nd District Police Headquarters, 3320 Idaho Ave. NW, rather than housing it on leased private property at 2619 Wisconsin Ave. NW as Mayor Muriel Bowser had requested.

Audit details cost overruns at Ellington

By MARK LIEBERMAN
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A 2015 report from the D.C. auditor looked into why the Duke Ellington School of the Arts modernization project had gone $107 million over its allotted $78 million budget. A new auditor report released yesterday added new details, linking the budget woes to a failure of city agencies to consult with the D.C. Council.

The report notes that agencies considered two alternative sites for creating a modernized facility for Ellington before deciding to keep the arts magnet school at its existing Burleith location — where, according to the latest schedule, the renovation will wrap up in time for the upcoming school year. Both the Ellington Field, three blocks from the school at 38th and R streets NW, and the Logan School, at 245 G St. NE near Union Station, came up as possible.

Costlier parking meter rates are now in effect

By MARK LIEBERMAN
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Parking meter fees have increased citywide as of today, but neighborhood leaders and residents across Northwest remain conflicted on the merits of the new rates.

The D.C. Council approved a uniform rate of $2.30 per hour at all city meters last year, an increase to $3.30 in “premium demand” and commercial loading zones and of $1.55 in “normal demand” expense for an hour of parking on a crowded block. Some in downtown neighborhoods expect the increases to prevent overcrowding and manage the excess demand for spots. Others in upper Northwest were frustrated that their spots now cost the same as the ones closer to the city’s center, where demand and traffic volume tends to be much higher.