

**Council of the District of Columbia**  
**Committee on Public Services and Consumer Affairs**  
**Notice of Joint Public Hearing**  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20004

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SECRETARY

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**COUNCILMEMBER MURIEL BOWSER, CHAIR**  
**COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICES AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

**And**

**COUNCILMEMBER JACK EVANS, CHAIR**  
**COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND REVENUE**

**Announces A Joint Public Hearing**

**On**

**B18-546: Neighborhood Preservation Amendment Act of 2009**

**And**

**B18-407: Blighted Properties Abatement Reform Act of 2009**

**Wednesday, January 27, 2010**  
**2:00 p.m., Room 412**  
**1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW**  
**Washington, D.C. 20004**

Councilmembers Muriel Bowser, Chair of the Committee on Public Services and Consumer Affairs, and Jack Evans, Chair of the Committee on Finance and Revenue, announce a Public Hearing on B18-407: Blighted Properties Abatement Reform Act of 2009 and B18-546: Neighborhood Preservation Amendment Act of 2009. The hearing will be held on Wednesday, January 27, 2010, at 2:00 p.m., in Room 412, of the John Wilson Building, 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW.

As part of the Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Support Act of 2009, the Council repealed the \$10 vacant property tax rate, and replaced it with a \$10 blighted property tax rate. The higher tax rate on vacant properties had the desired effect of moving many longstanding vacant properties into productive use. Since 2006, over 1,000 formerly vacant properties have become occupied. However, as the economy entered a prolonged recession, the vacant property tax began to affect more and more property owners, many who had simply run into hard times due to the economy. To mitigate this problem, and at the same time, to continue to incentivize vacant property owners to put their property to economic use, the Committee has pursued two initiatives: the blighted property tax and a graduated fee structure for vacant property that will rise the longer a property sits vacant. The blighted property tax continues the \$10 tax rate on those properties that through neglect, deterioration, or dilapidation are unsafe, insanitary, or otherwise threatens the public

health, safety, or general welfare of the community. It is narrowly tailored to a specific and palpable problem, vacant homes that are poorly maintained and blight the surrounding neighborhood. While most vacant properties do not rise to the level of blighted (some are vacant but well-maintained), the Committee believes that all vacant properties still pose a problem for our neighborhoods. To that end, the Neighborhood Preservation Amendment Act seeks to discourage long-standing vacant properties by authorizing DCRA to establish an escalated registration fee system in which fees will increase each year that a property remains vacant. This fee system recognizes that some vacancies are unavoidable and should be treated differently—for instance when a son or granddaughter receives real property through a family death—than vacant properties that remain nuisances for years. Together, the Neighborhood Preservation Amendment Act and the Blighted Properties Abatement Reform Act seek to address two distinct problems in a tailored way.

Members of the public are invited to testify. Testimony may be limited to 3 minutes per witness and 5 minutes for organizations. Those wishing to testify should contact Davida Crockett of the Committee on Public Services and Consumer Affairs via email at [dcrockett@dccouncil.us](mailto:dcrockett@dccouncil.us), or by phone at (202) 741-0989, by Monday, January 25, 2010. Witnesses should bring 15 copies of their written testimony to the hearing.

Members of the public may submit written testimony which will be made part of the official record. Copies of written statements should be submitted to Ms. Cynthia Brock-Smith, Secretary to the Council, 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 5, Washington, DC 20004, no later than 5:00 p.m., Friday, January 29, 2010.