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## **New Task Force to Offer Recommendations on the Future of CCNV**

By Kate Coventry

Last week, the DC Council approved the creation of a new task force on the future of the Federal City Shelter, commonly known as CCNV and located at Second and D Streets, NW. The building hosts five nonprofits that offer a wide range of services to as many as 1,300 individuals at any given time, yet it faces an uncertain future because the federal requirement that it be used to serve the homeless expires in 2016.

This expiration raises concerns about how the District will maintain its commitment to serve homeless residents, but it presents an opportunity as well. The building is in bad need of repair, and across the country, communities are exploring options to address homelessness beyond large emergency shelters.

The building was turned over to the District by the federal government in 1983, after Mitch Snyder and other activists with the Community for Creative Non-Violence held a 51-day hunger strike to highlight the growing homeless population in the District. The feds gave the building to the District with the stipulation that it be used to serve the homeless until July 2016, after which the District could decide what to do with it.

The building's future is also in question because of its deteriorating condition. Built in 1943, CCNV is showing its age and requires intensive repairs, so much so that some believe it should be demolished and re-built.

A new facility could be designed in light of new research of how to best help homeless individuals. The current focus is on helping individuals get quickly out of emergency shelter and into housing, and if needed, supportive services. This means a smaller number of shelter beds would be needed for emergencies, leaving space to build apartments and house supportive service providers.

The new task force will consider these issues and make recommendations within six months of its establishment. It will be led by Councilmember Jim Graham, chair of the Committee on Human Services, who proposed the idea of a task force to collect input from government, residents of the shelter, and the wider community. The task force will include representatives from the mayor's office and several DC government departments: Human Services, Behavioral Health, the Metropolitan Police, and General Services, the agency tasked with maintaining the building. Members will also include a representative of CCNV, which owns the adjacent parking lot, and the Interagency Council on Homelessness, which guides the District's homelessness policies. Current building residents, advocates, and other providers may be added as ex-officio members.

DCFPI looks forward to the first meeting of the task force and will highlight its work in the months ahead.