



09/12/2023

700 Pennsylvania Avenue SE
Ste. #2032
Washington, DC 20003-2141
6B@anc.dc.gov

Mr. Dorian Jenkins
Interim Executive Director, DCHA
300 7th Street, SW – 10th Floor
Washington, DC 20024

via Email

Re: Urgent Issues at Potomac Gardens Senior Building

Dear Mr. Jenkins,

At its regularly scheduled, properly noticed, meeting on September 12, 2023, with a quorum present, Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6B voted unanimously 9-0-0 to support the following letter:

We hope this letter finds you well. We are writing as the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) that represents residents of Potomac Gardens, to urgently bring to your attention some pressing issues that need attention. These matters are of paramount importance to the community's well-being and need to be addressed promptly and effectively.

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SMD 07 Vince Mareino
SMD 08 Edward Ryder
SMD 09 Matt LaFortune

- 1. Transparency and Accountability in the Work Order Closeout Process:** There is a lack of transparency and accountability in the Work Order process. Numerous residents have expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of work performed by DCHA and the time it takes for outstanding items to be addressed. To ensure that the work is truly completed to residents' satisfaction, we propose implementing a procedure where residents are provided with a statement to sign, acknowledging their approval of the work done before the Work Order is marked as complete. Maintenance issues directly impact the quality of life for residents and can have serious detrimental impacts on the health and wellness for residents. This simple step would not only guarantee that the work meets residents' expectations but will also serve to enhance trust between DCHA and its residents.
- 2. Urgency in Making Vacant Apartments Ready for Occupancy:** The current state of vacant apartments within the Potomac Gardens Senior Building is a serious cause for concern. There are no units available for immediate occupancy, leaving residents who require transfers or those facing emergency situations without suitable alternatives. Yet, by DCHA's own account there remains at least forty-four vacant units at the Potomac Gardens Senior Building. We understand that maintenance and preparation take time, but there needs to be a clearer timeline provided by DCHA regarding when these units will be made ready for occupancy. This issue has a direct impact on the well-being of community members, especially the disabled residents who need handicapped units, and we urge DCHA to expedite the process and maintain a certain number of vacant units in a habitable state.

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3. **Addressing the Safety and Maintenance Concerns Associated with Vacant Units:** The upkeep of vacant and boarded-up units has become a significant issue, adversely affecting neighboring units. These vacant units often emit unpleasant odors, attract rodents and insects, and serve as a breeding ground for mold and mildew. Regardless of their occupancy status, maintaining these units must be prioritized to prevent adverse impacts on other residents.
4. **Ensuring that Residents Can Stay at Potomac Gardens Senior Building:** Concerns have arisen among residents who are being pressured to relocate to other properties rather than staying at the Potomac Gardens Senior Building. We have talked to several residents with maintenance issues who were told their only option was to move to another property. Residents have established strong social ties and support networks within this community and neighborhood over the years. Forcing residents to relocate is a problematic and distressing approach, especially when it concerns seniors and disabled residents. Recently, a beloved resident who lived at the Potomac Gardens Senior building for 32 years was approved for a handicapped unit. Her friends and support network are all there. After being approved for the handicapped unit, six months later she was informed the unit would be elsewhere because the unit she wanted, as with all the other vacant units at the Potomac Gardens Senior Building, was not made ready for occupancy. At 91 years old, she had no time to wait for this situation to resolve itself in the hopes that DCHA would make a unit available at Potomac Gardens. I implore the DCHA to explore alternatives and ensure the preservation of the community.
5. **Addressing Security Concerns:** Residents have voiced grave concerns about safety and security at Potomac Gardens Senior Building. Incidents of unknown individuals loitering in hallways and stairwells and attempting to enter units have been reported. Recently, a TV theft occurred in the community room. While there is a front desk with a security guard, residents believe that additional measures must be taken to enhance their safety. Security guards should diligently log all visitors, and security technologies, such as surveillance cameras, should be fully functional.
6. **Transparency Regarding Long Term Plans for Potomac Gardens Senior Building:** Residents want to know what the long-term plans are for the place they call home. The presence of numerous vacant units and concerns about residents being asked to relocate have raised serious questions about the future of Potomac Gardens Senior. Improved communication and transparency from DCHA regarding its plans for the property would go a long way in alleviating these concerns.

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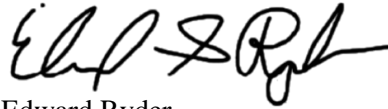
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In conclusion, we strongly urge the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA) to promptly and efficiently address the issues outlined above. The community's foundation is built on safety, cleanliness, health, and unity, and it is crucial that these values are upheld. The collaboration between DCHA and its residents is pivotal to maintaining a thriving community. I kindly request a thorough response detailing your proposed solutions to these matters.

As an Advisory Neighborhood Commission, we are committed to advocating for the interests of the residents of Potomac Gardens Senior at every level of government. In addition to urging DCHA to address these issues, we also plan to engage with the Mayor and the Council to ensure that DCHA receives the necessary funding and resources to fulfill its responsibilities to its residents.

Thank you for your attention to these critical concerns. We look forward to your timely response and action.

Sincerely,



Edward Ryder
Chair, 6B

Cc via-email:

Mayor of the District of Columbia:
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia:
Councilmember, Ward 6, Representing Potomac Gardens:
Councilmember, Ward 1:
Councilmember, Ward 2:
Councilmember, Ward 3:
Councilmember, Ward 4:
Councilmember, Ward 5:
Councilmember, Ward 7:
Councilmember, Ward 8:
Councilmember, At Large:
Councilmember, At Large:
Councilmember, At Large:
Councilmember, At Large:

Muriel Bowser
Phil Mendelson
Charles Allen
Brianna Nadeau
Brooke Pinto
Matthew Frumin
Janeese Lewis George
Zachary Parker
Vincent Gray
Trayon White, Sr.
Kenyan McDuffie
Anita Bonds
Robert White, Jr.
Christina Henderson