

Renovations Disrupt Federal City Shelter, CCNV

Providers in Shelter Recently Proposed Overhaul of the Entire Management Structure

By Fiona Clem

Much of the renovations to the Federal City Shelter that began June 1 will be cosmetic, but if some of the providers in this building have their way, future changes could include an overhaul of the way the entire shelter operates.

The renovations, organized in phases of 60 days, will take about 13 months. These improvements include refurbishment of the interior and the restrooms, as well as window replacement, lighting modernization, elevator replacement and installation of a new HVAC system.

One of the biggest concerns over the next year will be accommodations. The shelter has stopped intakes, and is moving current residents around from one floor to another. The hypothermia unit will also be used as temporary housing during the renovations. This will eliminate 135 beds from next winter's hypothermia plan.

These changes come even though a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) expired between all the Federal City Shelter tenants – the Community for Creative Non-Violence (CCNV); Unity Health Care, Inc.; D.C. Central Kitchen; Clean and Sober Streets; JHP, Inc.; and The Open Door Shelter -- and the District government on Jan. 20, 2005.

The MOA outlines the provisions that each Federal City Shelter provider should follow and how they will support each other.

As an alternative to the MOA, six of the providers housed in the Federal City Shelter came together to create the *Proposed Management Re-Structure at the Federal City Shelter*. This proposal was distributed to Brenda



Renovations prevent CCNV from taking in new residents at this shelter on 2nd and D streets, NW.

Donald Walker, the Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, Families and Elders, and discussed at a recent hearing.

CCNV was not part of this group and said that the proposal for restructuring is coming too soon.

"I'm not opposed to coming together to solve some of the problems in the building," said Abdul Nurridin, the interim director of CCNV. "But, all I've seen is an outline of a proposal. It's never been presented to anyone here."

"Here's the thing," continued Nurridin, "Let's do the MOA first. Why don't we fulfill all of this first before we go changing things. If the city would do their part, if every service

provider did everything that was outlined in the MOA, this would be a better place. CCNV hasn't done its full part either. If we all come together, let's see how tight this gets."

Robert Egger, founder and president of the DC Central Kitchen, a tenant of the Federal City Shelter, and a proponent of the management restructuring plan, believes that now is the time to move beyond the MOA. "We believe that the proposal is a positive step, and that it is more comprehensive and less piecemeal than the MOA."

"We have made numerous proposals in the past years that were positively received, but quite frankly were viewed as too confrontational because at the time we were not as

open to a partnership with CCNV," he added. "The times and our attitudes have changed. CCNV has made [a] really significant shift in its board and management structure in recent months and it elected a new interim executive director. We in the FCSP think this is an extremely positive step."

"I want to work with CCNV," he continued. "I think there is opportunity here. It's been a rough road, but I think there's lots of opportunity here."

The proposed changes include: making CCNV a voting member of the Federal City Shelter Board; subject to negotiation and ratification by the board, allowing the FCSP to assume the management of the shelter and serve as the agent of a case management contract with the District of Columbia; allowing the FCSP Board to solicit funds to employ an executive team to manage the day-to-day operations of the Federal City Shelter; and making changes to the shelter resident manager system to allow for training and stipends for workers.

Since the presentation of the proposal by Egger to the Committee on Human Services, nothing further has happened with it.

"This is the third time we've made a proposal like this," said Henry Pierce, vice chair of the Federal City Shelter Providers and executive director of Clean & Sober Streets, a Federal City Shelter tenant. "I'm not going to believe anything is going to happen until it does."

In the meantime, there are renovations to deal with that will impact the number of people the Federal City Shelter will be able to house and the way services are distributed in the building.