

SB849 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Jill Carter

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter

**In Favor of SB849 -Baltimore City –
Modifying or Closing Public School Facility**

Before the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

on March 1, 2023

**Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Members of the
Committee:**

- **SB0849 would put the power to protect Baltimore school grounds in the hands of the community leadership most connected to those schools. Currently, Baltimore City communities are forced to watch as their schools are sold off to non-Maryland business owners. This bill would correct that injustice.**
- **In 2019, hundreds of elementary school students were uprooted from their desks at Grove Park Elementary-Middle School, leaving the school vacant. The voices of the community were not heard when they endorsed an offer for a financial literacy and economic development elementary school. But the DHCD sided with**

CommuniCare, an Ohio based company, which intends to transform the school into a nursing facility.

- This bill would allow the citizens to have input in decisions regarding what will be done with re-purposed public schools. It empowers local communities to have a say by forming a community task force. The task force will examine and make recommendations concerning any future use of public schools and the land where the schools sit. It will ensure that the voices that matter the most, the community, will be heard.**
- The community around Grove Park was not heard when it lost its elementary/middle school. This bill will prevent that from happening again. The current system leaves the political power in the hands of people far detached from the communities affected by their decisions. It leads to an injustice for the people of Baltimore City and further disenfranchises them.**
- In a letter dated February 8, 2017, from the Baltimore City Department of Planning to the Baltimore City Delegation of the General Assembly, the City indicated that it would engage the community in future school closings in the manner this bill would dictate. That, however, never occurred. Accordingly, this bill is needed to have the City do what it promised this body in 2017.**

- **Three (3) more schools are set to close this year in Baltimore City. The community would like (and should) have input on what happens in their community. The Community Task Force that this bill would create will provide that opportunity.**

For these reasons, I request a favorable report on SB849.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jill P. Carter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jill P. Carter, Esq.

Thrweatt- Attempts to Reach Schleifer.pdf

Uploaded by: Terry Thrweatt

Position: FWA

Thrweatt, Terrence D Jr CIV DISA BD (USA)

From: Terrence Thrweatt <terrence.thrweatt@ubalt.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, February 28, 2023 1:59 PM
To:
Cc: Thrweatt, Terrence
Subject:
Attachments:

From: Terrence Thrweatt <terrence.thrweatt@ubalt.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, December 20, 2022 9:01 PM
To: Schleifer, Isaac <Isaac.Schleifer@baltimorecity.gov>
Cc: STEPHEN WARD <sspward@comcast.net>; kbraden410@gmail.com <kbraden410@gmail.com>; Savage, Sherrell (City Council) <Sherrell.Savage@baltimorecity.gov>; District5 <district5@baltimorecity.gov>
Subject: Re: Communicare- 5545 Kennison Avenue

Mr. Schleifer,

This is my **fifth** attempt at reaching you. **We, the Grove Park Improvement Association, are against the sale of Grove Park Elementary to CommuniCare.** We are seeking your partnership to make this right. Over the past month, we have knocked on over 500 doors in our community and will begin to knock on doors in communities throughout the Northwest Baltimore Partnership to gain their support. We have also held phone trees, email chains, and social media campaigns. With each signature on the petition, we have learned that there is a **strong** attachment to the Grove Park Elementary School building for the history it embodies and what it represents. All of our signatories and neighbors would like the building's continued use as a **school** building. The Grove Park Improvement Association is requesting a formal response stating your position on the sale of Grove Park Elementary to CommuniCare Health Services. **It is our official position that we are against the sale to CommuniCare as a commercial entity that will demolish the building.** I have reached out to the company to seek alternative locations and have secured one prospective location in this area that meets their development goals as stated in our November 9th, 2022 meeting with the company.

As a majority Black middle-class **residential** neighborhood with people from diverse walks of life, **we stand against the commercialization of our neighborhood and a degradation of our quality of life.** We have

expressed such through our DHCD survey and petition. In the absence of your response to confirm your partnership with our community, we have reached out to Concord and the CEO Group. We understand that by DHCD standards when merged with our own, Concord presents the best proposal. We have confirmed that they are prepared to move forward and are aligned with Grove Park's values and vision. DHCD stated throughout this process that they would follow the guidance of the community. That does not appear to be the case, as there was no one from our community on that panel. The sale to CommuniCare is not final- no contract has been approved and no ordinance passed. This means that **you have the opportunity to help us** by offering your partnership and leadership. We fully expect that as a community that has backed you- you will provide an answer to us. **We need to know that we have you as a partner in this.**

Lastly, we have not heard from your office concerning the July 27th arson among other concerns. We have not received an update on that from City officials. Much like the polling station change and current dumping/overgrown grass at the school- we have had to handle this ourselves. We sincerely seek your partnership. Again, this is our **fifth** attempt to reach your office. To confirm for you, I am handling the legislative and outreach affairs for the Grove Park Improvement Association under Ms. Karen Braden and Mr. Steve Ward. Your response should include Ms. Braden, Mr. Ward, and myself.

Attached are documents stating our opposition: Letter to City Council, Banner article, Email from Ms. Braden.

Respectfully,

Terry Thrweatt, JD, MBA (pr: **threet**)
terrence.thrweatt@ubalt.edu

From: Terrence Thrweatt <terrence.thrweatt@ubalt.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, December 6, 2022 11:20 PM
To: Schleifer, Isaac <Isaac.Schleifer@baltimorecity.gov>
Cc: STEPHEN WARD <sspward@comcast.net>; kbraden410@gmail.com <kbraden410@gmail.com>; Savage, Sherrell (City Council) <Sherrell.Savage@baltimorecity.gov>; District5 <district5@baltimorecity.gov>; Endyar@aol.com <Endyar@aol.com>; katelyn.keegan@gmail.com <katelyn.keegan@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Communicare- 5545 Kennison Avenue

Councilman Schleifer,

The Grove Park Improvement Association is requesting a formal response stating your position on the sale of Grove Park Elementary to CommuniCare Health Centers. **It is the official position that we are against the transfer to CommuniCare as a commercial entity that will demolish the building.** This is not in line with

our community master plan as a residential community. We need your help in seeking a historic designation on the building, recognizing its importance as the anchor of our neighborhood and as one of the first integrated schools in the City. **We need to know that we have you as a partner in this.**

We have reached out to the other offerors, namely Concord Baptist Church [Community Development Corporation] and BEAM Preparatory (the CEO Group, Inc.). Both are prepared to move forward. Concord has a strong track record with the community as an existing property owner and a network to bring the services that we have requested- namely maintaining the building and its use as a school. Additionally, many of our members are members of the church. BEAM Prep offers a private school concept with a concentration on business education for K-5 youth from our own community and underserved-underrepresented demographics in finance. The list of BEAM's backers that you requested by phone to Ms. Braden is below in this email chain. We hope that you are able to honor what you stated to her, in that conversation of if BEAM provides the list, you can work with DHCD to re-award to one of our desired offerors. Both were finalists in a process that did not include community input regarding the evaluations of the proposals. Both have the funds available in their own accounts and donors to maintain the building. Additionally, my own company will maintain the grounds as an in-kind donation to either nonprofit.

We have not heard from you since my initial email on 06 November 2022 and our two subsequent follow-ups. Neither have we received an informal response on this matter when speaking with CommuniCare on 09 November 2022, nor our subsequent community meeting where Ms. Savage was in attendance. It is our expectation that you will fulfill your fiduciary responsibility to the people of our neighborhood. We stand against the commercialization of our neighborhood and a degradation of our quality of life.

We hope to hear from you soon.

Respectfully,

Terry Thrweatt, JD, MBA (pr: threet)

terrence.thrweatt@ubalt.edu

From: Terrence Thrweatt <terrence.thrweatt@ubalt.edu>

Sent: Monday, November 21, 2022 3:23 PM

To: Schleifer, Isaac <Isaac.Schleifer@baltimorecity.gov>

Cc: STEPHEN WARD <sspward@comcast.net>; kbraden410@gmail.com <kbraden410@gmail.com>

Subject: Fw: Communicare- 5545 Kennison Avenue

Good Afternoon Mr. Schleifer,

This is Mr. Watkins' (BEAM Prep) list of donors for his fiduciary purposes, per your request to Madam President, Karen M. Braden (copied). To be great partners in progress, we have confirmed some of these donors ourselves. We have also done due diligence to confirm that Concord Baptist Church CDC is still interested (they are ready to take ownership and collaborate with BEAM). We need your help to stop the ENP process, we are requesting that you oppose this sale, and cooperate with our neighborhood to maintain its resident character. Please confirm receipt.

You can call me at my number below to let me know if we need anything else. I worked on your first campaign and knocked doors in West Arlington, Grove Park, and Glen/Arlington (Jonquil Avenue). I still remember our discussion concerning these neighborhoods and lower Park Heights.

FROM CALVIN WATKINS:

"Hello Karen. Per your request, here is a list of organizations and individuals that we have been in contact with to help us in making BEAM Prep a success. It is not an exhaustive list, but plenty enough to give you references for our supporters. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Financial Services and Institutions:

Ariel Investments (Chicago Based)
Mutual of Omaha
Farmers Insurance
T. Rowe Price
T. Rowe Price Foundation
Brown Capital Management
Chase Bank
M&T Bank
Wells Fargo
Bank of America
Harbor Bank
MECU
SECU

Businesses:

Commercial Construction
Baltimore Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport
Keller Williams
Cummings Realty
Door 2 Door Realty
Law Office of Michelle Greer, ESQ.
Law Office of Granville Templeton, ESQ.
Booth Consulting
Van Allen Realty
Hicks Realty Team of Cummings Realty
Studio A Foundation
Your New Home Team of Keller Williams

Educational Institutions and Universities:

Morgan State University

Towson State University, School of Economics and Business
University of Baltimore School of Entrepreneurship
Bowie State University
Ariel School in Chicago
Gilman School

Non-Profit Organizations:

New York Stock Exchange Global Giving
Maryland Council of Economic Education (MCEE)
National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship, (NFTE)
Black Professional Men
National Association of Black Accountants
The SIFMA Foundation (Stock Market Game)
Maryland CASH Campaign
The Family League
Maryland NonProfits
Making Dollars Make Sense, Inc.

Media Supporters:

WJZ TV-13
Baltimore FOX 45
WMAR TV 2 Baltimore
WBAL TV 11 Baltimore
Doni Glover, BMore News
Chosen Media, Inc.

Individuals:

Comptroller Peter Franchot (non-financial)
Former State Treasurer, Nancy Kopp (non-financial)
Governor Larry Hogan (non-financial)
Lt. Governor Boyd Rutherford (non-financial)
Eddie and Silvia Brown
Theodore Alexander
Watkins Family
Gerald Levin and the Levin Foundation
Dr. David Miller
Dr. Larmar Shields
Dr. Phil Leaf
Stacy Siegel
Sharie Helfand
Johnson Family
Weiner Family
Dr. Montressa Washington
Adrienne and Stacy Carver

This is not the entire list but a short list of various organizations that we have contacted and have support for starting BEAM Prep. Our business plan and proposal for the RFP shows exactly what and how we will generate revenue to open and sustain the school. It details how we will partner with our banking and business partners to not only drive revenue from sponsorships and donations, but it details the business operations of the school showing how we will generate revenue on a continuing basis through school tuition, grants, donations as well as partnerships with the universities and

businesses. To start, everyone on staff and in the administration, as well as the board, will be certified to teach lessons in financial literacy by MCEE. Our plan also gives details about our summer camp programs and how they will generate revenue by making camp affordable to families in the community and across Baltimore City and Baltimore County. Children in the Grove Park community will always receive neighborhood discounts for all programs, thus encouraging more families to move into the community for access to a quality education.

To track our success across the board, Towson State University has offered to track the data through qualitative and quantitative assessments, giving us the research needed to get larger grants and partnerships from companies and foundations across the country, large and small. Our mentor/mentee relationship with the Ariel School in Chicago will guide our success as we go through the stages of startup. The Ariel School in Chicago is supported by Ariel Investments, which is run by Chairman, John Rogers, and Mellody Hobson, President. John Rogers sits on the boards of Nike, McDonald's and The New York Times Companies. Mellody Hobson, part owner of the Denver Broncos, Chair of the Board for Starbucks, Director at JPMorgan Chase and previously served as Chairman of the Board for Dreamworks Animation. Imagine the conversations to the children of BEAM Prep coming from Mellody Hobson about not playing football but owning a business that leads to buying a team. Truly a paradigm shift for the children of Baltimore.

Our board of directors is made up of seasoned educators and entrepreneurs. We will immediately add community members to make sure the Grove Park community has a seat at the table and share the table that we create through BEAM and our partnerships. Our relationship with former State Treasure, Nancy Kopp, created an opportunity for every child that attends BEAM PREP to receive a FUNDED 529 College Savings Plan, managed by T Rowe Price. You won't find that anywhere else in Baltimore or the State of Maryland. Our relationship with Gilman School will grow to position BEAM as a feeder school for schools like Gilman, Boys Latin, Roland Park Country, Bryn Mawr and others in the area. Relationships from Gilman School go beyond the school to families made up of professionals in finance, real estate, legal services and politics. Many of which will serve as influencers and speakers at BEAM Prep.

In closing, I want to thank you again for your time and support. I look forward to a positive response and if awarded the building, we can start immediately with our fund raising and partnership efforts as well as the promotion and marketing of our summer camp programs for 2023 and the early learning center for Fall of 2023. Funding organizations like The Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers, Maryland Bankers Association and CRA offices across the State of Maryland support programs like the ones we will offer at BEAM Prep. These organizations, and others like them, start their funding early for summer programs. Our programs are our sustainability. Our grants support our sustainability efforts. Our work across all channels go towards building our endowment, which will be run by an advisory board that we will assemble through our current partners. The advisory board will be made up of financial service professionals who will donate, fundraise and manage our endowment with funds for the endowment being overseen by T. Rowe Price and Brown Capital Management. All efforts create and support the success of the children and families of BEAM Prep.

Thank you again for your support. Please excuse any grammatical errors. They should not take away from the passion, experience and dedication that we have for BEAM Prep.

Here is a link to our video. <https://youtu.be/RmQ04krWV10>

Please help us make BEAM Prep a reality.

Calvin Watkins Jr.
BEAM Preparatory
The CEO Group, Inc."

Terry Thrweatt, JD, MBA (pr: threet)
terrence.thrweatt@ubalt.edu

From: Terrence Thrweatt <terrence.thrweatt@ubalt.edu>
Sent: Friday, November 18, 2022 9:00 AM
To: Schleifer, Isaac <Isaac.Schleifer@baltimorecity.gov>; kbraden410@gmail.com <kbraden410@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Communicare- 5545 Kennison Avenue

Mr. Schleifer,

Speaking for the GPIA organization, it has been two weeks and we are still awaiting your official response and stance on the sale of 5545 Kennison. We do not want the building to sell to CommuniCare. We want to work with you, other offerors, and DHCD to get the proposal re-awarded to a school (public, private, or charter).

If it is re-awarded to a private school, we do not have a preference regarding the faith background of the organization*, only that they preserve the building. We also want input on the school grounds, namely parking accommodations. We believe that BEAM Academy, Concord Baptist Church, and CAC Agape had the best proposals. We would like to see a joint proposal or MOU between BEAM and Concord or CAC Agape. I have already reached out to those organizations, and they are amenable to this idea.

*As you know there were a number of faith-based organizations and denominations that made offers. We do not discriminate. We are open to having a school there and anyone that works with us to reach this goal and preserve our quality of life and property values is our friend.

Terry Thrweatt, JD, MBA (pr: [threet](#))
terrence.thrweatt@ubalt.edu
Member, UB Black Law Student Union, UBalt Jewish Law Students Association

From: Terrence Thrweatt <terrence.thrweatt@ubalt.edu>
Sent: Sunday, November 6, 2022 9:03 PM
To: Schleifer, Isaac <Isaac.Schleifer@baltimorecity.gov>
Subject: Communicare- 5545 Kennison Avenue

Mr. Schleifer,

What is your position on the purchase of 5545 Kennison Avenue by Communicare? Are you aware that the neighborhood association, Grove Park Improvement Association is AGAINST the purchase?

Terry Threweatt



Terrence D. "Terry" Threweatt Jr., MBA

JD Candidate | c/o 2022
University of Baltimore
School of Law
terrence.threweatt@ubalt.edu

Thrweatt- Email to Savage.pdf

Uploaded by: Terry Thrweatt

Position: FWA

Re: Grove Park Improvement Assn declares "No sale" to awardee nursing facility

Terrence Thrweatt <terrence.thrweatt@ubalt.edu>

Fri 1/13/2023 1:47 PM

To: Savage, Sherrell (City Council) <Sherrell.Savage@baltimorecity.gov>; Karen Braden <kbraden410@gmail.com>; Schleifer, Isaac (City Council) <Isaac.Schleifer@baltimorecity.gov>

Cc: Ward Family <sspward@comcast.net>; alan.bull@verizon.net <alan.bull@verizon.net>; Vermel Wells <vermelwells@gmail.com>; Katelyn Keegan <Katelyn.Keegan@gmail.com>

Bcc: Alexis Taylor <ataylor@afro.com>; Fern Shen <fern.shen@baltimorebrew.com>

Ms. Savage,

Thank you for copying me on this communication. In the meeting with Communicare on 09 November 2022, it was shared that the community requested a school and community multipurpose center. It was further explained during an exchange between Ms. Braden and Ms. Norelli (CommuniCare), during that same video conference, that Communicare did not make an effort to reach out to the Grove Park Improvement Association's leadership (GPIA). Additionally, what Communicare presented in the November video conference is *different* from what they presented to the community in March [during RFP proposals], and from what the RFP evaluation panel rated in April and May. You are also aware that no member of the community was on the panel, as DHCD explained, in that call. We voiced our concerns during that meeting and during the RFP presentations (evidenced by the video that Ms. Baccala shared and the poll taken afterwards). DHCD blatantly ignored these concerns. This concern was also voiced during the RFP presentations and Grove Park relied on the assurances from DHCD that our community's wishes would be followed, which encouraged GPIA participation.

Throughout this property disposition process, GPIA has been clear with all participants that the community desires a school and community multipurpose center. This desire is further evidenced by the email exchanges and records that DHCD has provided to me via the PIA. In fact, Commissioner Kennedy received Ms. Braden's recommendation regarding which nonprofit we would like to work with and the service that we would like provided- before making her decision. We understand that by DHCD standards, BEAM Academy did not present a strong enough financial backing. So, an alternative should have been selected in line with the community's wishes and DHCD standards. *That would have yielded Concord as the more palatable choice.* The DHCD poll and Concord's proposal and property portfolio supports this.

Lastly, it is true that GPIA suggested that the Baltimore Collegiate School for Boys relocate to a school built for middle schoolers. That was for four reasons: (1) Seniors in our neighborhood have been physically harassed by Grove Park and Calvin Rodwell middle schoolers and their parents (2) Students and parents have physically violated the property of residents on the blocks of Elderon and Kennison (3) We had other charters interested in the building (4) Baltimore Collegiate, *itself*, was interested in a *larger* location that would accommodate *growing* boys and *sports* activities. That past transaction is not relevant to the current RFP and property disposition process as Baltimore Collegiate did not participate in this RFP. Mr. Schleifer being our councilman should have knowledge of that. To move forward with our professional relationship, let's dispense with the falsehood: Grove Park is not against seniors. We have seniors fighting to be able to save *their* community and age-in-place in the community setting that they have built up over the past 40-50 years. They are fighting to stay in the homes that they have built versus being institutionalized and subject to the care of others, who are often overworked. We have seniors that are fighting to maintain our neighborhood as a *residential* community. We do not want the *commercialization* of Grove Park- that Communicare presents. Additionally, it is not likely that a Communicare location in Grove Park would meet state policy as this part of 21215 already has a saturated market for senior care needs. GPIA is also very confused by Planning's contradiction of their community master plan, their neighborhood vision plans, and their violation of the Baltimore City Code.

We are expecting Mr. Schleifer, who is our elected representative, to (1) speak up and vote for what our community wants and (2) provide a reply to the residents and representatives of the community. I have

reached out to Mr. Schleifer, in his professional role, since 06 November 2022 by email. The ethics complaint filed in December by someone else does not hinder him from speaking on this matter; it does not hinder him from speaking to constituents; and it does not stop him from doing his job to represent our community. He has not provided a reply to me, a constituent who did not file the complaint, before or after the complaint was filed. By my count, three emails were sent to him prior to the ethics complaint. In fact, had he done so, he would have learned that I have been in communication with different stakeholders to provide (1) a location for Communicare to meet their business goals as presented in the meeting (2) provide a solution that meets the goals of GPIA to have a school and remain residential (3) Increases employment and development in 21215 to build our tax base.

As a member of the Ways and Means Committee and one of the more vocal members of the Baltimore City Council, Mr. Schleifer is quite frankly missing an opportune political moment and abdicating his fiduciary duty to effectively advocate for what his constituents want- instead of non-Baltimoreans from Columbia, Fallston, and Cincinnati. We still have time to resolve this matter, it has not been finalized by the BoE nor the Ways and Means Committee.

There is still time to act in partnership with the Grove Park community.

Thank you.

Terrence Thrweatt Jr.

Terry Thrweatt, JD, MBA (pr: [threet](#))

terrence.thrweatt@ubalt.edu

(c) 443-585-2063

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Member, Maryland Association of Appraisers, Inc.

Member, Baltimore City and Baltimore County Bar Associations

alt. email: tthrweatt@gmail.com

From: Savage, Sherrell (City Council) <Sherrell.Savage@baltimorecity.gov>

Sent: Friday, January 13, 2023 10:47 AM

To: Karen Braden <kbraden410@gmail.com>; Schleifer, Isaac (City Council)

<Isaac.Schleifer@baltimorecity.gov>

Cc: Ward Family <sspward@comcast.net>; Terrence Thrweatt <terrence.thrweatt@ubalt.edu>;

alan.bull@verizon.net <alan.bull@verizon.net>; Vermel Wells <vermelwells@gmail.com>; Katelyn Keegan

<Katelyn.Keegan@gmail.com>

Subject: Re: Grove Park Improvement Assn declares "No sale" to awardee nursing facility

[**EXTERNAL EMAIL: This message originated from a non-UBalt email system. Hover over any links before clicking and use caution when opening attachments.]**

Good morning Karen,

Thank you for your email and for the opportunity to talk a few days ago.

Being the new staff member from the Councilman's office who will be working with the Grove Park Improvement Association, I wanted to clarify some items from your message below as we move forward in our relationship.

When I was oriented to my role, the Councilman shared with me that he has been in consistent communication with you as he is with all associations in his district, and he has made every effort to be responsive in a timely manner. He shared with me that Chaquetta worked closely with the Association during her time with his office and he has spoken to you regularly as well; whether it was via phone and/or text message regarding any concerns from the community. The disposition of the Grove Park Elementary School has been a topic of your conversations as well. He made me aware that throughout the process related to the school, from the time it was a part of the 21st Century School renovation program, he has had regular communication with you throughout the entire process including communications you've had as recently as right before Christmas.

I'd like to request as we move forward in forging our professional relationship, that you and members of the Association refrain from stating that the Councilman hasn't been communicating with you. The Association is aware that the Baltimore City Office of Housing and Community Development was responsible for facilitating the process regarding next steps for the school building. The professional panel was selected by staff from the office of Housing and they followed a strict rubric to select the vendor that would be awarded the Grove Park ES property. The Councilman, nor any other elected official, did not have a role in that process. According to the planning department When a school from another part of town was proposed a couple of years ago you and Mr Ward opposed it. Planning is confused as to why you are now asking for a school.

I agree that there is a high level of frustration with this situation. I think it would be in the best interest of our relationship, for us to find a way to move forward and turn the frustration into productive action that will benefit the community. I know the Councilman has been supportive of the community association since the day he took office. I would like to continue to foster the relationship the Association has with him as

I work with the Association, but let's make sure misinformation is not being shared that is counterproductive.

I was a part of the Zoom call with the Office of Planning and CommuniCare and during that call it was shared that the Association did not raise any concerns when the process was shared with you all previously. Your concerns regarding the process were only brought forward when the panel selection process yielded a vendor who would provide a community asset for seniors in the area instead of the ideas suggested by the other businesses who participated in the process that were more in line with the interests of the Association.

In the past, you have personally praised the Councilman for helping Grove Park on many occasions. I hope moving forward, as we continue to build a strong working relationship, that we will work together to continue to build on the great work that has already been achieved through this partnership and continue to have Grove Park be a strong community in the City.

Have a great weekend!

Sincerely,

Sherrell

Sherrell Savage

Director of Constituent Services

Office of 5th District Councilman Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer

100 Holliday Street, Room 505, Balto, MD 21202

Office: [410-396-4819](tel:410-396-4819) Cell: [410-241-1427](tel:410-241-1427) Fax: [410-396-6800](tel:410-396-6800)

Email: sherrell.savage@baltimorecity.gov

From: Karen Braden <kbraden410@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, January 11, 2023 11:31:02 PM

To: Schleifer, Isaac (City Council) <Isaac.Schleifer@baltimorecity.gov>

Cc: Ward Family <sspward@comcast.net>; Terrence Threweatt <TERRENCE.THRWEATT@ubalt.edu>;

alan.bull@verizon.net <alan.bull@verizon.net>; Vermel Wells <vermelwells@gmail.com>; Savage, Sherrell

(City Council) <Sherrell.Savage@baltimorecity.gov>; Katelyn Keegan <Katelyn.Keegan@gmail.com>

Subject: Re: Grove Park Improvement Assn declares "No sale" to awardee nursing facility

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11Jan2023

Dear Ms. Savage,

thank you for our brief conversation earlier, I apologize but I was totally disappointed that Councilman Isaac "Yitzy" Schliefer for our District decided not to respond to my prior requested email regarding his position to us all.

It's a shame that the Councilman "Yitzy", states according to you, that, now he can't talk or txt me or others due to the Ethics Complaint. It becomes an unacceptable excuse because Yitzy has been unresponsive regarding this matter to the Community members since September. We were hoping to collaborate on this unfair process that does not adhere to our master plan.

*This has a high level of frustration between the Community and our Councilman that shouldn't be happening right now ..

Karen M. Braden,

President of Grove Park Improvement Assn & our GPIA Executive Council members etc

On Tue, Dec 20, 2022, 7:22 PM Karen Braden <kbraden410@gmail.com> wrote:

20December2022

Dear Councilman Isaac Yitzy Schliefer representing our District in the Northwest area:

I, President, Karen M. Braden of the Grove Park Improvement Association and the Grove Park Executive Council members and community residents stands with me and have said from the beginning "No sale" of the property 5545 Kennision Avenue Baltimore MD 21215 to CommuniCare nursing facility.

Councilman Yitzy what is your position on this very important and urgent matter, please respond to all, so we will all know how say you..

Urgent respond requested,

Karen M. Braden of Grove Park Improvement Assn & NWPD CRC liaison etc etc

Thrweatt- Favor w Amd MGA 2023 SB 849.pdf

Uploaded by: Terry Thrweatt

Position: FWA

Copy of Threweatt Testimony to the E3 Committee - Submitted as PDF

Terrence Threweatt <terrence.threweatt@ubalt.edu>

Tue 2/28/2023 1:47 PM

To: Carter, Jill Senator <jill.carter@senate.state.md.us>

Cc: STEPHEN WARD <sspward@comcast.net>

Esteemed Committee Members,

I am writing in favor of SB 0849, Baltimore City – Modifying or Closing Public School Facility – Review by Community Task Force. At its simplest, this bill allows for the Citizens of Baltimore City to have a voice in the development of their community. Over the past 10 years, schools have been systematically closed as part of a cost-saving and remodeling agreement brokered by the City, State, and quasi-independent Baltimore City School Board. This agreement is known as the 21st Century Schools Initiative.

The closure of these schools has come at the expense of the communities where each school sits. In Grove Park, this has meant that a historically Jewish, middle-class community, now made of mostly Black and Latino individuals are living under the stress of facing devalued properties, increased traffic, and development uncharacteristic of what has been stylized as a "suburban neighborhood in the City". That is the impetus for this bill. Citizens of Baltimore City, just like anyone else, expect to have a voice in the equitable development of their community. This includes changes in parking, zoning, and the repurposing of schools.

In January 2020, when the Grove Park Elementary building was placed on the surplus list and put up for a RFP process via the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Grove Park community was systematically ignored by DHCD officials including Teresa Stephens, Deputy Commissioner Kate Edwards, and Commissioner Alice Kennedy and our own councilman, Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer. The Grove Park Improvement Association, led by Karen Braden, Stephen Ward, and I [- as a consultant], asked for a school and community multi-purpose center- a rec center for our youth and seniors. These are resources that are needed to help our community help itself. Baltimore City District 5 is the only councilmanic district without a public rec center for its youth. We courted qualified, Black-led nonprofits who had structure and funding to take on the project of reopening the school building, as a school. This would serve the goal of educating children in a community school format and help to attract young homebuyers to replace the seniors who have raised their families and pass their homes on to the next generation.

Alice Kennedy, DHCD Commissioner, enjoined a panel of five members without community input and without a member of the community on the panel. She received the panel's recommendation and the recommendation of the Grove Park Improvement Association (GPIA). GPIA specifically endorsed the Business and Economic Academy of Maryland which aims to teach young people business skills and self-sufficiency. Instead, Ms. Kennedy, without consulting the Grove Park community, entered into a non-binding agreement with a rehab center developer who aims to demolish a 16-room school building on 5 acres and replace it with 150 beds and a 100-space parking lot. This is not in line with the residential character of the community endorsed by the City's own Chief Planner, Mr. Chad Hayes. If the City approves the contract of sale and its corresponding ordinance, which they still have time to withdraw from, it will lead to (1) the commercialization of our neighborhood (2) devalued homes (3) increased traffic (4) the demolition of a historical marker that graduated hundreds- if not thousands- of students from 1958 to 2019 (5) the destruction of a functioning, low-crime, middle-class neighborhood.

We have brought our concerns to Commissioner Kennedy, who ignored us, until her appearance was required at a Community Relations Commission meeting under the Office of Equity and Civil Rights. We have brought our concerns to our councilman, Isaac Schleifer, who has ignored us because we do not reside in his favored communities north of West Northern Parkway. And, yes, we have brought our concerns to Mayor Brandon Scott, whose parents live just two blocks away and whose property will face the same devaluation as they are in our CMA/Appraisal market area.

We are turning to you to push forward this bill to allow not just our own community, but others around Baltimore City, a fighting chance. This is something that transcends the artificial color-lines that divide our City, as this is now happening in communities abutting the County lines down to the Southern regions of the City. I implore you to pass this bill, as I am fighting for my family and neighbors.

I favor this bill, with amendments, to include all the Department of Housing and Community Development, General Services, and Planning. I also seek the amendment to require the City to perform an equity assessment on the disposition of all government buildings or school facilities.

Terry Thrweatt, JD, MBA (pr: [threet](#))

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Member, Baltimore City and Baltimore County Bar Associations

alt. email: tthrweatt@gmail.com

Thrweatt- to Mayor Scott.pdf

Uploaded by: Terry Thrweatt

Position: FWA

Fw: Opposition to CommuniCare and the Process of Selection

Terrence Threweatt <terrence.threweatt@ubalt.edu>

Tue 2/28/2023 9:31 AM

To: Mark, Rebecca <rebecca.mark@baltimorecity.gov>

Ms. Mark,

FYI, see below. The Grove Park community expects a response.

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From: Terrence Threweatt <terrence.threweatt@ubalt.edu>

Sent: Tuesday, February 28, 2023 9:18 AM

To: Schleifer, Isaac <isaac.schleifer@baltimorecity.gov>; mayor@baltimorecity.gov

<mayor@baltimorecity.gov>

Cc: Alice.Kennedy@baltimorecity.gov <alice.kennedy@baltimorecity.gov>; kbraden410@gmail.com

<kbraden410@gmail.com>; STEPHEN WARD <ssward@comcast.net>; Curtis, Glenda (DHCD)

<glenda.curtis@baltimorecity.gov>; ccc na <cccbalt1@gmail.com>; rabbikomisar@gmail.com

<rabbikomisar@gmail.com>

Subject: Opposition to CommuniCare and the Process of Selection

Good Morning Councilman Schleifer and Mayor Scott,

I was unable to attend the Hilltop 4100 monthly community meeting. However, I have been informed by several community members of the status of the meeting. I want to provide a point of clarification and an action item for your agenda. To be clear, the Grove Park Improvement Association is opposed to CommuniCare taking ownership of 5545 Kennison- Grove Park Elementary. While some may believe that the "process" was fair, it did not include members of the community on the evaluation panel. Further, the panel made a recommendation that was forwarded to Commissioner Kennedy along with two other proposals for her selection. The community provided their recommendation to her staff in writing *before* she made her selection. It has been confirmed by a PIA request that she was aware of our recommendation and misused her discretion in favor of the big money interests of potential tax dollars- versus the futures of youth and homeowners in Grove Park. This is especially true of the homeowners who live on Kennison Avenue.

Ms. Kennedy had, and has, the ability to accept another proposal. The Exclusive Negotiation Process is a land disposition agreement that is non-binding and only negotiates the price and terms of sale. She, along with the Mayor, has the ability to direct DHCD to back out of this agreement and select an organization more in line with the community's wishes. This organization does not have to be the nonprofit that we recommended, but rather one that meets the goals of the community **and** those of

the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore City (DHCD). Concord's proposal represents such an opportunity.

This process is not final. This is an opportunity for you all. Especially, given that the community has expressed so much angst. We will not allow this to rest. More direct action is in line. What is happening here will happen in other communities.

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SB849 Baltimore City - Modifying or Closing Public

Uploaded by: Dawana Sterrette

Position: UNF

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Brandon M. Scott
Mayor, City of Baltimore

Jhnette A. Richardson
Chair, Baltimore City Board
of School Commissioners

Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises
Chief Executive Officer

**Testimony of the
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
In Opposition of
Senate Bill 849
Baltimore City – Modifying or Closing Public School Facility –
Review by Community Task Force**

March 1, 2023

As drafted, the proposed legislation requires that the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners may not take final action on the closing or modifying of a school building until the President of the local community association of the community where the school facility is located appoints a community task force to examine and make recommendations concerning any future use of the facility.

City Schools takes seriously the value and importance of community input when making portfolio decisions and include the community in decisions. Every year we undergo a process to make difficult decisions that, in the end, with the limited resources we have, will improve our ability to offer the rich and varied educational programming our students deserve. While this process, the Annual Review of Schools, can result in a variety of recommendations such as opening new traditional schools, reconfiguring grade spans in existing schools, merging school communities, relocating schools, we recognize the most challenging of these recommendations are those for school closure and/or facility surplus.

School programs and the facilities that house our schools are major institutions within our communities. The proposed closure of schools can feel like a major loss and many of the people who are served by and work at these schools experience a sense of grief. **This is why the process we use involves not just the quantitative and qualitative data that district staff analyze in this process, but also listening to and adjusting recommendations based on the impact, experiences, ideas and hopes expressed by our students and the communities we serve. Evidence of this can be found in the record that shows changes in recommendations based on community input.** Further, to ensure robust opportunities to provide input, the timeline by which **this process takes place has been expanded from a formal process that once occurred over several weeks to one that lasts months and includes working with communities for a few years to support and drive any major transitions.**

In addition to our own process, the City of Baltimore has an established School Surplus Taskforce, of which City Schools is an active participant. The existing process is extensive. Before site control of a school can be turned over to the City, the Board of Public Works, a State Agency, must approve the surplus of the site and that it will no longer be used as an educational facility. It is only after City Schools receives approval from the State that the district can officially declare the property surplus.

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Brandon M. Scott
Mayor, City of Baltimore

Johnette A. Richardson
Chair, Baltimore City Board
of School Commissioners

Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises
Chief Executive Officer

Once a property is declared surplus, the City officially begins its process of identifying a responsible agency for the site. The property is assigned to an agency for use or disposition through the Space Utilization Committee. Per the City Charter, the Space Utilization Committee, chaired by the Comptroller's Real Estate Office, is responsible for assigning properties to the appropriate agencies.

Based on stakeholder engagement, market assessment, and expressions of interest in the property, the City determines the appropriate re-use path for each property. In many cases, the property will be offered for sale through an Expression of Interest or Request for Proposals by Baltimore Housing or Baltimore Development Corporation. Other properties may be re-used directly by City agencies, other government entities, or have other special re-use considerations. Properties in weaker markets may need a different approach. This approach might be offering the property with subsidy, demolishing the building and offering a cleared site, demolishing the building and creating open space, leasing the property, etc. If the initial re-use path identified for a property is not successful in identifying a long term viable re-use for the property, another re-use path will be identified.

The City is committed to conducting stakeholder engagement so that the City (and any potential future users of the facilities) can understand community desires and concerns. This might include desires and concerns about uses, the site, or access. Stakeholders may identify particular uses that they would like to see in their neighborhood that are not currently available elsewhere. The City will gather and document stakeholder desires and concerns and make them available to prospective developers to set the stage for redevelopment. Preference can be given to proposals that respond to community desires and concerns.

Given the thoroughness of the existing procedures, the proposed legislation is unnecessary and would inevitably lead to costly delays. The absence of timelines means the community organization could substantially delay the work of City Schools and the City of Baltimore. In addition, the notion of community task force members having authority to sign sale contracts is concerning and would likely be another mechanism of delay. Furthermore, some neighborhoods do not have community associations, whereas other areas may have more than one, and subsequently more than one association president.

For all of these reasons, City Schools respectfully urges an UNFAVORABLE report of Senate Bill 849.

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