

President's Letter- March 2019

Dear Members and Friends,

First, let me thank the Metropolitan Police Department's (MPD) leadership team for their informative and excellent presentation this evening. On behalf of the Civic League of North Portal Estates (Civic League), I am especially proud of the work that the MPD provides for the safety in our community. Additionally, we are indebted to Judie Ponds for her leadership in securing such quality speakers as we had tonight.

As a follow-up to my January letter requesting information about joining the District of Columbia Federation of Civic Associations, I have been invited by Graylin W. Presbury President of the Federation to attend the Federation's next meeting on March 27th. For your information, the Federation is a membership organization that is shall be composed of nonpolitical, nonsectarian civic organizations which have individual memberships and which are established for, and are devoted to, the improvement of the civic interest and general welfare of the residents of the District of Columbia. Our intent is to become a member of this Federation. To date, I have not received follow-up information from the Federation of Citizens Associations of the District of Columbia

Additionally, I followed up on Councilmember Brandon Todd's suggestion from our last Civic League meeting regarding questions/issues that he might ask the Acting DCPS Chancellor Dr. Lewis D. Ferebee about his qualifications as Chancellor. Specifically, I forwarded the following concerns to the Councilmember:

1. At the elementary school level, DC teachers, social workers and counselors are increasingly seeing more children experiencing social emotional issues at every economic strata. The schools are in desperate need for more resources and especially a better working relationship with the District's Department of Behavior Health Services. In that connection, please delineate your experiences in addressing these problems particular when parents are stretched thin given that some are single parents and some are working two or three jobs just to survive.

2. Related to #1 above, what role do you intend to play in working with the Coordinating Council on School Mental Health? FYI, the Comprehensive Plan

to Expand Early Childhood and School-Based Behavioral Health Services developed by the former Interagency Behavioral Health Working Group established a coordinating council to guide implementation of the plan. The Coordinating Council on School Mental Health includes members of the former Interagency Behavioral Health Working Group and the former Task Force on School Mental Health.

3. On July 31, 2018, the President signed the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* into law which reauthorized the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 or Perkins V. Perkins is critical to ensuring that Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are prepared to meet the ever-changing needs of learners and employers. Those students who were considered CTE Concentrators in 2016-17 in the District of Columbia graduated at a much higher rate than non-CTE students: 92% CTE Concentrators compared with 69% District of Columbia. To what extent would you advocate for extending CTE expansion in DC schools and what would be your strategy to securing more support for CTE programming?

Moving forward and as Chair of the Nomination Committee, Judie Ponds will be presenting a slate of candidates for the upcoming election of officers for the 2019-2021 program years. In addition, Ms. Ponds is providing the leadership in putting together the details for our "Spring Clean" event scheduled for Saturday, June 8, 2019. More details to come!

In nearing the end of the Civic League's 2018-2019 program year, I want to thank the Executive Committee for their collective wisdom, support and successes that we have experienced throughout this term:

Nathaniel Sims - Vice President for stepping in and chairing meetings during my absences, providing me with his support and for being there

Pamela Lowe - Secretary for her extraordinary and thorough documentation of Civic League's meetings and ensuring that such meetings are effectively organized and effective records are maintained

Sharon Pugh - Financial Secretary for working closely with the treasurer and other financial officers in handling funds, keeping a record of all Civic League's funds collected and for providing your wisdom to me as a past president

Diane Baxter - Treasurer for overseeing the management of the financial affairs of the organization and keeping us solvent

Dr. Bette Catoe Strudwick - Sergeant-at-Arms for keeping our meetings flowing without disruptions

Dana Ash-McGinty - Parliamentarian for being that force for and expert in rules of order and the proper procedures for the conduct of meetings

Dr. Phylicia Fauntleroy Bowman - Archivist for facilitating our appreciation for the community we live in and developing through oral history acquisition creating permanent records and historically valuable documents of the North Portal Estates community

James (Jim) Edmonds - Chair of the Infrastructure Committee for his extraordinary efforts and success in addressing environmental and safety issues within North Portal Estates

Aleen Sutton - Chair of the Hospitality Committee for her planning and executing great parties

Judie Ponds Ransome - Chair of the Nomination Committee and Special Projects Subcommittee for being there and sharing her expertise

In looking to next year's program, I envision that one of the first items of business will be to hold a pot-luck dinner event in September as a galvanizing event for bringing the community together. Your suggestions for a theme and a location is, of course, welcomed!

Yours in service,

Michael L. Benjamin

President

Civic league of North Portal Estates

March 20, 2019