Council panel reviews recent EMS problems

- **Public safety:** Testimony focuses on two January deaths

  **By KATIE PEARCE**
  Current Staff Writer

As controversy and finger-pointing continues over the recent death of Medric Cecil Mills Jr., a D.C. Council hearing this week scrutinized the protocols and culture of the District’s emergency response system.

The oversight comes at a fraught time for the D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department, with the future of Fire Chief Kenneth Ellerbe emerging as a key issue for the mayoral election — and while an investigation looks into another death last month.

A day after chairing the oversight hearing, Ward 6 Council member and mayoral candidate Tommy Wells called for the resignation of both Ellerbe and Paul Quander, the deputy mayor for public safety.

In a letter to Mayor Vincent Gray, Wells said he was “stunned to learn” from Monday’s hearing that no plans exist to address “systemic mismanagement” in the District’s emergency response system.

The public safety hearing examined the public safety hearing exam-

State Department planning sparks OSS landmark bid

- **Preservation:** ANC backs pending landmark request

  **By KAT LUCERO**
  Current Staff Writer

Possible changes to the U.S. State Department’s Potomac Annex complex have sparked a push to give the site historical protections as the former headquarters of the nation’s first intelligence agency.

The Foggy Bottom/West End advisory neighborhood commission last Wednesday joined the effort to get national landmark status for the complex at 2430 E St., a portion of the Old Naval Observatory campus and former home of the Office of Strategic Services. The complex is already a locally recognized landmark, but the listing is based on its earlier history as a public health laboratory and does not extend to its later occupants.

The Office of Strategic Services — the predecessor to the Central Intelligence Agency — used part of the 11.8-acre site overlooking the Potomac River during World War II.

Several years ago, the bulk of the campus — including the old observatory building, which is already on the National Register of Historic Places — was vacated by the Navy and is now slated to accommodate new facilities for the State Department, whose headquarters sits just across 23rd Street. The agency is now working on a master plan for the site that would let it consolidate all regional offices there.

The property includes three fédéral buildings — including the Potomac Annex complex — whose earlier history as a public health laboratory and later as the site of the first intelligence agency in the nation form the groundwork for the landmark request.

Council hopeful Settles seeks jobs trust fund

- **BY GRAHAM VYSE**
  Current Staff Writer

When John Settles explains his vision for job creation in D.C., he starts out talking about laundry.

That’s because helping to create a commercial laundry facility in the District is one of several goals the at-large D.C. Council candidate has for the “Jobs Trust Fund” he’s pitching to reduce unemployment in the city’s poorest wards.

Settles, a candidate in the Democratic primary on April 1, envisions this new fund as an independent entity providing financial support for remedial education programs, job training and direct investment in start-up businesses that hire D.C. residents — especially from wards 5, 6, 7 and 8. He thinks a laundry start-up could be a strong early priority due to high demand from hospitals and restaurants for cleaning services. But he also wants to invest in solar panel providers, fresh produce merchants and a company that recycles ink and toner cartridges.

“By establishing businesses that employ our residents who need jobs to provide goods and services to local consumers and businesses, we are not only helping families and individuals achieve self-sufficiency, we are also laying out a plan for the future economic success of the entire District,” Settles said in a Feb. 18 news release.

The candidate also said his fund would indirectly address homelessness, housing affordability and public safety.

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School system will offer grants to help student satisfaction

- **NEWS**

See **School Dispatches/Page 13**

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$900,000 for three separate but relat-ed programs that “move from the beginning to the end of the urban agriculture process, and help devel-op skills and training for people along the way,” said Shane.

One of the programs will create neighborhood-scale “aquaponics” systems, which allow for the combi-nation of raising fish and growing plants. When paired with a small greenhouse, each facility is expected to create 500 pounds of fish and 5,000 pounds of produce annually, according to a news release from the city. Dwane Jones, director of the school’s Center for Sustainable Development, said the effort will likely raise tilapia and grow edible native plants.

In this type of ecosystem, fish provide nutrients to fertilize the plants, while the plants filter water from the fish waste. The process requires no pesticides, antibiotics or hormones.

While aquaponics itself is not new, implementing it on a commun-ity scale is — and that’s where an invention of the University of the DIS-

The apaquonics initiative received $519,000 through this year’s innovation challenge.

The university also won $290,000 to launch a “business-incubator kitchen” in Ward 8, to promote edu-cation on food and nutrition as well as job training. The program will include a traveling food truck serv-ing healthy fare across the city. Both the kitchen and truck might be com-bined with the aquaponics systems, Shane said.

Another $121,500 will go toward a project to build a native plant nurs-ery in Ward 5. All of the above initia-tives are connected to the universi-ty’s College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability and Environment Sci-ences, known as “CAUSES.”

At Hardy Middle School and the Fillmore Arts Center in upper Georgetown, the grant program gives $330,000 toward building an 11,100-square-foot outdoor class-room to offer “hands-on examples of renewable energy, stormwater man-agement, native-species planting, nutrition and urban agriculture,” according to the mayor’s office.

Built from sustainable materials, the facility should offer a replicable model “that can be integrated into school design citywide,” Shane said, and also help advance the city’s environmental literacy curriculum. Although informal community gar-dens and other sustainable spaces already exist at various schools across the District, he said the Handy site will be the largest and most for-mal effort to date.

Rounding out the grants this year are:

■ $200,000 to rebuild two neglected D.C. Department of Recreation greenhouses, including the one at Twin Oaks Community Garden at 14th and Taylor streets NW in Ward 4. Nonprofits will get involved to help provide community growing spaces and training opportunities, particularly for youth, according to the mayor’s office.

■ $492,000 toward a “splash park” in Ward 7 that will reuse rainwater for the water feature as well as for irrigation of nearby playing fields.

■ $400,000 for features like rain gardens to reduce stormwater runoff in Oxon Run Park in Ward 8. Cur-rently, polluted runoff flows untreated into the Oxon Run stream.

The grant program is part of the broader “Sustainable DC” initiative, a 20-year action plan to make D.C. “the greenest, healthiest, and most livable city in the nation.”

Last year’s inaugural challenge awarded $4.35 million, including $600,000 for a feasibility study on green or solar roofs for government buildings.

Shane said D.C. Council deci-sions led to a tighter budget for this year’s program. From here, each agency must move forward with contracts, construction and imple-mentation, usually pitching in addi-tional money.

From Page 1

GRANTS: Funding supports sustainable initiatives

From Page 1

The new grant will go toward funding supports sustainable initiatives

From Page 1

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