

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -- Dec 10, 2025

Contact: Debby Hanrahan, Save DC Public Land, debby@savcdpublicland.org, 202-462-2054

DC Residents Seek Transparency Regarding Possible Coordination Between Local Officials and Right-Wing Growth Agenda; *Recent FOIAs Highlight Need for Openness in DC Housing Policy Discussions & Decisions*

Washington, DC — Residents with Save DC Public Land: The 1617 Project have filed two Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests recently.

FOIA #1 -- The first to understand why its taken more than a year for the DC Zoning Commission to issue a written order [regarding the future of 1617 U Street – ZC Case No. 23-02](#).

FOIA #2 -- The second FOIA seeks records from ANC 1B02 Commissioner Francois Barrilleaux regarding his recent drafting and introduction of “**A Resolution Urging Gentle Density Throughout the District of Columbia**” (available at page 36 of the [ANC 1B December agenda PDF](#)).

FOIA requesters note that none of the resolution’s recommended changes requires the creation of **affordable, family-sized homes**, despite the city’s acute need for lower-cost three- and four-bedroom units.

FOIA #2 (attached) seeks communications that the Commissioner may have had while drafting the resolution with representatives of Greater Greater Washington, the American Enterprise Institute (where Commissioner Barrilleaux is employed), and the Office of Ward One Councilmember Brianne Nadeau, among others.

“When a local ANC resolution mirrors proposals from organizations promoting market-first approaches and wholesale housing-policy deregulation, the public deserves to know how it was shaped and why,” said Marcy Logan, one of the FOIA requesters who has property on Seaton Street.

The controversial “gentle density” proposal would grant DC’s real estate industry broad new by-right permissions to demolish single-family homes and replace them with rowhouses or small apartment buildings of 4 to 6, possibly 8, units—**without specifying affordability outcomes** and with no further community dialogue (“**by-right**”).

At a recent meeting, 1B neighbors warned that such policy changes could have **far-reaching adverse effects** on residential areas across the city, particularly in Wards 4, 5, 7, and 8, where neighborhoods are more vulnerable to speculative displacement.

"The discussion seems to show that if these policies were enacted, they really wouldn't have much of an impact on ANC1B or our ward," stated [Howard Kurtzman, 1B neighbor and member of the 1B Economic Development Committee](#). *"They would have an impact on other wards and neighborhoods like Cleveland Park and Crestwood and elsewhere. I don't think ... residents of those neighborhoods will not take kindly to these proposed policies. ... My preference would be to just table it because it's just not in the domain of this ANC."*

I think it's absolutely wrong for [ANC1B] to take a position and issue something that if it was done to us in the reverse, we would definitely not appreciate it. So, I think that that is not the way we should go... to move forward without any input of the people that [this proposal] would actually affect is problematic, stated [Tania Shand, 1B neighbor and participating member of the ANC 1B Economic Development Committee](#).

The FOIA filing cites **notable similarities** between the draft ANC resolution and recent policy positions advanced by both [GGW](#) and [AEI](#)—organizations known for **market-driven deregulation and pro-growth housing proposals**, typically promoting increased density without meaningful race- or class-impact analysis. The request also references long-standing concerns about displacement in the District over the past two decades (60,000 Black residents gone)(1 in 4 Black residents displaced from Ward 1 over the past decade alone).

The FOIA request seeks all communications, emails, messages, and documents from August 1 to December 4, 2025, to and from Commissioner Barrilleaux in his official capacity as an ANC commissioner regarding the proposed “Gentle Density” resolution.

Hanrahan and Logan are members of Save DC Public Land, an organization advocating for greater affordability and the production of family-sized housing using DC’s limited public land and assets, including a proposed social-housing pilot on the 2 acres of public land at 1617 U Street NW.

They emphasize that transparency is essential in the lead-up to the **Comprehensive Plan 2050** update, where zoning concepts included in the resolution may be considered on a citywide scale. [www.dc2050.com]

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Public Official FOIA Request (Dec 4 2025): Commissioner Barrilleaux's Responsive Document

1 message

debby h. <debby@savедcpublicland.org>

Thu, Dec 4, 2025 at 3:19 PM

Reply-To: the1617project@savедcpublicland.org

To: 1b02@anc.dc.gov, francoisbarrilleaux@gmail.com

Cc: oancs@dc.gov, 1b@anc.dc.gov, 1B01 <1B01@anc.dc.gov>, 1B03 <1B03@anc.dc.gov>, 1B04 <1B04@anc.dc.gov>, 1b05 <1b05@anc.dc.gov>, 1B06 <1B06@anc.dc.gov>, 1B07 <1B07@anc.dc.gov>, 1B08 <1B08@anc.dc.gov>, 1B09 <1B09@anc.dc.gov>, opengovoffice@dc.gov, info@dcogc.org

Dear Mr. Barrilleaux, Mr. Deramo, and Ms. Wiktor,

Please see attached FOIA with full details.

Commissioner Barrilleaux, we seek responsive documents about “Gentle Density” “Light-Touch Zoning” or otherwise anything to do with the proposed “A Resolution Urging Gentle Density Throughout the District of Columbia” put before ANC 1B, with responsive documents dated between August 1, 2025, to today, December 4, 2025.

We believe there is a substantial conflict of interest here given that you, Commissioner Barrilleaux, introducer of the ANC resolution, “A Resolution Urging Gentle Density Throughout the

District of Columbia” are also employed by American Enterprise Institute.

AEI is simultaneously rolling out these same policy directives as found in your resolution and the tie to your actions should be apparent and identified as such.

AEI is proactively and directly advocating DC government adoption into the upcoming Comprehensive Plan 2050: “Legalizing Single-Family Home Conversions to Duplexes, Triplexes, or Townhomes in Washington, DC’s, New Comprehensive Plan,” AEI Economic Perspectives, November 18, 2025, (Link)

It's likely recusal is warranted by Commissioner Barrilleaux from taking any vote or even introducing this proposal given your employment ties to AEI.

We believe the elected offices of DC are meant to protect vulnerable communities and provide equity for all community members to thrive. We want affordable housing, especially social housing to result from major policy changes like that proposed but which as written now requires or ensures none of that and instead lets the market decide. We know how that goes.

Please affirm next steps and email with any questions or clarifications.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Debby Hanrahan
Save DC Public Land: The 1617 Project

w/ Marcy Logan, Seaton Street

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Commissions, General Counsel
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Date: December 4, 2025

Re: *Freedom of Information Act Request per DC Open Government Act*

Dear Commissioner Barrilleaux, and as witness, Chair Deramo and Ms. Wiktor,

This is a request under the DC Freedom of Information Act.

Commissioner Barrilleaux, we request to pick up or receive a copy of any and all documents produced as either:

- a facsimile,
- electronic email,
- PDF, Word, or any other such electronic document,
- and/or hard-copy paper documents, post mail or otherwise,
- as well as any electronic communications and messages sent by text SMS, Signal, WhatsApp, or any other online, encrypted or otherwise, electronic, or phone communications.

FOIA search terms include any permutation of the following:

- “Gentle Density” “Light-Touch Zoning” or otherwise anything to do with the proposed “A Resolution Urging Gentle Density Throughout the District of Columbia” put before ANC 1B by Commissioner Barrilleaux.

Responsive documents shall be such documents found using the criteria above within the records of Commissioner Barrilleaux, especially targeting any communications or other documents shared with, by, from or to:

- Alex Baca with Greater Greater Washington, or any other staffer and representatives with Greater Greater Washington,
- Tobias Peter and/or Stan Veuger with American Enterprise Institute, or any other staffer and representatives with American Enterprise Institute,
- Brianne Nadeau, Councilmember Ward One, or any of the City Council staff.

We are asking responsive Documents include any found within the dates of August 1, 2025, until today, December 4, 2025.

Background:

Commissioner Barrilleaux has introduced “A Resolution Urging Gentle Density Throughout the District of Columbia” with very little engagement with his constituents or the broader public. While there have been conversations at the ANC level, it remains unclear how or why this resolution was derived, particularly given that its stated provisions appear to have little—if any—direct impact on ANC1B. Commissioner Barrilleaux has publicly stated several times that he intends to use this resolution to build a citywide coalition to advance the deregulation of residential areas, a policy direction that could substantially and adversely affect neighborhoods that are more vulnerable to real estate speculation and displacement—the same forces that have contributed to the displacement of 60,000 Black residents over the past two decades. The Commission may take up this resolution for consideration very soon. Understanding the motivations, rationale, and basis for introducing this resolution is very much in the public interest and directly affects ANC1B constituents, including many members of Save DC Public Land: The 1617 U Project, among others.

We believe there is a substantial conflict of interest here given that Commissioner Barrilleaux, who is introducing the ANC resolution “A Resolution Urging Gentle Density Throughout the District of Columbia” is employed by American Enterprise Institute. AEI is simultaneously rolling out these same policy directives as found in Commissioner Barrilleaux’s resolution and they are proactively and directly advocating DC government adoption into the upcoming Comprehensive Plan 2050: “Legalizing Single-Family Home Conversions to Duplexes, Triplexes, or Townhomes in Washington, DC’s, New Comprehensive Plan,” AEI Economic Perspectives, November 18, 2025, Link: <https://www.aei.org/research-products/report/legalizing-single-family-home-conversions-to-duplexes-triplexes-or-townhomes-in-washington-dcs-new-comprehensive-plan/>

We are writing this FOIA on behalf of Save DC Public Land: The 1617 Project, an unincorporated non-profit citizens association because we believe the elected offices of DC are meant to protect vulnerable communities and provide equity for all community members to thrive. We want affordable housing, especially social housing to result from major policy changes like that proposed but which as written now requires none and instead lets the market decide. We know how that goes.

We are seeking the above public information in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to the public understanding of the activities and information about important public policy and development unfolding in this area and citywide. We are willing to pay fees for this request up to a maximum of \$51.00. If you estimate that the fees will exceed this limit, please inform us first.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Debby Hanrahan, Save DC Public Land &
Marcy Logan, Property Interests on Seaton Street

You may contact us collectively at:

debby@savedcpublicland.org || marcy@savedcpublicland.org