

**DC City Council
Reception a Success**

The February 20 reception for the DC City Council held in the John Wilson Building was well-attended by many co-op owners and resulted in an unexpected move to initiate legislation related to senior tax credits.

Held in the atrium of the Wilson Building, the reception was co-sponsored and co-hosted by the DC Cooperative Housing Coalition (CHC) and the Community Associations Institute (CAI). The annual event is to recognize council members for the work they do as well as to raise awareness of issues affecting housing cooperatives.



Council member Carol Schwartz (At-Large) with two co-op constituents

This year's event competed for the council members' attention inasmuch as that day, the Council held hearings on the contentious issue of Mayor Fenty's plan to wrest control of the District's school system from the Board of Education. That hearing lasted throughout the day and late into the evening.



Nancy Skinkle, CHC Treasurer, Council member Phil Mendelson (At-Large), and Bernie Robinson, BRIM Management Company

Council members Carol Schwartz (At-Large) and Phil Mendelson (At-Large) spent some time at the reception. Council members Tommy Wells (Ward 6) and Jim Graham (Ward 1) had members of their staffs attend.

Towards the end of the reception, representatives of CHC and CAI met one-on-one with Council member

**March 31, Convention Center:
CAI Conference and Expo!**
See inside for details!

Mendelson to talk about the change the city made in recent years in who issues refunds to seniors for their senior tax exemption. Prior to the change, the city mailed refunds directly to individual seniors. However, the city now mails one payment to each co-op where Boards or their management agents are responsible for identifying who is to receive the refunds and sending them their refunds. Unfortunately, it isn't always that simple, with many co-ops barred from distributing funds other than on a percentage basis. Mr. Mendelson asked that his staff be contacted to initiate action to correct the situation which CHC and CAI will do.



Linda O'Brien, Policy Advisor for Council member Tommy Wells, and Andy Listsky, ANC6D04 Commissioner and ANC Vice Chair

CHC Board Members Reaffirmed as Representatives to DC Building Code Advisory Committee

Nancy Skinkle, CHC's Treasurer, and Art Leabman, CHC's Secretary, were recently reaffirmed as the Coalition's representatives to the District of Columbia Building Code Advisory Committee (BCAC). Nancy and Art have represented Coalition members' interests since the spring of 2004.

Nancy is Assistant Director for Project Development at the Architect of the Capitol, and former project architect for Chatelaine Architects, Inc. She is active in professional and community associations. She is past Director of the Cleveland Park Historical Society and co-chair of its Architectural Review Committee. She lives at the Broadmoor Cooperative.

Before retiring, Art served in administrative and policy positions at the National Institute of Mental Health and at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. He has been actively involved with Coalition activities and co-op affairs for many years. He lives at the 1870 Wyoming Avenue Cooperative where he has served on its board of directors.

The BCAC consists of a diverse group of individuals, including District employees who review the model building codes and make recommendations for local amendments. These recommendations are forwarded to the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) who can then accept, modify, or reject these recommendations prior to sending them to the City Council for final review and approval.

The BCAC is currently reviewing the 2006 International Code Council (ICC), as amended, and making recommendations as they relate to the unique characteristics of the District of Columbia.

With fourteen subcommittees including Existing Structures, Fire and Life Safety, Accessibility, and Property Maintenance, the BCAC's review is extensive and comprehensive. All proposed amendments to the model code's provisions must be justified and based upon the following criteria:

- Inappropriate provision due to local conditions – climatic, physical, urban planning or economic.
- Provisions that hamper the economic development of the District without clearly contributing to the safety, health, and welfare of the building occupants or population at large.

- Provisions that create an economic hardship on owners without a clear justification based on consideration of protection of safety, health, and welfare of the building occupants or population at large.
- Provisions that are inconsistent or in conflict with the District statutes, regulations or established policies.

Art and Nancy serve on the Existing Structures Subcommittee, which reviewed many retroactive elevator code requirements, an issue of particular interest and relevance to CHC members. The 2003 IBC elevator recommendations are still in "limbo" as comments are still being received from legal staff in addition to unspecified concerns within the DCRA.

If enacted by the City Council, existing elevators will be required to comply with the new regulations within a three year period regardless of whether the building and/or elevator is undergoing renovation. In the recent past, the City had mandated similar elevator requirements but did not actively notify the general public. These requirements were later invalidated, but only after considerable consternation for many folks. It was particularly confusing

that no distinction was made between automatic elevators and manual/attendant-operated elevators. However, thanks to Art and Nancy's participation on the Existing Structures Subcommittee, which worked closely with several other subcommittees, including Fire and Life Safety, this distinction is reflected in the new recommended amendments.

Another important distinction that has now been made is between a high-rise building (defined as one where an occupied floor is located more than 75 feet about the lowest level of fire department vehicle access) and a non high-rise building. All of the proposed amendments pertaining to elevators are geared to ensuring greater safety, both in general and in emergency operations. The proposed amendments also provide for deferred compliance in certain situations.

CHC will continue to update our members when additional information becomes available. To review code amendments, go to <http://www.dhra.dc.gov> by clicking on Building Code Advisory Committee, Committee Membership and Meetings, and then proposed/approved amendments.

CAI's 2007 Conference & Expo

The DC Cooperative Housing Coalition (CHC) is pleased to inform our members about the annual Conference & Expo sponsored by the Washington Metropolitan Chapter of the Community Associations Institute (CAI).

**Saturday,
March 31**

8:00 am to 4:00 pm

**Washington
Convention Center**

801 Mount Vernon Place
Green/Yellow Line

\$10 Expo-only admission

The Coalition is an "Allied Partner" for the event and, as such, our members are entitled to a discounted Admission-Seminars-Lunch package for \$75. See the enclosed flyer or contact CAI →→→→→→→→→

**** Exhibitors ****

Over 100 companies are scheduled to exhibit their products and services including:

- Trash and recycling
- Pools
- Security
- Laundries
- Boilers
- Painting
- Cleaning
- Management
- Paving
- Accounting
- Waterproofing
- HVAC
- Windows
- Landscaping
- And so many more!

Education

**** Seminars ****

Over a dozen seminars covering topics including:

- Rules
- Energy conservation
- Maintenance planning
- Best practices
- Communications
- Leasing restrictions
- And many more!

For more information and registration, contact CAI:

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www.caidc.org

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About the Coalition

The DC Cooperative Housing Coalition exists to advance the common interests of cooperative housing associations in the District of Columbia and to promote cooperative housing as a desirable form of home ownership. It is therefore both an advocacy organization that articulates the interests of members before government officials and regulatory agencies and a service organization that provides information and education to members.

Membership is open to all District housing cooperatives, regardless of size. A volunteer board of directors, elected by member co-ops, governs the Coalition. Activities are financed through annual dues.

The Coalition grew out of an ad-hoc group of District cooperatives that formed in response to a judicial ruling that had cast a cloud over many cooperatives by banning proportionate voting. By marshaling the forces of more than 3,000 housing cooperative units, the ad-hoc group persuaded the District's City Council to resolve the matter.

Recognizing the importance to the cooperative housing community of speaking in a single voice and maintaining the ability to respond quickly and knowledgeably to matters affecting cooperative housing, the ad-hoc group decided to form a permanent organization. The Coalition was established in 1984 and was incorporated as the DC/CHC, Inc., a nonprofit, IRS Code Section 501(c)(6) organization in the District of Columbia, in 1993.

Mark your calendars!

March 31, attend the CAI Annual Convention at the DC Convention Center

Coming soon!

Spring, attend the free Coalition seminar on "Homestead Exemption Explained!"

**Reproducing
CHC Member News
Articles**

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**Does your co-op need
a web site or
one that needs updating?**

CHC is fortunate to have found a talented web designer to create our web site. Luckier still, he is willing to create sites for our member coops at reasonable rates. Go to our web site, www.coopscdc.com, and click on "Contact us." Let us know of your interest and we will pass that information on to him.