

The Committee of 100

on the Federal City



Dr. Fitzroy Lee
Chief Financial Officer
Office of the Chief Financial Officer
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Re: Proposed OTR Tax Sale Auction

Dear Dr. Lee,

It has come to our attention that the Office of Tax and Revenue within the Office of the Chief Financial Officer has begun the process to reinstate the auctioning of real property based on delinquent tax payments. We have concerns about protecting the public interest through the implementation of this program.

1. Mailed notices have historically not reached many of the delinquent taxpayers but this is often not known before the property is sold because OTR does not use certified mail. An additional notice is listed in two newspapers, but many people, particularly low income residents, do not have newspaper subscriptions, which also prevents them from reading newspapers online, even if they had access to the internet.

2. The amended DC Comprehensive Plan requires agencies to create and implement racial equity procedures and safeguards to ensure that minorities, including low income Black residents, are not disfavored or burdened by processes and decisions that affect them. Has OTR and OCFO created a racial equity lens program that has been applied to the tax sale auction process to satisfy the goal of not facilitating displacement of Black residents?

3. Public policy in the District emphasizes homeownership as the main pathway to building generational equity and stability. The mayor has recently set goals for increasing homeownership among Black residents. The potential sale of 9,000 homes, the number reportedly listed for auction, could result in a substantial number of Black households losing their investment in their future. Has OTR conferred with the mayor or the Department of Planning and Economic Development about whether the auction conflicts with current public policy and whether there are other means to satisfy the tax delinquencies?

A beautiful and livable Washington, DC for all.

We hope that you expeditiously investigate the appropriateness of conducting the auction, which we understand is scheduled for July 2022. We know you share our concern that the District not lose more Black residents or render them homeless by selling their homes due to a tax debt that may be as low as \$2500.

Sincerely,



Kirby Wining, Chair

Committee of 100 on the Federal City

Cc: Phil Mendelson
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