Testimony Before the Zoning Commission
By Eugene Dewitt Kinlow
On the Unified Communication Center
April 18, 2002

Good Afternoon Chairman Mitten, and members of the zoning commission. I am Eugene Dewitt Kinlow, a resident of ward 8. I am the Executive Director of the Washington East Foundation, an organization dedicated to building sustainable communities east of the east of the Anacostia River, a board member of the East of the River Community newspaper and a member of the Ward 8 Coalition; a planning advocacy organization for the ward. By reference I am also a member of the DC Preservation League and also a member of the Committee of 100.

I am here today to offer my support to the Unified Communications Center (UCC). This project, if approved will be the District government's largest single structural investment in Ward 8 at a time when investment is sorely needed.

I support the UCC concept for the following three reasons:

1. The UCC as designed will consolidate the command and control functions of fire, police, Emergency medical services, 911, 311 and the 727-1000 call center. It is my understanding that such consolidation in a state of the art facility will increase the efficiency of such services lead to improved service delivery to residents and faster response times from our public agencies. The UCC's use as a control command center is preferred over the present decentralized systems that lacks in the delivery of coordinated emergency communications. The new UCC will provide the District with the nations premiere emergency communications service delivery and provide a secure communications environment.

2. The UCC will provide an economic anchor for development that will serve to bolster a community that has suffered for a lack of disinvestments, much as the Reeves center provided for the U street Corridor. With such an important anchor in our community the UCC will serve as a catalyst for future private, and public investment. It is my hope that the UCC in conjunction with the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative at Poplar Point, and Transit Oriented Development

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enhancements at the Anacostia and Congress Heights Station will serve to provide a synergy that will create opportunities for increased investment, new homeowners that work in the community, and increased utilization of our local, and small businesses.

3. The community can benefit by the building in of community benefits such as First Source employment opportunities, creating mentoring and intern opportunities and job development from our local high Schools including Anacostia and Ballou, creating new historic preservation opportunities for the three historic cottages in the UCC footprint, and by providing an environmental clean-up of the fly ash and other environmental detriments. Of the numerous community benefits discussed as a component of this project, I whole heartedly endorse developing apprenticeship programs so that residents can obtain good training and that will lead to jobs for our resident. I also endorse a commitment by the city to provide contracting opportunities to local, small and disadvantaged businesses. Additionally, I am hopeful that the UCC working with representatives of Public Works and the Department of Health will begin to work on cleaning up the environmental problems that have plagued the East Campus, and have been assured that the fly ash and soot will be remediated. I implore the city to keep lines of communication open (no Pun intended) to facilitate a well-rounded package of community benefits. I thank you for your time.