

I am Valerie Jablow, a DC taxpayer testifying about how the public has not been a meaningful part of the approval process for Eagle.

Less than a year ago, in April 2019, you approved Eagle having two buildings under one name (Fairlawn). One building was its soon-to-be-closed New Jersey Ave. facility; the other was 2345 R St. SE, which Eagle constructed.

But Eagle did not locate at 2345 R—and now is proposing to NEVER locate there, but instead locate at a new facility on Half Street in SW.

It is not clear from materials publicly available whether Eagle's new location in SW will be ready in time for school this fall--nor whether there is outdoor space for the school's young children.

2345 R is now in the lottery as the address for Lee Montessori East End, which has not been approved by you to be there, despite signing a lease with Eagle—and for which you have not even started soliciting public comment.<sup>1</sup>

Nor does Eagle's application now before you show its lease for the SW facility; how much remains to be paid on revenue bonds issued for constructing 2345 R; or the fact that \$1.5 million in liens have been brought against Eagle in the last 2 months alone for that construction.<sup>2</sup> The financials in both staff reports mention none of that.<sup>3</sup>

And that's not even mentioning neighbor opposition to 2345 R and DCRA issuing multiple stop work orders for unauthorized construction<sup>4</sup>.

Approving Eagle's SW facility means approving Eagle being **only** a landlord at a facility that it built with DC revenue bonds issued with the understanding that it would actually be located there as a school—NOT a landlord.<sup>5</sup>

Disturbingly, the April 2019 staff report on Eagle suggested a vote postponement if public comment against Eagle was submitted—then noted none was. But that is untrue—and a **second** citizen delivered testimony in person then against Eagle, whose plans were approved anyway.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, a public witness's outline at the January 2020 board meeting--about Eagle's lack of due diligence regarding demand and community engagement in SW--were omitted from a summary of public comments, which also summarized other comments incorrectly.<sup>7</sup>

Intended or not, this amounts to public deception—and vitiates any possibility the public is a meaningful part of this process. I'm sorry to say this.

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<sup>1</sup> Adding to the confusion was the fact that charter board staff altered the original January 27, 2020 staff report (which mentioned Lee leasing 2345 R), by deleting all references to Lee. The rationale for this, per spokesperson Tomeika Bowden, was to give the schools time to tell their families. However, there was no note to indicate to the public how the one version of the same report of the same date differed from the other.

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The original January 27, 2020 report is here (posted on 1/24/2020):

<https://educationdc.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/2020-01-21-ph-eagle-academy-new-location-proposal-bbf-public-v2.pdf>

The altered January 27, 2020 report is here: <https://educationdc.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/alterepcsbreport.pdf>

A comparison document of the two reports is here:

<https://educationdc.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/comparison.doc.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> The January 2020 lien is here: <https://educationdc.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/2020009281.pdf>

The February 2020 lien is here: <https://educationdc.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/second-lien.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> There are two staff reports, one dated January 27, 2020 and one dated February 24, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Both neighbor opposition and permitting problems were outlined in a news report in January 2020 here:

<https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/education/eagle-academy-charter-school-built-without-permits-leaving-before-opens/65-c89178db-8bd6-4245-a42a-22d9d6f25179>

<sup>5</sup> Because of the high price of real estate in DC, there exists a possibility that Eagle intended all along to use 2345 R only as an investment, bolstered by low-interest financing through the revenue bonds.

<sup>6</sup> The staff report dated April 22, 2019 said “*To date, the DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) has not received any written public comments. The Board will discuss all public comments received prior to its vote, and will postpone the vote if public comment in opposition is received.*”

But Camille Joyner sent two emails in public comment against Eagle to [public.comment@dcpcsb.org](mailto:public.comment@dcpcsb.org) on April 22, 2019. The first email was sent at 12:41 am, and the second was sent at 7:27 am. She received a reply to both at 10:23 am from [public.comment@dcpcsb.org](mailto:public.comment@dcpcsb.org), which said “Thank you for your public comment. Your comment has been received.”

Later that day, at the charter board meeting, Jackie Brown testified against Eagle. Ironically, I also testified at that hearing, noting that the siting and approval process by the charter board appears publicly bankrupt, inasmuch as other schools were listed in the lottery without being approved by the charter board.

<sup>7</sup> Grace Hu’s testimony at the January 27, 2020 board meeting noted that Eagle’s SW facility has a target enrollment of 250, so because Eagle does not have a plan for hitting that enrollment, the result is that Eagle may market itself to families who otherwise would go to Amidon-Bowen. Her testimony is here:

<https://educationdc.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/eagle-academy-grace-hu-testimony-jan-2020.docx>

I and others testified about how Eagle used DC revenue bonds to create a building that was not actually going to be used for the purpose for which those bonds were legislated—not tax breaks.

See my testimony here: <https://educationdc.files.wordpress.com/2020/01/eaglemeridian.docx>

See others’ testimony here: <https://educationdc.files.wordpress.com/2020/01/camille.docx>

The rationale for not including *actual* testimony (instead of just a link to video of the entire January board meeting) in the materials for the 2/24/2020 meeting was not given—despite the fact that I sent all the testimony except Grace Hu’s by email to Barbara Boyd on 1/27/2020 at 5:33 pm. I then resent both via email to Rick Cruz on 1/28/2020 at 10:36 am.