

**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE & COMMITTEE ON THE
JUDICIARY AND PUBLIC SAFETY
NOTICE OF A JOINT PUBLIC OVERSIGHT HEARING**
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

**CHAIRMAN PHIL MENDELSON
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

&

**COUNCILMEMBER CHARLES ALLEN, CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY AND PUBLIC SAFETY
ANNOUNCE A JOINT PUBLIC OVERSIGHT HEARING**

on

Agency Responses to Code Violations and the Subsequent Fire at 708 Kennedy Street N.W.

on

**Monday, November 18, 2019, 1:00 p.m.
Room 500, Council Chambers, John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20004**

Council Chairman Phil Mendelson and Councilmember Charles Allen announce a joint public oversight hearing of the Committee of the Whole and the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety on “**Agency Responses to Code Violations and the Subsequent Fire at 708 Kennedy Street N.W.**” The hearing will be on **Monday, November 18, 2019 at 1:00 p.m. in Room 500 (Council Chambers)** of the John A. Wilson Building.

On the morning of August 18, 2019, a fire started in a row house at 708 Kennedy Street N.W. that ultimately resulted in the deaths of Fitsum Kebede and Yafety Solomon. Approximately five months prior to the fire, a Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) officer, responding to a noise complaint at the property, identified numerous unsafe conditions, including no exit signs, no working smoke detectors, and an untagged fire extinguisher. He reported this to the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) and to the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (FEMS). A DCRA inspector did not visit the house until two months after the officer’s initial email, and the inspector never went inside the building. After the fire, it was determined that the rowhouse was an illegal boarding house and had numerous code violations that made it difficult for tenants to escape the building as it burned. A third-party review was commenced in late August to determine gaps in policy and communication processes that had contributed to the lack of action from DCRA and FEMS to protect the tenants. That review, as well as a broader discussion regarding house code enforcement, is the subject of this hearing. The Committees will also be seeking additional information on the dispatch of FEMS to the scene of the fire from the Office of Unified Communications.

Those who wish to testify are asked to email the Committee of the Whole at cow@dccouncil.us, or to call Blaine Stum, Legislative Policy Advisor, at (202) 724-8092, and to provide your name, address, telephone number, organizational affiliation, and title (if any) by the close of business **Thursday, November 14, 2019**. Persons wishing to testify are encouraged, but not required, to submit 15 copies of written testimony. If submitted by the close of business on November 14, 2019 the testimony will be distributed to Councilmembers before the hearing.

Witnesses should limit their testimony to four minutes; less time will be allowed if there are a large number of witnesses. Copies of the legislation can be obtained through the Legislative Services Division of the Secretary of the Council's office or on <http://lims.dccouncil.us>. Hearing materials, including a draft witness list, can be accessed at <http://www.chairmanmendelson.com/circulation>, 24 hours in advance of the hearing.

If you are unable to testify at the hearing, written statements are encouraged and will be made a part of the official record. Written statements should be submitted to the Committee of the Whole, Council of the District of Columbia, Suite 410 of the John A. Wilson Building, 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004. The record will close at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, December 2, 2019.