

## **Senior Commission Members Back Johnson Over CM Lewis George's Move to Oust Her – Examine Bylaws**

At a packed meeting of the Ward 4 Mini-Commission on Aging Thursday, Oct. 10, member after member in turn voiced support for its chair Jocelynn Johnson over Councilmember Janeese Lewis George's attempt to oust her and asked to see the Bylaws. Members cited the failure to warn Ms Johnson of alleged 'disrespect,' the failure to try to resolve the problem short of ouster and the relative harshness of removal for apparently minor offenses.

Johnson revealed George's September 16 letter (see below) telling the Board she would boycott the commission's meetings until Ms Johnson was no longer chair. Members said George was wrong to allow a personal animus to divert her attention from the needs of her constituency. Members raised questions about process and asked to see their Bylaws after Johnson was stopped from reading them aloud. In an hour of discussion, no one spoke to defend the Board or George but the Board and George's chief of staff, Candace Nelson.

Finally, Board Member Sam McCoy said the Board had made its decision and now it was up to the membership. Whereupon a motion was made and seconded to reinstate Johnson. But the interim Chair Gail Williams,

acknowledging some confusion over who were members, set the vote for the November meeting and abruptly adjourned the meeting.

The commission meets the second Thursday of the month at MPD station, 6001 Georgia Ave. NW in Ward 4.

Nick DelleDonne

[HearUsNow@GoogleGroups.com](mailto:HearUsNow@GoogleGroups.com)

October 15, 2024

**JANESE LEWIS GEORGE**  
Ward 4 Councilmember  
Chair of the Committee on  
Facilities and Family Services

**COMMITTEE MEMBER**  
Committee on Transportation and the Environment  
Committee on Executive Administration and Labor  
Committee on Public Works and Operations

September 16, 2024

Executive Board  
Ward 4 Mini-Commission on Aging  
Email: [ward4mcoadc@gmail.com](mailto:ward4mcoadc@gmail.com)

Dear Executive Board Members:

I write to raise my concerns about the actions and behaviors exhibited by the Chair of the Ward 4 Mini-Commission on Aging. Chairperson Johnson has created a non-collaborative environment that puts the advocacy efforts for Ward 4 Seniors at risk with my colleagues on the Council of the District of Columbia and the Executive Branch. I have personally experienced unprofessional and disrespectful conduct, and I have witnessed it towards my team, the Mayor, fellow Councilmembers and their staff, and agency directors and their representatives. This type of behavior has become a disturbing norm during Commission meetings and interactions. It is entirely unacceptable and is in direct conflict with the principles of respectful civic engagement.

Additionally, the Commission is supposed to be non-partisan and independent of political activity. However, Chairperson Johnson on numerous occasions used the Mini Commission's email address and listserv to recruit volunteers and advertise events for candidates. Also, it has become evident that outside influences from Ward 2 are being allowed to set the agenda of the Commission, rather than prioritizing the needs and work of the Ward 4 Seniors' community. Specifically, Nicholas DelleDonne of DC Safe Streets Coalition has been ushered around the John A. Wilson Building and given a platform at Commission meetings. Furthermore, Chairperson Johnson was quoted in a news article in the DC Line and reaches out to reporters to further her partisan political agenda. This misalignment of focus, coupled with a failure to participate in key oversight hearings, hearing on specific legislation, or roundtables that impact the well-being of Ward 4 Seniors, raises significant concerns about the integrity and purpose of the Commission overall.

As a result of these breaches professionalism, respect, and commitment to Ward 4, my office and I will no longer attend the Commission's monthly meeting until new leadership is in place and a renewed commitment to the integrity of the Commission's mission is established. My responsibility, first and foremost, is to the residents of Ward 4, and I cannot in good conscience continue to recognize an organization that compromises that trust.

However, I want to reassure Ward 4 Seniors that our office will remain fully accessible to them. We will continue to provide support and services on Wednesdays at Hattie Holmes and Ft. Stevens Senior Centers. Should any seniors wish to request separate office hours on Fridays, that option remains available to ensure their needs are met.

Over the years, I have had a great respect for the Ward 4 Mini-Commission on Aging. I hope we can get back to a working relationship and that the Commission will take the necessary steps to restore integrity and realign with the priorities of our Ward 4 Seniors' community.

In Service,

*Janeese Lewis George*