

# **CAPITOL AREA** *neighbors*

Front St. to Third St., Walnut St. to Forster St.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **GSA DELAY TO COURTHOUSE DECISION AND COMMENTS BY THE PROJECT MANAGER HEIGHTEN NEIGHBORHOOD ANGUISH**

**Capitol Area Neighbors Concerned that GSA's Delay Regarding the Final Site Selection for the New Harrisburg Federal Courthouse, as well as Comments by Project Manager Abby Low are Causing Undue Hardship for Local Neighborhood and Call for Decision this December.**

Sept. 29, 2005- Harrisburg, PA – Residents of the Capitol Area Neighborhood were dismayed by the General Services Administration's (GSA) six (6) month delay regarding the announcement of the final site selection for the new Harrisburg Federal Courthouse. GSA cited the need for additional time to conduct a Social Impact Analysis. "We believe this delay is causing undue hardship for the property owners in and around the affected area (Green St. to Third St., Forster St. to North St.)" said CAN spokesman Matt Simmons. "There are neighbors who've been losing sleep over this issue for six (6) months and have now been told that the expected GSA Christmas gift will now be presented as Christmas in June. People have put off renovation and maintenance projects expecting to be able to pick up in the spring and now that's not going to happen. For Sale signs used to come and go overnight in our neighborhood, but now properties sit for weeks" explained Simmons.

With regard to the Social Impact Analysis, the CAN Steering Committee believes that the results will clearly support their arguments that the destruction of the homes and businesses along Green, North and Third streets would have the most detrimental effect on the City.

"Selecting the CAN site would disrupt the daily activities of the immediate neighbors as well as the thousands of people who worship, visit, work, shop,

and dine in our neighborhood,” commented Rev. Russell Mueller. “In addition, there would be significant loss to the city’s tax base as well as to the historic properties that make up so much of the charm of this neighborhood.”

Additionally, the CAN Steering Committee takes exception to several of the statements attributed to Abby Low, GSA Project Manager for the courthouse project, in yesterday’s Patriot-News.

CAN President Bill Allis responded, “We find it hard to believe that the replacement cost of the Jackson Lick apartment buildings would be the most expensive option. The Jackson tower is currently vacant and the Lick tower is roughly half occupied. The Harrisburg Housing Authority has even expressed a desire to build a new facility, but the current administration, the president and Congress, has zeroed out that budget.” Allis continued stating, “We also find it hard to believe that HUD could demand replacement value for a vacant building, particularly when new housing is only needed for 70 to 80 residents. The CAN Steering Committee has always believed that GSA’s best option was to create a win – win – win- win scenario by choosing the Jackson Lick site. By that I mean the residents of the Jackson Lick apartments win; they receive new affordable housing, the city wins; they receive the anchor for the development in the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor, the City wins a second time since there is no loss to the tax base and finally both CAN and the City win since our homes and our historic neighborhood is preserved.”

“We also take exception to Ms. Low’s statement that crime is a large concern surrounding the Cumberland Court and Jackson Lick sites,” stated Simmons. “If Ms. Low knew Harrisburg, she would know that the Sixth Street area faces no additional levels of crime than other parts of the city, including CAN.”

“CAN residents and the Steering Committee have worked in concert with the Harrisburg Mayor Steven R. Reed, Harrisburg City Council, Representative Buxton, Senator Piccola and Congressman Holden to ensure that GSA understands the significant negative impacts; personal, cultural and financial, that locating the new Federal Courthouse in CAN will have upon the city” said Simmons. “Everyone involved with this process, except GSA, recognizes that this neighborhood is not an acceptable location for a federal courthouse. We hope that GSA will recognize this and that Ms. Low will suspend the Social Impact Analysis, announce the final site selection this December, as originally promised and end the anguish of all concerned.”