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“Youth Engagement” was the theme for the bimonthly Mayor’s Night-In, which took place on Monday, June 2nd inside the War Memorial Museum. “This is a great gathering of young people helping to decide their own futures,” said 14th District Councilwoman Mary Pat Clarke. Dozens of community adults and youth occupied tables inside the museum for a two hour session facilitated by the Mayor’s Office. The goal was to articulate community concerns and needs between youth and adults, and how within a community structure, gaps could be bridged between both parties. The format of the evening consisted of conversations where each table recorded concerns, after which one young person and one adult representing each table would stand before the room and share their group’s outcomes. Opening remarks were given by Dixon, Mayor’s Office of Neighborhoods Director Angela Fraser, Community Law in Action Executive Director Terry Hickey, and New Light Leadership Coalition Inc. President Farajii Muhammad. Unbeknownst to everyone, one group was to change the evening’s conversation in a specific way. Peer 2 Peer Youth Enterprises, a coalition of approximately 20 youth organizations appeared in large numbers occupying seats at every table. Some were garbed in Peer 2 Peer T-shirts, white hospital masks and paper plates with slogans written on them, as well as attire with red x marks with the slogan, “No Education, No Life.” Like clockwork, a representative from each table stood up and articulated the mission of Peer 2 Peer and the \$3 million interest from the city’s rainy day fund they have been demanding for their organization, which has resulted in a four day hunger strike. The mayor and others attempted to address the organization regarding their issues and what the city is doing in

terms of youth funding, asking them to allow others to make their comments known to no avail. At the end of the evening there were five tables that did not have the opportunity to speak because time had run out. There was a mixed audience reaction to Peer 2 Peer ranging from total support to total disgust. “I want to let them know that adults care and that the city is not the only place they can get their money from,” said Teairha Washington, President of Divine Purpose Healthcare. “We had no idea about this Peer 2 Peer, but we’re interested in knowing what they are going to do,” said Maxie Davis of the Mount Winans Community Association. “If they want dollars from the mayor, then Peer 2 Peer should have tentacles that reach out to all of the communities within Baltimore City,” said Ann Robinson of Mount Winans. “That attitude that I saw in that room is the reason I moved away from this city. I would not want one cent of my tax payer dollars for a bunch of kids to act that ignorant,” said Mayor’s Office of Cable Communications Mike Wells. “I was a little disappointed because I hate to see a stacked meeting. You do not have to beat somebody over the head with one particular idea or method,” said Maryland State House of Delegates Melvin L. Stukes (D-44). There are some things that we could do if everyone could sit down and hear each other and talk with each other,” said Dr. Sylvia Butler, of Baltimore City Public Schools and Associate Minister of Perkins Square Baptist Church. One adult representative expressed to the mayor the young people’s request of a monthly continuation of the youth engagement sessions so they could “build a foundation of coming together more cohesively.” The mayor appeared to agree.

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