

Permission to issue nearly \$3

preparation stages, according to reports from the state's School

go ahead to start school construction projects that have already been

not Christe needs to act, said Krengel.

# The lonely protest of Abdul-Rasheed

By Chris Sykes  
Staff Writer

West Ward Councilman Hassan Abdul-Rasheed staged a one-man protest against the mayor Tuesday morning outside City Hall.

Abdul-Rasheed said he had his "Occupy 29 North Day," marching alone on the sidewalk, to protest what he called a lack of transparency and accountability in the administration of Mayor Eldridge Hawkins Jr.

Abdul-Rasheed, who represents the city's West Ward, said one of the events which pushed him to protest concerned the hiring of an acting municipal judge. He said he sought information for three works before he received it.

"This occurred when the mayor refused to give me information regarding acting Municipal Judge Harold Fullilove Jr.'s work schedule, rate of pay and whether or not he is receiving any benefits," Abdul-Rasheed said.

He added that the council members learned of Fullilove's appointment through a memorandum from the administration. "That was a slap in the face since he's being paid by taxpayer dollars and the fact that we're in the middle of the budget process.

"That was the last straw in terms of realizing that the administration is essentially doing the same thing they did during the last budget process," Abdul-Rasheed continued. The councilman accused the administration of withholding budget documents, resulting in limiting the oversight function of the council, then forcing the governing body into taking certain actions.

"They force the council's hand, saying we didn't approve certain things; hence, we didn't do what we needed to do make the transitional budget turn into the new calendar year budget."

The six-month transitional

budget ends Dec. 31. Abdul-Rasheed said that is why he wanted to raise issues while there was time to for benefits to be achieved.

In response to the protest, Hawkins said Tuesday night that while Abdul-Rasheed is entitled to stage a protest, the councilman's claims are without basis.

"I think Councilman Abdul-Rasheed's recent general conduct is an embarrassment to the city," Hawkins said. "His assertions are ridiculous and lack proper context. However, I congratulate him on exercising his right to protest all by himself."

There was not much traffic

entering or leaving City Hall during Abdul-Rasheed's protest, but his presence was noted by the few visitors who passed by.

"I think he has the right to express feelings and the way that he thinks," said a woman who said she came to City Hall to address a personal issue. She did not provide her name. "I was not surprised or distracted by seeing him out there. You see this anywhere, especially today."

While the woman may have referred to the Occupy Wall Street protests in New York, Abdul-Rasheed said it was a coincidence he chose the same name and theme,

a response to government gone bad.

But that doesn't mean that it is a bad thing.

"This is just something that I felt I needed to do even though I recently had surgery to replace my knee," Abdul-Rasheed said. "It shouldn't have taken three weeks for me to get the information that I asked for. They could have given it to me that same day that I first requested it, but I finally had to file an Open Public Records Act request just to get it."

Abdul-Rasheed noted that no city employees, including police officers, attempted to disrupt his protest.

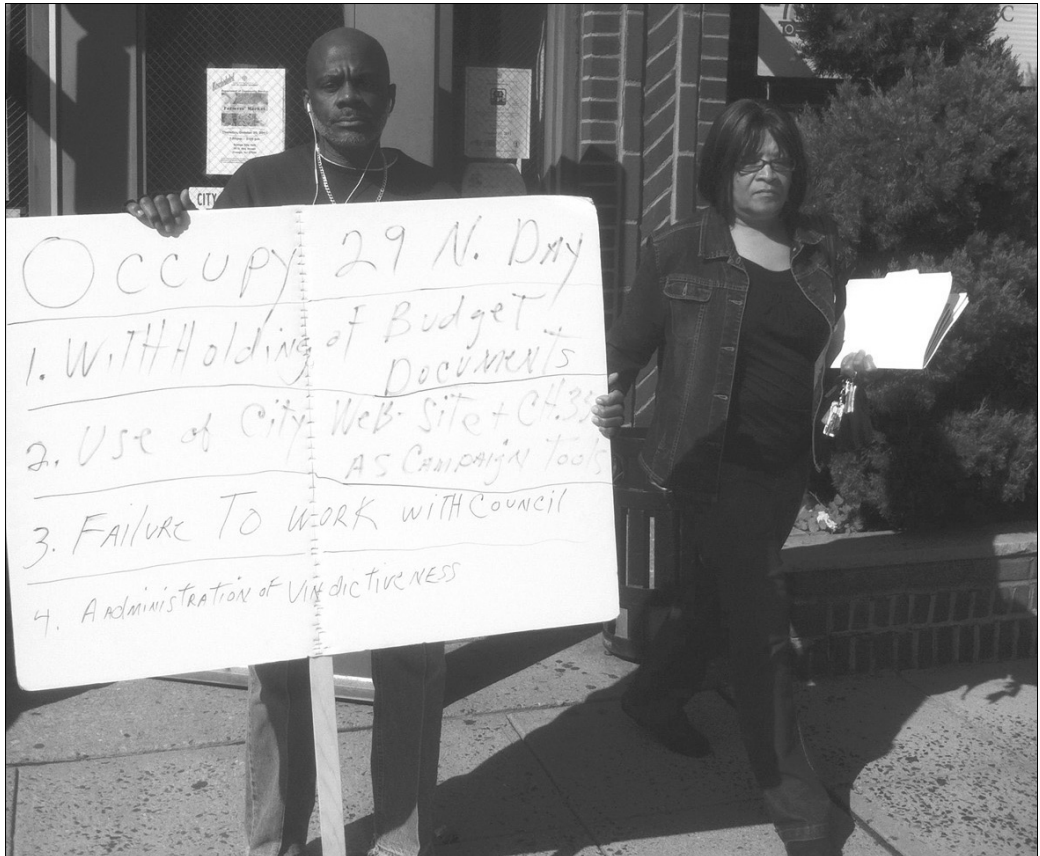


Photo By Chris Sykes

As a woman leaves City Hall, Councilman Hassan Abdul-Rasheed presents his protest sign with his four claims against the municipal actions of Mayor Eldridge Hawkins Jr.