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April 30, 2006

Ms. Ellen McCarthy, Director
DC Office of Planning
801 North Capitol St., NE
Washington, DC 20002

Re: Capitol Place Planned Unit Development (PUD)
Zoning Commission Case No. 05-37

Dear Ms. McCarthy,

We write in opposition to the current design of the proposed Capitol Place PUD.

The Applicant proposes a ten-story, 100-foot building that pretends to be a 9-story, 90-foot building by neglecting the first floor mezzanine and by measuring the project from 3rd & H – a point some 10 feet higher than 2nd Street. The first floor and mezzanine are retail/commercial with eight floors of residential above. While not as tall as the highest part of the SEC, the street wall of this project will be higher than the SEC building along the length of 2nd Street. The project includes three levels of parking under the entire footprint of the site. The Applicant requests three significant zoning bonuses: a lot consolidation to apply height measurements from Third and H to the entire site; a rezoning from C-2-A to C-2-B for nearly 2/3 of the site; and a Planned Unit Development on top of the requested rezoning.

The lot along H Street was recently up-zoned from C-2 A to C-2-B as part of the H Street Overlay. The lots fronting on Second and G Streets are currently C-2-A, but these also have been up-zoned from C-1 in recent years. All of the existing buildings west of the mid-block alley would be demolished, including some 14 potentially eligible historic structures.

The proposed project is excessive in height and does not provide an appropriate transition to the lower-scale, R-4 zoned properties on this square. The proposed project creates numerous adverse impacts for the residents on this square that will diminish the enjoyment of our homes. These include the view of the building from the rear of our residences; the loss of residential character; diminished privacy in our back yards; noise from commercial activities; noise from outdoor activity areas; light pollution and visual nuisance of proposed residences at night; increased traffic; and increased competition for scarce on-street parking. We cannot support awarding the requested zoning bonuses: they constitute an incentive to create adverse impacts. In addition to height and bulk increases, the up-zoning from C-2-A to C-2-B also allows an expansion of the potential

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uses. For example, fast food restaurants would be a matter of right in the C-2-B zoning. We are also concerned about the advisability of digging in excess of 30 feet below very fragile rowhouses, and in the case of one house immediately up to the property line.

The residents on this square will very likely request Party Status and voice strong opposition to the requested zoning bonus from C-2-A to C-2-B, and oppose the lot consolidation that leads to the misleading and fictitious measurement of the building height. These substantial zoning bonuses create the most severe adverse impacts and together with the PUD result in fully doubling the matter of right height for significantly more than 50% of the site. Further, this project is not consistent with the spirit and intent of the Comprehensive Plan, H Street Overlay, or the NoMa Plan. All of these planning documents call for a transition to the R-4 rowhouse neighborhoods and do not support the Applicant's requested multiple zoning bonuses.

The Applicant should revise their proposal to reflect the existing zoning envelope. Substantial additional height and bulk remains available through a PUD under the current (and recently increased) zoning. There is simply no cogent urban planning argument for supporting the requested zoning bonuses. This incentive will simply reward the Applicant for demolition of potentially eligible historic structures to allow a project of excessive height with multiple adverse impacts.

Sincerely,



Sandra Tallant, Landscape Architect, Urban Planner



Drury Tallant, PhD, Architect, Urban Planner
732 Third St., NE
Washington, DC 20002

Cc: Ms. Carol Mitten, Chair, DC Zoning Commission
Jennifer Steingasser
Mark Dixon, ANC 6C Chair
William Sisolak, ANC 6C Zoning Chair
Bob Braunohler, Louis Dreyfus Property Group