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ZONING COMMISSION CASE NO. 05-38

**APPLICATION OF FAIRFIELD RESIDENTIAL, LLC FOR PLANNED USE
DEVELOPMENT
/ZONING MAP AMENDMENT AT 1000-1100 SIXTH STREET SW: MARINA VIEW
TOWERS**

**TESTIMONY OF LEA ADAMS, PRESIDENT OF
MARINA VIEW TOWERS TENANTS' ASSOCIATION, INC.**

GOOD EVENING, MADAME CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE ZONING COMMISSION, MY NAME IS LEA ADAMS, AND I LIVE IN AN APARTMENT AT 1100 SIXTH STREET SW. I AM HONORED TO SERVE MY FELLOW TENANTS AS PRESIDENT OF MARINA VIEW TOWERS TENANTS' ASSOCIATION, INC., A D.C. NON-PROFIT CORPORATION. IT IS IN THAT CAPACITY THAT I COME BEFORE YOU TODAY. SINCE I WILL NOT BE AFFORDED 3 ADDITIONAL MINUTES FOR INDIVIDUAL TESTIMONY, I WILL TRY TO IDENTIFY ANY PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES AS SUCH.

OUR ASSOCIATION REPRESENTS A MAJORITY OF RESIDENTS WHO LIVE IN THE 141 OCCUPIED UNITS AT 1000 AND 1100 SIXTH STREET SOUTHWEST, A 255-UNIT, 8-STORY, 2-BUILDING RENTAL PROPERTY KNOWN AS MARINA VIEW TOWERS.

AT A MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 28, 2007, IT WAS THE UNANIMOUS DECISION OF OUR 6-MEMBER BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO SUPPORT THE PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT AND ZONING MAP AMENDMENT APPLICATION OF

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FAIRFIELD RESIDENTIAL, LLC, WHICH OWNS AND MANAGES THE PROPERTY. I WILL EXPLAIN IN MY TESTIMONY THE REASONS FOR OUR SUPPORT AS WELL AS OUTSTANDING CONCERNS AND CONTINGENCIES AFFECTING IT.

MY PRIMARY PURPOSE AS T.A. PRESIDENT IS TO ENSURE THAT THE NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF ALL OUR TENANTS ARE ADDRESSED AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE. THIS HAS BEEN A SPECIAL CHALLENGE IN THE 15 MONTHS SINCE FAIRFIELD ANNOUNCED ITS REDEVELOPMENT PLANS, SHORTLY AFTER WE LEARNED – TO OUR GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT, BY THE WAY – OF THE SALE OF THE BUILDING WITHOUT PRIOR NOTIFICATION TO RESIDENTS BY THE PREVIOUS OWNER. LIKE TENANTS THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT, WE WERE DISMAYED TO LEARN THAT THE SALE OF OUR HOME WAS AMONG WHAT ARE COMMONLY CALLED “95/5” TRANSACTIONS, AND THAT T.O.P.A. RIGHTS WOULD NOT APPLY. ALTHOUGH THE SALE TOOK PLACE PRIOR TO MY TENURE, I LED OUR EFFORTS TO HAVE IT OVERTURNED, WITHOUT SUCCESS.

ONCE WE ACCEPTED THIS DEFEAT, OUR ALREADY DIVERSE APARTMENT COMMUNITY BECAME COMPARTMENTALIZED INTO THREE GROUPS, BASED ON ASPIRATIONS AND INTENT: FIRST, THOSE WHO WISH TO CONTINUE RENTING AT MARINA VIEW INTO THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE; SECOND, THOSE WHO WELCOME AN OPPORTUNITY TO PURCHASE CONDOS; AND THIRD, THOSE WHO ARE PREPARED TO RELOCATE, GIVEN THE RIGHT INCENTIVE TO DO SO.

IT WAS WITH THIS IN MIND THAT THE MEMBERS OF OUR TENANT ASSOCIATION BOARD – WHOSE INDIVIDUAL PLANS FIT, BY THE WAY, INTO ALL THREE CATEGORIES – CONSIDERED FAIRFIELD'S REQUEST FOR OUR SUPPORT AT THIS HEARING. WE REACHED THE FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS, ON WHICH WE BASE OUR SUPPORT FOR FAIRFIELD'S APPLICATION:

1. FAIRFIELD HAS BEEN DILIGENT, RESPONSIVE AND FOR FAIR IN COMMUNICATING ITS PLANS WITH TENANTS INDIVIDUALLY, IN GROUPS AND THROUGH THE ASSOCIATION;
2. WHILE CHANGE IS DIFFICULT AND EVEN PAINFUL, IT IS INEVITABLE. THE PLANNED DESIGN OF THE TWO NEW PROPOSED TOWERS WILL BE A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER, IN TERMS OF PRESERVING THE BEST OF EXISTING HISTORIC AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITIES, PROVIDING MUCH-NEEDED RETAIL SPACE, AND PLANNING AMENITIES THAT ARE OF VALUE TO THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY WITHOUT JEOPARDIZING THE PRIVACY, SAFETY AND COMFORT OF EXISTING RESIDENTS.

AS I MENTIONED, OUR SUPPORT IS NOT UNQUALIFIED. BASED ON CONVERSATIONS WITH THE OFFICES OF THE TENANT ADVOCATE, WARD 6 COUNCIL MEMBER TOMMY WELLS, AND OTHERS WHO HAVE TAKEN AN INTEREST IN OUR TENANTS' BEST INTERESTS, WE WOULD LIKE THE COMMISSION TO HEAR AND CONSIDER APPLYING THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS TO ITS APPROVAL:

FIRST, THAT FAIRFIELD WORK WITH APPROPRIATE D.C. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO ENSURE THAT THE LETTER AND SPIRIT OF ALL LAWS AFFECTING RENT CONTROL AND TENANTS' RIGHTS ARE SUPPORTED, WITHOUT EXCEPTION;

SECOND, THAT FAIRFIELD PROVIDE TO EACH TENANT, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, A DETAILED PLAN FOR THE TWO EXISTING TOWERS, INCLUDING TIMETABLES, TENANT ACCOMMODATIONS AND SPECIFICS ABOUT HOW THE PLANNED RENOVATIONS WILL BE CARRIED OUT WHETHER OR NOT CONDO CONVERSION IS APPROVED.

IN CLOSING, FAIRFIELD HAS ASSURED US THAT NO MARINA VIEW TOWERS TENANT WILL BE DISPLACED AND THAT ALL WILL RETAIN THE RIGHT TO REMAIN AND RENT AN APARTMENT AT MARINA VIEW TOWERS. WE HOPE THE ZONING COMMISSION WILL USE ITS GOOD OFFICES TO ENCOURAGE THE APPLICANT TO KEEP ITS PROMISES.

GIVEN THESE CAVEATS, WE URGE THE COMMISSION TO APPROVE THE REFERENCED APPLICATION AT ITS FIRST OPPORTUNITY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CONSIDERATION.