

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ZONING COMMISSION
CASE NO. 09-03 SKYLAND HOLDINGS, LLC –
CONSOLIDATED PUD & RELATED MAP AMENDMENT
IN SQUARES 5632, 5633, 5641, 5641n, & VARIOUS PARCELS
Thursday, December 10, 2009

TESTIMONY OF KAREN WILLIAMS AND MARVIN BOWSER

I am Karen Lee Williams, President of the Hillcrest Community Civic Association (HCCA). I reside at 2914 W Street, SE. This is Marvin Bowser, 1st Vice President of HCCA. He resides at 2501 33rd Street, SE. We speak today on behalf of the Hillcrest Community Civic Association. The mission of HCCA is to enhance the quality of life and prosperity of the residents, families, community organizations, businesses and institutions located within our boundaries. HCCA fulfills its mission, in part, by advancing the interests of our members before the government and private sector and leveraging our collective influence to achieve community improvements.

The Hillcrest Community Civic Accusation represents more than 400 households in Ward 7. The HCCA boundaries are: Pennsylvania Avenue SE from 31st Street to Southern Avenue; Southern Avenue to Naylor Road; Naylor Road to 27th Street; 27th Street & Naylor Road to Pennsylvania Avenue & 31st Street. Skyland is the major commercial area located within our geographic boundaries.

There are five major points we want convey to the Zoning Commission on why HCCA supports the Skyland Town Center Development and the Development Team, Skyland Holdings, LLC.

First HCCA and Hillcrest residents have been the catalyst, visionaries and champions for Skyland redevelopment for more than 15 years. Initially, because

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Skyland a major shopping area serving our section of the city was falling prey to neglect, we worked to revitalize the shopping center. In 2000, we started making the case to former Mayor Anthony Williams for a brand new Skyland Shopping Center.

Second, HCCA members in large numbers have participated in every public and community process to help shape this project into a proposal for a "prominent shopping, living and gathering place" to meet the needs of our thriving community. We have provided compelling testimony at every City Council proceeding to make the successful case for \$40 million in city financing. We successfully led the fight against the effort by the private owners to prevent revitalization by proposing to use historic preservation of unqualified buildings. We also helped make a successful case for the use of eminent domain as a means for the city to purchase the property for revitalization purposes. Though we are disappointed as a community by the pace of the project due to the legal entanglements associated with eminent domain, we acknowledge the steady progress on the project by the city government and the Development Team.

Third, Gary Rappaport & his partners were selected through a competitive process. This Development Team has become a valued partner in our community. We have worked with them for 9 years and know them to be open, forthright, and accessible. Thus far they have lived up to their commitments. They have supported community causes and projects over the nine year period. We have monitored other projects developed by members of this team and have been pleased with the outcomes of these ventures. The Development Team has listened to our concerns and has been responsive in to our needs in changes to designs. HCCA has become confident they will build a high quality project as planned. We are also confident they will continue to be responsive to

the needs of those property owners who live on Fort Baker Drive, in close proximity to the development, who have legitimate and documented concerns about the effect of the development on the stability of their homes. We will actively work with Rappaport to ensure the Rappaport Team continues to be a "good neighbor" through every phase of the Skyland Project, through completion and beyond.

Fourth, HCCA enthusiastically supports the Town Center mixed use retail and residential project as designed. We feel it will complement and upgrade our existing community. We have publicized the design of the project and related materials on our web site and through our list serve for many years; in addition to having a presentation on the final design, the PUD application and the community benefits package in February 2009. We think the community benefits package is a good one. Its provisions are consistent with the goals and priorities of HCCA. Most importantly we feel HCCA and the other members of our community have a relationship with the developer that will allow us to work together to produce a final package that is acceptable to all parties.

In closing, the HCCA is the entity that made the compelling case for the new construction development of the Skyland project before the District government in 2000. We have provided leadership and support in the community, before the government, and in support of the Development Team consistently since that time. Our organization has hosted no less than 50 Skyland updates at our Association meetings over the past 9 years, and we have presented testimony at every public meeting sponsored by the Executive Branch, NCRC, or the City Council and participated in numerous sessions sponsored by the Developer over this period. Also be advised that our Board of Directors passed a resolution of

support regarding this project in May 2007. The resolution remains in effect and is attached for your ready reference.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and we will be happy to answer any questions you may have.