

To: Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia
From: Gary Gold, Senior Vice-President, Murry's
Date: Thursday December 10, 2009
Re: Case No. 09-03 (Skyland Holdings, LLC – Consolidated PUD & Related Map
Amendment @ Squares 5632, 5633, 5641, 5641N, & Various Parcels)

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OPPOSITION

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to speak before the Zoning Commission today. My name is Gary Gold. I'm the Senior Vice President of Murry's Inc., born and raised in the District, and employed by Murry's for nearly 30 years. Murry's was founded on Sheriff Road over 60 years ago in the District of Columbia. We have and continue to serve the Washington community by providing consumers a needed alternative to the traditional supermarket. We provide employment and career growth opportunities in the neighborhoods we serve and are a steadfast, cooperative, and reliable tenant in the shopping centers where we are located.

Since 1958, in good times and bad, and as the District has evolved, Murry's has remained and has grown with the city. We have gone from 1,200 square foot, one register stores, offering a few hundred products, to stores that now approach 15,000 square feet, with six checkouts, and over 1,000 quality value-priced products. We've also added fresh produce & fresh meat sections in all of our D.C. stores. In short, we're probably the best-kept secret in the District.

We are currently located in the Skyland Shopping Center, as well as Minnesota & Benning, 6th & H-Street, South Capitol Street, and at Georgia & Morton. It's important to note that in several of these locations, we partnered with landlords and developers to occupy spaces vacated by traditional supermarkets. We have successfully filled the void in communities that were not able to support two large supermarkets while still offering consumers a viable alternative and a means to stretch their food dollars, which is critical in today's struggling economy.

We opened our store in the Skyland Shopping Center in 1997. Prior to moving and expanding to this location, we had two viable yet small locations in Anacostia on Good Hope Road and on Alabama Ave at 23rd street. We consolidated these locations to give our customers a better shopping experience and to fill the void when a traditional supermarket left the neighborhood. We employ over 30 associates from within the neighborhood and have substantially invested in this store by re-modeling the store twice, and adding a complete fresh produce and meat section as stated earlier.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 09-03

EXHIBIT NO. 60

Since we opened, we have been a model tenant and good corporate citizen. But because of “Eminent Domain” and alleging “Blight” in what was a fully occupied vibrant center, good tenants and viable businesses are being forced to vacate for a project that just doesn’t match the city’s current economic reality.

Skyland Shopping Center was thriving, but the truth is, it’s not sexy. This center exhibited everything that the District and other cities are striving for. It was a mixture of entrepreneurs, chains, and successful family businesses. I would humbly suggest that the City would be better served by denying the zoning request, and by having the District of Columbia re-evaluate the project. The plan should be to preserve and renovate the center while retaining the tenants and services the community wants and deserves.

In the end, I believe we all have the same goal. That is to better serve the neighborhood, not to evict thriving businesses, not to plow down structures, not to leave vacant lots for years to come and not to create blight that doesn’t exist today.

Murry’s has been an integral partner in the communities we serve and hope to continue for many years to come. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak today.