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Anthony Hood
Chairperson, D.C. Zoning Commission
441 Fourth Street, N.W.
Second Floor
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Brookland Artspace Lofts PUD Application Hearing (Z.C. Case 09-08)

Dear Chairperson Hood,

This document serves as my testimony in support of the PUD Application submitted by Artspace in their efforts to redevelop the Brookland Studios along with the rezoning of Dance Place. ANC 5C voted in support of the PUD Application on Tuesday July 21, 2009. Eight of the twelve commissioners were present and the resolution was passed unanimously.

There were four (4) community meetings held to discuss this project along with three (3) ANC monthly meetings where Artspace presented information on the project. This project sits within ANC 5C09 however, the residential area along the west side of 8th Street lies in ANC 5C10. Commissioner Timothy Day and I coordinated meetings so that citizens from both single member districts could attend and voice their opinions on the project proposal. Artspace created an online presentation which was sent out to citizens via email. During the meetings, surveys were distributed and citizens were allowed to give feedback. Data was collected and it is attached to this document. Between July 9th and July 16th, the poster boards for the project were on display at Dance Place for citizens to view (those who could not attend the scheduled meetings) and give feedback as well.

This project offers 100% affordable housing for artists and in this city, affordable housing is an amenity that is scarce. The Brookland/Edgewood Community has always been an area open to art work and artists. This project provides an opportunity to integrate art into this community even more.

With any project, there are items that need to be reviewed and require further discussion in an effort to resolve concerns that the community may have. With this PUD Application, the community has expressed an interest in seeing a project such as this one happen. However, this project has to be implemented correctly. Just as affordable housing is a scarce amenity, employment and participation in development projects has become scarce for residents of the District of Columbia. Artspace has made a promise to include District residents (preferably Ward 5 residents) on the construction site with an opportunity to showcase their skills in various trades. It is my hope that Artspace will deliver on this promise. My desire is to have local residents not just begin on the project's development site, but to also see the project completed. This will allow current citizens to have a stake in what will blossom out of this project.

Because of our community's connection to art, there are artists and aspiring artists in the immediate area that could benefit from such a project. Artspace has promised to solicit artists in

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the area and give preference to District residents. Again, it is my hope that Artspace will deliver on this promise. There are citizens that have artistic aspirations and we need to ensure that as many local artists as possible are able to take advantage of this opportunity.

Lastly, the citizens are concerned with the exterior renderings that have been showcased at the community meetings. This seems to be the biggest concern heard throughout the process. Many citizens have expressed that a building dedicated to "art" should appear more artistic on the exterior. The community is opened to have a hub for artistry in the area and would like to see that "art" on display through the design of the facility itself.

I am interested in hearing feedback from the Zoning Commission on this project. If there are any additional questions or concerns, I am willing and able to provide as much insight as possible.

Sincerely,

Silas Grant, Jr. (Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner, 5C09

Artspace Meetings Summary

- Four meetings: May 20, 2009 and June 15th, 2009 at the Bennett Career Institute and July 9th and 16th at Dance Place
- Approximately 15 people attended each of the first two meetings (although some did not choose to sign in on the sheet). The second set of meetings at Dance Place had very low attendance despite email notifications and fliers distributed in the community.
- A survey was disbursed for attendees to respond to in an effort to get a written understanding for the opinions of each person. 13 responses were returned from the first two meetings. However, others chose to ask questions in the meeting and not turn in a survey.
- The following are the questions that were asked and the responses:

On a scale of 1-10 (10 being the highest), please rank the level of clarity of the presentation and give feedback as to how you arrived at this ranking.

11 of the 13 surveys returned include a response to this question. Between a score of 1-10, 8.1 was the approximate average score. Below is summary of feedback of how people arrived at their rankings:

- Being a single artist and my income is above \$40,000 mark, I cant benefit
- The jury is still out on the sincerity of how this plays out
- History was clearly articulated. The projects that were shown were great
- Clear, concise presentation. Much remains to be finalized.
- There were issues raised that I hadn't considered
- Power Point was clear and questions were answered
- Presenters were willing to explain all details of the project
- Everything was discussed from location to qualifications to rent
- Some responses weren't finalized, but overall clear; Individual apartment information should be mentioned more in presentation and rent income

What are your three (3) major concerns about this development proposal?

- The look of the building
- Cost
- Storage space
- Area for children
- Parking
- Construction remaining on schedule
- That I might be a renter

- Timeline and time constraints
- Soundproof apartments
- Providing employment for people living in the neighborhood (construction, management, etc.)
- Sales price being reasonable for artists
- Handicap accessible
- Displacement of long time residents
- Loss of current open space
- Assurance that the art purpose be protected over time
- Community involvement/benefits
- Construction impact on current residents
- Ward 5 preference for applicants and labor contracts
- Freight elevators in addition to residential elevators
- Ventilation system in the workshop
- Qualifications for applicants still vague
- Setbacks from the street and from the property to the north

Are there any ways in which you as an existing citizen can benefit from this development?

- At this time, I do not see how I can benefit from this development because I am a photographer
- Yes, property value may go up
- The building could be a community meeting place for community activities/cohesion
- The lofts would personally benefit me as an artist who lives in the adjacent Woodridge neighborhood. I'm interested in getting one of these spaces.
- It will benefit the visibility and diversity of the Brookland/Woodridge neighborhoods
- Yes, I am looking for affordable, quality living space
- As close neighbors, we see this as an improvement to our community
- I plan to attend potential events at Dance Place as well as volunteer with their programs
- This space would be a live/work space walking distance to metro and convenient variety stores
- Interest in photography and drawing has increased and I've started to use my skills toward the community and I show my work in the community.
- Strengthening of Brookland/DC Arts Community

In general, do you support/oppose the proposal plan based on the information given at this meeting? Note: A number of these responses are contingent upon the concerns being addressed

Opposition – 2

Neutral – 1

Support – 10

What additional information would you desire to have available to you?

- Progress updates
- Leasing info
- Floor plans
- Soundproof studios
- Who will be the management company
- Concrete construction dates
- Requirement of applicant's zoning regarding F.A.R. and setbacks
- D.C. Govt's intentions regarding imposing covenants to preserve this as art dedicated usage
- How would persons who are auxiliary supports to artists (stagecraft, stage managers, production managers) meet criteria for selection?
- Will there be new metro transportation routes