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Testimony: BZA Case No. 20191
August 3, 2020

To BZA Commissioners:

I am writing in support of the appeal in BZA Case No. 20191.

I share the Appellants' interest in preserving this important historic site — McMillan Park. Beyond my interest in honoring the site, it is critical to me that the law be followed in terms of zoning and other DC regulations, many of which have been broken over the last ten years (e.g. no-bid construction) in order to develop this site.

Pertinent here is that the Zoning Administrator has not followed the law.

All existing historic preservation covenants that run with the site in perpetuity should be included in the land covenants that are required to be recorded according to the zoning regulations. The Zoning Administrator failed to ensure this. It was the intent of the GSA that this site be preserved — open and available for public use.

Moreover, the McMillan Master Plan requires another look by the Zoning Commission in a Second-Stage Planned Unit Development review before any demolition can begin. This is clear in their first Zoning Order No. 13-14(6). The Zoning Administrator didn't ensure the Zoning Commission saw the plans under Second-Stage review or waive those requirements per the law.

The law is clear, and the Permits were issued prematurely. Please affirm the appeal.

It is shocking to me that destruction of the historic site had begun even while the legality of Vision McMillan was/is still being adjudicated!

I have been interested for many years in the development of the McMillan site by the people and reflective of the desires of the People for Public use by the People — both of the community and of the District as a whole.

If McMillan Park were located in virtually any other city in the world, it would be the subject of competitive bids to preserve its landscape and architecture — to enhance the historic elements, such as the caverns and the perimeter promenade, and the then state-of-the-art technology.

The fact that you have ignored the GSA covenant in the deed causes me to think that you have not informed yourselves of the importance of the 25-acre site.

The rise of Black Lives Matter should have turned your attention immediately to the historic significance of McMillan Park as central to Black life in the District during the years of segregation. It was the only public space where blacks could gather, recreate, and even sleep on hot summer nights with impunity. And, yet you and the Mayor and the Council all want to eradicate that history, and turn the high, cool acres, which look out over Federal DC into another Wharf, or worse.

Please listen to the residents of DC who are tired of District Zoning seeming to work only on behalf of developers — not majority residents — and support this appeal.

Sincerely,

Carole Lewis Anderson