

Testimony on Second Stage PUD & Modification of Significance to First-Stage PUD
For Waterfront 375 M Street and, LLC & 425 M Street, LLC
DC Zoning Commission Case 02-38I, May 10, 2018
Fredrica D. Kramer, Near SE/SW Community Benefits Coordinating Council

Good evening, Commissioners. I am Fredrica Kramer, Vice Chair of the Near SE/SW Community Benefits Coordinating Council (CBCC), which helps obtain community benefits in the context of redevelopment for the communities represented by ANC 6D. CBCC has already submitted a letter of support for the community center promised as part of the modification to the First-Stage PUD for 375 and 425 M Street SW that you are currently considering. We are very grateful for this vital addition and hope to participate directly as it reaches full realization.

CBCC is also the only local organization whose explicit mission is to maintain social diversity and quality of life as our neighborhood redevelops. My comments tonight are addressed to aspects of the PUD that might serve that mission. They support and I hope amplify what ANC Commissioner Litsky testified to at the April 5 hearing.

As CBCC has written and testified to in many venues, we are troubled that locally-owned, community-serving retail has remained relatively elusive as 4th Street is redeveloped—thus, not fulfilling the prescriptions in the SW Small Area Plan as a true town center. We were grateful to have met with Forest City nearly two years ago to talk about neighborhood-serving retail that we hoped would be part of the build-out of Elliot on 4th. We specifically suggested replacement of our local bank which, if it offered all services except safe deposit boxes, would satisfy residents' need for a bank within walking distance but could be provided in a smaller space with simpler construction requirements and hence less burden to the developer. Other examples we suggested for smaller spaces (<1200 sq. ft.) were a hair salon, pet store, and bakery/coffee shop, all of which have become only more needed as our population (pet and human) increases and we remain without a casual space to meet and eat that local residents, especially those that work at home, look for. Other ideas that have been raised include a small post office (the current Half Street facility will be lost in the not-too-distant future), a stationery store (cards, flowers, etc.) and a shoemaker, all of which we mostly travel to Capitol Hill or Virginia for.

We also talked about rent levels that would be sustainable by small businesses and would serve all residents of Southwest and in the process support our mission for preserving the social diversity that our community holds dear. Some spaces at the Yards apparently had rented at below \$40/sq. ft., and

we noted that commercial condominiums have been used in other places to stabilize rents over time. Considering original cost and the revenue stream promised from the now planned residential use, we would hope that some accommodations to serve locally-owned and desperately needed businesses could be made.

For similar reasons we always hope that developers push the limits of housing affordability beyond the minimum required by law. As density increases, the actual number of low, moderate income and many middle income households will become an increasingly smaller portion of the whole, straining the reality that Southwest's iconic social diversity will have survived redevelopment.

On a last note on the community center, on which we have already submitted our testament of strong support and thanks, Commissioner Litsky spoke of the community's desire that the space be provided free to the community, and that management be under the aegis of the community, not the landlord. It has also been mentioned that that space be ensured for the life of the project. Funding for local organizations is always a struggle, and many of the likely users of the community center will have no spare cash beyond what they must put into staff and programming. The need for a common space will become more critical as the population of Southwest doubles in redevelopment, increased density uses up open space and other public spaces on which the community relies, including our beautiful new Southwest Library, will not support all the needs of the massive growth in our population. We wholly endorse ensuring the long-term sustainability of the center for the community's use.

Commissioner Litsky properly testified that all benefits to the community need to be specified in writing and prior to approval of the PUD modifications. We agree and thank you for your careful consideration of their merits.

Thank you.