# ANC 6B

*Capital Hill / Southeast*

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## FAX COVERSHEET

**DATE:** June 21, 2004

**TO:** Andrew Altman
Director
Office of Planning

**FAX:** (202) 727-6072

**FROM:** Bert Randolph
Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** ZC # 04-02 and Large Tract Review Maritime Plaza

**# OF PAGES:** Five (5) including the cover page.

**COMMENTS:** Please let me know if you have any questions.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 04-02
EXHIBIT NO. 16

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June 17, 2004

Andrew Altman
Director
Office of Planning
801 North Capitol Street, NE Suite 4000
Washington, DC 20002

Re: ANC 6B Comments on Large Tract Review of Maritime Plaza

Dear Mr. Altman:

ANC 6B is supportive of the development between 11th Street, M Street and Water Street, SE on the Washington Gas site know as Maritime Plaza. The developer has gone to great lengths to keep us informed as to the process of the project and has been receptive to our suggestions.

The ANC reviewed and supported Phase I and II of this project. The current review before the DC Office of Planning and the ANC involved the construction of three additional buildings on the site as well as a parking structure.

The ANC is some what concerned over the placement of the new buildings, which will be higher than the existing building. We have always believed that the height of the existing (Phase I and II) buildings is appropriate

The general policy we have stressed in the past, specifically at both the SEFC and Reservation 13, is that the buildings should appear to fall away as you approach the river. In the case of SEFC, this meant placing smaller buildings closer to the river. In the case of Reservation 13, this meant that the building closer to the river could be taller if they took advantage of the downward slope of the land so that their rooflines were not higher than the other buildings.

In the case of Maritime Plaza, the proposal is for taller buildings closer to the river. If this was a new concept, it would raise serious objections. However, the overall project has been before the ANC on numerous occasions and the issue of the building heights discussed.

The ANC's concern is over the changes in the building placement. The original placements of the additional buildings were perpendicular to the waterfront, which had the effect of minimizing their blocking of the sight line to the river. The new proposed placement of the third of the three new building, in either of the two alternatives presented, as more parallel to the river has the potential for creating a visual wall, screening off the river from view.

This concern is mitigated, somewhat, by the design of the main plaza, which will present a "grand opening" to the river, and by the creation of a new plaza at the end of Virginia Avenue, extended.

On the matter of the parking garage, we strongly support the design of the parking structure so that the ground floor can be use as retail space. We would also recommend that the parking garage be no higher than the existing building on M Street and the façade be similar so as to create visual continuity along M St and Virginia Ave.

Very truly yours,

Julie Olson
Chairperson

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June 17, 2004

Zoning Commission
DC Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 210 South
Washington, DC 20001

Re: ZC # 04-02
East M Street Target Area of
Near Southeast Plan

Dear Commissioners:

At its meeting of June 15, ANC 6B voted 8-0 (6 being a quorum for the conduct of business) to support option three of the proposed zoning text and map amendments. This meeting was a special call meeting announced at the regularly scheduled and properly noticed meeting of June 8, 2003 because of the lack of a quorum at that time. In accordance with our by-laws, all decisions on items on the agenda of our regularly scheduled meeting were postponed until the June 15 meeting, when a quorum was present.

ANC 6B understands the need to rezone this area, but has some concerns about the proposal. First, the ANC is concerned whether or not this rezoning will disrupt the existing plans for Maritime Plaza and create a disincentive to finish the project. The representatives of the project raises the concern that the need for further Zoning Commission approval contained in the overlay proposal was a significant barrier that could slow the project down and potentially create a disincentive. They also raised the concern that office use, while an allowed use, was not included in the list of preferred uses.

Second, the ANC was concerned about the height of the buildings. The ANC believes the heights of the existing buildings are appropriate. The issue is not the actual size of the buildings, but the perception of the height of the buildings as one moves from L Street across the Southeast Freeway towards the river. The higher building may be appropriate, if they take advantage of the sloping of the land to allow higher buildings that do not screen off the sightlines to the river and create a visual wall.

This is particularly relevant for that portion of the area currently occupied by the Southeast Freeway. In the eventuality that the freeway is removed, development on that land should be limited in height so that the roofline is lower than the current houses on L Street and is no higher than the existing Maritime Plaza building on M Street. Thus, the ANC supports the lower height W-2 zoning for the area currently occupied by the freeway, with the suggestion that the base of the building heights be measured from the current level of the freeway (which we believe will allow for a 60 foot building that does not rise above the height of the current buildings on L Street), rather than being measured from any fill or decking that might be build over that portion of the freeway.

Concerning the requirement for further Zoning Committee review of development on the site, we understand the concern of the developers of Maritime Plaza and the fact that the development under going Office of Planning review under the Large Tract Review process. It has been the ANC's continuing belief that such further design review is an important part of the process and has been highly supportive of such requirements in both the SEFC and Reservation 13. In this case, we believe that further design review is warrant as there is at least one (and may be more depending on the fate of the freeway) additional development planned for the site. The Large Tract Review process (while without the enforcement mechanism of a Zoning Commission decision) addresses some, but not all of this need by laying out the information needed for the analysis. We would therefore recommend that the Zoning Commission adopt an expedited review process for any sites that have under gone Large Tract Review.

We would also ask the Zoning Commission to insure that office use is in no way inadvertently penalized under this zoning, as it will be the major use of this site – while maintaining incentives for retail use.

Therefore, the ANC supports the re-zoning proposal with the recommendations concerning the heights of the buildings in the area currently occupied by the freeway and concerning an expedited review.

Very truly yours,

Julie Olson
Chairperson