



Mission: To empower our endangered youth to reclaim the Anacostia River, their communities, and their lives.

November 27, 2006

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District of Columbia Office of Zoning
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Suite 210 South
Washington, DC 20001 (*via fax c/o Sharon Schellin - 202.727.6072fx*)

Re: Community request to reopen case # 04-14 Florida Rock Second Stage PUD to ensure community benefit from the community proffer

Dear Commissioners:

Earth Conservation Corps, a nonprofit organization providing workforce development to disadvantaged youth and restoring the heavily polluted Anacostia River since 1989 was pleased to testify at the Zoning Commission's September 18th hearing on Florida Rock's application for Stage II approval of a PUD.

During testimony from Robert Nixon, Chairman and Glen O'Givie, President and CEO, the Commission directed the Earth Conservation Corps to meet with and make an agreement with the applicant (*Florida Rock Properties*) and the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation (AWC) to ensure that Earth Conservation Corps' proven successful workforce development and environmental service programs become part of the community proffer. Earth Conservation Corps' interest includes, but is not limited to the fact that the development in part encompasses land currently under lease by Earth Conservation Corps and designated as a park memorial in honor of Diamond Teague, a positive and influential young member of this community and our organization who was murdered in 2003.

This letter is to inform the commissioners that despite our good faith efforts, we have not been able to advance our discussions with the applicant or the AWC. And currently have no agreement or assurances in place that Earth Conservation Corps youth will be engaged in the park construction or maintenance. We were not able to secure such assurances even for the 7,728 square feet of Earth Conservation Corps leasehold land although we have not conceded to AWC any of our property rights as they are described in our lease with the District of Columbia.

As we testified, the Earth Conservation Corps is a lease holder of the property immediately adjacent to the east of the Florida Rock property and we have for over ten years been working with the City, The Federal Government, the foundation and private industry (including Florida Rock) to create a park on our leasehold land and that of the adjacent Water and Sewer Authority. In the process we have invested well in excess of a million dollars and have engaged over three hundred youth in developing this land from a dump into a waterfront park that was the first public access to the west bank of the Anacostia from Buzzards Point to the eleventh street bridge.

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So important is the park we created, that it was designated by the Department of Interior as a Chesapeake Bay Gateway Park. In addition, the Corps worked with the District Department of Transportation to design and build in the first of three sections of the Anacostia River Walk. And trail. This accomplishment was dedicated by our host of partners including; Mayor Anthony Williams, Councilmember Sharon Ambrose and then DDOT Director Dan Tangherlini. The essential element of our workforce development program is that much of the work is done as a training opportunity for the youth in the local community. It has been a powerful tool in empowering them in the restoration of the Anacostia and paving the way for them to be connected to American society.

Thus we are very pleased that Florida Rock's proffer is to expand on our decade long park development program and see their proffer as the first real opportunity to realize a true community benefit from the commercial development of the Anacostia Waterfront. Our vision is to work with the two corporations Florida Rock and the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation to ensure that every single opportunity for youth engagement and employment is gained through this expansion of Diamond Teague Park.

We met with AWC last week and only received the draft agreement between the applicant and AWC on Wednesday November 22nd (holiday evening) at 9:59pm. The draft does not include a description of the project and with respect to the interests of Earth Conservation Corps, it only provides for membership on an advisory committee (as one of seven members). The draft makes no reference to Diamond Teague Park (and we note, disturbingly, that the November 22nd supplemental comments submitted by the Office of Planning refer consistently to "First Street Landing Park"). We see ample opportunity for community benefit such as designating that the maintenance of the park be entrusted to the youth in Earth Conservation Corps programs rather than as a yet to be established Business Improvement District. Clearly the community needs the assistance of the Zoning commissioners to ensure that this community proffer does indeed benefit the local community. From our vantage point it seems that this proffer as designed will primarily benefit the future tenants of the Florida Rock development site and the baseball fans before and after the Nationals games. There is a tremendous opportunity for the community but unless strong assurances are put in place it may well become a lost opportunity.

The concern of the community is heightened by very recent history. On Earth Day of 2004, The Earth Conservation Corps signed a park adoption agreement with Mayor Williams, the DC Parks Director, Neil Albert and Ethel Kennedy for reservation 248. Like the Anacostia Gateway Park we spent tremendous time and energy clearing this site and beginning the process of creating a park. On October 12th 2003 Mayor Williams paid his condolences to Florence and Ivory Teague the parents of slain Corps member Diamond Teague. At that meeting Mayor Williams suggested that a city park be named in Diamond's honor and square 248 was designated Diamond Teague Park. When baseball was announced the Earth Conservation Corps was assured by the Office of Economic Development that Diamond Teague Park would not be affected and we were instructed to inform the Teagues that the park would not be affected. As you all know, that land was quickly engulfed by the baseball stadium.

While we appreciate the applicants proffer and AWC's expressed willingness to talk, at this point it appears the proposed PUD takes into account only the plans and interest of the applicant and AWC. The concerns of the community to which the Commission directed the parties' attention, including those expressed by Florence and Ivory Teague, Garden Clubs of America and our organization are not being protected. To that end, it is clear that the resources represented by the applicants proffer will not provide critical community benefits. Therefore Earth Conservation Corps must oppose the proposed PUD in case number 04-14 at this time.

We are hopeful that the Zoning Commission will suggest the applicant recognize the community's equities and provide specifics on how they will incorporate the Earth Conservation Corps in the project. We will all be in attendance for the hearing this evening and available for questions.

Sincerely,



Bob Nixon
Chairman



Glen O'Gilvie
President and CEO

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