Zoning Commission Meeting
January 27, 2005
Testimony in support of
Abdo development for 800 3rd St NE
Given by
Kathy Dwyer Southern
President and CEO
National Children's Museum
(Formerly Capital Children's Museum)

Good evening, my name is Kathy Dwyer Southern, I am the President and CEO of the National Children's Museum (formerly the Capital Children's Museum), and I am joined by Ross Hechinger, the Chairman of the Board of NCM. We are here to testify in support of the Abdo development plan for 800 3rd St NE.

As many of you know, this property was the home for the Capital Children's Museum for over 30 years. We sold the property to Jim last year after we had identified the new home for the National Children's Museum at L'Enfant Plaza where our offices are now located.

Throughout our 30 year history at CCM, each year 150,000-200,000 children and families visited us at the museum. Washington families have grown up with the museum and we have many wonderful experiences and memories associated with this site.

We were an active member of the H Street community as well, hosting community meetings, actively participating in the development of the H Street plan, and being a special place for the kids of our community.

We cared deeply about the museum, our schools and the surrounding property and did the best we could to maintain and support it while providing our visitors with a great museum experience.

I am speaking tonight in support of the Abdo plan because we know this developer shares our perspective, our values and our respect for this property. We sold the property to Jim Abdo for the very same set of reasons.

This is a neighborhood we have cared about and worked hard for, for over 30 years and we know Jim will carry on this tradition of deep and full community involvement and real respect for the neighborhood and the neighbors. In our experience, Jim is a man who truly listens, really works with the community and keeps his word. He is a true partner and will keep what's best for the area always in focus.

He also shares with us a well documented sensitivity for historic structures and areas. The site houses several truly beautiful and significant structures which we have always

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loved and honored. We know that Jim will continue this respect for the property and that the plan before you is an excellent demonstration of his commitment in this area.

At closing with Jim last year, I know that the museum board and staff felt that this was a "win, win, win" for us all. A win for the neighborhood, because we had brought in an excellent and sensitive developer who was already well aligned with the thinking of the area. A win for the museum, because a place we had honored and called home for over 30 years would be thoughtfully and sensitively developed and brought to life in new and exciting ways. And a win for the City, as the site provides new housing opportunities and helps launch the redevelopment of the H Street corridor.

We fully and wholeheartedly support the Abdo plan and ask for your approval.

I'd now like to introduce Ross Hechinger.