

**TESTIMONY
OF
CARRIE L. THORNHILL
WARD 7 RESIDENT, FORMER MEMBER OF THE UDC BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND
MEMBER OF THE CCDC ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AT THE ZONING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING
ON
CASE NO.-05-28C
MONDAY, APRIL 18, 2011
RESCHEDULED TO THURSDAY, MAY 5, 2011**

Chairman Hood and members of the Commission, my name is Carrie Thornhill. I have been a resident of Ward 7 for over 40 years. I am currently a member of the Advisory Committee on the Community College of the District of Columbia (CCDC), a former member and Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees of the University of the District of Columbia (1993-1998) and formerly CEO at Marshall Heights Community Development Organization during the Parkside Redevelopment planning. I am pleased to appear before you in support of this Second Stage PUD approval for the construction of a university building to serve the Community College of the District of Columbia ("CCDC").

I have been an advocate for a community college for almost 30 years as a central component of revitalization plans for the northern end of the Ward 7 area. Parkside is ideal location for CCDC. I only wish Parkside had been the original location for the University of the District of Columbia. There is a great need for accessible quality education and workforce training in Ward 7 – many students from this area will attend the Community College because the site would be accessible. Parkside provides great access – across from a Metro station, on the highway, and

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many bus routes converge at the Minnesota Avenue Metro and the Anacostia Trail provides unparalleled bike access.

We all are aware that east of the river has a high rate of unemployment, estimated at 19% and over 30% in Ward 7 & 8 respectively. We have the lowest literacy rates and a lack of job readiness. Many HS graduates not ready for a 4 yr college will attend the Community College which will enable these graduates to matriculate and succeed at four year universities. Many of our DC graduates cannot afford four years at a 4 yr university – the 2+2 is an affordable option. Many Ward 7 and Parkside residents also will benefit from mid-career advancement since the average student age is 29 years old.

Parkside is part of the federally designated Promise Neighborhood Initiative. This initiative provides an excellent opportunity for collaboration and partnership among partners (e.g. Georgetown, the DC Primary Care Association, Educare and federal and district agencies). The entry of the CCDC into this community would complete the zero to college education continuum that Mayor Gray envisions for our city.

Ward 7 deserves a state-of-the-art facility. The 60 year old elementary school where CCDC is currently providing classes is only a stop gap measure. CCDC must be competitive with neighboring jurisdictions – look at their facilities. To prepare today's students for careers in the 21st century, we must have technology-based education – old infrastructure is not adaptable – we need smart classrooms, distance learning, universal wireless access, and bright engaging

space. The CCDC campus must be a beacon for education – the design and architecture must speak to the importance of education, that we value education highly for all of our citizens, and that CCDC is not a second rate institution. The College must be welcoming to students and the community. It must incorporate all we know about the effect of environment on learning.

Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, you have been provided substantial evidence that neighbors of Parkside and the greater Ward 7 community supports this institution at this location. I trust the concern of some neighbors about traffic impacts will be satisfactorily worked through so that it will not cause the loss of this perfect opportunity to change the educational and employment readiness fortunes for residents of Parkside and Ward 7.

I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.