

TESTIMONY OF  
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National Capital Planning Commission

BEFORE THE  
District of Columbia Zoning Commission  
Construction of a Major League Baseball Ballpark  
ZC 06-22  
June 26, 2006

Mr. Vice-Chairman and members of the Zoning Commission, thank you for this opportunity to speak to you regarding the proposed major league baseball park. The National Capital Planning Commission reviewed this project at its meeting on June 1, 2006, and I have provided copies of the final Commission action and staff report for your review.

First, the National Capital Planning Commission generally supports the ballpark itself as proposed, but noted in its June commission action that certain elements, such as lighting and signage were insufficiently developed. We therefore recommend that the Zoning Commission direct the applicant to resubmit those elements for Zoning Commission approval under the special exception process when their design is finalized.

We note that the Applicant has modified the amount and location of preferred uses in the application and is requesting that the Zoning Commission approve amount and location of preferred uses along First Street as envisioned in Option One. This is an improvement over the original submission and is consistent with the NCPC commission action taken on June 1, but does not address NCPC concerns regarding the need for ground-floor activity to sustain street life along South Capitol Street. This streetscape vitality is an essential element of efforts to revitalize South Capitol Street, as proposed in NCPC's *Legacy Plan* and by the South Capitol Street Task Force.

My remarks today, however, are specifically intended to address the supplemental submission materials that we received on Friday, June 23. Since the National Capital Planning Commission has not yet had an opportunity to review those materials, I want to make clear that my comments regarding them reflect the views of staff only. They do, however, reflect the recommendations that would be included in the Executive Director's report to our Commission if the project as currently proposed were to be referred to NCPC by the Zoning Commission.

NCPC staff has significant concerns regarding the design for the preferred alternative submitted June 23, 2006. While the alternative proposed is described as mixed-use development wrapped around above-grade parking, we note that the plans for levels G1 and P-1 through P4, as shown on sheets A9-02 and A9-03, include structured parking immediately adjacent to South Capitol Street. The plan for level B1, as shown on sheet A9-01, shows a slip ramp from South Capitol Street. NCPC staff would not support

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providing relief from Zoning Regulation 1606.7 that requires all parking spaces to be underground, or regulation 1606.17 that prohibits driveway access to parking spaces from South Capitol Street, given the project as currently proposed.

Finally, the supplemental materials submitted June 23 show the proposed height as 130 feet plus additional architectural embellishments. We note illustrations in the previous submission materials show the height of the parking structures as essentially equivalent to the concourse building along South Capitol Street. The buildings in the current proposal are 130 feet high. While we have not had adequate time to fully analyze the most recent submission materials, we have serious concerns regarding the impact this height will have on views between the stadium and the Capitol, and as to whether or not it conforms to the Height of Buildings Act. We therefore encourage the Zoning Commission not to rush to judgment regarding elements of a project no one has had time to fully digest