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December 12, 2014

Mr. Anthony J. Hood
Chairman,
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 2005
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Chairman Hood,

This letter is to register my support for Four Points' Stage II Planned Unit Development application for a new mixed-income residential property at 2255 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE. As a 19 year East of the River resident and former ANC Commissioner (7B05) in neighboring 'Hillcrest', this type of development in our sister community of Historic Anacostia is most welcome. Having reviewed the designs and am pleased to see not only the inclusion affordable units, but also artists' work space.

I could quote innumerable studies validating the economic importance of enticing artists to reside in a community, particularly in areas undergoing a renaissance. However, I have first-hand experiences throughout my 29 year career as an arts executive and presenter. Arlington Economic Development's Cultural Affairs Division, became the first Arts organization to win the Innovation in American Government Award from The Ford Foundation and Harvard University, largely due to our leveraging the power of the arts for broader economic benefit via the 'Arts Incubator' program. Prior to joining Arlington Cultural Affairs as Director of Marketing in 1996, I was Marketing Director for Washington DC's performance art venue, Dance Place. Credited with sparking the initial resurgence of a post-1968 riot-scarred 'Adams-Morgan' neighborhood in the 1980's, the institution is now acknowledged as the centerpiece of the economic revitalization now taking place in 'Brookland' NE (where it should be noted, Dance Place purchased a building in 1986 after being priced-out of the area they helped to revitalize).

The simple truth is that the practice of weaving the arts and their makers into the fabric of a community 'works'. The creative class are industrious individuals who by their nature become engaged in the communities in which they live. I am wholeheartedly in support of Four Points proposal to include artists' work space in this new venture, as part of an uplifting new day for Historic Anacostia. Please feel free to contact me at 703-228-1847

Respectfully,

Jim Byers
Director of Marketing,
Cultural Affairs Division, Arlington Economic Development