

Zoning Commission Case No. 08-30 (1-29-09)

TESTIMONY of Ron McBee for ANC6D

Commissioners and staff, good evening, I am Ron McBee, Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner for ANC 6D03. My single-member district borders this project. This evening I represent both my SMD and the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC 6D) on which I serve. Our ANC has a quorum of four. On January 12th the motion passed 6-0, with one abstaining, to support the application, contingent upon ANC reaching, on before January 28th, a final community benefits agreement; and further provided any letter of support includes reservation about the height of the embellishment. A motion for Ron McBee to represent ANC6D before the Zoning Commission was voted 6-0 with one member not voting. On January 27th a motion to accept the community benefits agreement was passed 5-0 with two absents.

We support the application this evening being put forth by West Half 1, LLC; West Half 2, LLC; and West Half 3, LLC.

First, many of us had problems with specific design issues. Primary was the metal screen embellishment on the corner of M and Half Streets SE that extends to 146 feet and has a flag pole on top of it to make the total height 160 feet. In our dialogue with Akridge, they have reduced the mass of the embellishment and the height is below the light stanchions at the National Stadium. Secondly the loading docks and truck traffic presented issues. Akridge has agreed to support 4-30 foot loading docks and the applicant agrees "to limit the length of trucks to 40 for recurring daily deliveries, etc; due to the width of Van Street SE (50 feet)." Thirdly, moreover, we remain concerned about traffic flow around this project - specifically the intersection of Van Street and M Streets and the traffic egress posed issues due to Stadium events but primarily because of its juxtaposition to the major intersection of M Street and South Capitol. Discussion was had on limiting right turns only onto M Street SW from Van Street SE as well as limiting left turns into Van Street SE from M Street SE for traffic heading West on M Street. Since none of us has training in traffic analysis, we look to the DC Department of Transportation and this Commission to ensure the smooth flow of traffic around the project once completed.

We therefore support the current project application that has been put forward to the Zoning Commission. The applicant has entered into a Community Benefits Agreement with ANC6D and the Near SE/SW Community Benefits Coordinating Council. The applicant "agrees that it will urge the Zoning Commission to include this Agreement as a condition of approval in the Zoning Commission Order in Case No. 08-30."

The Agreement includes such important items for our residents as employment for our 6D residents where the applicant will recruit construction workers from ANC6D; provide an overall 5% "first source" employment goal for qualified residents; tie-breaking preferences for LSDBE companies headquartered in ANC6D and qualified workers

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living in 6D; and after construction this employment initiative will apply to retail sales, administrative, management, community-relations, landscaping, janitorial, and others.

The Applicant will participate in good faith in the Near SE/SW Community Benefits Coordinating Council's Workforce Development Center Steering Committee to develop jobs and qualified residents for jobs/employment.

The Applicant will comply with District "First Source" requirements

The Applicant will seek Platinum LEED certification and will establish a recycling program for post consumer waste to include residential, office, and retail uses. Additionally the Applicant will include planting strips on the ground level of the project along Half Street SE.

Residential parking will be provided as stated at .75 per and with underground parking provided as well for retail and commercial needs.

The Applicant, in regard to potential closings of Half Street, Van Street, and/or N Street will, has agreed to advise ANC6D a minimum of three (3) business days prior to the submission to the Emergency Management Agency (EMA).

The Applicant has stated it is a good community partner and will act as such. It or its designee(s) will endeavor to provide support to improve the quality of life for residents in facilities such as the Hope VI "Capper Senior" DCHA facility. Additionally the Applicant and/or its designee(s) will seek to support the civic, public school, and cultural elements of the near SE/SW community (ANC6D area).

The Applicant will provide an Annual Report each year to ANC6D regarding satisfaction of the benefits covered by our Community Benefits Agreement.

Because of this Community-Benefits Agreement--involving serious commitments to our community--we consider this project potentially very important addition to the cultural life of our neighborhood. This is why we support this Applicant's current application to the Zoning Commission. We urge you to include our Community Benefits Agreement in any approval of this application.

Thank you.