

# Hoffman Madison-Marquette Southwest Waterfront First Stage PUD Case No.

11-03, July 18, 2011

## Testimony of ANC6D06 Commissioner Rhonda Hamilton

My name is Rhonda Hamilton, I am an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner for ANC6D and my single member district is 6D06 which borders South Capitol Street to the East; N and M to the North; Delaware Avenue and Second Street to the West; and Fort McNair and S Street SW to the South. I represent approximately 2000 people in my Single Member District as every Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner in ANC 6D and when taking my oath, I took my oath to the District of Columbia to support the laws and Constitution of the District. While I support the development on the SW Waterfront, I am concerned that development be done right for EVERYONE and not just for those who will live and work in the new redevelopment. We have heard how this will be a "world class" development that will lead and become a model for other waterfront cities around the world. Slowly it seems this phrase is being used less and now we are being confronted by requests for exemptions from not only the applicant but their partner, city agencies. This joint public private project will probably be the largest I will see in my life time and certainly the largest the city has undertaken to date. As Councilmember Wells for Ward 6 stated in an presentation of the project, WE GET ONE CHANCE TO DO THIS RIGHT. The SW Waterfront has a wonderful history of being inclusive regardless of racial make-up or economics. I want to see the waterfront become the best that it can be and continue to be that special place/destination for our residents, community, and visitors.

Under the first-stage PUD process, I am concerned with the character, scale, site plan, and public benefits although I am supportive of the redevelopment of our Southwest waterfront.

The overall character in looking at this project with 130 foot tall buildings and another 18 feet for mechanicals will be a monolithic wall that will bare little resemblance to the 2003 Waterfront plan put forward to the community with a step down or terracing of the building heights to the South from the freeway bridge, which many think is still the plan. I am very concerned with the view corridors of the water front at M Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Street and the Banneker Park/ 10<sup>th</sup> Street view into the water or Washington Channel. The placement of the pavilions makes them look like ticket booths for an entrance fee and the trees look nice on paper but will soon grow to block views. I am not against trees and feel they are needed as other plantings to counter the massive amount of hard surface currently proposed but be respectful of vistas. I feel these views are special for everyone and should be respected. The new front of St. Augustine's church should be set back several feet toward the South so that it fits with the set back of Tiber Island to the East but most importantly it does not pinch the view offered at this important nexus of our two great streets, Maine Avenue and M Streets, with the Washington Channel as grandly proposed. St. Augustine's townhouses are to be approximately 45 feet high in parcel 11. Parcel 10 should mirror that height (excepting the church's steeple) to open that wonderful civic plaza site and keep the project in contextual relationship at the South end of the project with the possible building on the Pier and other residents there. Such a reduction in height is very minor, if not less than one percent of the total square footage proposed. This special relationship of the vistas and water should not be missed to make such a view statement for the community, our district residents, and visitors to the Waterfront (especially our visitors arriving by bus at this site, which is the site chosen for their arrival and departure location). The same holds true for the view from the 10<sup>th</sup> Street over look to the water as it will become a major entry from

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the National Mall and L'Enfant Plaza Metro. Perhaps the proposed stairs could be the view axis, with some minor alignment of the building openings/ view to the channel, but these stairs need to be ADA compliant as well as the ends of the Waterfront Wharf promenade.

Regarding the build out of exclusive townhouses on Pier 4, it is not so much the homes but the fact you will be limiting the views as well as with the build out on the commercial pier with 30 foot plus high structures to service the large lunch and dinner tour boats. It appears no matter where you will be on the new Wharf promenade; you will not have a view "down the channel" to the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers. No grand view of Tall Ships coming into the harbor - up the channel. Because of the limited view, it creates a pond like effect with the loss of the open water view to the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers.

This ANC and community have been concerned about the traffic and its impact on our residents, businesses and children who walk to school every day. DDOT needs to weigh in now and not at the Stage 2 part of this process. The 5000 seat arena proposal is enough to say how is this all going to be handled in a smooth and coherent transportation plan that fits into the current uses of the streets of our neighborhood. The District Department of the Environment needs to address just how and how much rain runoff of storm water is to be handled by this waterfront project. We should not be asking for a waiver to the District's 1.2 inch runoff requirement. Even this is below other area jurisdictions as I have been informed for rain water runoff for non point source of pollution. We should do everything possible to keep the rivers clean and give the Chesapeake Bay an opportunity to flourish again with aquatic life.

Our SW community is small and once called the island due to only being able to getting here by crossing water. I am excited by the opportunity being put forward for employment and affordable housing. We also desperately need a community center, not a recreation gym, but a facility to support the needed activities of a community engaged in helping its citizens. This 2 billion dollar joint private partnership project of the District should not let this community benefit need go unfulfilled for it will be a catalyst to support the needs of the current community and the community online to be built here in SW.

We in Southwest DC have lived through the urban renewal efforts of the 50s and seen the destruction of many blocks of houses and structures in the name of progress. With these losses we have lost more than structures but part of our culture, history, and humanity. Let's make this redevelopment work for all of us.