

Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia
Case No. 11-03 (Southwest Waterfront PUD and Map Amendment)

*Testimony of Kwasi Holman
on behalf of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church
July 18, 2011*

I am Kwasi Holman, Junior Warden at St. Augustine's Episcopal Church. The Church is located at 600 M St SW. I am pleased to appear on behalf of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church in support of the PUD and Map Amendment Application of Hoffman-Struever Waterfront, LLC. As a southwest resident since 1963 and a member of the Church since its inception, I am excited about the potential this PUD offers to continue the presence of the Church for many years to come at its current location and, as to the larger redevelopment of the Southwest Waterfront, to bring new vibrancy and energy to our community.

As you are aware from the Application, St. Augustine's owns the property at 600 M Street, S.W. (known as Lots 83 and 814 in Square 473). In conjunction with the PUD Application, St. Augustine's has requested that the Church's property, which is known as Parcel 11 in the PUD submission, be rezoned from R-3 to R-5-B.

The PUD application fulfills the Church's desire to continue its presence as a diverse and giving part of Southwest. For over 20 years, we have operated our Bread for Life program, feeding the homeless in our community. We have provided scholarships and other programs for youth, including support for the Arena Stage's Voices of Now program. We have also provided low cost meeting space for a wide range of community groups, including ANC 6D, the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly, Alcoholics Anonymous and other non-profit associations.

The Church's decision to work with the Hoffman-Struever team emerged from a multi-year discernment process during which we explored a wide variety of options for the future of St. Augustine's Church, including the option of closure or merging with another congregation. We believe that the proposed redevelopment of Parcel 11 -- with a new St. Augustine's Church building that will replace our existing facility and a mid-rise residential building to be constructed by Hoffman-Struever on land purchased from St. Augustine's -- represents our best opportunity to continue to serve our congregation and our community. The lot coverage, height of building, design and mix of uses proposed by the development of Parcel 11 will provide a balanced solution that will allow us to meet our needs while maintaining a building scale compatible with the community and our immediate neighbors.

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While we understand that some of our neighbors might prefer that the existing Church building remain forever (as one neighbor has stated in a submission to the Zoning Commission), our existing facility is outdated and no longer adequately serves our needs or the needs of those we serve. Furthermore, although the Church could build a replacement building at a height of sixty (60) feet under the existing R-3 zoning, we want to continue to be good neighbors to our many, many friends and neighbors in Southwest and have agreed that any new building to be constructed by St. Augustine's Church on Parcel 11 will be no taller than forty-five (45) feet.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer St. Augustine's support for the PUD and Map Amendment application. I would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.