

D.C. Zoning Commission Public Hearing
Case No. 11-03
Southwest Waterfront 1st Stage Planned Unit Development and Related Map Amendments

Testimony of Rev. Ruth W. Hamilton, Chairperson,
Near SE-SW Community Benefits Coordinating Council (CBCC)
July 18, 2011

Preface

The Near SE-SW Community Benefits Coordinating Council (CBCC) began in 2005 with public meetings down on the Waterfront to organize the community in the face of massive redevelopment beginning to happen. Out of that ongoing community organizing effort, CBCC came into being as a 501c3 not-for-profit, incorporated in the District of Columbia in 2010.

The Articles of Incorporation state:... the CBCC is organized to ...ensure that ANC 6D redevelopment sustains neighborhood diversity and improves residents' quality of life; to participate in negotiating ANC 6D community-benefits agreements; to address issues such as (but not limited to) creating a community center or workforce center or both, maintaining housing diversity, and increasing the supply of neighborhood-oriented retail.

CBCC joins ANC6D commissioners and the SW Neighborhood Assembly board in testifying in support of the Applicant and like our neighborhood's elected leaders, we have specific requests of the Zoning Commission, asking you to affirm and memorialize in your definitive ruling certain agreements that are now scattered across city agencies.

Whereas most of the testimony in this Stage One PUD hearing is related to massing, sight lines, circulation, etc., CBCC has limited its testimony to the matters that relate to our urban and national issues of poverty, unemployment, affordable housing, and opportunities for growth.

Memorializing Ward 6 and SW Preferences

As citizens of the District we are grateful that the city negotiated important community benefits as part of the LDA and that our District wards with the highest rates of unemployment were named. But as residents of Ward 6 and specifically ANC6D, we are aware that within our community we have neighbors within a few blocks of this massive development living generation to generation in deep poverty and wary of promises that development will benefit them rather than remove them.

Southwesters see any new redevelopment as the chance to right the wrongs that were done to a community in the Urban Renewal of the 50s and 60s. Unless the current residents of this neighborhood are specifically targeted for services and preferences, it is as if the memory of the first removal had been forgotten. Your ruling can help it be remembered.

We ask the Commission to:

- 1) Highlight in its ruling the language from the 2008 First Source Agreement stating that the Applicant *shall use good faith diligent efforts to hire residents of Southwest Washington, DC for such new jobs.*
- 2) Include in its ruling that the Workforce Intermediary Program will, at minimum, have a satellite location in SW.
- 3) Include in its ruling that the Affordable Housing Plan make provision for reasonable preferences for residents of and workers who provide services in Ward 6 for all affordable categories offered (30% AMI, 60% AMI, 100% and 125% workforce)
- 4) Include in its ruling that 5% of the 35% CBE requirement be procured from Ward 6.

Memorializing a Process for Implementing and Monitoring Benefits Related to SW

CBCC commends the Applicant for significant outreach to the SW community and other wards as they are related to the project. CBCC also understands that when it comes to monitoring and enforcing of agreements, the “devil is in the details.” CBCC is prepared to work with Zoning’s PUD enforcement officer related to our areas of concern, therefore it is critical the PUD at Stage One spell out the process by which the community will have a role in implementing and monitoring benefits. It is not enough to have an agreement on a shelf.

In the Applicant’s response to the ANC6D Resolution, the applicant has stated that: *Outreach with community has been ongoing and is anticipated to continue through Stage 2 PUD process and through construction of the project. HMW will continue to work with ANC 6D and other Southwest neighborhood oriented committees that are acknowledged by the ANC in the areas of workforce development, certified business enterprise hiring, and affordable housing.*

We would ask that:

- 1) The Commission’s ruling name CBCC as one of the entities to be included in neighborhood oriented committees related to workforce, CBE and affordable housing. Both the current ANC6D and SWNA testimony have adopted CBCC’s three major requests for community benefits, thereby acknowledging CBCC’s leadership role related to these areas of the project.
- 2) The Commission’s ruling specify a time-frame for community engagement that goes beyond “through construction of the project” which suggests that community issues related to workforce, CBE and housing will cease at the end of construction. The lease is long-term. The process for implementing and monitoring agreements should be long-term as well.

Memorializing a Partnership for Community Enrichment and Services

Finally, CBCC is extremely grateful that Mr. Hoffman has signed a statement (HMW response to ANC6D Resolution) that includes this sentence: *HMW agrees to forge an ongoing relationship with ANC 6D and the community to realize the vision for a long needed community center.*

Mr. Hoffman's support indicates his understanding that investment in buildings, piers, shops and roads is not enough to create a healthy community. We must invest in people. We must develop people and give them opportunities for self-development.

As a leader in the District's development community, the participation of Mr. Hoffman and his partners will be critical in bringing in other developers as well as the city and community to establish a vision and a plan to build a world-class community center or campus of services for a world-class neighborhood.

CBCC, therefore, asks the Zoning Commission:

to memorialize in its ruling, as part of this Applicant's community benefits package, the Applicant's participation in a joint City/Developers/Resident Partnership to plan, finance and achieve creation somewhere in SW of a comprehensive community center or campus for enrichment and services in and for the whole neighborhood.

Closing

In Milan Kundera's novel, "The Book of Laughter and Forgetting," a character named Mirek makes the following observation: "The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against oblivion."

CBCC represents a diverse community of people without the power of money or position, multiple offices or staff. For the average citizen, memory is our greatest asset and the ruling of the Zoning Commission, in addition to the LDA, provides the public with memory of agreements made, of human values lifted up, of a common vision shared.

Thank you for being a keeper of the public memory.