

**Testimony of Eve Brooks
Near SE/SW Community Benefits Coordinating Council
Board Member**

"SW Waterfront Redevelopment PUD Hearing"

**Hearing before the Zoning Commission
One Judiciary Square
441 4th Street Northwest, Room 220 South
Monday, July 18, 2011, 6:30 pm**

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ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 11-03
EXHIBIT NO. 72

Chairman Hood, Vice Chairman Schlater, Commissioners Selfridge, Turnbull and May:

I am Eve Brooks, member of the Executive Board of the Near SE/SW Community Benefits Coordinating Council (CBCC). A Community Summit involving 200 residents, held in March 2011, helped CBCC set priorities to guide our work on public benefits in The Wharf development. High among those priorities is the development of a community center or campus to house programs of enrichment for children, youth, families and workforce development. This CBCC priority is endorsed by the ANC. Further, I understand that the Hoffman-Madison Marquette team is willing to support this general request.

I am pleased to provide qualified support the application of Hoffman-Madison Waterfront Team for Stage 1 PUD and ask that you condition your PUD approval on significant improvements in the public benefits package, including planning and financing of a facility or facilities to address the social/education and enrichment needs of the population. The City is a partner in this application, and should be a full and active partner in the planning and financing of such a facility. We look forward to working collaboratively on this effort.

The Need

The Wharf will attract new residents, particularly young families who will need supports, and quality education and seniors who will want to age in place. Subsidized facilities and proactive social planning will translate into a stable, engaged and safe community, where low income and middle class families can thrive.

The need for a facility or campus of sites for social and enrichment support system is great. The SW and Near SE areas are a wasteland when it comes to children, youth and family services. SW is home to four public housing developments. In the past decade SW lost all our local social and youth services: A Boys and Girls Club; a small settlement house and the local Child Welfare Collaborative which targeted the families at greatest need, all have closed. There is no meaningful replacement. We have no infrastructure- either buildings or not- for- profit agencies- to serve the current and growing population. An over populated and under resourced recreation center- primarily a gym and outdoor tennis basketball and baseball facilities- lacks meeting rooms to engage children and youth when schools are closed.

The elementary school serving the area (Amidon-Bowen) has 25% proficiency rates, with children entering and remaining below grade level and 81% of its current student body are eligible for subsidized meals. The middle class families will continue to leave the area when their children reach school age unless they can trust the schools to be safe and engaging. That is

why The Near SE/SW Parents and Neighbors for Education Excellence, Now! successfully pressed for the reconstitution of Amidon-Bowen.

Reconstitution of school staff will help, but meaningful change will come when all those entering school have age appropriate skills. Towards that end, we have called upon AppleTree Early Learning PCS to significantly expand its services in the area by buying the building on 6th Street SW, currently owned by the Graduate school and now on the market. In response Appletree Early Learning has a bid (possibly too low) to buy the building and has not heard. It appears that we will need the assistance and collaboration of the developers, the City leadership and the Graduate School to realize this critical feature of our plan.

The CBCC urges the Zoning Commission to seek PUD application modification to memorialize the developer/city government commitments as follows:

- 1) That the Applicant partner with ANC designated SW entities, including the CBCC and SWNA, support the development and implementation of a Plan for Community Enrichment and Services as part of the public benefits package.
- 2) That said Plan would involve a Developer/Community /City Partnership to define and finance the preparation of designated space in SW to house multiple programs and services needed by SW residents of all ages and that would attract quality not-for profits with subsidized below market rents. Such space could be in an existing re-purposed building or part of new development accessible to SW residents of all ages and incomes.
- 3) That said Plan would envision space of sufficient size to hold a number of activities at a time and include spaces for small group meetings, one to one counseling sessions and multiple larger spaces for activities. We suggest that minimum of 30,000 to sq ft will be needed.
- 4) That said Plan would take into account the varied opportunities and potential partners within the SWW, i.e. Graduate School, Cultural Facility, public parks to be programmed, etc. That agreements are made with each potential partner about what they can bring to the project, such as Graduate School offering classes targeted to neighborhood.
- 5) That said Plan would provide a timeline and milestones and that if such milestones, are not reached, an agreed upon financial contribution would be made to the project.

Thank you for your time and consideration.