

BEFORE THE  
ZONING COMMISSION  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ZC Application 11-03J  
Application of Wharf Phase 3 REIT Leaseholder, LLC  
Hearing date: November 9, 2017

Testimony of Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA) Local 11

Good evening. My name is Steve Lanning and I live at 1736 Columbia Rd NW Washington, DC 20009. I am the Director of Organizing for the Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA) Mid-Atlantic Regional Organizing Coalition. I am testifying here today representing LIUNA Local 11.

The modifications to the first stage Planned Unit Development (PUD) and the second stage PUD application cannot lawfully move forward if they are inconsistent with the District's Comprehensive Plan. The proposals in front of you contradict numerous Comprehensive Plan Policies, including ED 2.5, The Production, Distribution, and Repair Economy; ED-4 Increasing Access to Employment; and ED 4.2.7: Living Wage Jobs. As the living wage policy explains, the Plan seeks to:

“Promote the attraction and retention of living wage jobs that provide employment opportunities for unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Use marketing strategies and incentives to encourage the relocation of firms with such positions to the District.  
717.15 “

Projects like The Wharf should help to address widening inequality in our city – the Comp Plan itself is entitled “Planning an inclusive city.” Creating high quality, living wage jobs is an essential part of the vision for inclusivity in DC that is the essence of the Plan.

In the first phase of this project, the developer did not to make any commitment to create high-quality jobs at The Wharf. Since that time, they have refused to even meet with us regarding our concerns about this project.

In the rebuttal and responses to questions from the Commission on Monday, November 6<sup>th</sup> related to the testimony offered by our partners at CHOICE and DCFPI in the first hearing on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, the applicant did not provide any information about job quality on the first phase.

The Wharf is one of the largest publicly supported projects ever constructed in DC. The lack of job quality standards on this project affects all of us in the construction industry. Our members and their families suffer because projects like The Wharf lower working standards in our industry across the city.

Through decades of extensive experience in the construction industry, we can say that having a union is the only way we've seen that consistently ensures construction jobs are careers with living wages, decent working conditions and a safe working environment.

When our members walk through cities, they can point with pride at the buildings they were part of constructing over decades. They receive world-class training, good wages, health insurance and retirement benefits that are key parts of creating the career jobs in construction that are called for as part of the Comprehensive plan policies I previously listed.

We are here today fighting to ensure a commitment to high quality job standards on projects to ensure construction careers exist for DC residents.

The developer's representative at the last hearing stated that they want to create "career paths" in construction. We encourage them to do that by working with the labor movement and signing a project labor agreement (PLA). The bottom line is PLAs are a proven tool to create middle class careers and deliver quality projects on time and on budget.

We are aware that a PLA cannot be mandated on this project, but the Zoning Commission must ensure that the project complies with the Comprehensive Plan. The applicant should thoroughly document that it has and will promote the creation of quality jobs in construction which are living wage careers for District residents and which have career advancement opportunities.

We call on you to decline to approve the proposal unless the developer agrees to enforce job quality standards in the construction and operation of the project.

We and our partners would be happy to work with the Commission and the developer to prepare a set of employment standards that would help ensure that Phase II of this development can succeed where Phase I failed—and truly promote inclusive growth in the District of Columbia.

Thank you very much for your attention to the critical issues of inclusive, living wage jobs in the proposal under consideration.