

Good evening. I am Laura Cox and reside at 600 Water St SW, Gangplank Marina. I want to thank the Commissioners for allowing me to testify tonight in opposition to the continuation of the Wharf Development as currently proposed. I appreciated Mr. Chairman, one of your final questions to the applicant on our first night of hearings. You asked if any resident of SW had been displaced. The answer was, "No." I'd like to provide a different answer. "Not yet." For I am one of the many residents of SW, and in particular of my marina community, (along with my husband, two children, dog and two cats,) that will be economically displaced if the applicant receives approval for their proposal with the fees and parking as it currently stands. I want to humanize this otherwise theoretical conversation and share with you my story.

We first moved to Gangplank Marina in 2005, and have raised our children here, from kindergarten to college. Our older daughter Galena is now a Freshman in college; Raya is a Junior in HS. (She was here last week with her broken ankle and crutches doing homework. You may remember her.) But that is a very different child than the one who first moved in. In fact, she fell into the Potomac before knowing how to swim at age 5. Our family does not have the greatest longevity at Gangplank having lived here nearly 13 years. We are ranked 15th longest residents out of the 89. When the developers spoke of us, they talked of selling boats, turnover and implied a great deal of transiency. That does not apply to many of us who call the marina home. That does not apply to my family. (Submit newspaper and magazine articles.)

The developer also seems to feel that they are negotiating with our slip holder association in good faith. I really appreciate all our volunteer Board has done and support this continued work. I know our Board is striving to do move this process forward without sacrificing our critical needs, and to take into consideration what it is that we can compromise. We understand that the developers and the marina live aboard community have different goals, which creates a natural tension. The developer says they want to create a world class marina. We just want our homes and this wonderful community to be able to survive their vision. The issues our Board is fighting for are needs to survive on boats, and for many of us to not lose our homes and our amazing community.

We are not all wealthy yacht owners; in fact, our boat is 30 years old. I am an elementary school teacher. My gross income is less than \$50,000/year. My husband is 72 years old. We have two children, one of whom is in college. Many of our neighbors at Gangplank are government employees and public servants, retirees, small business owners, computer tech people, musicians, or work in the boating industry. Not many, but some, are well to do. We are part of an amazing, extraordinary community that exemplifies what it means to serve and be neighbors. If the developers are able to push through their desired results, we will have lost property and value of our homes without either the protections of tenancy or the rights of property owners under the rules of eminent domain. We fall into this crazy legal niche- allegedly- that denies us the rights and protections that anyone else might enjoy. If another neighborhood lost their on-street parking as a result of the creation of a pedestrian shopping mall, they could not be forced to park more than ½ mile away, and pay for the privilege to do so. They would be entitled to some form of recompense. The applicant is not only putting us in the position to pay for what has been included in our license agreement (a parking spot/slip) and charges \$150 for additional ones, but is not planning to reduce fees to cover this loss.

The costs of parking and increase slip fees may seem small. To a giant developer, they are small. However, to a family such as ours, they are the difference between staying in our home or being forced out. Our daughters have so many stories of life at Gangplank, and have been enriched by the opportunity to live here. It would be a shame if this community is not sustained.

The saying that it takes a village to raise a child has been proven by our neighbors in the lives of our children. They know their neighbors well and feel connected to them. I'll never forget the night that I had a class parent evening and my husband had to be out as well. Our girls were maybe 12 and 14. It was Ladies Night Out and everyone was going to the newly opened Station 4 Restaurant for Happy Hour. They begged the girls to come along, as they were considered part of the Women of the Waterfront. I came home to a picture posted on social media that included my girls. Everyone had a glass of wine around the long table of women; there they were with an apple juice and a sprite at the end of the table, in the mix. The next day they shared stories of these women whom they got to know better and were so inspired by- Cpt. Kathy who had been one of the first female under-cover police detectives in DC, Nancy who was in the third class of women admitted to the Naval Academy, Petra, the then stay-at-home mom who attended Harvard Law School, Coast Guard Lt. Jodie who protected her younger sister from a mugging in Guatemala by breaking the perpetrator's arm. When we had a send-off at Galena's last Thursday night gathering before heading to school in L.A., 60 or more of our neighbors (in this small community of 89 households) came by to wish her well. They watched her grow, came over before Prom to do hair and nails, lent and handed down clothes and took her on her first roller coaster ride ever.

In addition to providing a social fabric for our family to thrive, our neighbors are eclectic and diverse, yet somehow remain a tightly knit community. During the toxic election season last year, we had to invent a code word to use when someone began a political conversation since it was so divisive. Peanut butter was the word. It was a silly reminder that our neighbors mean more to us than spouting our opinions about the candidates. We are active in SW and the DC community at large, having planted trees, painted storm drains and former fire call boxes, volunteered countless hours at many years of the Cherry Blossom Festival, hosted the Boat Open House Tour, raised money with the annual Leukemia Poker Run, worked with the Anacostia Conservation Corps on river clean-ups, supported our local elementary school and the list could go on. All of these endeavors we engage in communally, not just as individuals. We contribute in many ways.

We support one another in extraordinary ways as well. It was so cold one February about 10 or 11 years ago that we could not fill our boats' water tanks with water for weeks. Finally, one night the temperatures crept up above 32 degrees, but the pipes on B Dock had burst. My neighbors strung together probably 30 hoses and filled every single boat's tanks with the slow trickle of water that had to go more than 250 feet to get to some boats. It was after 4:00 am when the boats were finally with fresh water again. When Julie's knee surgery prevented her from cooking, meals were provided. A beautiful henna tattoo was painted on the bald head of a chemo patient. We were evacuated one morning when a boat was listing and the Coast Guard thought that righting it might cause it to sink our boat. Frankie and Jim took us all in- including our pets, and made us fabulous waffles, complete with powdered sugar and fruit compote. The day Liz and Justin lost their cat in a fire, neighbors took care of them, just like when Darryl's boat caught fire and he also lost everything. Within hours, a home, clothes and basics were provided. We celebrate together events like the births of children and marriages, and mourn our losses of life with an 8 Bells Ceremony. This community is connected, despite all our differences, and committed to one another and our city at large. However, if the fees suggested and the changes that the applicant seems unwilling to yield on pass through Zoning, I cannot afford to stay, nor can many others. This incredible, vibrant community will be disbanded in order to expand the commercial mecca being built.

I appreciate the efforts to bring more people to the waterfront, but worry about the lack of fore-thought shown toward its use. Councilman Allan will confirm that the police and fire resources on the water are inadequate, as are the protections provided by the developers for the new water users. Careful

planning provides security and designated pedestrian, bike and vehicular lanes on land. Where are the protections and designations on the water? A kayak cannot be seen under the bow of a large boat. Weekend renters of SUPs or small motor boats do not always understand that a sailboat cannot easily change direction while under sail. There has been a lack of planning demonstrated by the applicants regarding the safety on the water, similar to their lack of planning regarding how to meet the needs of the Gangplank Marina community. They have vision, and have created something beautiful, but as with the bus and traffic on land snafus have demonstrated, several eventualities have not been considered. They say we have benefited and will benefit from the development. I guess that is true. But we have also borne the brunt of the inconveniences of living in a construction zone for 5 years. I have had several flat tires, have had traffic craziness galore, have listened to the pounding in of pilings for weeks on end, have power shut off and water on numerous occasions, and have had to flexibly change commuting routes or plans. Pretty does not offset the disruptions that we have had to endure. It's nice, but not necessary. However, affordable fees and accessible parking are. I hope you consider this when making a determination about this PUD.