

January 22, 2015

District of Columbia Zoning Commission

Case ZC 13-08

Testimony by Robert Green

Alabama Ave/13th Street Tenants Coalition

Honorable Members of the Zoning Commission,

My name is Robert Green. I reside at 1331 Alabama Ave SE apartment 304, Washington DC 20032 and have lived there for two years. I would like to testify in opposition to the PUD today for two main reasons

The first reason that I oppose the PUD is because of the hardship that being displaced from my home would cause me personally. I would like to remain in my apartment because of the closeness of public transportation- the metrobus and subway which are next door to my apartment. The accessibility of the bus and subway helps me by getting me to my medical appointments and physical therapy sessions. There are grocery stores, a library, food establishments close by when I'm too sick to cook, my pharmacy, and a laundrymat are also near by. Because of the number of churches in this area I can attend religious and civic meetings. I have neighbors that check on me because of my various medical problems, which I'll not have in another neighborhood. Also Malcolm X school is right next door to my apartment building, where I go to use their field for my physical therapy exercises for the rehabilitation of my left knee. I have had to be rushed to United Medical Center on numerous occasions because of my heart conditions, diabetes, asthma, A-fib, and bleeding problems. I believe I and other tenants in my buildings should have the right to enjoy these benefits.

The second reason I oppose the PUD is that I do not believe that Sanford Capital is worthy of having this project approved based on their deplorable track record with the properties they already own. I do not trust Sanford Capital, do not appreciate their treatment of tenants and property, and do not want to give up my TOPA rights.

Since I've lived on the property, I have experienced housing condition problems such as cracks in the walls, problems with hot water, with heat and air conditioning, issues with rodent infestations, and many other issues. When the cracks in my walls are fixed they reappear soon after, and the hallways and common areas are not cleaned enough and are left filthy. The laundry facilities in my building are a mess, there are leaking pipes in the basement, and the basement floods every time it rains. The smell is terrible, and there have been fly infestations because of the standing water. There is raw sewage often times in the basement when it floods. Lastly, the glass to the front door is constantly broken and not repaired. I had to fix the cracks myself so that they are no longer a problem, and bought curtains to insulate the windows. Roaches came up from the apartment below me, and when I called Sanford about it they told me that they were sending someone out but no one ever came. Finally I sprayed it myself with RAID. The worst thing about the conditions is the mice

that were everywhere I was throwing away food like mad; bread, cereal, and as a matter of fact I had to throw away a mattress I jumped in bed once without turning on the lights and didn't realize I was in bed with about ten baby mice. I had to kill them and throw away the mattress and box springs since they were such a mess.

To get a repair done, you are supposed to call the maintenance number. When you do that they give you a confirmation number and then turn it over to site maintenance. They come knock on your door and asks what the problem. It takes months to get repairs completed. The maintenance people might come and start the work, but they always say they have to get parts and never come back to finish the job.

Just to try and get them to do the basic repairs that they are supposed to, I've had to do a lot of things. I've written to the deputy mayor of public safety, I have called all the district agencies, called my ANCs, I've called Todd Fulmer, Dominic, Pat Strauss, from Sanford. Me and my neighbors had to take them to Housing Conditions Court just to get these basic things taken care of in our building

I don't think Sanford is a responsible property owner, and they don't keep up their buildings or take care of their tenants. If they treat me this way and other tenants, it's not fair for them to get a new building and treat the new tenants with respect and consideration, and take care of their needs after they treated me so poorly It shows that they are treating me as a non-person. And that shows that they do not care about black people. We have been trying to negotiate with them, but we do not trust their word on anything, and we should not have to give up our legal TOPA rights as a requirement to come to an agreement with them

In conclusion, Sanford Capital doesn't care about their tenants or meaningful affordable housing. If you the members of this commission have done a check on Sanford's tenants' living conditions and the way they treat people and the conditions of their buildings you would see that they are the largest slumlords in their city and surely don't deserve to build this project. Several of Sanford's people have advised and pressured me and my neighbors to move, and have told me that this project has already been approved from the beginning I certainly hope this is not the case

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony in opposition to the PUD

 Robert T. Green 1/22/15

Robert Green
Tenant of 1331 Alabama Ave SE