

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Schellin, Sharon (DCOZ)
Sent: Tuesday, July 30, 2019 11:20 AM
To: Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)
Subject: FW: Submission for Consideration for the extension of Zoning Order No. 13-08A
Attachments: Appendix A.docx; Appendix B.docx; Rescind Letter.docx; City_Partner_CH-Development Project_Petition.pdf

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This email and his attachments can now go in the record as Ex. 8A, 8A1, 8A2, etc.

From: David conn [mailto:DAConn622@hotmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 9, 2019 6:51 PM
To: DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ) <DCOZ-ZCSubmissions@dc.gov>
Subject: Submission for Consideration for the extension of Zoning Order No. 13-08A

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7/9/19 – **please confirm receipt**

Good Day Washington DC Zoning Commission –

I am composing this letter because I would like to express my support for the continuation and extension of the PUD for the Congress Heights Metro Development Project (also known as Sq 5914 Congress Heights, Zoning Commission Order No. 13-08). This project is led by CityPartners and has significant local support in Ward 8. I represent only one group that supports this project, but the support is far greater. Our group of resident activists is composed of 30 separate tax paying parcels who represent nearly 50 Washington DC voting residents of Ward 8.

We have emailed, mailed, called, and spoken in person with various Ward 8 Liaisons (Quenton Horton and Kornelius Anderson). We have voiced our opinions at several ANC 8C and 8D meetings and spoken directly with many of the ANC representatives, including having a meeting with ANC Commission Mike Austin, and many correspondences and conversations with Robbie Woodland—both of whom support the project and wish the tenants would take the TOPA offer provided by CityPartners.

Many of the residents here in Ward 8 sent and forwarded an email (see Appendix B below) to the following Washington DC officials: Muriel Bowser, Rashad Young, Ronald Ross, Beverly Perry, Lamont Akins, Julia Irving, Polly Donaldson, John Falcicchio, Brian Kenner, Andrew Trueblood, Kornelius Anderson, Quenton Horton, and Sarosh Olpadwala. ANC rep Mike Austin did meet with about a dozen of our residents to discuss our hopes for someone within the DC government to help provide leadership on this issue. I have written to and spoken on several occasions with Ward 8 Councilman Trayon White. Even Mr. White will privately express his hope for the project and his wish that the tenants take the generous offer provided by CityPartners. We have also written into the Washington Post and several other local newspapers editorial sections to express our point of view.

We also organized and sent out a letter mailing campaign to many of the same people mentioned above but added Attorney General Karl Racine to the mailing campaign. We had over 15 residents mail letters on this subject to the various offices. Mr. Racine did reply to my letter, but no one else's, with a short letter that mentioned he would take my opinion into consideration, see attached photo of the letter.

And this brings me to the principal reason for emailing you. Attorney General Racine added a letter to your Commission expressing his opinion that the PUD should not be extended. Mr. Racine is firstly acting beyond his authorities to provide his opinion on a zoning issue when his jurisdiction is only related to the TOPA rights of the tenants who formerly lived in the Sq 5914 complex. Therefore, his opinion should be considered not as the Attorney General but simply as a private DC resident. A resident, however, who does not live in Ward 8 like we do

Although I personally believe that CityPartners has acted in good faith, I would advise the Zoning Commission to read the many correspondences in the below appendices to see our side of the story before judging on the extension of the PUD. I think if you review our emails and letters you will start to see why we feel the tenants are being treated fairly and that the development would be productive for our community, which badly needs services like grocery stores, local business, and greater security near the metro.

It is my view that the Attorney General is trying to make an example out of CityPartners and score points with key constituencies, who do not want any sort of development anywhere in the city, and who falsely claim gentrification in every instance. Well the truth is this development is the exact opposite of gentrification. It provides 1/3 of the apartments as affordable (approximately 80 of the 215). It also provides local Ward 8 businesses discounts on rental space and priority in this potentially premier location. CityPartners is also working to get a prenatal clinic added to this development. Furthermore, the tenants will be able to move back into the apartments at the same rate as before. And the development is *not* displacing anyone because no one currently lives there. These buildings sit abandoned after a fire last November due to a resident dispute. This is the definition of responsible development, not gentrification: No one is being forced out, and the community is getting badly needed resources.

If this PUD expires, CityPartners might loss the court case, and the 10 remaining tenants will be able to proudly declare victory. But the deal they are getting with CityPartners (which includes \$100K per household! Please read appendix A & B to see the full details about the TOPA deal), will be gone and these buildings will not be simply years away but probably a decade or more from any sort of development. In the meantime, the tenants are out all this money but satisfied by stopping what they think is gentrification, and the buildings will sit undeveloped. Local businesses will continue to flee Ward 8, there will be less affordable housing, and less security near the metro. All bad things for a community that has plenty of problems already. But perhaps worst of all is that these abandoned buildings will stand as a testament of the ineptitude of DC Government to take the lead and to help solve local problems. I have yet to meet the DC official who has the courage to stand up against these clearly politicized issues and push a pragmatic and beneficial solution.

Whether CityPartners wins the court case and develops the land, or perhaps the opposite where they sell it to the tenants, in both cases the PUD must be extended or the delays related to reapplying for the permits will be untenable. Whatever the outcome of the court case, if the PUD expires you have sentenced this neighborhood to another decade of blight. Let the courts figure out the final outcome but let us not allow the PUD to expire. Anyone acting in good faith would agree this development is good for the neighborhood. It doesn't matter who wins in the courts, the neighborhood loses, if this PUD expires. Please do not let this happen.

Thank you for taking the time to review this opinion, and I would also advise that you please review and read the attached documents and the appendices below to get a full picture of the issues at hand. Thank you.

Kindest regards

David Conn
Ward 8 Resident

