



TALKING POINTS

To: Zoning Commission
From: LaRuby May
Date: January 7, 2016
Subject: Case number 13-09 (Stanton Square, LLC – 1st Stage and Consolidated PUDs & Related Map Amendment @ Square 5877

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the Zoning Commission. My name is LaRuby May and I have the privilege of representing the great hard working residents in Ward 8. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the commission. I am here today to express my concerns regarding the application for a planned unit development and related Zoning amendment for the 8.1 acre property bound by Stanton, Elvans and Pomeroy Roads, SE., which is known as Lot 122 in Square 5877.

Located in the Fort Stanton and Hillsdale neighborhoods, this property is located in Advisory Neighborhood Commission 8B and borders Advisory Neighborhood Commission 8A. Let me begin by stating that I am a supporter of economic growth. Throughout my entire campaign and in 250 or so days that I have been in office I have been working to make sure that all developments in Ward 8 go beyond bricks and mortar and extend into building the capacity of ward 8 businesses and residents. It is not enough for any developer to come into our community and believe that it is fair or acceptable to provide our residents with employment for a couple months of construction and take all of the revenue to Connecticut Avenue NW.

I had the opportunity to meet with the developers of this project a couple months ago where I shared what I heard and hear from Ward 8 residents and businesses. I was clear in conveying a message that it is important to the community to have Ward 8 participation on every level, including developer, on this project. At the time of the meeting the members of this development team did not include any Ward 8 businesses and that was of significant concern. In my meeting I asked the team to help me understand why their composition omitted Ward 8 businesses. In fact the specific example that I talked to the developer about was the insensitivity of bringing a Ward 1 child care provider to Ward 8 when there are nationally accredited child development centers currently operating in Ward 8 who would have jumped at the opportunity to provide services to children in a brand new facility.

As the Councilmember in Ward 8, I receive calls from constituents ranging from compliments to concerns. In my short tenure, my office has received many concerns regarding property that is currently owned by Horning Brothers. There is a property that is a short walk from this property that according to residents has been underserved and neglected for years. I encourage any

member of this board to visit the property and hear from the residents personally. In community meetings these residents and other neighbors are justifiably hesitant to believe that the proposed development is even meant for African American residents, let alone low income African American residents based on the current treatment by this developer. In addition, Horning Brothers owns a property in the 1300 block of Morris Road that is also neglected and poorly maintained. I spoke with the advisory neighborhood commissioner representing the residents in this building and she has been unable to receive a response from Horning Brothers to help address the issues of the tenants. In fact Mr. Chairman the death Joseph Kenneth Belle in front of the property did not invoke a meeting by the owner with the residents to discuss public safety concerns. It is not only my job but my obligation to make sure that the residents of Ward 8 receive what every resident in the district deserves, and that is quality housing with quality services. And I challenge this Board to join me in this commitment and making sure that the issues that poor African American residents in Ward 8 are facing at the hand of this developer.

I know that this development team has done community outreach, but the efforts seem to be only for self-serving purposes and not in an effort to be a good neighbor. Let me explain this belief. As I mentioned earlier this proposed project is in Advisory Neighborhood Commission 8B and boarders 8A. This project is literally across the street from neighbors who have not been engaged by this development team. The residents of the Hillsdale community (8A) will be more significantly impacted by construction on this site than any resident in ANC 8B, yet they have not been engaged, nor has this team made any presentation to the single member representative or the 8A commission. I believe that a good neighbor would want to make sure that those stakeholders impacted by the development would be informed and have an opportunity to ask questions. However because the developer only need to provide this body evidence of engaging 8B there was no benefit and therefore it did not happen.

The reason that I am bringing these issues to your attention tonight is because you have an opportunity to tell this developer that community engagement is not a box you check, it is a genuine effort to make sure that the people in the community are an integral part of the process.

I believe that it is unconscionable that Horning Brothers have owned this site for 50 years and has done nothing to date but allow for it to be an eyesore and a dumping ground. Let me be clear, I support economic growth and I want to see this site developed but not at the expense of leaving Ward 8 residents out and behind.

Lastly, I would ask this board to consider not granting the additional height requested in this application. Having a large and tall structure on this site is not consistent with the structures that currently exist. Currently there are both parking and traffic issues in this neighborhood because it is used as a shortcut by many of our neighbors from Maryland. I humbly request that this Board not approve this application until the applicant can show evidence of a commitment to the lives of Ward 8 residents and the capacity building of Ward 8 businesses.