

**May 13, 2014**

**Good evening Chairman Hood and Commissioners,**

**My name is Jane Huntington. I live at 1920 Shepherd Street, NE. I have been a member of the McMillan Park Committee since 1998 and now Friends of McMillan.**

**I appreciate this opportunity to once again contribute my thoughts regarding the VMP development plans. You have received my letter in opposition.**

**Briefly I would like to clarify an assertion that Mr. Lynch made in his presentation on May 5th. He stated, "I was personally recruited by many members and organizations of the surrounding neighborhoods who were interested in mixed used development." He also stated that "we" created 10 principles around open space, housing, and a park.**

**To clarify: following a very contentious meeting held at Catholic University by NCRC in June 2006, I wrote to then NCRC president Anthony Freeman in which I reported briefly on the outcomes of meetings conducted by the Office of Planning in 2000. Consensus was to create "something really special" at McMillan Park.**

**At this point in time I must say that I was naive in envisioning what I advocated. I wrote, "Somehow we seem to have come to a point where often communications between the city government and citizens around quality-of-life issues, development, and service expectations and delivery quickly become contentious. I am writing to you [Mr. Freeman] because I hope we can open communication and find ways to work together to create win/win outcomes for a very precious property." [I would be happy to add a copy of that letter to the file.] I never heard from Mr. Freeman, Robert Bobb, then City Administrator, or members of the Council whom I copied.**

**I had seen Jair Lynch pictured in the NCRC video. I knew him to be ascendent in his career in Washington neighborhood investments when he returned from his success**

as an Olympic athlete. I knew that he had been on the board of the Tennis and Learning Center, spearheaded by Cora Barry. On July 7, 2006 I sent Mr. Lynch a copy of my letter to Mr. Freeman and stated a hope that NCRC and advocates for preservation of McMillan could create ways to work together and transform McMillan into "a magnetic destination point in the heart of the District of Columbia."

Tania Jackson, Director of Community Policy for The Jarr Lynch Companies, called me upon receipt of the letter and invited representatives of the McMillan Park Committee to meet in Mr. Lynch's office. Four of us went. We never discussed housing, medical offices, retail. We talked about the Basilica Cistern in Turkey and restorations to it, the restored former industrial Parc Bercy in Paris and others. We discussed McMillan's history, its role in stemming disease with clean water, its place in the emerald necklace, its engineers and designers, and its potential as a world class historic destination.

Mr. Lynch invited us to bring a group of neighbors and advocates to another meeting. We met on August 29, 2006 at the Lynch offices and continued an enthusiastic conversation about the potential for the McMillan Sand Filtration site. Between that meeting and the end of September, the Lynch Companies formed the Vision McMillan Team, brought in EYA, represented by Mr. Thakkar, and forwarded the 10 principles for mixed use development to which I believe none of us signed on to. "We" did not create those principles. They did. I have email from Ms. Jackson asking for reply and endorsement.

And so began the long arduous struggle to be heard as the developers created their vision to build a new neighborhood from scratch. Mr. Lynch was asked along the

**way why their early design iterations hadn't worked to which he replied, "People weren't quite ready to give their ideas. They were ready to say no."**

**I reiterate that we have never said "no." We have consistently urged "yes" to creative repurposing of the tremendous public asset that McMillan Park is. The destruction of the historic features is unacceptable as is the dismissal of honest public input.**

**Thank you.**

**JANE F. HUNTINGTON  
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June 20, 2006

Anthony C. Freeman  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
National Capital Revitalization Corporation  
2025 M Street, NW  
Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Freeman,

This spring I submitted a suggestion regarding the McMillan Sand Filtration site to DC Appleseed and its "Solving DC Problems – Campaign 2006." The contest, sponsored in part by the June and John Hechinger Family Trusts, received 900+ submissions. Though my contribution was not selected as a finalist, I am taking the liberty of sending you a copy with the hope that you and the NCRC team and others involved in making decisions about McMillan will consider its broad vision

At the conclusion of several series of community discussions about the property, Mr. Altman, then Director of the Office of Planning, always voiced his concern with doing "what's best for the city." Doing what's best for the city, the nation's capital, the people of the city and beyond, as well as the extraordinary city treasure that is the McMillan Sand Filtration site, motivates my suggestion.

My bias in favor of saving McMillan is clear, and I am grateful to be not alone. I envision a restored site as a destination point for visitors from all over the world, its attraction fortified by attractive development in its environs, north, south, east, and west. Washington, the capital city, was conceived to be a showcase city. The Smithsonian, the heart of the Washington visited by tourists today, came later.

Large commercial retailers have a place in the city, for sure. Yet the areas neighboring McMillan are full of smaller-scale redevelopment opportunities that could only enhance the McMillan property and spur economic growth and stability in struggling neighborhoods and long-neglected major gateway avenues. Preserving McMillan as a destination point separate from the Federal tourist attractions will, at long last, bring more tourist dollars into the economy of the District.

Green spaces are a vital part of Washington, from the original plans to the McMillan Commission's early 20<sup>th</sup> century "emerald necklace," of which the McMillan site is a link, to citizens' consistent support for green spaces

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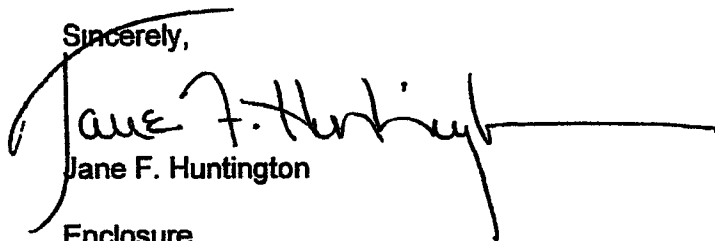
The community voted overwhelmingly to invite an international design competition to restore the park, originally landscaped by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and to carefully consider the unique industrial ruin and extraordinary underground architecture. The Office of Planning cited "limited public resources" as a constraint to following through on that proposal. However, in 2004 the city elicited funds from the National Endowment for the Arts to entice "35 leading designers from around the world" to offer proposals for the Washington Canal Park Competition. I hope that we have opportunity yet to explore creative options for McMillan.

Clearly, the property presents many challenges to NCRC, not the least of which are the underground cells. Those sacred spaces—they bring to mind similar architecture dating from ancient Rome—showcase American ingenuity, spirit and awesome ability to meet challenges—in the case of McMillan, providing clean water to the eastern part of the city. I understand that stabilizing and strengthening them to build on safely will be very costly.

Somehow we seem to have come to a point where often communications between the city government and citizens around quality-of-life issues, development and service expectations and delivery quickly become contentious. I am writing to you because I hope we can open communication and find ways to work together to create win/win outcomes for a very precious property. This is definitely a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create something spectacular, and it can be done only here in this city, the city that is the nation's capital. We can be a model of healing and caring for a national treasure, inviting and involving broad participation, and at the same time, NCRC can meet its mandate in vitalizing long underserved neighboring communities.

I appreciate your time and attention in reviewing my letter. I hope that you will want to follow up.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jane F. Huntington", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jane F. Huntington

Enclosure

cc: Robert C. Bobb, DC City Administrator  
Members of the DC City Council

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Submission to the DC Appleseed Center for Law & Justice  
"Solving DC Problems – DC Campaign 2006"

### **SAVE AND RESTORE THE McMILLAN SAND FILTRATION PLANT**

This city needs healing BIG TIME, and unless we snap out of denial and evasion, we won't get it. Over several years of community planning forums, citizens unanimously advocated to create "something really special" on the site of the McMillan Sand Filtration Plant. Rather than seize the rare opportunity to restore an historic industrial wonder and create a unique destination point in the heart of the District, the government abstained from action and oversaw further decay. Recently they managed to pass the property on to their development ally, the National Capital Revitalization Corporation.

The nation's first slow water filtration facility served safe water from 1905 to 1985. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. landscaped parkland atop the underground water works. The entire design is a testament to engineering ingenuity, enlightened Congressional leadership and City Beautiful planning principles.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to see the NCRC meet its mandate of "spurring economic development in underserved District communities" by sponsoring an international design competition for the site? Nearby are commercial corridors crying out for economic development—many, "gateway" streets. Envisioning the site in a greater whole has potential to attract interest not only of citizens from all parts of the city but also from all over the world. Caring well for this special place can raise expectations for financially, culturally and artistically healthy outcomes in the strategic East-West border of the District of Columbia, a dividing line between the two cities that are the nation's capital.