

May 13, 2013

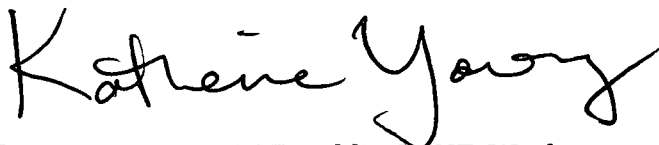
Chairman Hood, Members of the Committee, Distinguished Invited Guests,

My name is Katherine Young. I have lived at number 16, the unit block of Franklin St. Northeast since 1987. Every day, I walk onto North Capitol St across from McMillan Park. Although I am not a "200 footer", I am a 250 footer. I am also a recent former Stronghold Civic Association Vice-President and a founding member of the McMillan Park Committee in 1989. I am a native Washingtonian and my family has lived in Washington, DC continuously since 1916.

The impaired hearing and vision of the DMPED officials and their consultant VMP requesting a CR and C-3-C zoning along with their accompanying hubris, greed and obliviousness to our community appall and offend me.

I will address our collective need to consider and protect a vista in our nation's capital, a vista of American history at the Bloomingdale and Stronghold doorsteps of McMillan Park. This vista is a treasure and an aesthetic asset belonging to all Americans, not to a privileged, private few who would have the remaining access to this view from the 13th floor of a building built to pad the pockets of developers and the District. Everyday I take one of the H buses to and from work. Along Michigan Ave. I make sure to look south taking in the dome of the Jefferson building at the Library of Congress, the Capital, Post Office Pavilion, the Washington Monument and beyond to the shores of Virginia- a former slave state. I then sweep my eyes over to Howard University's Founders Hall Tower sitting nobly above McMillan Reservoir. A thirteen story building and other high-rises on McMillan Park will block this view for my fellow citizens and future generations of Americans. I was amazed to see this vista on family trips to New York at the end of the '50s when I was six years old with a great-grandmother still alive, born during the Civil War. This is the only clear- horizon vista drivers and pedestrians have along the east-west corridor of Michigan Avenue from which they can appreciate our capital from this side's high ground. This is also, ~~to~~ the only publicly accessible high ground vista in our neighborhood, ~~for~~ for the 4th of July, where my neighbors and I sit outside the fenced hilltop on the north side of Michigan Ave. opposite McMillan Park watching fireworks over the Mall. We are barred from higher and private ground at The US Soldiers and Airmens Home, the VA Hospital and Catholic University.

Why does the city and its consultant impair our vision and our history? Do not destroy this vista. Take the fence down at McMillan Park between First St. NW and North Capitol Streets. Give us back our public land. Let us descend the still-existing steps into the park designed by Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. Let us walk again among the quince and hawthorne trees above caverns that could be creatively re-used for a variety of cultural, recreational, low density commercial and civic purposes.



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ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.13-14
EXHIBIT NO.720

May 13, 2014

Dear Office of Zoning,

My name is Ali Tharrington. I am a five year resident of Ward 5 and a friend of McMillan Park. I grew up in rural Warren County, North Carolina one of the state's poorest. My mother, a transplant art teacher from an educated family in Ohio, was always determined to make sure I knew the world beyond our tobacco farming community and DC was my classroom in that regard.

As a child from the country, DC was a majestic place full of wonder-inspiring sights and places that I could never experience back home. For me, it represented a place where the past meets the yet-to-come, history meets vision, and where former foresight meets future dreaming. It has always been my favorite city and where I wanted to spend my adult life. On Friday, I closed on a house in Manor Park and my dream of being a DC homeowner became a reality.

As I look toward spending the next decades of my life in this city - joining a community, raising a family - I am dismayed and disturbed by the lack of vision our leaders and planning professionals seem to have when it comes to the future of our city's great spaces. We, the people of DC, have in our possession a special and beautiful asset that could be turned into something visionary, creative, iconic! What's been offered by the proposed development couldn't be more different - 13-story medical office buildings, big box grocery, even more traffic woes, and a corporate lawn managed by a Business Improvement District.

Again, this is land **owned by the taxpayers** of the District of Columbia, and our government should be responsive to its constituents' requirements. In fact, in 2002, the city spent significant money and significant time asking the community around McMillan what they wanted to see at the site - the only time the city has done so. The proposed development gives them everything they **didn't** want - high-density development with views that go nowhere, the paltry preservation of public open space, and the wholesale destruction of priceless, underground historic infrastructure.

VMP pretends they have gathered community input, but in fact, from the beginning, they have pushed a "We Know What You Need" plan down our throats and to help them do so, have hired on not one, but **two** "community outreach" firms, shipping in their version of "grassroots" in from Baltimore.

This site is an Olmsted-designed space listed on the National Register and it deserves better (and we deserve better) than a plan that looks like a First Year architectural student's failing final project. We only get **one chance to do this right**. Cities all around the world are moving into the future with forward-thinking, adaptive re-use projects that truly serve the public - why not the District of Columbia?

I urge this body to reject the zoning for the proposed development of McMillan Park.

Thank you,

Alexandra (Ali) Tharrington
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