

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,

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