

Testimony in Opposition for Zoning case Brookland Manor, 14-18A

February 23, 2017

My name is Jose Valcarcel, I am an Architect in the city and have been working as such for 14 years. I come in front of the zoning commission today not to talk about social issues. There are people here that can talk to that better than I can. Plus, I know this board often turns a deaf ear to that subject. I'm here to talk about the role and obligations of this board. You see as an active practitioner in architecture, I thoroughly understand the role of this board

The Zoning Commission and board is here to:

- Grant relief from the strict application of the Zoning Regulations, also known as variances.
- Approve certain uses of land, also known as special exceptions.

Complete re-zoning of a 23 acre site is not granting relief. The role of the developers presenting to this board is not to present a master plan via hearing. The role of the zoning board is being twisted by developers and certain administrators for their own benefit.

If an individual resident of this city came in front of this board to ask for a change in zoning of their property lot or square from residential to commercial or mixed uses or a much higher density residential zoning you would not grant it unless a hardship was shown.

In contrast developers who come in front of this board for similar changes, receive customized review. Let's be clear a developer's desire to make a bigger profit is not a hardship.

What is being asked of you by this developer goes against the character of that neighborhood and the history of that site. I know that one of you is here from the National Planning Commission. Another of you is here from the national parks service. The two of you should know better than to allow this particular ask and to not allow what is being presented to be voted in favor by this board. The other 3 board members are appointed by the mayor, and we all know and witnessed that our current mayor has no problem selling our city to developers.

I ask one of you think about what is being done here and do the right thing. Vote against this re-zoning case. Do not allow the protections of our city's history and character to be changed in hearing rooms for the benefit of a developer's profit.

Instead you must listen to the Brookland Manor residents and people in opposition of this case. Do not allow any zoning relief until the developer does right by the existing residents of these lots and of the community at large.

Sincerely,

Jose Valcarcel
Ward5 residents
Practicing DC Architect