

Testimony on behalf of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B

April 2, 2015

Resolution #15 -0202

Regarding ZC 14-22

Implement the Walter Reed Zone

Good Evening, Zoning Commissioners, Ladies and Gentlemen, My name is Brenda Speaks and I represent Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B, adjacent to the proposed Walter Reed Development.

My neighbors and I have a very long and proud history with the Walter Reed property and deeply cherish this important local and national asset. I was actually born at the Walter Reed hospital and know the campus well from growing up here.

I view this Walter Reed campus to be a true destination for the city and to have great importance to making all of Georgia Avenue a wonderful, walk-able, well landscaped Great Street for our whole community and the city.

The Office of Planning has submitted to you a new proposed zoning package that fully reflects all of the hard work our community put into planning the Walter Reed development through the SAP over a 6 year process. I have attended numerous community meetings, and I represent our ANC 4B as a part of Walter Reed Community Advisory Committee – the CAC.

I strongly support the proposed new zones WR-1 through WR-8, and the detailed direction they provide for future development.

The resolution originally passed by my ANC 4B in February raised several concerns about how the development would fit in with our surrounding neighborhood. Since then we have seen several

presentations that address these concerns.

I will submit a revised Resolution at the next ANC 4B meeting to revise the original Resolution. We will strongly support the proposed zoning for the site, and ask that the Zoning Commission should approve the zoning as submitted by the Office of Planning.

The original concerns that my commission raised are related to three major matters:

1. **Timing of zoning approval**
2. **Building Heights**
3. **Affordable Housing, and**
4. **Parking**

Since the Zoning hearing was postponed from March 6 to April 2, 2015 due to weather, we have seen several presentations and have learned significant new information.

1. **Timing of Zoning Approval.** We really have waited a long time for this development to occur and have worked very hard to make that happen. We would like to see the zoning be put in place now so that the redevelopment can begin.

2. **Building Heights.** ANC 4B has been concerned about the building heights and how they impact the neighborhood. We have seen several presentations over the past month that show that the Office of Planning really listened to the community. At the three edge areas of Walter Reed where homes are single family homes or townhomes, the zoning absolutely limits heights and setbacks so that new buildings do not loom over smaller homes across the street. The four zones that impact the neighborhood most are:

- WR-1 at Fern Street,
- WR-3 between Elder and Dahlia Streets, and
- WR-8 along Aspen Street.

WR-1. We were concerned about the heights of the townhomes and stacked townhouses in WR-1 across from Fern St.. We have since then seen sections through the site that show the maximum heights of buildings and we can see that they match the existing single family homes across Fern Street. We understand that the houses will be allowed to have livable attic areas with roof top decks, and therefore the towns count as 4 stories high. We also understand that the proposed homes on Elder St. will be the same heights, with roof top patios – resulting in a maximum of 5 story heights, and also match the existing neighborhood because they are downhill by over 10 feet from Fern Street.

There are many 18 foot wide townhomes in our Ward 4, and we are ok with this size townhomes, since they could have 3 stories and roof top decks.

WR-3. We were most concerned about the buildings across Georgia Avenue in the new town center being

similar in height to the existing th story townhouses and higher building ANC 4B. We have seen that the Office of Planning has created an open area with 150 feet deep of open space at the middle, and no buildings on Georgia Avenue for almost the whole block between Elder and Dahlia. The existing townhomes in our neighborhood are located across the street from this new open area, so they will be over 100 feet away from the new buildings and will in no way be dwarfed by new buildings. The new zoning further reduced the community's proposed Small Area Plan building heights closest to these existing townhomes. This WR-3 proposed zoning addresses our concerns.

WR-8. The new zoning allows a new building to be built on the corner of Aspen and 16th Street. It will have a lot of open space around it, with a setback from both 16th and Aspen street and a limit on the height of the building on Aspen, where it faces the single family homes across the street. It is actually lower than the existing historic building next to it, which will be used as a charter school. We think this works well with the homes across the street and will not shadow over them.

WR-2 . This is the town center. We strongly support a mix of retail here including a large grocery store. We understand that the height of the buildings proposed will be at least 35 feet lower than the existing hospital that will be demolished. We also now understand that these buildings are on a hill that is almost 30 feet lower at Dahlia than at Elder St. So, based on its highest height at Dahlia Street, the building height could be the maximum of 85 feet, but is still at least 35 feet lower than the existing hospital that will be demolished. The buildings proposed are much shorter than the hospital to be demolished and we are ok with the building maximum height in the zoning. We understand that Walter Reed is a very rolling, sloped site and that the zoning that OP has proposed takes this into account.

3. Affordable Housing. The Local Redevelopment Agency has committed to 432 unit of affordable housing on the Walter Reed site. The value of this housing is a big commitment to the neighborhood.

- 114 units of Homeless housing have been awarded funding by the city serving households likely earning under \$15,000 per year, including veterans and seniors.
- 109 units of housing serving incomes under 50% of Area Median Income are committed.
- 149 units serving our workforce under 80% of Area Median Income are committed .
- 30 homeownership units serving incomes under 50% of AMI are committed.
- 30 homeownership units serving incomes under 80% of AMI are committed.

We understand that this affordable housing will be supported by market rate housing development, or affordable housing funding, and we very much appreciate this city commitment. We agree that 432 units or 20% committed to this very deeply affordable housing is a great commitment and we are happy with it. We do not wish to request additional affordable housing over 432 units.

ANC 4B has worked hard and strongly supported the redevelopment over the past 6 years and still strongly supports the community's Small Area Plan and the proposed WR-1 through WR-8 zoning. I also serve on the CAC advisory group for the city. We would like to see the recreation, employment and economic benefits of this development help enliven and improve all of Georgia Avenue and our community instead of continuing to be a vacant island closed off from the community. We urge you to approve the proposed zoning.

Thank you.

Brenda Speaks