

Testimony of George S. Hawkins, Esq.
CEO and General Manager, DC Water
Zoning Commission Case No. 15-14
(DC Water Consolidated PUD and Related Map Amendment @ Squares 744S and 744SS)
Written Testimony Submitted for the Record
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Intro

Good evening Commissioners, staff and agency personnel My name is George Hawkins and I am the General Manager and CEO of the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (DC Water). I have the pleasure of leading an organization that provides more than 650,000 residents and 17.8 million annual visitors in the District of Columbia with retail water and sewer service With a total service area of approximately 725 square miles, DC Water also treats wastewater for approximately 1.6 million people in neighboring jurisdictions, including Montgomery and Prince George's counties in Maryland, and Fairfax and Loudoun counties in Virginia. When water is used in our service area, it is conveyed through the 1,800 miles of our sewer system to our Blue Plains resource recovery facility at the southern tip of the District. It is there we treat an average of 300 million gallons per day of used water. After the water receives treatment it is returned to the Potomac River.

We purchase treated drinking water from the Washington Aqueduct, which is operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Our drinking water travels through 1,350 miles of interconnected pipes, four pumping stations, five reservoirs, three elevated water tanks, nearly 43,000 valves and 9,343 fire hydrants. The median age of the District's water mains is 79 years old and nine percent of this infrastructure dates back to the period between the Civil War and the 1890s We store 61 million gallons of water throughout the District at eight facilities that are strategically located based on pressure and elevation.

Since 1996, DC Water has operated as an independent authority of the District of Columbia. We are governed by a Board of Directors with 11 principal members and 11 alternates. The entire board, including the chairman, is appointed by the Mayor of the District of Columbia. We have five principal suburban board members and five alternates. Suburban members do not vote on issues that exclusively affect the District such as setting retail water and sewer rates. DC Water is not a for-profit enterprise and operates strictly for the benefit of the public we serve.

In my view, DC Water operates one of the largest and most advanced recycling operations in the world. We are an innovative environmental organization. Our product supports every person, household and job in the nation's capital We are committed to serving our community with respect, ethics, vigilance and accountability

The need for Headquarters

DC Water has developed a holistic plan for all office spaces to take strategic advantage of our facilities around the District and eliminate leased space We undertook a detailed analysis of our facility needs, and concluded that there is no available room for expansion of office facilities at Blue Plains, as the

Authority is already challenged by the lack of space at Blue Plains for future process improvements if required by permit or desired for innovation

Currently the administration functions for DC Water are primarily located in a five-story building at the Blue Plains campus, known as the Central Operations Facility ("COF"), and scattered among numerous other locations around the District – including rented space in the Ballpark District. The COF has reached its capacity, necessitating the use of much-valued land at Blue Plains for the placement of office trailers, rather than for its intended use as a critical treatment facility. To alleviate the overcrowding at the COF and to free-up land for the expansion and improvement of the plant processing operations, DC Water needs to construct a new headquarters building. This proposed new building will, among other things, consolidate and relocate all administration-related personnel into one centrally-located facility.

Further analysis showed that by relocating nonessential personnel off of the Blue Plains industrial campus, DC Water will be better positioned to manage risks and mitigate accidents caused by operations or natural disasters. Our Master Plan preserves space for strategic growth and allows for flexibility in using DC Water land, which will optimize operational efficiencies and improve response time to our customers. The Plan also leverages limited DC Water facilities funds for permanent long-term investments, consolidating administrative staff on land DC Water owns and controls will save approximately \$44 million over 30 years in leasing expenses.

HQ will be located at the O Street Pumping Station, which along with the adjacent Main Street Pumping Station, are the two primary untreated sewage hubs routing materials from throughout Washington DC to Blue Plains for processing. These two facilities are centralized choke points for over 70% of all sanitary sewage and stormwater collected in the DC Water service area. As indicated in the memorandum from DC Water regarding the Property's security constraints, our facilities have been deemed essential to supporting the United States government. Development of the HQ building must therefore incorporate certain security measures and access restrictions, which impact operation and design of the new building and surrounding area. DC Water appreciates that the Office of Planning recognizes our security concerns as an impediment to access to the site. We are committed to allowing controlled public access to our HQ, for the public to learn more about DC Water operations and our dedication to enhancing the Anacostia waterfront, or conduct DC Water business onsite.

DC Water is proposing to build a new office building headquarters for DC Water on our property, wrapping the pumping station on two sides, maximizing the use of our valuable land. The building will have an overall density of 1.39 floor area ratio ("FAR") and will include approximately 167,180 square feet of gross floor area. The project will have a maximum building height of 100 feet and will include 20 off-street parking spaces. In addition, there will be 50 parking spaces provided on the property just north of the Subject Property for use by DC Water until such time as the Forest City PUD is implemented. We have been coordinating with Forest City Washington on their PUD and our needs for the DC Water campus that remains post-development, and they have been excited and supportive of the HQ project and the vibrancy it will bring to the Anacostia Waterfront. DC Water is committed to continue the great working relationship during construction and after the theatre is built, to ensure that issues related to parking and access are resolved between us in a fair and reasonable manner.

Sustainability

The HQ project will be a model of sustainable design and innovation for the District and the region. Located next to the historic Main Pumping Station and near the National's Ballpark, the new DC Water Headquarters building will be DC Water's most sustainable construction project ever and provide a visible connection to the community that we serve. The Headquarters will anchor DC Water's new publically-accessible campus along the Anacostia River, which embraces our relationship to the watershed and reflects our stewardship of both the natural and built environments.

Headquarters will demonstrate and educate the public that DC Water's mission is essential to every living organism -- we distribute safe and clean drinking water, as well as treat and recover valuable resources from wastewater collection and treatment -- all while emphasizing DC Water's historic role in serving the DC metropolitan region for over a century. Educational programming will take place inside and outside the building's public areas where interpretive and interactive exhibition spaces can tell the story of DC Water's past and present efforts to protect the public's health and act as a vital steward of the environment, from the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers to the Chesapeake Bay.

Positive Interaction with the Community

We at DC Water pride ourselves on engaging and being responsive to the needs of our customers and the community we serve. We have presented extensive information about the HQ project to area elected officials, including ANC6D and Ward 6 Councilmember Charles Allen, as well as members of the Capitol Riverfront BID and nearby community groups. We have also engaged in dozens of coordination meetings with Forest City Washington, to ensure that our projects can proceed through design and construction without conflict given their close proximity to our HQ. I'm happy to testify that we have received a unanimous vote of support from our local Advisor Neighborhood Commissioners. We've also received letters of support for HQ from Forest City Washington, Councilmember Allen and the Capitol Riverfront BID. We intend to continue to work with our friends and neighbors in the community as we proceed through design and construction, to limit any negative construction impacts and keep people well-informed about the project.

We intend to be a proud and connected part of the community, as we expand upon our interactions with our friends and neighbors, having already been happily participating in community events and school openings with our Quenchbuggy and Wendy the Waterdrop Mascot. DC Water will advertise any and all community events within our HQ facility, and encourage our employees to enjoy the numerous retail and restaurant amenities nearby. We will also expand upon our tour program, currently only offered at Blue Plains and the Bryant Street Pump Station, to include the Historic Main Sewage Pump Station and our new HQ campus. We are currently offering sPOOkY "Number 2" Tours at Blue Plains for the Halloween season, and the new HQ will give us even more opportunities to bring our mission and message to the people in creative and fun ways.

Conclusion

Thank you Commissioners for your time and attention to this exciting and complex project along the Anacostia Waterfront. We at DC Water are seeking approval as quickly as possible so that DC Water can move forward with the design and construction of our new Headquarters.