

Colleen Garibaldi
1850 Potomac Avenue SE
Washington DC 20003

Zoning Commission
Office of Zoning
441 4th Street NW
Washington DC 20001

April 5, 2015

Re: Public Hearing for Case No. 16-03 (DB Residential Hill East, LLC – Hill East District Review @ Square 1112E, Lots 802, 803, and 804)

Dear Chairperson and Commissioners:

I am a homeowner in ANC6B and reside at 1850 Potomac Avenue SE, across the street from and within 200' of the above-referenced project. My home is on the corner of 19th, Potomac and D Streets SE and faces the proposed extended Massachusetts Avenue and G1 – the vantage point of one of the renderings (G1 View Looking NE Along Mass Ave) looks like it could have been taken from my window. I have lived here for 16 years and have had the wonderful opportunity to participate in many meetings and events for the old Reservation 13, now referred to as Hill East Waterfront, first participating in the creation of the master plan, then collaboratively working with citizen's groups, the ANC, the Council, the Office of Planning and the Office of Zoning in the creation of the form-based code that now governs the property, as well as witnessing the evolution of the various RFP proposals and finally the selection and development of the current project with Donatelli. To say that I am thrilled that this project is moving forward is an understatement.

Overall, I am in support of this project. Most recently I have met with my immediate neighbors to discuss the plans before you now for design review, or more specifically, the first set of drawings submitted for review, and collectively we became interested in proactively working with the development team in bringing curated, local, neighborhood-specific retail to this project. Larry Clark of Donatelli has been engaged with us, first listening to our desire to move beyond the national chains, business-as-usual retail model and even coming to my home for a meeting with myself and fellow neighbors to hear us out. Mr. Clark gets double bonus points because he gave up a Sunday afternoon for this meeting! We are continuing our engagement by communicating with him about potential leads and look forward to working towards a successful retail environment that enriches our neighborhood – serving both existing and future customers and businesses.

In addition to working on bringing relevant, Hill East curated retail to this project with my neighbors, I am personally focused on the grading of the site and its potential impact to the skyline and sightlines at the eventual full build-out.

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Therefore, I would like to bring to the Commission's attention a detail of the project that impacts not only the existing plans but the future build-out of this site, one whose importance is easy to miss but whose outcome could greatly affect the entire area: the site work. The intention of dividing the zoning areas into subdistricts, HE-1 through HE-4, was in part crafted to allow the natural grade of the site, which slopes down toward the river, to accommodate taller buildings in the area closest to the NPS-owned land fronting the river, creating an area of more density without overwhelming the low-rise character of the adjacent existing neighborhood. As we now start the initial development of the Hill East Waterfront site with blocks F1 and G1, the infrastructure is being developed, roads and sidewalks designed, and grades are being modified to accommodate the development. I have observed that the proposed grade as you move from 19th Street toward the interior of the site has been raised; in some cases, the proposed grade appears to be raised approximately 8' (F1 at the corner of the proposed extended Burke Street and the proposed alley). It is my understanding that this grading has been designed in conjunction with DDOT to meet a standard slope requirement.

I have two concerns about the design of the streets and the grade. One is the potential impact raising the grade at F1 and G1 will have on the height of future buildings should the existing grade continue to be raised as you go deeper into the site, and second, the impact of stormwater runoff into the Anacostia River from the new streets and the apparent absence of AWI-friendly SWM design of the streets. I therefore request that your review considers these impacts and whether there is an alternate to what is being proposed that would satisfy the intent of the original zoning and height restrictions, what the impact of the grades and roads as designed will have on future development, as well as the impact on the quality of the Anacostia River and the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

I understand that compromise is part of the development of any parcel and recognize the need to balance all relevant issues. I also understand that sometimes the larger picture can be missed in developing the details, especially in a situation such as this where the street grid is being extended into a sloping site with no existing street grid.

Again, I want to reiterate that I do support this project. I believe that the architecture and landscape design teams are to be commended for F1's and G1's grace, integration into the surrounding neighborhood at large including the outward appearance of multiple buildings that grew over time instead of one monolithic new project, the thoughtful handling of the public spaces in light of the challenging grade changes and the sense of place in the architectural detailing. I look forward to welcoming the new residents and businesses of F1 and G1 to our neighborhood!

Sincerely,

Colleen Garibaldi
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