

**CASE NO. 16-11 (Park View Community Partners & District of Columbia – Consolidated
PUD & Related Map Amendment @ Square 2890, Part of Lot 849)**

December 5, 2016

Testimony of Damella Dotan

Ward 1 Resident

My name is Damella Dotan and I live in Ward One, in the Columbia Heights neighborhood. I would like to address the issue of the temporary housing that will go up in the park to keep Park Morton residents in the neighborhood.

Last year I lived in the neighborhood of Takoma, DC, right next to a church. It was a beautiful, quiet neighborhood, with many trees and green space. Moving to Columbia Heights, I definitely felt the lack of that, and I understand why people want to fight for access to as much green space as possible.

However, I recognize that as a white college-educated woman with access to transportation, if I am not satisfied with the more than acre of park space they *are* setting aside at Bruce Monroe and at Park Morton, I can venture a small distance to rock creek park, to the arboretum, or to the Palisades Park next to the Potomac. I can go to the sculpture garden or to Dupont. I have the luxury of having a place to live, and having the time and money to travel small distances to enjoy nature, while living in a bustling city.

However, DC is becoming increasingly unaffordable. There is a growing income gap, rent and home prices are increasing rapidly, and families who have lived here many generations cannot afford to live here anymore. This displacement has changed the demographics of DC drastically, effectively creating a space in which many low income folks, especially low-income people of color, can no longer afford to live.

I want to live in a city where everyone can live, where we can all thrive and afford to stay, to not be pushed out by people of privilege like me who come in expecting the whole package handed to us exactly how we want it, and who will ignore the livelihoods of those who might get in their way. I do not think it's fair to say, 'if it's too expensive, get out.' That's not just, not fair to say that in order to live here, you have to have a lot of money. I work with low income folks every day, and I have learned a lot from them, and have learned that it is just as much, if not more, their city as it is mine. Everyone deserves a safe place to call home, and to be able to stay in said home if they so choose. Unfortunately that is not the case for so many—let's try to curb this problem and fight for justice instead of letting displacement increase.

As a person of Jewish faith, I believe that we need to love our neighbors as ourselves, to take care of our communities and to nurture the home. The neighborhood in which I live is my home, and I want to make sure it is a place of love where people can live, that is inclusive and open, and where the history of the home in which I live is remembered and honored. I can get up and go to the park—it'll take ten minutes. IT takes a lot longer than ten minutes to find a safe, decent, and affordable place to live in DC—let's not pretend they are the same thing. Let's advocate for ward one to be a place of economic and racial justice, that honors the history of DC residents, their struggles, and their stories. Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you tonight.