

November 25, 2016

Dear Commissioners,

I hereby submit my written testimony in case 16-11 and 16-12. I am Lydia Curtis and I own a home at 639 Irving St NW, diagonally across the street from the park where Bruce Monroe School once stood. I went to two of the early planning meetings hosted by DMPED, and listened to the developer's rationale as to why two sites were needed in order to provide the necessary units of affordable housing. I am very dismayed to hear from neighbors that over the summer, the developers have changed the plans, resulting in a plan with a reduction of green space at the Bruce Monroe site. We the community, comprised of Park Morton residents, folks living near Park Morton, and people living near Bruce Monroe, worked diligently and interactively on a plan that met everyone's wants and needs, and it was reasonable to expect that the city and the developers would respect and honor the agreed upon plan. I have lived in DC for 38 years and I am tired of broken promises. I am tired of developers doing whatever they want without regard for the wants and needs of the community, ignoring the input of taxpayers and other stakeholders.

The plan that is currently on the table is unacceptable because it takes away more than 50% of the park. But more important than that is the fact that this plan is not what we agreed to and it is dividing the community unnecessarily. It appears that the city and the developers are exploiting race and class divisions in the community to push a plan that no one likes down our throats. Everyone loves the park. It has something for everyone and is used by residents of all ages, genders and colors. It allows teenagers to blow off steam on the basketball court, *and* interact with elderly women working in the garden. There are parents in the park with strollers. But because the wishes of the community have been ignored, neighbor is pitted against neighbor. Park Morton residents perceive the homeowners near Bruce Monroe as self-centered, choosing the park over affordable housing. Bruce Monroe homeowners perceive the Park Morton residents as hostile, due to a couple of verbal altercation incidents. The main organizers of the "Save Bruce Monroe Park campaign" are white homeowners.

This scenario can and must be addressed. After talking to residents, I am against any zoning requests/decisions or any change in the architectural planning that will delay the completion of the affordable units. I repeat...I do not support any zoning requests/decisions or any change in the architectural planning that will delay the completion of the housing for Park Morton residents. Furthermore, I posit that the Park Morton residents are the *major* stakeholders, and their demands should carry more weight than other stakeholders, because the consequences impact them more than their neighbors. Neighbors should support their wishes. DMPED should support their wishes. The developers should support their wishes and be forced to stick to the original plans for Bruce Monroe Park, that left 50% of the existing space for greenspace. Plans to look for another plot of land is unacceptable if it will extend the timeline. We need more affordable housing for our neighbors now!

Please, when you make decisions and /or vote on the various issues in this case, please be guided by the following and ask yourself:

Will my decision/vote extend the timeline of the project and make people living in substandard Park Morton Housing wait longer for their new unit?

Will my decision/vote hold DMPED and the developers accountable?

Will my decision/vote help balance out the power inequity of the current stakeholders?

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Lydia Curtis