

GOVERNMENT
OF
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
(DHCD)

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2352, 2356, 2360 HIGH STREET SE

+ + + + +

PUBLIC HEARING

+ + + + +

MONDAY
NOVEMBER 5, 2018

+ + + + +

The hearing was held at 1800 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE, Washington, D.C., at 6:00 p.m., Keishon Keane, Project Manager, presiding.

PRESENT:

KEISHON KEANE, Project Manager, Property Acquisition and Disposition Division, DHCD
ALLISON LADD, Deputy Director, DHCD

ALSO PRESENT:

DIARRA MCKINNEY, Neighborhood Development Corporation
TAYLOR STOUT, Neighborhood Development Corporation

ORIGINAL

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 (6:06 p.m.)

3 MR. KEANE: Good evening, and welcome
4 to the public hearing for the disposition of
5 2352, 2356, and 2360 High Street, SE. We are
6 scheduled to start at 6 o'clock, but we'll wait
7 until 6:15 to give some more people time to get
8 in.

9 (Pause.)

10 MR. KEANE: Good evening. My name is
11 Keishon Keane, and I am a project manager in the
12 Property Acquisition and Disposition Division,
13 also known as PADD. PADD is a department within
14 the District of Columbia's Department of Housing
15 and Community Development.

16 I would like to welcome each and every
17 one of you to the public hearing for the
18 disposition of 2352, 2356, and 2360 High Street,
19 Southeast, also known as Square 5799, Lot 0976.

20 PADD was established in Fiscal Year
21 2008 and consolidates the Homestead Housing
22 Preservation, the Home Again Program, the Land

1 Housing Development Opportunities Program, and
2 other property acquisition and disposition
3 functions into one division.

4 The goal of PADD is to preserve and
5 create affordable housing while stabilizing
6 neighborhoods by decreasing the number of vacant
7 and abandoned properties in the District. PADD
8 transforms vacant and/or deteriorated properties
9 into livable environments for extremely low
10 income, low income, and moderately low income
11 District of Columbia residents.

12 Pursuant to the requirements of the
13 Housing Act of 2002 as amended, DC Official Code,
14 Section 42-3171.03, Section (a), Sub-section (1),
15 the Department of Housing and Community
16 Development is holding this hearing to solicit
17 community input for the District's intended
18 disposition of this property.

19 The property appeared in the hearing
20 notice announcement that was published on October
21 12th, 2018, in the DC Register.

22 The property is located in the

1 Anacostia neighborhood of Southeast Washington,
2 D.C. Anacostia is named after a Native American
3 settlement once located east of the Anacostia
4 River.

5 Founded in 1854 as Union Town,
6 Anacostia was one of Washington's first African-
7 American suburbs. In 1978, its historic district
8 was added to the National Register of Historic
9 Places. Abolitionist Frederick Douglas was a
10 resident of Anacostia.

11 The neighborhood's housing stock was
12 built between 1854 and 1930. As such, many homes
13 are largely wood frame and brick two-story
14 houses, and Townhouse, Cottage, Italianate,
15 Washington row house, and Queen Anne styles.

16 The Community's downtown is situated
17 near the intersection of Good Hope Road and
18 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue in southeast
19 Washington. According to the American community
20 survey, approximately 10,489 people or 4,080
21 households reside in Anacostia of which 55
22 percent are women.

1 The housing stock is 31 percent owner-
2 occupied. These units have a \$266,000 median
3 value. Additionally, Anacostia's average
4 household income is \$47,708 per year, and the
5 median household income is \$34,186 per year.

6 Once again, the property address is
7 2352, 2356, and 2360 High Street, SE. The site
8 is currently a vacant land located in Ward 8.
9 Its current zoning is R3. It is not in a
10 historic district, and the 2017 appraised value
11 is \$490,000.

12 The post-development is currently a
13 44-unit condominium, multi-family building of
14 which 25 percent of the units will be offered at
15 30 percent AMI. That is 11 units. Twenty-five
16 percent of the units will be offered at 50
17 percent AMI, 11 units, 20 percent of the ---
18 excuse me, 10 percent of the units will be
19 offered at 60 percent AMI or four units. The
20 remaining units will be available at market rate.
21 We will have a one-to-one parking-unit ratio of 1
22 44 parking spaces. BR

1 I would like to introduce the
2 development team who has been awarded the
3 contract to develop, the Neighborhood Development
4 Corporation. NDC's team members are Jingjing
5 Liu, Taylor Stout, and Diarra McKinney.

6 At this time, I would like to welcome
7 the development team who will introduce
8 themselves, give a brief overview of the project,
9 and address the following items that are
10 concerning to the ANC and the public.

11 One will be traffic and parking, two
12 will be building density, three will be massing,
13 four will be architecture, and five will be
14 community involvement.

15 And now we will have Diarra McKinney
16 speak on behalf of NDC.

17 MR. MCKINNEY: Good evening, everyone.
18 My name is Diarra McKinney. I'm a vice president
19 of Neighborhood Development Company. This is
20 Taylor Stout. He is an associate at Neighborhood
21 Development Company, and Jingjing Liu is here as
22 well. She's a senior associate at Neighborhood

1 Development Company.

2 I'm here tonight to talk a little bit
3 about NDC and a lot more about the project and
4 where we are in the time line.

5 (Off the record comments.)

6 All right, so who we are.
7 Neighborhood Development Company was started a
8 little over 20 years ago, about 22 years ago. We
9 have delivered over a million square feet of
10 development here in DC.

11 We've been a force for positive
12 neighborhood change in and around the District.
13 We've done work in all portions of the city and
14 many wards of the city. We have a large focus on
15 market rate condos. We also do affordable and
16 workforce housing and neighborhood retail.

17 Our CEO's name is Adrian Washington.
18 He grew up actually in Anacostia in Frederick
19 Douglas Apartments. And he's a lifelong resident
20 of Washington, D.C. He founded the company in
21 1999, and he has over 30 years of experience.
22 The company and Mr. Washington have both received

1 numerous awards for design and for effecting
2 change in neighborhoods in and around the city.

3 So why are we here tonight? We wanted
4 to talk about, one, the disposition, but also
5 what we are seeking. So this site is currently
6 zoned as R-3, and we are seeing a map amendment
7 with the Zoning Commission to RA-2 to allow us to
8 build the building that we are here to talk about
9 tonight.

10 So we put this chart together just to
11 show the differences between R-3 and RA-2. So R-
12 3, the building height allows for 40 feet and
13 three stories, whereas RA-2 allows for 50 feet
14 and no limit on stories.

15 FAR, there is no maximum FAR of the R-
16 3, but effectively, if you maximize your lot
17 area, you end up having a max of about 1.8,
18 whereas RA-2, as a matter of right, is 1.8. And
19 if you do inclusionary zoning it allows you to go
20 up to 2.16.

21 Lot occupancy is 60 percent under R-3
22 for attached dwellings, and churches, and for

1 places of worship, and 40 percent for all other
2 structures. And then RA-2 is 60 percent lot
3 coverage. And then rear yard is 20 feet under R-
4 3, and RA-2 is a calculation. It's four inches
5 per foot height. But you have to have a 15-foot
6 minimum rear yard.

7 So this slide shows why we believe
8 that this site is allowed to be re-zoned to RA-2.
9 And it's really based on a comprehensive plan.
10 The future land use map designates the property
11 as moderate density residential.

12 And it's hard to see on the screen,
13 but you can see the site is the little elbow just
14 above the S. And so it's that yellowish color.
15 What you can see on the charts is moderate
16 density residential. And then a general policy
17 map designates the property within a neighborhood
18 enhancement area.

19 PARTICIPANT: Can you point to it
20 again, because I'm not seeing it?

21 MR. MCKINNEY: So this is the site
22 here. It's not shown as a lot, but it's

1 approximately right here. And you can see here
2 it's moderate density residential.

3 So we've met a fair amount of times
4 with Greta Fuller, the ANC SMD who's represented
5 by the community in and around the site. And
6 we've heard a number of concerns. We've met with
7 Greta directly, and I know Greta has a number of
8 concerns about the site that we've dealt with and
9 talked about.

10 We haven't solved them all, but I
11 think we certainly want to continue that
12 conversation. But I just wanted to talk to kind
13 of where we started on this project when we won
14 the solicitation. And then I wanted to talk
15 about where we are today.

16 And certainly this is an ongoing
17 conversation. I'm not suggesting that we're here
18 and going to do exactly what we're showing on the
19 screen. But I just wanted to show kind of where
20 we started and where we are right now.

21 And so from a density perspective, we
22 started at 60 units. And one of the things we

1 heard from the community, both individuals who
2 live in and around the site, but also from the
3 elected representative, from Greta, that the site
4 was too dense. And so we have reduced the amount
5 of units from 60 units to approximately 44.

6 From a massing perspective, we started
7 at four stories along High Street. And we also
8 heard that that was too high. It was too tall.
9 And so most of the buildings in that area are
10 approximately 35 feet. So we reduced the height
11 to three stories along High Street.

12 Traffic and parking, we heard this
13 concern from a few folks about parking on the
14 street. Originally, we were showing 60 units
15 with 32 parking spaces. And so there was a
16 concern that if you have buyers that come to the
17 site or live at the site that there wouldn't be
18 enough parking for them and that folks would be
19 parking on the street, along High Street, along
20 Maple View, and even along Bangor.

21 So one of the things that we did, we
22 took another hard look at what we could do on the

1 site from a parking perspective. And we are now
2 at 44 parking spaces for 44 units, so it's
3 approximately a one-to-one ratio.

4 Considering the location and how close
5 it is to the metro, we don't believe, in our
6 experience, that every buyer is going to desire
7 parking. But certainly we wanted to try to
8 address that concern and be able to park all of
9 those units within the building.

10 From an architecture perspective, we
11 started this process -- this is the way RPs work.
12 The city puts out --- the ANC puts out a
13 solicitation. They ask developers to come up
14 with creative designs that help maximize
15 affordable housing and help to address some of
16 the issues that the ANC is trying to address.

17 And so during that process, we heard
18 feedback from the ANC. We certainly now, and
19 having met with the community on numerous
20 occasions, we've heard from you, you know,
21 community feedback on the design as well.

22 We've heard that the building, the one

1 that we showed previously, was too institutional
2 looking, that the materials didn't necessarily
3 reflect the materials -- it's not in the Historic
4 District, but certainly it doesn't reflect
5 materials that are used in the Historic District.

6 And so what we've committed to is to
7 do two community design charettes to solicit
8 feedback from folks who live in this community.
9 I think it's very important from a community
10 involvement perspective. Again, today we've held
11 some small community feedback sessions with Greta
12 directly but also with a few of the neighbors.

13 And then we attended an SMD meeting
14 where we presented -- I guess it was about two
15 weeks ago, and I thought all of that input was
16 very helpful to us.

17 And ultimately, what it resulted in
18 was a conversation with your elected
19 representative, with Greta, to talk about how do
20 we come up with a situation that works for the
21 community, that also works for the city, that
22 works for the DHCD and what they're trying to

1 achieve here.

2 And so we started to work on a
3 Memorandum of Understanding, an MOU, to try to
4 come to some level of agreement on what should be
5 on the site and what it should look like.

6 From an affordability perspective, we
7 started again with 60 total units where we had 15
8 -- so one of the things we heard was that the
9 affordability on the site was a concern.

10 Certainly there was a building that
11 was here previously that was demolished a number
12 of years ago. Greta was very involved in helping
13 to get that done. And that building, you know,
14 had a number of issues with it from a crime
15 perspective, things of that nature.

16 We've heard concerns about the level
17 of affordability here. And we originally had 15
18 units at 30 percent AMI and 15 units at 15
19 percent AMI. DHCD has a, you know, I wouldn't
20 necessarily call it a mission, but they have a
21 goal of increasing affordability in this city for
22 all people, not just people at the top.

1 And so we didn't get rid of those
2 units, but where we are right now is we're able
3 to reduce the number of units. And so now we
4 have 11 at 30 percent of AMI and 11 at 50 percent
5 of AMI.

6 And probably the MOU is going to be a
7 conversation about how do we target the types of
8 folks that we want to be able to come into this
9 neighborhood, the types of residents that we want
10 to provide these affordable home ownership
11 options to. So with that, I'll turn it over to
12 Taylor.

13 Oh, I'm sorry, I had one more slide.
14 This is just showing the unit types, the break-
15 down between the different units in the building
16 as currently conceived. And so we're now showing
17 13 one-bedroom units, 15 two-bedroom units, and
18 16 three-bedroom units, and that adds up to the
19 44 units.

20 And then we also show how it breaks
21 down from an affordability perspective. So we're
22 showing --- so again, this is not an affordable

1 housing building. This is a mixed income
2 building which means that it also has market
3 rate. And as you can see, 40 percent of the
4 units are market rate, so we have 18 market rate
5 units, four at 60 percent of AMI, 11 at 50, and
6 11 at 30.

7 And then one final slide, because one
8 of the pieces of feedback that we kept getting
9 is, or one of the questions we kept getting was
10 who can afford to live in this building from DC,
11 right? Who are the types of people that can
12 afford to buy these units. These are condo
13 units. These are not apartments, these are not
14 rental. These are home ownership.

15 And so we took some time and went out
16 and did some preliminary --- we're not market
17 analysts ourselves, but we look at a fair amount
18 of census data. So we took a look at the census
19 as it pertains to this neighborhood and to Ward
20 8.

21 And these are some of the folks who
22 will be able to afford to live in this building

1 and be able to buy some of these units to be able
2 to have their first home ownership opportunity.

3 So some of the folks up here are
4 police officers, carpenters, teachers in this
5 community at Thurgood Marshall and Cesar Chavez -
6 - and of course, that's a little over the bridge
7 --- certainly taxi, Uber, and Lyft drivers. My
8 dad lives in Ward 7, and he drives a Lyft. And
9 he bought a unit recently at about 50 percent of
10 AMI over in Fairfax Village.

11 Barbers, there are a number of barber
12 shops in and around this neighborhood, waiters
13 and waitresses, retail sales persons, and
14 janitors, these are some of the people who earn
15 incomes at the level that would allow them to buy
16 in this project.

17 MR STOUT: So my name is Taylor Stout.
18 I'm just going to briefly talk about the
19 preliminary building massing and design. It's
20 important to note that this is just the initial
21 concept phase, and as Diarra alluded to earlier,
22 we're interested in having design charettes to

1 kind of get some more input on the design and the
2 massing.

3 So currently, as the initial concept
4 is envisioned, we have a 40-foot tall section of
5 the building along High Street which is here to
6 the left. High Street is a little bit taller as
7 far as the elevation to the alley side which is
8 envisioned on the right.

9 So High Street will be -- the High
10 Street side will be three stories of residential
11 with a pitched roof with mechanical space
12 totaling about 40 feet tall. We will have four
13 residential levels along the alley side with,
14 again, a mechanical space hidden in the pitched
15 roof for a total of 50 feet along --
16 approximately 50 feet along the alley side.

17 This is a preliminary aerial view of
18 the concept. You can see it's envisioned as a H-
19 shaped building with one bar along High Street
20 and one bar along the alley. There is going to
21 be a private courtyard in between the two bars of
22 the building as well as parking access from the

1 alley along Bangor Street.

2 The architects have taken a catalogue
3 of the existing architecture in the area. And
4 they have applied some of the principles
5 including the pitched roof, the proportions of
6 the windows, and the materials, and applied them
7 to the initial concept design.

8 This would be a street level view
9 looking from Maple View at the proposed building.
10 You can kind of begin to see the scale of the
11 building within the neighborhood.

12 So it's important. We're very excited
13 to be working with MOS Architects on this
14 project. MOS Architects is a ten-person firm out
15 of New York City. They built works or
16 architecture within the US and abroad with a
17 large focus on campus planning, housing, and
18 private houses. But really, the question here
19 is, why have we chosen MOS Architects? And there
20 are three main reasons.

21 And number one is they're not the
22 norm. We think they're going to bring a fresh

1 perspective to this site. The second one is that
2 they are an award-winning design firm. And the
3 third one is we believe that they are going to be
4 mindful of the history and local architecture.
5 And that's the end of our ---

6 MR. KEANE: With regards to the
7 questions and answers, just a little house rules
8 on decorum. Please make sure all cell phones and
9 other electronic devices are on silent. Kindly
10 be respectful of others who are speaking and keep
11 side conversations to a minimum. Do not
12 interrupt while someone else is speaking or
13 giving their testimony.

14 Witnesses' testimony will be limited
15 to three minutes. This evening, we have two
16 persons who will be giving their testimony, Ms.
17 Barbara Scott and Ms. Dorcas Agyei. After we
18 have heard from all registered witnesses, we will
19 open the floor to hear other persons who wish to
20 provide testimony.

21 Yes, ma'am?

22 PARTICIPANT: Question about the

1 registration. Was there something beyond the
2 Eventbrite link to register?

3 MR. KEANE: Yes. Well, you're free to
4 register to speak after these two persons have
5 spoken this evening.

6 PARTICIPANT: Question, if you signed up
7 to speak, and your name wasn't just listed, then
8 what?

9 MR. KEANE: Then you can speak after
10 they have spoken.

11 PARTICIPANT: What if we registered and
12 we put the marker in and wanted to testify?

13 MS. LADD: It may have been a glitch.
14 Hi, I'm Allison Ladd. I'm the deputy director
15 here at the Department of Housing and Community
16 Development.

17 So after the two individuals that
18 Keishon stated, if anybody else would like to
19 give testimony, we can take your name. We can
20 sign you up, and you can speak tonight. If you
21 did already register, we apologize, but we'll
22 make sure you have a chance to testify tonight.

1 MR. KEANE: Ms. Barbara Scott?

2 MS. SCOTT: Hello, everyone. I live
3 on Chester Street, lower Chester Street
4 specifically. And I'm going to read a letter
5 that I sent to many of the individuals, and
6 government DHCD, some of our elected officials,
7 et cetera, and specifically Ms. Donaldson:

8 Ms. Donaldson, I plan to attend the
9 public hearing on November 5th in Anacostia about
10 the proposed re-zoning of the three properties,
11 2352, 2356, and 2360 High Street Southeast, to
12 make room for a 52-unit building which includes
13 many large-sized and subsidized low-income units.

14 Ahead of that, I am writing to express
15 my disappointment and protest these plans. The
16 substantially increased number of people this
17 will bring to a quiet block will have a
18 significant impact.

19 A building of this size is simply too
20 large for a small, quiet block consisting of
21 small houses. The proposed plans to include 30
22 parking spaces and a required handful of bicycle

1 parking spaces will not offset the increased
2 parking and traffic on and near that block.

3 People who currently own homes on that
4 block will lose property values, not to mention
5 quality of life. What will the city do to
6 compensate them?

7 In addition, given the proportion of
8 units that are designated for individuals and
9 families with low incomes, risks are high that
10 owners will not be able to afford their mortgages
11 over time, even at subsidized rates, as well as
12 their more than \$300 a month condo fees and
13 routine maintenance of their property which is
14 expensive.

15 It's not uncommon for condo
16 associations in lower income buildings like the
17 proposed one on High Street, SE to go bankrupt
18 because of this. In fact, Ward 8 is home to a
19 large amount or number of condo associations that
20 are dysfunctional due to their inability of their
21 owners to afford the mortgages, fees, and
22 property upkeep.

1 "These buildings commonly become a
2 nuisance to their surrounding community. The
3 city has long experience with this phenomena in
4 other Wards as well.

5 This building is thus a risk for this
6 community to become host to yet another nuisance
7 property in addition to all the others that we
8 struggle with.

9 While our community is committed to
10 supporting low income residences and the city's
11 most vulnerable residents, this must be done in a
12 way that benefits both the low income residents
13 and the surrounding communities. This plan
14 arguably does neither.

15 Furthermore, Anacostia already
16 supports an abundance of low income and various
17 other sorts of non-market rate housing far beyond
18 what most other neighborhoods in other wards in
19 the city host.

20 Other parts of the city that already
21 have a pattern of high density housing, and the
22 right street grid, and enough space are better

1 equipped to cope with a condo building this
2 large. And I encourage you to consider other
3 sites in other areas.

4 Thank you for your consideration, and
5 I look forward to discussing this serious issue
6 right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. KEANE: Ms. Dorcas Agyei.

9 MS. AGYEI: I have -- oh. I submitted
10 testimony. And I'm going to read parts of it.
11 And I may amend it as needed. I do not live
12 directly by the project. But I'm here to support
13 neighbors and residents that do. And in that, I
14 will start my testimony.

15 Hi, I'm Dorcas Agyei. And I live in
16 historic Anacostia. And I've lived there for
17 nearly 15 years. And I am opposed to what I feel
18 is a tactic of rezoning for the purpose of I feel
19 the city's efforts to address affordable housing
20 that appears to be a practice of creating
21 neighborhoods of concentrated poverty.

22 In addition, it's come to my attention

1 that there was a similar property project that
2 was supposed to be for Ward 6. But instead it
3 was then diverted to Anacostia. And my concern
4 is that the level and quality of projects are not
5 the same.

6 So, instead of the project that we are
7 now getting, what Ward 6 is now getting is a
8 project dealing with market rate condos, hotel, a
9 doggy park, children's playground. And we are
10 getting, I'll amend it if necessary, but it seems
11 to be more of the same of housing that creates a
12 concentration of poverty.

13 And what I mean by that is when you
14 have neighborhoods that aren't mixed that have
15 low-income housing and you don't get to mix it
16 up, there's crime not always in that
17 neighborhood, but it lingers and it draws and
18 there's going to be a gateway for folks to come
19 to the neighborhood.

20 So I would like, so I like what I'm
21 hearing now that it's going to be, can turn more
22 mixed of that. I think that it was introduced to

1 us as low-income.

2 In addition, I just want to make sure
3 that the substantial number of people in the
4 projects don't impact the peacefulness of what is
5 now a otherwise quiet community.

6 And I want to make sure that first-
7 time homeowners aren't in a situation where they
8 can't afford their condo fees or they can't
9 maintain the property, which is something that
10 even folks that make, you know, over \$80,000
11 struggle with.

12 So I just want to make sure that those
13 things are taken into account, as well as the
14 voices of the folks here that live in the
15 community. Thank you.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. KEANE: We currently have six
18 other persons who would like to testify this
19 evening. We have a Chekesha Rashad, Kim Lucas,
20 Nikki Wadell, Ari Theresa, Ronald Thompson, and
21 Levita Mondie. So first I'm going to call
22 Chekesha Rashad.

1 MR. RASHAD: Hello, everyone. My name
2 is Chekesha Rashad. And I'm actually a fifth
3 generation Washingtonian. I grew up on the
4 waterfront in Southwest, which is another area
5 that's undergone a huge redevelopment.

6 I went away to school. And when I was
7 looking to come back home to D.C., my mother
8 suggested I look at Anacostia. And I thought she
9 was insane at the time because of the -- I grew
10 up on the waterfront and -- Anacostia was not
11 necessarily the best neighborhood in the '80s.

12 But after doing some research about
13 forthcoming projects, including the 11th Street
14 Bridge project, I decided to take her advice and
15 come on over and look at Anacostia and happen to
16 stumble on this wonderful street called Maple
17 View.

18 So I'm not sure how many of you are
19 familiar with Maple View, but it is parallel to,
20 well, it's adjacent to High. If you looked at
21 the pictures that they showed, the view at the
22 top of the hill of their project, that's Maple

1 View, that actual street that's leading up there.

2 We have a very, very quiet street.
3 And one of the things that attracted me to the
4 neighborhood was that there were people outside
5 like talking and mingling with each other.

6 Now, I grew up in a high-rise condo
7 with -- Tiger Island. And I don't know if any of
8 you are familiar with Tiger Island. My family
9 has owned there since 1982. And so I've lived
10 there -- I'm 45. You know, my mom's been there
11 since I was eight years old. I couldn't tell you
12 half the people who lived in the building.

13 But when I came on Maple View, I saw
14 neighbors talking with each other. And I was
15 like, wow, this is like the suburbs. I've never
16 seen this in the city.

17 And so that's really what kind of
18 swayed me was actually the neighbors that told me
19 about the house that I actually purchased, which
20 I got a great deal back in 2009.

21 Now, when I moved in, there was an
22 abandoned three-building apartment unit up there

1 that had been fixed in. Apparently, there was
2 drugs and various things going on up there. But
3 through the neighborhood and our feedback, we
4 were able to get it shut down and eventually
5 demoed.

6 Now, since being there, I know
7 everybody on our block. We have a very, very
8 tight community. Everyone knows everybody. But
9 one of the major problems that we have in the
10 neighborhood is that it's a very small street.

11 Since the construction of the new
12 project down at the bottom of the hill, which is
13 the Bozzuto property, we have people who come in
14 from outside the area that park all the way up
15 through our neighborhoods.

16 I'm fortunate enough, I live at the
17 top of the hill. So no one wants to park up
18 there. I'm able to park in front of my house
19 every night.

20 But what happens with us should this
21 project go forth? All of these people coming in
22 to work on these properties, where do we go?

1 I'm on the side of the street that has
2 no alley behind me. It's a ravine that looks
3 down to Morris Road. So what do I do about
4 parking? What do my other neighbors who have
5 parked on the same side who don't have parking,
6 what do we do? You know, what about our
7 inconveniences that it will take to get this
8 property going?

9 And also I'm always kind of like
10 skeptical, because we get a dog and pony show a
11 lot in this neighborhood. They show us. Hey,
12 they're going to do this. We're going to include
13 you in this. And then by the time the project
14 starts, it's a completely different thing.

15 Now, coming in, I heard 52 units,
16 which I was absolutely like no. And it's not
17 that I'm against affordable housing. We have
18 plenty of it in Ward 8. Ward 8 has the cheapest
19 housing in the city.

20 My concern is in a neighborhood that
21 is historic, although this property is not in the
22 historic district, it's right here lined right up

1 with it. So, when I step out my door, I'm two
2 houses down from the top of this project. I'm
3 going to have to look at this thing that looks
4 the bottom of a hill, which doesn't fit in our
5 neighborhood. That Bozzuto property does not fit
6 the look of our historic district.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. RASHAD: And there's no way that
9 you could tell me, again, I've lived here for a
10 very long time, that you could do this in other
11 areas, put in historic neighborhoods in the city,
12 stuff that doesn't fit.

13 And I'm concerned about my property
14 value, how that's going to be affected by another
15 building coming in that doesn't fit that.

16 People who know our street know and
17 love our street because we have such a tight
18 community there. And building an apartment
19 building that's now -- we could be sandwiched in
20 with this big, I think it's 114 units at the
21 bottom of the hill and now 44 right here.

22 Then there's already an apartment

1 building existing at the bottom of Morris Road
2 behind Caribbean Citations. Then you have
3 apartment buildings right there on Pleasant,
4 which is right off the corner of High, apartments
5 on Bangor.

6 It's like build houses. If you're
7 going to build, build homes, real houses, not
8 just condos.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. RASHAD: Again, if we were a
11 state, our state bird would be the construction
12 crane, because all you see in our skyline is
13 cranes everywhere, but in the same model of
14 apartment and condos.

15 And besides, I'm curious about the
16 square feet of the units. Ten years ago the
17 average square feet of a one-bedroom apartment
18 was over 900 square feet. Now, if you look at
19 the size of a one-bedroom square apartment,
20 you're looking at about 700 square feet. So
21 you're building for density not for lifestyle.

22 So those are concerns that I have.

1 And I will be submitting written testimony. I
2 just need to, I needed to hear what was being
3 said today before I came through and wrote it.

4 But, I mean, I have -- again, parking,
5 you know, some of us have more than one car. And
6 if you do a one-to-one ratio, are the prices of
7 the parking included in the pricing, or is it
8 like my condo that now I co-own with my mom where
9 we have to spend an extra \$50,000 to buy a
10 parking space over there?

11 So, even if you do one-to-one on a
12 three-bedroom unit, it's likely that somebody
13 might have another car. What happens when they
14 have friends that want to come over? Where do
15 they park?

16 We just had a community event at a
17 neighbor's house. There was 70 people that came
18 to that, that -- you know, and people were
19 parking all over the place.

20 You know, so those are -- I know I may
21 be over three minutes now. But those are some of
22 the major concerns that I have being a person

1 that's two houses down from where this is going
2 to be built.

3 (Applause.)

4 MR. KEANE: Kim Lucas.

5 MS. LUCAS: Normally I don't get
6 nervous, but this is a tough crowd.

7 (Laughter.)

8 MS. LUCAS: Hello, everybody. My name
9 is Kim Lucas. I'm a resident of Maple View Place
10 right down the street from this development. And
11 if you see in the earlier presentations from the
12 architect, my house is one of the examples given
13 for architecture that they're basing off of,
14 they're not basing off of.

15 Anyway, I'm up here to second the
16 things that we've heard earlier about the
17 challenges that our neighborhood has experienced,
18 the incongruity of the design and density that is
19 proposed for this location with the rest of the
20 neighborhood's character, and also to add a
21 component about the process.

22 So I believe that this is a map

1 amendment to switch from an R3, which allows
2 single-family homes and not multi-family
3 buildings, to something that is much denser.

4 My understanding is that this location
5 perhaps will be better served by something called
6 a planned unit development where if a developer
7 wants to make this change to zoning, they can't
8 just get a simple yea/nay from the zoning
9 commission. They would actually have to have a
10 number of components as a part of their package,
11 including a community benefits type of agreement
12 that would have to be agreed upon, and a lot more
13 stakeholder engagement.

14 Some expressions of concern have been
15 made about the fact that what we've seen has felt
16 like a very baked product and something that has
17 been predicated on mostly the idea that this high
18 density approval is going to go through. And so
19 I want to make sure that we call attention to the
20 concern with that process and how it's
21 transpired.

22 Their solicitation agreement indicated

1 that 40 percent of the units, or the solicitation
2 offer rather, 40 percent of the units should be
3 at 80 percent AMI.

4 What we have seen is that 50 percent
5 of the units are at or below 50 percent AMI. So
6 the affordability rate that has been proposed,
7 while in some regards is good because it exceeds
8 the affordability rate from the RFP, is much
9 higher. And so, with the community's concerns
10 that the concentration, hyper concentration of
11 poverty, I take issue with that.

12 Again, the character of the
13 neighborhood, we have safety concerns. You've
14 probably seen the Washington Post say that one of
15 the blocks they are by is one of the deadliest
16 ones in the city as of this year.

17 I don't believe that furthering this
18 trend with not only a very high concentration of
19 fairly low-income units, but also not mixed use.
20 There's no commercial retail activity that's
21 being proposed for this. And that's going to
22 make the neighborhood continue to be imbalanced.

1 And again, to reemphasize with the
2 DHCD process, I'm a little concerned when I asked
3 a gentleman from DHCD about community engagement
4 before it gets to this state, maybe having some
5 of the folks in this room participate in the
6 development of an RFP so we can get an idea
7 before this stage of what the neighbors might
8 want to see.

9 And the response I received was that
10 it is a technical document. And because it is so
11 technical, our input perhaps would not be
12 merited.

13 So, to reemphasize, I take issue with
14 the process that has undergone here. I think a
15 planned unit development would better serve the
16 community. I do not believe that this density
17 fits into the character of the neighborhood.

18 I also think that the location of such
19 density is kind of far from the Metro rail
20 station. And I do think that the transportation
21 concerns of my neighbors of inducing car trips is
22 a real one, especially given the location up the

1 hill. Thank you.

2 (Applause.)

3 MR. KEANE: Nikki Wadell.

4 MS. WADELL: Good evening. My name is
5 Nikki Wadell. And I also live on Maple View. So
6 this is going to be on my street. So I take
7 exception to that.

8 I have a very long testimony that I am
9 going to send in. So I'm not going to read all
10 of it. But I wanted to just -- obviously, you
11 know, the people who have come up before, I want
12 to echo their concerns. I essentially have three
13 or four major concerns.

14 One is, you know, we bought in this
15 neighborhood because we appreciate historic
16 properties, right. That's why we bought. So
17 this does not in any way complement our community
18 at all.

19 And so, to me, I bought market rate.
20 And someone's coming in now and saying I'm going
21 to put something else in the neighborhood after
22 I've already spent my time. We've put blood,

1 sweat, and tears into our home. We renovated our
2 home from the beginning. Like we bought a
3 boarded up house.

4 So, to me, this is very disrespectful
5 to the community to come in and do something like
6 this without getting more input from the people
7 who currently live there.

8 And I also echo the concern about the
9 process. I'm relatively new to the community,
10 but my husband isn't. And I think there's really
11 a lot of people who feel very frustrated, and
12 they feel like the city does not care about their
13 views. They don't care.

14 Like what happened with this
15 testimony, this, you know, hearing, but is
16 anybody really listening to what we're saying?
17 You know, I mean, we're taking our time to come
18 here and express our views.

19 And this is not the first time this
20 has been done in this community. And people are
21 saying this is not what we want. And they keep
22 doing it.

1 So I'm paying tax -- I'm a taxpayer,
2 and I'm paying taxes for a lot of this stuff.
3 And when I say that this is not what I want, the
4 city is not listening to me.

5 And so I really feel like there's a
6 lot of disrespect to the people who live in the
7 community. And I don't appreciate that.

8 The other issue we have is that a lot
9 of people who live on our street have small kids.
10 And one of the reasons why we bought on this
11 street is because it's quiet. There's not a lot
12 of traffic. Our kids can potentially play
13 outside.

14 And now you're introducing all these
15 high-density units. Again, we're flanked by
16 Maple View Flats. And we're going to have this
17 other unit up here. So you're going to have more
18 people.

19 We already have a problem with people
20 speeding on the street, because they, because
21 people are not used to people living in this
22 community and caring about the community. So

1 people race up that road. They don't even look
2 where they're going. And so now we're going to
3 have more of that.

4 And I want my children to be able to
5 play outside. I don't want pedestrian accidents
6 happening on my street. And I don't feel like
7 anybody has addressed that.

8 The other two issues I have is about
9 concentrated poverty. And there are so many
10 articles out there about why we shouldn't be
11 doing this. And I've spent a lot of time doing
12 research on this. And it's clear that the city
13 is concentrating all of the affordable housing in
14 Wards 6, 7, and 8. And the other wards have very
15 little affordable housing.

16 And so I'm trying to figure out what
17 the goal is. Is the goal just to increase units
18 or is the goal to stop the trend of concentrated
19 poverty?

20 And if the goal is to stop the trend
21 of concentrated poverty, then you should be
22 looking to put affordable housing in the areas

1 that don't have any affordable housing, where
2 they have good schools, that is not a food
3 desert. They have retail. So these people have
4 access to jobs, to better education, and to lower
5 crime.

6 The other thing is that you can't beat
7 what you can't see. So, if you put all these
8 people together in one neighborhood and everybody
9 around them is impoverished, do you think you're
10 going to have a different outcome than what you
11 already have? The answer is no.

12 So I don't get it. I don't understand
13 like what we're doing.

14 And then the last thing is that
15 there's a difference between giving a person a
16 fish and teaching them how to fish. We've
17 already -- we all know that parable.

18 But to me, there's a difference
19 between giving a person a house and then -- or
20 there's a difference between giving them a place
21 to live and then changing the outcomes of
22 poverty.

1 So you can say instead of renting now
2 you can buy in a concentrated impoverished
3 neighborhood. It doesn't change the schools. If
4 you put the same people that are already in the
5 neighborhood and you don't bring the resources in
6 to change the outcomes, then you get the same
7 outcome. Now I just own in the community instead
8 of renting in the community. So, I mean, I don't
9 understand that either.

10 I just feel like the city has really
11 lost focus of what their true, ultimate goal is,
12 and that is to stop this cycle of poverty.

13 And I think that they really need to
14 be focusing on affordable housing in areas that
15 don't have affordable housing, because then if
16 you're a low-income person and you buy in a
17 neighborhood that's high-income, then you also
18 realize the American dream of increasing your
19 property value.

20 But if you're buying in a neighborhood
21 where, you know, the market is suppressed, you
22 know, by the government, then you don't realize -

1 -

2 (Applause.)

3 MS. WADELL: -- I mean, and neither do
4 us. We would be the people who buy market rates.
5 Like we want to realize our American dream, too,
6 of increasing our property values. Like we don't
7 want to buy in a community and then ten years
8 later we have no equity because they're flanking
9 our neighborhood with all this affordable
10 housing.

11 And we're now -- now this will be the
12 fourth affordable housing project in a small
13 radius. So I don't understand.

14 Like is -- and I don't think any of us
15 have any issues with affordable housing and
16 supporting that concept. We just have a problem
17 with concentrating it all in one place.

18 And the last thing I have to say, too,
19 is what happens is the city, they make all these
20 promises. We're going to do this. We're going
21 to do that. And at the end of the day, we need
22 more retail. We need more economic development.

1 But you can't get that if the median income is
2 too low to support businesses.

3 Okay. So then what happens?

4 (Applause.)

5 MS. WADELL: The city says we're going
6 to put a child development center, we're going to
7 put a laundromat, or we're going to spend \$15
8 million on subsidizing somebody's business
9 instead of taking that money and subsidizing
10 affordable housing in Northwest. That makes no
11 sense to me. I don't understand.

12 Well, I mean, if you're spending that
13 much money to subsidize, why aren't you
14 subsidizing affordable housing? It makes no
15 sense. Anyway, I'm sending this in.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. KEANE: Ari Theresa.

18 MS. LADD: So, if I could just ask, I
19 mean, we are holding a public hearing. So this
20 is an official business for the government and
21 the department.

22 So I understand there's a lot of

1 energy. And I understand we're all trying to
2 hear. But if you could hold the applause to a
3 minimum --

4 MR. THERESA: Or boos. My name is Ari
5 Theresa. And I'm a land use attorney. My home
6 is located on 16th and V Street located in the
7 historic district. I'm not quite on Maple View.
8 And so my concerns aren't as immediate as the
9 people who live there.

10 I will say that I love all of my
11 neighbors, you guys, and the people who are not
12 in this room maybe who didn't know about it or
13 didn't get, who weren't on the Listserv.

14 I'm a fourth generation resident,
15 lived east of the river for four generations.
16 And I've seen the city change over the years.
17 And I know that this area is changing.

18 Poplar Point has a development that's
19 going to come online very soon. It has 700
20 units. Ninety percent of it is market rate,
21 maybe ninety-two percent, very little family
22 housing.

1 There is a market rate housing plan
2 for the Gateway. There's a lot of market rate
3 housing in the Reunion Square neighborhood.
4 There's the 11th Street Bridge project. There's
5 the Frederick Douglass Bridge that's coming
6 online that's going to have stuff affiliated with
7 that that will increase market value.

8 I bought here about four years ago.
9 Maybe this is too much information. But my house
10 was \$200,000 when I bought it, and I believe it's
11 assessed around \$350 now. So I'm not very
12 concerned about my property value. I'm very
13 pleased there.

14 What I am concerned about is how the
15 neighborhood is going to change with all of the
16 development that's coming. And I just want to
17 make sure that everyone is protected and everyone
18 has a part of the success that's going to come to
19 this neighborhood or what successes and how a lot
20 of I think the people here perceive it.

21 I think that this project is a decent
22 project. I've seen projects come up all over the

1 city. And I haven't seen very many projects that
2 are truly mixed income. And this is one.

3 This has 30 percent housing, 50
4 percent housing, and market rate. The 50 percent
5 housing and the market rate is definitely over
6 the surrounding area's income. So, you know, the
7 poverty in this area really would be 30 percent
8 market rate.

9 And while I'm aware that there is a
10 lot of affordable housing in this area, in Ward 8
11 in particular, a lot of it's of very poor
12 quality. And I know you've heard of a lot of the
13 slum landlord suits that are happening.

14 So, you know, I want to applaud DHCD,
15 you know, for doing this. I can't think of any
16 time I've ever done that. I mean, you guys have
17 been on my hit list for a while. But I think
18 that this project, in consideration of everything
19 else that's happening in the neighborhood, I
20 think it's responsible.

21 And even the fact that they've gone
22 from 52 units to 44 units, I mean, it seems like