



## *Southwest / Navy Yard / Buzzard Point* Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6D

1101 Fourth Street, SW  
Suite W 130  
Washington, DC 20024  
202.554.1795  
Email: 6d@anc.dc.gov  
Website: www.anc6d.org

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*Gail Fast*

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Good afternoon Chairman Hood and Zoning Commissioners. I am Gail Fast, Chair of ANC 6D, representing Southwest, Navy Yard and Buzzard Point.

As stated in our supplemental report filed with the Zoning Commission, ANC 6D voted 5-0-0 to oppose ZC Case No. 20-14, a design review case located in the heart of ANC 6D. This was ANC 6D's second opposition vote on this project.

Following the directive of the Zoning Commission, ANC6D met with the Applicant twice; once for a brainstorming session where ANC 6D specifically spelled out our vision and second time to review the design before you tonight.

As we have said before, ANC 6D regards South Capitol and M as the two most important streets in our ANC. Ever since Anthony Williams and Andy Altman presented their Anacostia Waterfront Plan and introduced the concept of a new SW Waterfront to the Southwest Community, M Street was proclaimed to have a design as a Grand Boulevard whose easternmost portion would start at 11<sup>th</sup> Street, SE, cross South Capitol and end at the SW Waterfront. As one can see now along M Street, The Wharf has been designed in its second phase and their property has been *specifically* placed so as to have a head-on view of the water from M Street. Accordingly, ANC 6D believes that the plan has been all along to have M Street as a broad welcoming grand boulevard which we believe should include a structure at the juncture separating Southeast and Southwest that more clearly marks a change in the neighborhood's look and feel.

We had hoped to come today to say that the Applicant's revised design reflects its unique position at the eastern end of M Street, Southwest and its important gateway location. While some of the design elements have been improved, ANC 6D will argue the building is still architecturally heavy-handed, domineering and unwelcoming.

The replacement of the three-story grid and adding balconies and terraces has helped minimize the stacked tissue box seen in the first iteration. ANC 6D actually liked the new concrete framing and repeatedly requested extending the exoskeleton around all three buildings. By doing so, not only would it soften the look of the project, it would provide a visual that would draw you from South Capitol gracefully down M Street. ANC 6D was disappointed that the Applicant ignored this suggestion since one of our main criticism – is that this design lacks any sense of cohesiveness whatsoever.

In the Applicant's revised design, they modified the hopper windows by tilting them backwards. Why they did that -- ANC 6D is not sure as they now make the building look even heavier and fatter than before?

While the Applicant proports to have incorporated design elements used by such noted architects as Chloethiel Woodward Smith, Charles Goodman and Keyes, Lethbridge and Condon – the revised balcony design on the North elevation and Southwest corners (L and Half Streets) look like hanging inside-out pockets. I fear Cholethiel would be turning over in her grave if she knew these were an homage to her concept of floating volume, framed masonry and wide balconies seen throughout Southwest.

The Applicant has also squandered an opportunity on M Street to bring that grand boulevard vision to fruition. ANC 6D discussed with the Applicant numerous times, even before the revised design, to tier the building on M Street to show its gradual entrance into Southwest. It apparent that the ANC and the Applicant have defined tiering differently, as the Applicant has "set back" the building rather than, like seats in an amphitheater, designed the building to successively recede in its height as it makes it way down M Street.

As for the pavilion, ANC 6D has nothing to say regarding it other than it is misplaced, and does not serve as a connection between the buildings on M Street and Half. Had the Applicant extended the exoskeleton, you could begin to see the correlation between the Applicant's project and the sanitary homes which are directly across from it.

As stated in our report, the Applicant has indicated to the ANC that it will actively be seeking a grocer to fill the retail space. ANC 6D is concerned that the site cannot sustain the 24/7 commotion of truck traffic to stock it. This ANC is all too familiar with this type of scenario as evidenced on Maine Avenue, down by the Wharf, any weekday evening between 4 pm and 7 pm where cars must navigate around box trucks too large to utilize the loading dock and instead double-park on Maine Ave causing traffic backups all the way to Independence Avenue. We are requesting to see, a detailed, transportation plan that includes in their retail lease(s) ANC 6D's requirement that there is no loading and/or unloading to occur on South Capitol or M Streets.

And should the Applicant be unable to secure their proposed retail tenant, ANC 6D is requesting the Zoning order include wording that restricts the Applicant from operating or leasing out any portion of the parking lot

to a PMI or any other parking company to serve anything other than that which ends up as their retail tenant(s).

In meetings with the Applicant, we reiterated numerous times our concerns regarding the proposed loading on L Street and we are convinced they were added at the last minute in an effort to eke out a few more market-rate units in this already enormous project. Aside from the concerns regarding at-risk windows, lack of air and sunlight for the residents, the design is contrary to any loading and parking entrance seen in Southwest. The ANC advised the Applicant numerous times about their building's relationship to the adjoining property; however, it fell on deaf ears. Apparently, our concerns were not enough to impact their design. We were pleased to see that the Ruben Company has provided a letter of opposition that reiterates ANC 6D's same concerns. Maybe they will be more successful than we were?

Finally, as it pertains to the design, ANC 6D would like on the record a response to the support letters provided by the Capital Riverfront BID and one of its members, Brookfield. To be honest, ANC 6D was shocked to see the letters and have come to learn they had been drafted in response to a request by one of their other board members. To that end, let us be clear that a) development projects are not in a BID's purview, which Michael Stevens, President of the Capital Riverfront BID attested to in his letter; b) 5 M is not located in the Capital Riverfront BID boundaries; c) that the Capital Riverfront BID has never supported or opposed any development projects, during my tenure on the Commission, that is within its geographic boundaries; d) that JBG is a member of the Capital Riverfront BID Board of Directors; and e) 5 M is located squarely within the Southwest Small Area Plan, a plan that was developed in conjunction with the Office of Planning and an Advisory Board made up of Southwest leaders.

What this says to me and my fellow ANC Commissioners is that JBG does not have enough belief in their own project to let it stand on its own merit.

In closing, our residents are steadfast in their desire to maintain the economic and racial diversity that makes Southwest so strong and vibrant. And while ANC 6D recognizes this is a design review, this ANC wants it to be clear regarding the Applicant's response to the affordable housing issue. They are still positioned, based upon their penthouse habitable space, to provide only one (1) unit of affordable housing. The remaining 19 units they are proffering will be workforce housing. While their total contribution to the District of Columbia's housing needs has almost doubled; boasting that 2.6% is a lofty offer is shameful.

That concludes ANC 6D's testimony. I look forward to answering your questions.