

Margaret Dwyer for SURJ-DC  
5112 45<sup>th</sup> St. NW Washington DC 20016  
Zoning Commission on Rezoning for Barry Farm 20-21  
December 7, 2020

I am here today representing Showing up for Racial Justice, SURJ-DC. We are the DC affiliate of a national effort to challenge and dismantle systemic racism. We have over 2,000 active members living in all eight wards of the District, and we are committed to housing justice in DC. We have been part of the struggle for justice for Barry Farm for four years, and we are here today to urge this Commission to deny the requested zoning change, to honor the decision already handed down on the redevelopment for Barry Farm, and to protect Barry Farm and its residents from further erosion of this valuable property and the rights of its residents.

Over the years, we have all had front row seats as DMPED's New Communities Initiative has failed to honor its mission and successfully identify a public housing community for redevelopment, engage its residents fully in planning the redevelopment, build first without irreversible disruption to the residents, fully redevelop the complex at true one-to-one replacement, and fully return its residents to their new homes. Never once. Instead, they have forced residents out, demolished properties, and developed scattershot units that have fallen far short of what should have been developed.

Barry Farm is a case in point. This property and community are part of the history and common wealth of the District. After decades of deliberate neglect, it needed redevelopment. Residents had clear demands – build first, keep residents on the property, replace at true one-for-one, and respect residents' right to return. When the NCI plan did not reflect their aspirations for what their community should look like, and when residents took the matter to the Courts, they were utterly vindicated.

The good faith response would have been to admit wrong and truly re-engage residents to come together to build a community that works for all. Instead, the District has dragged its feet and now comes before this Board with a request for rezoning that would relieve it of its obligations to residents and nullify the rights granted them by policy and the Appeals Court decision. This rezone is a cynical attempt to avoid the PUD process which gives the community more input on what happens with redevelopment. It reminds me of a child who doesn't get the answer they want from one parent, so they go to the other.

Please don't be that other parent! This change, if granted, would not harm only the already displaced residents of Barry Farm and all the taxpayers in the District who want to see our money used to support our low income neighbors. This could be a dangerous precedent for other public housing redevelopments across the District. We need the Zoning Commission to respect the Court decision and support the residents of Barry Farm and all DCHA public housing and reject the proposed change.

Thank you.