

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Jen Pearson <jenpearson7@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 15, 2021 5:01 PM
To: DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ)
Subject: Opposition to Case 20-34

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Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express my vehement opposition to Douglas Jemals' Cotton Annex project, case number 20-34 before the Zoning Commission. I am a Southwest DC resident and do not want this development in my neighborhood.

Douglas Jemal is a longtime DC slumlord who was convicted of defrauding the public. I suppose it should come as no surprise that he is still at it, and paid off a 6D Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner with a \$100,000 donation to his foundation and earned approval from the ANC for this project. This was a wildly unethical display of double dealing on the part of Andy Litsky, and negates any approval that our publicly elected neighborhood representatives have lent to the project. This is precisely the type of bribery that landed Douglas Jemal in civil court many times over the years, and with a wire fraud conviction in 2003. He was pardoned for this crime just two months ago by fellow real estate developer and unethical profiteer, former president Donald Trump. If you look up Douglas Jemal in DC Case Search you can see a long record of cases indicating unethical business practices and a slumlord who will fight tooth and nail to exploit DC renters and tax-payers until a judge orders otherwise.

Douglas Jemal's Cotton Annex project offers only the bare minimum inclusionary zoning requirement, and does almost nothing to respond to the affordable housing needs of this city and the Southwest neighborhood. All new developments in Southwest must guarantee that 33% of residential units are deeply affordable, 33% are for workforce housing, and 33% are market rate, as is recommended by housing policy experts and SW Action. This project proposes that 92% of its newly built residential units be market rate luxury units, despite high vacancy rates in most of the other nearly identical market rate luxury apartments. Southwest does not need more luxury apartments. We need more affordable housing.

This type of development is exactly what is fueling gentrification and displacing Black DC residents. An egregious trend that Douglas Jemal has actively and aggressively participated in over the past 30 years. It is racist housing policy to continue enabling such projects to be built and the data demonstrates this.

The Cotton Annex would be a derailment from the Southwest Area Neighborhood Plan's goal for Southwest to be an exemplary model of equity and inclusion, and I ask that the Zoning Commission reject this project.

Sincerely,
Jen Pearson
Southwest resident
Ward 6
Washington D.C.