

## Written Testimony Regarding Case 20-34: Cotton Annex, 300 12th Street SW

My name is Kelley Gallagher and I'm writing to you about Case 20-34: "Cotton Annex, 300 12th Street SW".

As a resident of SW, I respectfully request that you **reject this development unless or until the project design is an example of equity and inclusion per the SW neighborhood plan with 1/3 of the units set as deeply affordable (50% AMI or below) and 1/3 designated as workforce (50%-80%).**

I'm deeply concerned about the lack of affordable housing in the SW neighborhood. DC and nearby Navy Yard are some of the most gentrified areas of the country (<https://www.npr.org/local/305/2020/09/04/909686815/new-project-uses-google-street-view-to-examine-gentrification-in-d-c-neighborhoods>). Rents continue to rise and more families, especially black families, are being pushed out of DC and SW, specifically.

The Southwest Neighborhood Plan states that "Southwest will remain an exemplary model of equity and inclusion - a welcoming and engaged community that celebrates and retains a mix of races, ages and income levels and enhances well-being for all amidst neighborhood growth and change." And the Mayor has stated her goal of building 12,000 new affordable units over the next six years. There is no way we can meet these goal if projects like the Cotton Annex continue to be approved.

The Application being considered proposes to rehabilitate and incorporate the existing historic building into a 12-story building with approximately 610 dwelling units. Only 50 of those units, or 8%, will be "affordable". In addition, the developer has offered "community benefits" including joining the SW BID and donating \$100,000 to the Southwest Community Foundation.

First, approving projects with only 8% affordable units is not enough to meet the goals of the SW Neighborhood Plan or the Mayor's stated goals of having 12,000 new affordable units over the next 6 years. This project, like many that continue to be approved by this Commission, will exacerbate gentrification and push more low and moderate income families out of our neighborhood. It should be noted that Douglas Development, the firm requesting this application, is already contributing to this problem. They built Riverpoint in Buzzard Point which has zero (0) affordable units. When are developers like this going to be compelled to do what our community and the Mayor say they want? It should start now, with this project. 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the units in the Cotton Annex should be deeply affordable and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> should be set at workforce rate.

Second, regarding the "community benefits", it needs to be noted that Andy Litsky, an ANC Commissioner who helped draft this agreement with the developer, sits on the board of the foundation that would receive the \$100,000 donation. This is an egregious conflict of interest that was not disclosed to the community during ANC meetings where this project was discussed. What would benefit SW the most would be for this developer to provide affordable housing. If community benefits such as this \$100,000 donation are going to be considered, a more thoughtful discussion should be had about where those funds are invested.

At the October 1st zoning hearing regarding the 5 M Street SW project, there was a disagreement among the Commissioners on whether affordable housing is within the Commission's purview for "design review." The Courts have told the Commission that it is. If projects like this Cotton Annex application continue to be approved, it will drive more black and brown families out of our SW neighborhood. While decisions like this might not be racist in intent, they are racist in practice. I'm asking you to please, do the ethical thing. Please choose

the welfare of our community, please protect our vulnerable neighbors, over the desires of developers who just want to profit at our expense.

Thank you for your consideration.

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