

**Testimony before the District of Columbia Zoning Commission
by Kerry Kemp, Public Witness**

**ZC Case No. 23-02
DC Office of Planning Rezoning Application
1617 U Street, NW (police and fire stations)
Existing MU4 (moderate) density zoning;
Proposed MU10 (high) density zoning
1.88 Contiguous Public Property
June 26, 2023**

My name is Kerry Kemp. I have lived at Rutland Court Owners, a cooperative apartment at 17th and Riggs Place, NW, for development for 30+ years. My apartment is about 5 blocks from the fire station at 1617 U St and the police station at 1620 V St NW, which occupy the 2-acre property being considered for upzoning and redevelopment.

My understanding is that the city is proposing to demolish the existing police station and fire station at the site in order to sell or lease these 2 acres of valuable public property to private developers to build a 9+ floor apartment building. Upzoning the property from MU-4 to MU-10 would give the developer, as a matter of right, the ability to construct a building 100 feet high (plus a penthouse story) and fill almost the entire lot. Taking into account the topography, the building could be as high as 125 feet along U St. The January Office of Planning report assumes a developer could construct a 650-unit apartment building on the site, plus commercial establishments.

I am tired of seeing the city give away public land and properties in sweetheart deals to developers who make millions of dollars without offering any real benefit to the public in return. I oppose this plan for the site, as well as the upzoning of the site from MU4 to MU10. I would like to see redevelopment of this public site proceed with 1) genuine opportunities for community input, esp. from affected neighborhood residents, about what kind of building and community amenities or facilities should go there; 2) redevelopment that is in scale with the surrounding historic districts; 3) serious consideration given to the environmental, safety, and other impacts of the project; and 4) the construction of social or other housing

that is truly affordable to low- and moderate-income families who serve our community.

My view is that the entire 2-acre site should remain public for public uses and to meet public needs. For example, for the construction of new MPD and DCFD stations, a local public library, neighborhood community center, low-income housing with support services, and other public services either currently needed or that might arise in the future. Please consider this alternative. Thank you.

