TESTIMONY

RE:Buzzard Point ZC 96-3
21 November 1996

Good evening, and Thank you for this oppurtunity to testify before you on the Buzzard Point/Capitol Gateway proposal, Case No. 96-3/89-1.

My name in Linda S. Eckles, Chair of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2D and more specifically the long time commissioner of single member district 2d04 which covers virtually all of the Buzzards Point area up for consideration tonight.

For over twenty years I have been fond of, and a constant visitor to the hodge-podge of forgotten uses and odd places that make up Buzzards Point.

Decades ago, when the sand and gravel barges lay half sunk in the Anacostia mud and the old gravel yard was idle I used to spend nearly every Sunday morning letting the dogs get a good run, and spreading the Sunday paper out on the dock treads. Within easy sight of the Capitol it was still a totally hidden little niche in the urban scene, safe and a million miles away from the hussle of downtown.

In another capacity, one of the older property owners I see listed to speak later on the agenda may remember me as the voice from the construction trailor off of Half Street who answered his daily inquiries as to how many piles we had successfully completed that day for his new office building. (it took 587)

I am prone to loving hard to love things and places and I can tell you I know most every square foot of Buzzards Point better than my own condo grounds a few blocks away.

I know you can neck very safely in a car late at night at James Creek Marina, that you can get upwards of a cent a pound for scrap steel at Super Salvage and that, even as I speak someone is probably illegally dumping on Potomac Avenue.

All that being the case, it is with very real attachment to Buzzards Point that I have participated in the various exercises in prospective planning that have taken place through the years.

From the years of arid discussion at the Federal City Council, through the briefly touted 2020 plan and more enduring Buzzard Point Owners Association plan and now into the razzle-dazzle of the recent NCPC plan I can tell you there has been an air of unreality, even fantasy about these exercises.

So it is, with a degree of relief if no exhaustion that I am able to come to you this evening to **endorse** a specific set of zoning recommendations put forth by the Office of Planning.

And I do so endorse.

I want also, however, to take this chance to highlight two areas of concern I have about the recommendations within Case 96-3 on the assumption the substance of the proposals will be adopted.

ZONING COMMISSION
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ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.96-3
EXHIBIT NO.56

Use of TDR's

The proposed use of TDRs to achieve certain planning goals, equalize trade-ofss of bulk, density and height, etc. is far too complex to discuss this evening. The results, nationwide, have been exyremely mixed but one central truth has emerged. TDRs can only work when there is a central authority; state, municipal or even quasi-public that has openly and even-handedly brokered the complex trade-offs involved.

Public interest, in particular, has been victimized when local public auspices have been unable or unwilling to exert uncompromising vigilance.

Extensive dependance on the utilization of TDRs should raise a red flag in the public.

50' Waterfront Open Space Easement

The second andlast issue I want to draw the Commission's attention to is the proposed continuous fifty foot open space easement along the waterfront. Undoubtedly the proposed easement will greatly enhance the entire waterfront. The long-term beauty and attractiveness of such prime open space will be a singular accomplishment of which we can all be proud.

For it to work, however, I believe it must be, in its entirity, under the aegis of an entity that knows, to its core, how to protect and defend turf. Knows how to regulate and how to maintain public space. In my considerable experience in this city there is only one entity with those capabilities: the National Park Service.

I strangly urge that the proposed easement, **IN ITS ENTIRITY** be placed under the auspices of the National Park Service.

At risk of offense, let me say that any commissioner at my level who has as a major player on their patch the National Park Service will, of necessity developed a love-hate relationship with the NPS.

We will love their steady committment to their job, their professionalism and their usual accessibilituy and openess to discussion. At the same time we may tear our hair out at the insulation from the public affected by their decisions and the occassional lapse into bureacratic paranoia.

Through the years I have had substantial interaction with the Park Service. Were it now for the continued efforts of the Park Service one perimeter of my single member district, that rather bland and boring waterfront area along the SW restaurant row would be still bland and boring but also very dirty.

My constituents at theresidential end of the SW waterfront owe the Park Service a deep debt of gratitude for decades of maintenance and oversight. The attractive and active open space at the water ii front of Harbour Square and the Riversaide Consominium may have been mandated by RLA design but have only survived because of the NPS. Thse open spaces at the river which begin just outside my window and unify the whole area are very similar to the open spaces propsed this evening. I know from long experience that they require a spoecific unity of approach and control that individual owners cannot provide.

50' Waterfront Open Space Easement...con'd

The National Park Service knows the stresses and vunerabilities unique to urban public space and has the strength of professional dedication to preserve them for us all.

In closing I believe the 50' easement which is so central to the excellence of the future of the Buzzards Point Waterfront, and which is proposed in Case 96-3/89-1 here before you, which is heartily endorsed by my constituents and endorsed by Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2D will only really work if administered by the National Park Service.

Thank you again for receiving these comments and I join my neighbors in proposing adopton of Case 96-89-1.

Report of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2D
Regarding Case No. 96-3/89-1
Presented to D.C. Zoning Commission
November 21, 1996

ANC 2D has been concerned with proposals for the development of the Buzzard Point/Capitol Gateway area for nearly the entire 20 years of the ANC's existence. The Buzzard Point section of this case lies within the boundaries of ANC 2D. Representatives of the ANC participated in the Federal City Council-led task force which studied the area in the late 1980s and early 90s. The Commission has reviewed the Vision 2020 Report and other studies of the area. During the current ANC term the Commission and/or its staff has attended a number of briefings, planning sessions, and hearings about the area. Commissioners have visited the area, and Commissioner Richard Westbrook has produced an extensive photographic survey of the area. A portion of each of the last three ANC meetings has been devoted to a discussion of this case.

The Commission considered a range of issues in evaluating the present proposal from the Office of Planning. What ultimately should the area look like? Should it remain a primarily industrial area? Or should it become a residential area? Should office use predominate or should the mixed use vision of the current comprehensive plan continue to guide our planning for the area? The Commission also considered whether it really made any sense to re-zone the area when there is so little market activity. The argument is being made that even if we want to move from industrial to mixed use, re-zoning now would be ineffective and thus premature.

In the end, the Commission rejected this view and voted 3-1 (at its November 18, 1996 meeting) to support the Office of Planning proposal.

Among the considerations that contributed to the Commission's decision to endorse the OP proposal were these: 1) the comprehensive plan, which the ANC previously endorsed, calls for a change in present zoning; 2) residential uses cannot be introduced into the area until the zoning is changed; 3) matter of right development that would block public access to the waterfront will be possible as long as the present zoning remains in place; and, 4) relatively high density development will remain possible as long as the present zoning in place.

l Keeping the present zoning, on the other hand does guarantee that we won't have certain uses such as townhouses or hotels, and it puts at unnecessary risk the prospect of 50-foot set back for all future waterfront development.

In endorsing the OP plan, the Commission also took notice of the Commission of Fine Arts recommendation that the maximum building height along the eastern edge of Fort McNair be limited to 60 feet. The ANC joins the Commission of Fine Arts in that recommendation.

ZONING COMMISSION
CASE NO. 96-3/89-1
EXHIBIT NO. 56A