GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

Office of the Director

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MEMORADUM

TO: Zoning Commission

FROM: Andrew Altman, Director
Office of Planning

DATE: March 6, 2000

SUBJECT: Waiver of Rules for Late Submittal of Final Report on Case No. 096-3/89-1

The attached Final Report concerning the application for Buzzard Point is being submitted less than 10 days prior to the Zoning Commission's consideration of the item and scheduled public hearing. The Office of Planning respectfully requests that the Commission waive its rule and accept the report into the record.

Attachments

AA/UB

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 96-3/89-1
Exhibit 85

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

Office of the Director

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MEMORANDUM

TO: **Carol Mitten, Chair and Members**
D.C. Zoning Commission

FROM: **Andrew Altman, Director**

DATE: **March 3, 2001**

SUBJECT: **Zoning Commission Case No. 96-3/89-1**

INTRODUCTION

This memo responds to the request by the Zoning Commission on February 12, 2001 for the Office of Planning to clarify changes that have occurred around the subject area since the Case No. 96-3/89-1 was last discussed in 1997. This memo identifies planning and development issues, which the Office of Planning (OP) believes have direct relevance to the case. This memo assumes familiarity with written record of the case.

This Report contains the following sections:

I. Planning and Development Issues Since June 1997.

II. Office of Planning Recommendation

I. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES SINCE 1997

The advertised limits of Case No. 96-3/89-1 and its immediate surroundings have been both the subject of subsequent planning exercises and development activity. The following list of items represent, in OP's assessment, the most significant actions which have relevance to the case. These items are listed by type, not by chronology.

A. Development - Navy Yard Redevelopment. The recent relocation of the Naval Sea Systems Command to the Navy Yard has consolidated several Navy functions into the Navy Yard that are now operating at Crystal City, VA. The relocation increases employment to 10,800 employees -- a 100% growth between 1995 and 2001. A substantial percentage of these employees are civilians. The Navy also accommodates over 400,000 tourists annually. Most building construction at the Navy Yard has been completed; limited site work and roadwork remain. All construction is scheduled for completion by the end of 2001. There has been a net gain of 900,000 square feet of new or converted office uses, for a total of approximately 1.5 million gsf.

The Navy Yard's reconstruction has served to:

- Preserve/enhance the historic physical setting, complementing with green space;
- Expand the employee base to 11,000 administrative personnel and civilians;
- Establish base-serving retail activity near the center of the Yard;
- Establish two loop traffic and parking systems;
- Expand the waterfront park, including a continuous pedestrian promenade and a possible "natural" amphitheater; and
- Focus public activity centers at an expanded museum complex as well as in the waterfront park to the west of the museum.

B. Development - Recent Commercial Office Related to the Navy Yard

Relocation of Naval Sea Systems Command from Crystal City to the Navy Yard has prompted Navy contractors to move with them. It has served to create a market for commercial office space along M Street. Three buildings are currently being completed and represent the 'first wave' of office space demand, with additional new construction anticipated:

- 300 M Street SE - New construction of 282,000sf office building. Completion Spring 2001.

- 80 M Street SE - New construction of 273,000sf office building with 2000 sf fitness and 5000 sf café. Completion Spring 2001.

- 1201 M Street SE - New construction of 180,000sf office building. Completion Fall 2001. First building of five building master plan located at terminus of M Street on Anacostia River. Second office building scheduled to start construction in August 2001.

C. Development - Mixed-Use in the vicinity of Buzzards Point

The Near Southeast neighborhood and South Capitol corridor have also been the location of new mixed-use development. Many of these projects are early "indicators" of the development pressures expanding the Capitol Hill neighborhood

and the increased interest in public access and maritime access to the shoreline of the Anacostia River.

- 1st Street SW / I St – Millenium Arts Center. Adaptive reuse of 40,000 sf former public school into an exhibition, rehearsal and studio arts center.

- 2nd Street SE / I St - Former Washington Post and Evening Star Printing Plants. Adaptive reuse of 480,000sf former printing facility into use as data hotel. Completion Spring 2001. Evening Star site fully demolished and site preparation complete. OP anticipats residential use to be developed on the site.

- 3rd Street SE / G St – Results Gym. Adaptive reuse of 25,000sf former school building into use as private health club. Completion Summer 2001.

- 7th Street SE / L St - US Marine Barracks Annex. New construction of 300-bed 120,000sf single officer quarters and 45,000sf Marine Band building including parking and ball fields. Completion 2002.

- 1200 M Street SE - Anacostia Community Rowing Center. Adaptive reuse of DC DPW warehouse for use by non-profit rowing organization. Completion Spring 2001.

D. Development - Mixed-use on Buzzard Point

The development of two educational and research facilities has brought increased access from residential neighborhoods in the Southwest, Capitol Hill and Anacostia to the river and shoreline:

- Earth Conservation Corps Pump House. Completed 1997. Adaptive reuse of former Capitol Building pump house into educational facility for the Earth Conservation Corps, a non-profit organization which combines social programs for at-risk youth with environmental research programs. The facility serves as an amenity for public access to the waterfront.

- Mathew Henson Nature Study Center at former Pepco Pumphouse. Completed November, 2000. Co-initiated by the National Geographic Society and the Earth Conservation Corps, this action adaptively reused the pumphouse formerly utilized by the Pepco power plant. The Henson Center is an education facility designed to introduce research and monitoring of the Anacostia River ecology to the District's public school children and serves as an amenity for public access to the waterfront.

E. Planninng - NCPC

Coming in the wake of the Legacy Plan, NCPC has recently completed two important documents which focus substantial attention on the Anacostia Waterfront.

- ***NCPC Open Space and Natural Feature Element. Completed February 2001.*** - This document has been recently adopted by NCPC after public review and comment. The document addresses design issues in areas of open space and natural features, with extended language addressing the Anacostia River. Of note are discussions creating guidelines for building height and setbacks in waterfront areas. These guidelines are consistent with Case No. 96-3/89-1.

- ***NCPC Museum and Memorials Plan. Draft released December 2000.*** - This document has been released as a draft for public comment. Most significantly, this document identifies numerous future sites for federal memorials and museums, many of which are located on the Anacostia River. Three of the sites are located within the Buzzard Point area, with one of the three characterized as "Prime Site" - at the terminus of South Capitol Street at the Anacosita River. Additional locations on or near the Buzzard Point area include: Navy Yard, Southeast Federal Center, Poplar Point, and Delaware Avenue, SW.

G. Planning - Anacostia Waterfront Initiative

The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative is an inter–agency partnership to coordinate planning and actions for waterfront areas along the Anacostia River. The Waterfront Initiative seeks to revitalize surrounding neighborhoods, enhance and protect park areas, improve quality of water and environment and where appropriate, increase access to the water and maritime activities along the waterfront. The Initiative does not alter any aspects of jurisdiction by partner agencies.

The Initiative forges a partnership between the Federal and District agencies together with neighborhood citizens. Key participants include the DC Office of Planning, General Services Administration, the National Park Service and the National Capital Planning Commission.

The Anacostia Waterfront initiative considers the entire waterfront in a comprehensive manner. Target planning areas include:

- The Near South East Neighborhood including the South East Federal Center;
- the Southwest Waterfront, including Waterside Mall and Buzzard Point;
- Poplar Point;
- Anacostia Park and Kennilworth Park;
- the RFK Stadium Area and neighborhood,
- Heritage and Kingman Islands.

One of the key objectives of the coordination effort is the creation of a continuous Riverwalk on both sides of the river, which links each of the waterfront neighborhoods together and which integrally links both sides of the river together.

The Office of Planning has recently procured the services of a multi-disciplinary team of architects, planners and economic development consultants in order to facilitate coordination for the Initiative. This team will be conducting additional public workshops in the coming months and will draft a planning document by January 2002. It is anticipated that additional waterfront zoning revisions will be recommended at that time.

H. Planning – Southeast Washington Waterfront Workshop. This was co-sponsored by GSA and OP as part of the AWI in May of 2000.

In anticipation of H.R. 3069 (see below) and in concurrence with the completion of NEPA review of the alternatives for the site selection for a new headquarters for the US Department of Transportation, the GSA and OP co-sponsored a three-day community workshop, which focused on the Near Southeast Neighborhood, including portions of the Case No. 96-3/89-1 Subject Area. The overwhelming conclusion of this workshop was to better integrate area land uses in pursuit of creating a mixed-use waterfront neighborhood. The review of existing zoning by national expert, Jonathan Barnett, was described as a "zoning emergency", with additional design guidelines such as waterfront setbacks and setbacks on M Street identified as absolutely necessary to achieve neighborhood goals. Please see workshop summary brochure attached.

I. Federal Legislation - Southeast Federal Center (SEFC) Legislation. This legislation was passed in November 2000.

The 55-acre SEFC is located immediately adjacent to the subject area. H. R. 3069 allows the GSA to partner with the private sector in order to develop the SEFC. Most significantly, the legislation allows the GSA to introduce non-government uses to the site, including residential and retail uses.

The GSA recently sponsored an Urban Land Institute panel to review alternative development strategies and market conditions for the site and the overwhelming conclusion was to incorporate residential uses as the primary driver of the site's development. GSA is currently devising a procurement process to act on the powers of the legislation and is expected to release a development RFP within the calendar year.

J. Zoning - Florida Rock PUD

The amenities for the PUD amenity included housing linkage which would currently be a prohibited use under M or CM zoning.

K. Zoning - January, 2000 - Capitol Point PUD and Map Amendment. Case No. 90-20F/87-4P. Action 700-D. This action extended the PUD approval for the construction of a mixed-use development, including office and residential uses, to a maximum of 110 feet, a maximum FAR of 5.3, a maximum lot occupancy of 75%, underground parking for 2,150 cars and 500 apartment units.

II. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The demand for additional office development in response to the Navy Yard expansion continues. Recent interviews suggest that companies which have moved satellite offices to the area are now considering moving additional employees to the area, making the demand for office uses larger than initial estimates. While this is generally a very positive trend in the Navy Yard/M Street area, single-use office development in Buzzard Point might pre-empt later mixed use development.

Moreover, the two bulky office buildings constructed on the waterfront in the 1970s block vistas to the river and at least one of them impinges severely upon the water's edge, leaving very little room for any continuous public walkway/bikeway. Additional development of this type would be contrary to the potential of this area and contrary to adopted planning policies of the District of Columbia.

Although it's evident from the list of developments underway, there is now both an office market and a residential market, neither of which existed in the mid-1990s. As a result, there is greater potential for adverse office development in Buzzard Point under industrial zoning.

Equally important, the prohibition on residential development in industrial zones prevents the area from beginning to move towards mixed-use. It is also critical to establish a waterfront setback requirement to preserve the physical ability to implement a continuous public way along the riverfront. The District's waterfront is too precious a resource to squander.

OP recommends the Zoning Commission adopt Case No. 96-3/89-1, with the following refinements, including:

1. Design review, especially for M Street;

2. A listing of squares to be covered by the W-2 zoning, instead of measuring a set distance from the waterfront.

3. The institution of a mandatory Planned Unit Development process for developments bordering on the waterfront.

OP suggests that it develop a specific text for these refinements which would be advertised for a public hearing as soon as possible. After the hearing, the Commission could take a final vote on the adoption of the Overlay, with whatever provisions it deems appropriate.

OP recommends that the following issues not be adopted at this time as part of Case No. 96-3/89-1:

1. Designation of existing industrial uses as Non-conforming uses.

2. Zoning of Square 701 as BP/C-3-C instead of BP/CR.

3. Designation of Special Uses such as Pepco and WMATA uses.

Rather, OP intends to examine the following issues further during the course of the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative and will return to the Zoning Commission with these findings. The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI) will do a detailed analysis of these issues and may propose additional regulations as are reasonable. The AWI recommendations are not expected for another 12 months.

In conclusion, adoption of this case at this time will eliminate a major conflict between the pre-Overlay zoning and the Comprehensive Plan, in furtherance of the mandate in the Home Rule Act that zoning shall be "not inconsistent" with the Comprehensive Plan. This action would also begin implementation of the small area plans and studies of Buzzard Point that have been done, all of which recommend: a) mixed use development, including residential uses; b) a step down in building height and bulk along the waterfront; and c) a continuous setback along the waterfront for the use of a public pathway.