

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Pamela Daley <psdaley@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 6, 2018 6:00 PM
To: DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ)
Subject: Case # 02-381 - Letter in Opposition

Dear Zoning Commissioners,

My name is Pamela Daley, and I am a resident of Tiber Island in SW DC. In recent years, I and many others in our community have enjoyed the use of the lot at 425 M St SW for our farmer's market, local events such as the 202 Arts Fest and the DC State Fair, and the Friday markets. This communal space has helped to foster a strong, diverse Southwest community. The new renderings do not include an open gathering space for the community and ignore how the community currently uses the space. Ironically, the communal space we desire to maintain will actually be maintained within the resident-only courtyards in these buildings.

I am not against development just to be against development. We need more affordable housing for District residents; however, these 600+ units offer the bare minimum with 8% of units at 60% MFI. I am further concerned that only five units across the two buildings offer three-bedroom apartments at a reduced rate. Actually, there will only be five three-bedroom units available at all. A mere .8% of units will be available to families. This does not encourage families to settle in Southwest; rather, it offers a few, still overpriced options to less than a handful of families. This proposal does not support the socioeconomic or racial diversity of Southwest as expressed by SW residents in the 2015 Southwest Neighborhood Plan.

I understand why the applicant no longer wants to build office buildings, as studies and rental costs for office space have not demonstrated a need or profit. I wonder why are we not also discussing recent studies, such as the study released last November from the Fuller Institute at GMU, that found that more millennials are leaving the city than moving in? The Census Bureau also noted in late 2016 that net migration to DC had slowed overall, and that "most of that increase came from births and international immigration," not young professionals. However, these new plans for 4th and M Streets are clearly targeting this demographic. For whom exactly are these buildings being built? It's clearly not targeted toward families, or older individuals.

This proposal by the applicant is taking away a valuable community asset, not just displacing it, and the suggested alternatives are not viable options. For example, at the March ANC meeting, representatives from Forest City and Perkins Eastman suggested using the Southwest Duck Pond, which has a large pond in the middle of it, and a playground adjacent to the library as spaces for these events. To me, this demonstrates their lack of understanding of the Southwest community and how it uses the current communal spaces. They also suggested closing down a vehicular road that runs parallel to Safeway and the metro entrance, which would block residents' access to their homes in the Lex or Leo buildings, not to mention the additional need for police or fire personnel to maintain the closures.

I appreciate the ANC's efforts to work with the applicant in developing the community center. I am, however, concerned about the need for such a space and what will happen after the 30 years of (partially) free use of it is over. What SW organization will be the operator of this space? Why do we need a community center when we already have two such spaces - Randall Recreation Center and King Greenleaf Recreation Center. Both have computer labs, indoor meeting spaces, and host community events, such as Zumba and Yoga. The difference I do see is that these two spaces are adjacent to or in the middle of public housing. I see the idea of this new community center as a means to further segregate our community and tell implicitly our low-income residents where "they belong," as many already feel this with the arrival of so many luxury high-rise apartments in our

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-381
EXHIBIT NO.93

neighborhood and yet their homes stand decrepit and disregarded by the city.

I understand that buildings will be built on this space. My suggestion for this development is to leave part of this land as an open communal space for the neighborhood's use. It is not beyond reason to build a smaller building on 425 M St, offer more affordable housing units, and still maintain an outdoor communal space. There will still be profit for the applicant to make from maintaining a communal space. It will be an appealing sale to whomever moves into their new buildings, and they can continue to charge vendors to use the space for these events, as they currently do. I would like to note that these events have become so popular that each year they have increased the frequency in which they are held. This year, the Friday market will begin on May 4 and be held every other week. Two years ago, this event was held once a month and began in late May. There is evidence that such communal open spaces have a place here in DC. The Yards, for instance, hosts weekly Friday night concerts during warmer months on a communally used space along its waterfront. These events are also very popular and draw people to the Yards. The communal open space, we know, cannot continue as it is in its current form; however, I believe it can be maintained if the applicant were open to new ideas in how to build high-rise luxury apartment buildings. We do not want to look like NoMa.

In summary, the loss of this space tears at the social capital of our community by taking away access to fresh food, not addressing affordable housing, and disregarding how the community currently uses the space. For these reasons, I am opposed to this proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you my concerns about this proposal.

Sincerely,

Pamela S. Daley