

**Testimony of ANC-6D
Before Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia
ZC Case No. 11-03J
Second Stage PUD for Phase Two of The Wharf Hearing #2
Parcel 8, Parcel 9, Water Building 2, The Grove & Marina Way
November 6, 2017**

Good evening Commissioners. My name is Andy Litsky. I live at 423 N Street, SW and tonight I will be delivering testimony on behalf of ANC-6D where I served as Chairman. I am also the SMD Commissioner for 6D-04, representing both of the residential waterfront complexes directly adjacent to this particular PUD as well as the 94 live aboard residents whose homes are located at the Gangplank Marina, the only residents actually living within the boundaries of the PUD itself. The entire Wharf project is in my Single Member District.

This is the hearing where ANC-6D ought to be throwing rose petals. And, by and large, we are. The major individual buildings put forth in this second hearing review of the Second Stage PUD are the most visually compelling of any in Southwest. When ANC-6D held a large community meeting at Arena Stage this past September and more than 300 Southwesters attended, I can honestly say that virtually all of the comments about the architecture and design of these three large structures were met with almost universal admiration. They were blown away. You know that our Community is not the slightest bit reluctant to voice our opinions, and strongly at that. So as it pertains to this particular grouping as a whole, we are very appreciative that the Applicant has provided us all with a level of design and professionalism to which others coming before our Community and this Commission should similarly aspire.

In a packed auditorium of the old EPA headquarters nearly fifteen years ago, when we were first given a glimpse of Anthony Williams' initial vision of the Anacostia River Redevelopment Plan, certainly, this is what I'd envisioned – especially driving west along M Street, which we hope our Department of Transportation will soon turn into that long promised Grand Boulevard. As one approaches Sixth and Maine Streets, there will be the sweep of the roof and glass walls of our iconic Arena Stage counter balanced by the dramatic sloping curves of the building on Parcel 9 tempered and toned by the greenery at The Grove. Is this how I want people to first enter Southwest? You bet it is.

But enough with the glowing assessments. Such impressions are fairly subjective in any event and as this Commission knows, ANC-6D usually focuses on the operational aspects of the PUDs that come before us. And so, aside from the glowing first part of this testimony, we are going to do so tonight. Again, we beg your indulgence in that most of the items in this testimony have not been included in our ANC report. Having no attorneys to guide us through this, nor a fleet of professional retainers, we're at a bit of a disadvantage. I certainly hope that the comments we put forward will not be met with objections by this Commission, the applicant or their counsel and that what we present be accorded great weight.

One item about which ANC-6D has been insistent from the beginning of this project was maintaining as much of the view shed from Maine Avenue as possible. Clearly, as it pertains to the First Phase, we were not totally successful. We hope that will be rectified especially as it pertains to the view shed from Arena Stage. Arena Stage literally set the stage, as you will, for the redevelopment of Southwest. They are our crown jewel. We fought like hell to keep them and we feel the need to ensure that their view toward the Washington Channel is preserved as much as possible. It's not enough that there is some as yet undefined anticipated use by Arena of M Street Landing. ANC-6D believes that the view sheds shown from Arena through M Street Landing are unimpressive. Yes, there's a view. However that view is from the interior area above the Arena Theater itself, next to the women's bathroom – certainly not from the outside balcony. We'd like it acknowledged that there was actually a reason that Bing Thom created his magnificent three story glass curtain.

ANC-6D also appreciates that OP has noted the possibility that there may be other anticipated extensions of restaurants outside of the building envelope other than those shown in the plans. As we are now noticing after First Phase activation, we find a number of permanent and semi-permanent structures along the sea wall that had been previously articulated as simply "kiosks" are now fungible. ANC-6D would like to be assured that what may be anticipated in Phase Two is clearly identified not simply in terms of a rather innocuous description, as OP points out, with the Applicant's use of the term "Potential Tenant Enclosure," that can be embellished later, but with a clearly defined objective in word, size and diagram. Especially as such structures impact view corridors to the water, even if what leads up to them may be lovely open spaces, let's get what's anticipated locked down right now.

As was mentioned in Thursday's hearing, we need a much clearer articulation of what is being proposed in terms of signage on both waterside, atop each structure and along Maine Avenue. Our ANC, as you know, has led the charge against unbridled digital signage in this city and certainly in our ANC. As it relates to Phase Two, our discussion of signage was initially relegated to digital. We believe that an accommodation has been reached about how such signage will judiciously be used, in small footprints and without animation. But it's signage writ large where we urge the Commission to concentrate. There was broad discussion about signage in Phase One – illumination, up lighting, down lighting, impact upon the neighborhood, impact upon drivers from 14th Street Bridge, impact from signage visible from Hains Point. I should think that at least that much should carry over to Phase Two, because if we don't address it with some level of specificity, as we saw in the Anthem sign, the vacuum will.

Similarly, ANC-6D and the greater Southwest Community had always envisioned the Waterfront as an audio refuge. Sure, there are people. They talk and murmur, and laugh. They clink glasses and silverware. There are special events and there's music to celebrate. But what we've now discovered much to our dismay is that The Wharf is wired for sound. And that sound no longer provides us the opportunity to simply listen to the boat horns, or the lines clinking against the masts or the water lapping against the dock. Or simply the sounds of silence.

Now I guess that we had known that speakers would be placed at The Wharf. But we'd expected that they would be employed during special events – or emergencies. Instead, we now have constant elevator music. It undermines the entire point of going to the waterfront to be closer to nature. It competes with the live music drifting throughout the site, and it is an unnecessary assault on the senses, especially in a world that's already hyper-saturated with media. Moreover, I have already received concerns from people at CYC and others, who are exposed to the music whether or not they care to hear Steely Dan for hours on end. Folks who want to sit quietly with their loved one on a swing on the Recreation Pier don't need smooth jazz to establish a rhythm. Let's please ensure that as we look after the visual in the public space, that as Phase Two proceeds, we also look after the audio. This is really, really important.

Regarding Marina Way, ANC-6D appreciates the articulation of the steps leading from the west side of Building Ten and how they create potential for small performance space or lectures in that part of the project. We hope that there will be continued collaboration with Arena Stage and

other cultural institutions in Southwest that will provided a new outdoor venue at waters edge. We also welcome that the Applicant has, at our request, included on that same side three family restrooms.

The ANC also notes that although M Street Landing has been put forward primarily as a pedestrian space, that it also accommodates automobiles. As such we want to ensure, that should the unfortunate transportation redeployment be required, that it will also be designed to accommodate larger vehicles --- if absolutely necessary.

ANC-6D has no objection to the requested modification of Parcel 8 to a hotel/apartment building from either office or residential. We understand the objectives of the larger project and agree that placing an even more high-end boutique hotel on that parcel will benefit the overall objectives for both the Applicant and the District. It's a win-win. We also concur with OP's suggestion to add balconies to the interior courtyard units. Water. That's why this project is located here. That's the draw. And considering that so many of the units on site have considerably smaller dwelling sizes than we're all used to, not to take advantage of outside living space – and facing the water -- would be very unfortunate.

On Water Building Two – The ANC has never quite understood the purpose of that building, frankly. We agree with Office of Planning that it requires a bit more articulation both in design and operation. We think that the design concept description on page 3.1 is indicative of design speak that simply needs to be called out. “As Water Building #2 will be built as part of a large scale urban project – The Wharf – the provide (sic) the building with a natural border condition between the city (The Wharf) and the nature (Washington Channel).” Honestly!

Whatever it is, is there really a need for it to jut as far as it does into the Washington Channel, significantly impacting the view of the Channel to from the west steps of Building Ten at Marina Way? We don't know what it is, but the Applicant has clearly decided that they needed to show what its potential signage – illuminated and non-illuminated – would be would look like. And why is it so big? Commissioner, please ask for greater precision.

Page 4.7 illustrates the granite pavers about which ANC-6D has expressed concern. We'd asked to be shown material samples. We'd also note that there are three versions of granite

pavers shown. We've asked where each going to be placed. Once you've walked it, you'll understand that it makes a difference to the pedestrian environment.

And with The Grove, as with The Bosque, in Thursday's hearing, the ANC sees trees, some seating and little else. We anticipate that this will be a lovely place for visitors to sit and rest in the shade. Will they be required to buy a cocktail to do so? That's been left unsaid. OP wants to ensure that some of this space is left for the public. Let's strive for a bit more specificity here. Again, what's left in a void is usually filled with unintended consequence.

That concludes my testimony. On behalf of ANC-6D, we appreciate the opportunity to testify this evening. Thank you for your time.