

**Hearing on CASE NO. 13-14 (Vision McMillan Partners LLC and the District of Columbia – First-Stage and Consolidated PUDs and Related Map Amendment @ 2501 First Street, N.W. (Square 3128, Lot 800)), March 23, 2017**

I join with Friends of McMillan Park, DC for Reasonable Development and others in the community in opposing the present plan for VMP to develop McMillan Park, for example, already stated in my previous testimony to the DC Council (November 12, 2014 and October 26, 2015), and submitted online to the Zoning Commission on December 16, 2015.

First I point to the Washington Post article by Jeffrey Anderson (2015). Anderson concludes by saying “City leaders are determined to see McMillan developed like NoMa or CityCenterDC. But without vision or respect for history, they put commerce before culture, which is not what great cities do.” In her October 19, 2015 letter to Chairman Mendelson, Kathleen Patterson, DC’s Auditor, finds that “Although in its early stages that plan included a competitive process that resulted in the selection of Vision McMillan Partners, LLC (VMP) as the land development team, it ultimately resulted in a greatly expanded role and exclusive rights for VMP, all without the benefit of a competitive process”, concluding “Just as it is common knowledge in the construction industry that government practice is to re- bid a project if there is a material change to the scope of work, certainly, the change to VMP’s role and giving it exclusive rights are materials changes that warrant a new competitive process.” Given the conclusions of the DC Auditor’s letter, the Zoning Commission should act immediately to do all it can to terminate the contract with VMP and reopen a bidding process for redevelopment of the McMillan site.

I was an active participant in the Green Economy Working Group of Sustainable DC. There are alternative proposals to keep McMillan Park as an historic site with truly green development which can be found on the website of Friends of McMillan Park (<http://friendsofmcmillan.org>). I thought Sustainable DC was a very promising signal that our elected government was rethinking economic development, to promote a just and green economy, but keeping VMP as the developer would make the Sustainable DC vision a mirage. Therefore, in taking action that would facilitate opening up a new competitive process the Zoning Commission should insist on explicit criteria for redevelopment consistent with the vision of Sustainable DC, in particular to preserve most of the green space and historic character, in sharp contrast to the existing VMP plan. I now specifically focus my testimony on one aspect of “Issue No. 4 A. Will the PUD result in environmental problems..?”. In particular, the highly probable increase in traffic along N. Capitol St. will amplify an already existing dispersal of vehicular air pollutants as well as carbon emissions. I note the important testimony on the very serious adverse health impacts of air pollutants by Mel Peffers, a Bloomingdale resident. I would only reemphasize the recent studies pointing to a link to dementia, highlighted in Science (Underwood, 2017). Joe Mehra (MCV Associates) has already provided testimony to the Zoning Commission with documentation showing that the traffic impact of the PUD will be roughly twice the magnitude of the Gorove/Slade study used by VMP. Both to protect the health of our residents and commuters and to reduce carbon emissions promoting climate change, consistent with the goal of Sustainable DC, vehicular traffic powered by combustion of gasoline and diesel fuel (petroleum distillate) must be radically reduced in the very near future. A proven alternative already exists, shift to electrified public transport, supplemented by electric cars, both powered by electricity generated by wind/solar energy. Unfortunately the current WMATA plan, supported by its Chair, Councilmember Jack Evans, to address its budget shortfall will promote more car use, more congestion and air pollution because of service cuts and fare increases. Once again we are witnessing an economic and environmental assault on our residents who bear the burden of income insecurity. The alternative is a combination of a regional surtax on millionaire income and the big corporate sector, which could entirely fund an adequate WMATA budget and move proactively to lower fares and more service.

I conclude: implementing this PUD would constitute an egregious environmental justice violation and must be aborted. The bidding process for McMillan redevelopment should be reopened.

References cited

Anderson, Jeffrey (2015) “D.C. should embrace McMillan’s history”, Washington Post, September 18, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/dc-should-embrace-mcmillans-history/2015/09/17/5c8ea5e0-2c9e-11e5-a250-42bd812efc09\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/dc-should-embrace-mcmillans-history/2015/09/17/5c8ea5e0-2c9e-11e5-a250-42bd812efc09_story.html); Underwood, Emily (2017) The polluted brain. Science 355 (6323), 342-345.

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ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia  
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