

Anthony Hood, Chairman

DC Zoning Commission

May 5, 2014

Subject: Testimony in Opposition to proposed McMillan Park Development

Dear Chairman Hood:

I am writing to express my intense opposition to the current development plan for McMillan Park. The current plan is highly detrimental to historic values, public uses, and the economic value of the surrounding area. All of these benefits will be foregone if the current plan is approved. As a DC citizen, property owner, voter and real estate professional, I believe that the current plan will hurt the city. Furthermore, it is premature and procedurally mistaken to hold zoning hearings on the plan before important reviews of the site's historic value and legal designation are complete. I strongly urge you to dismiss or deny the current plan.

These are not simply opinions. This proposed plan fails to take into account the Summary of Recommendations for Site Revitalization of McMillan Park (DC Office of Planning, February 2002), a city-led effort to identify community priorities for the site. This study identified many of the applicant's proposed uses for McMillan Park as unacceptable including hospital/medical facilities and high-rise office and residential buildings. The current VMP plan completely disregards key recommendations of the study: (i) "A minimum of 50% (approximately 12.5 Acres) of the McMillan site should be revitalized as publicly accessible open space; (ii) "The remainder of the site should be developed with low and moderate intensity uses."; (iii) "Vistas from the site are significant and should be preserved in conjunction with development of public open space."

DC and especially the McMillan Park area deserves a plan which takes into account these recommendations and does justice to the vision of both the park's designers, and the current city's aspirations to be a "world class" city. I strongly favor an adaptive re-use of the site which takes into account the recommendations of the 2002 DC Office of Planning document. The current process appears to be legally flawed, procedurally premature, and economically misguided. We can do better and the citizens of DC are seeking to work closely with DC Zoning Commission and other involved agencies to create a plan for this site which will be recognized by current and future generations as an economic, social and aesthetic treasure for the DC.

I urge you to dismiss or deny the current plan and work with the community to develop a plan for adaptive re-use of the site based on the correctly identified priorities for the site. This is an issue of intense importance to me and I am mobilizing everyone I know--my family, neighbors, friends, government contacts, business partners, mass media contacts, social media contacts—to fight for a right and proper use of this space. The generation of the current plan frankly is a scandal with many dubious aspects in addition to its obvious flaws. I urge you to deny it, distance the Zoning Commission from it, and correctly use the capacity of the Zoning Commission to receive and approve an appropriate plan based on a legally and socially correct site planning process that makes sense for all the people and the whole economy of DC.

Sincerely,



Malcolm Childress, Ph.D., 627 L St. NE, Washington DC 20002