

As you all have seen, there are many, many people opposed to the development in its present form for several reasons.

Of course, three minutes is not a long time to speak, but as little as one minute can be the difference between life and death for McMillan. One common concern is that the medical office buildings, as proposed, are too tall. And that is the root cause of the one issue that everyone, including DDOT, is concerned about, namely, TRAFFIC—and lots of it. And what is it that will bring most of the resulting traffic to the surrounding streets? The two vastly oversized medical office buildings.

How do you reduce some of this excessive traffic? You do not allow zoning for the proposed building height of 130 feet in parcel 1. This denial would lower the height of the office buildings and keep them within the city-wide zoning restrictions. This reasonable limitation would not only reduce the number of vehicles and traffic congestion on surrounding streets, but would also mean that the historic silos and regulator buildings would not be so completely dominated, overshadowed and overwhelmed by towering 130-foot tall office buildings.

About 10 years ago I happened to notice increasing gridlock at First St. and Michigan Ave. Ambulances often got trapped in northbound traffic on First Street just a few hundred feet from the emergency rooms of the hospitals. As I mentioned earlier, a few minutes can be the difference between life and death—and in this case sometimes those minutes could be when you are in an ambulance and stuck in traffic on First Street.

I brought this traffic problem to DDOT's attention. They improved that intersection by removing eight parking spaces on First Street. Now VMP wants to reverse these improvements by adding traffic lights and especially by shortening turn lanes. This unacceptable plan would create a hazard to public safety. Again, it's the medical office buildings that will be the major cause of traffic problems at McMillan.

Moving on to the park area: The south service court street will supposedly be part of the park, but as presently proposed it will be open to vehicular traffic. But it is not even a through street. Instead, all the townhouses could easily be accessed via their rear entrances, while the community center could be accessed via the cul de sac on Quarter Street that runs directly into the community center. Yes, there could possibly be two small businesses—less than 200 square feet each—that occupy the two regulator houses on this court. But, future customers do not need a road to access them.

Making the service court a walking and strolling area shouldn't cost the developer any money, and it would likely make the townhouses more valuable. A pedestrianized service court would be safer for pedestrians and users of the park and would be a unique and pleasant destination in itself. Please preserve one of the two service courts for pedestrians. European cities pedestrianize streets all the time. We can do the same in our nation's capital right here at McMillan!

Now the underground cells: I heard testimony here that the cells are unstable and unpredictable. We all need a guarantee up front that these cells be stabilized or reconstructed so they can be used as planned. The repurposing of two cells is an integral part of the McMillan proposal, with one cell for the community center, and one is for future commercial uses, such as a restaurant, pub, or wine cellar.

As for the Community Benefits Agreement (CBA), two agreements have already been negotiated. The Bloomingdale Civic Association has already devised a detailed package and residents have approved it. Meanwhile, the McMillan Advisory Group (MAG) was established by DC as the only organization that is truly representative of all interested parties, for example, the ANC, the civic associations, as well as nearby residents and the MAG has developed a CBA package. However, currently yet another CBA is being negotiated between the developer and the ANC; this one under terms that favor the developer as opposed to the community. The MAG CBA is the only benefits package that should be considered—although please take a close look at the similar package submitted by the Bloomingdale Civic Association.

Exactly one quarter century ago, in May 1989, three Bloomingdale residents organized a large community party at McMillan. Hundreds of citizens attended. There were games and music, food and drink. It was the one and only time since WWII that McMillan was used once again as a park. I was one of the 3 residents who organized this "Picnic in the Park." I hope that McMillan can again be attractive and accessible to the public—just not at the expense of the surrounding neighborhood.

In conclusion, please do not allow 130-story office buildings.

Please make the south service court a wonderful pedestrianized area.

Please guarantee that at least two of the underground cells will be repurposed for public use.

Please don't overdevelop the remarkable McMillan National Landmark.

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