

**Kathleen H. Altemus**

1439 Channing Street, NE Washington, DC 20018  
(202) 725-8095

February 20, 2015

District of Columbia Zoning Commission  
4414 14<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 200-S  
Washington, DC 20001

**Re: Brookland Manor/Brentwood Village Shopping Center PUD Application**  
**Case Number: 14-18**

Dear Zoning Commission:

I am writing to express my support for the proposed renewal of Brookland Manor and the Brentwood Shopping Center. As a longtime resident of the adjacent community of Woodbridge, I am confident that the new eight block development will enhance the quality of life for existing residents, while affording others the opportunity to reside in a mixed use community that will offer a variety of housing types with over 2,200 residential units and approximately 200,000 square feet of retail space. I believe this expansive urban renewal project will also stimulate economic growth for Woodbridge, as this immediate area of the city's Northeast quadrant presently lacks commercial development.

In addition to supporting the renewal project, I would like to express concerns regarding sustainability and the environmental and social impacts a large-scale development will have on Woodbridge and its adjoining communities. It is imperative that the zoning commission and developers of this project ensure that a viable infrastructure is in place to support the demands the new development will inevitably bring. At the minimum, 2,200 residential units will increase traffic, pollution, utility usage, and impact the population of our public schools. Additionally, public safety must also be addressed as urban growth and crime are often synonymous, especially in mixed-use areas.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize the historical significance of Woodbridge and its adjoining communities of Brentwood and Brookland. I feel strongly that when considering urban development, we must also preserve and honor the historical integrity of the region. As a third generation Washingtonian and longtime Woodbridge resident, I am extremely proud to say that my community evolved in the early 1870s, when it served as host to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad's western line. Many of our first single-family, wood-frame houses stand today as a testament to exquisite architecture in styles ranging from Queen Anne to Craftsman.

These structures contribute to the uniqueness of the area, and set Woodbridge apart from other popular Washington neighborhoods that are dominated by Colonial, Georgian, and red brick Federal style homes.

I am most eager to share that during the 1930s, Woodbridge served as a model, multi-ethnic community when many other neighborhoods in the city maintained a Whites-Only clause forbidding Blacks and Jews from purchasing homes. Accordingly, Woodbridge attracted a large population of affluent African Americans. Of particular note are 13 International style houses designed by Hilyard Robinson and Howard H. Mackey, two of Washington's most prominent African American architects of the era. Robinson was responsible for the Ralph Bunche house, 1510 Jackson Street, NE, built for the Nobel Peace Prize winner. Other prominent black Washingtonians to call Woodbridge home included decorated Tuskegee Airman and doctor Leonard A. Altemus (my late husband), Housing and Urban Development Secretary Robert Weaver, Senator Edward Brooke, famed musician Bo Diddley, historian Rayford Logan, the poet Sterling Brown, and the entertainer Pearl Bailey, whose former Channing Street residence was purchased by my late husband more than fifty years ago and serves as my home today.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that in order to move forward responsibly, we must remember and honor the past. We must also consider our social and carbon footprints to ensure that every step of our planning supports the best environmental practices. It is my hope that as you break ground for the new development, you will consider the historical integrity of Woodbridge and support its preservation, as well as the social and environmental concerns I have shared.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my concerns and share a valuable piece of Washington's history with you.

Sincerely,

  
Kathleen H. Altemus

Woodbridge Resident