

GENE SOLON'S TESTIMONY AT THE D.C. ZONING COMMISSION'S
DECEMBER 14, 2016 HEARING ON CASE 16-02

Good evening Commissioners. I, Gene Solon, a homeowner at the Harbour Square housing complex along 4th St., SW, thank you for hearing my testimony on Case 16-02, a *very* important example of the *pressing* need to improve D.C.'s planning process so that it *truly* improves the quality of life in D.C. neighborhoods.

At 84 years old it's getting harder for me to suffer the ups and downs of the *spirit-lifting* language of so-called "Comprehensive Plans" followed by *spirit-depressing* approval of *community-harmful* land-side *and waterway* proposals Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6D, the D.C. Office of Planning (OP), and the D.C. Zoning Commission have all too often signed off on! Further, we Southwest D.C. residents, young *and old*, *are already suffering from cart-before-horse wrong-way planning practices!* It's *senseless* for any government official to approve building a soccer stadium at *any* location *before* having, *in hand*, an accompanying detailed transportation plan that moves people to and from that stadium *without congesting neighborhood streets!*

Commissioners, the attachment hereto is an emailed reminder I sent OP community meeting attendees, *including* ANC 6D chairperson Litsky, that "government officials...must *at long last* officially realize and publicly acknowledge that *a development project is a package -- a wrapped-together package containing inseparable components*; not only "bricks and mortar," but also safety, evacuation, area transportation patterns, congestion, parking, pollution, view-corridors and other community-affecting features!" Further, I stated that "Our government, be it the government of Washington, District of Columbia or Washington, Douglass Commonwealth, *must enact legislation its citizens deserve: not airy-fairy "Comp Plans," but substantive, community-beneficial comprehensive plans along with thoroughly consistent enforceable law!...ANC commissioners must act in a timely manner, when it really counts -- on proposed complete development packages, packages that, at the time they are first proposed, include all components...!*" (It fell on *me* to forward that email message to Mr. Litsky's ANC colleagues.)

Mr. Litsky has publicly stated, "ANC 6D is generally supportive of the notion of the D.C. United soccer stadium at Buzzard Point, contingent upon a clearly defined and unambiguous transportation plan." What? Should we be impressed when our ANC approves projects with "clearly defined" *ineffective* transportation plans? *Of course not!* Nor should we be impressed with a Gorove-Slade representative's agonizing struggles to provide some vague hope that a stadium-area traffic pattern could *somehow* be developed to prevent traffic congestion *and* parking problems alongside our housing complexes.

Commissioners, I was present on November 28th when you exposed the Applicant's lack of preparedness on a *host* of issues. That experience *reinforced* my conviction that the notion of a Buzzard Point soccer stadium must be *completely re-addressed* -- as the *multi-component package* it really is!

Commissioners, please take this opportunity to help turn a wrong-way planning system around. Please encourage appropriate soccer stadium *relocation!*

(over)

ATTACHMENT

A REAL D.C. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:
PRESENTATION BY GENE SOLON, NOVEMBER 3, 2016

For so MANY years now, to no avail, I've been trying to get ANC 6D commissioners to realize that they are NOT required to vote to approve proposed (matter-of-right OR PUD) projects in which they see community-harmful flaws -- and to vote to OPPOSE projects that, while claimed to be technically within D.C. law, clearly VIOLATE the safety-protecting, view-protecting, congestion-preventing principles so eloquently expressed in D.C. Comprehensive Plan ("Comp Plan") documents.

I'm 84 years old now, and it's getting harder for me to suffer the ups and downs of the SPIRIT-LIFTING language of Comp Plans followed by SPIRIT-DEPRESSING approval of COMMUNITY-HARMFUL PROPOSALS the D.C. Office of Planning, and ANC 6D and the D.C. Zoning Commission all too often sign off on!

Some examples of bad -- yet approved -- planning are, (a) unsafe, waterway-blocking, unnecessary OVER-extension of piers into the Washington Channel, causing waterway traffic congestion and preventing safe evacuation by waterway in emergencies, (b) unnecessarily excessive height and mass of Southwest D.C residential and office buildings blocking long-enjoyed and treasured views of landmarks such as the Washington Monument, and causing landside traffic congestion our transportation systems cannot handle, and (c) a Buzzard Point soccer stadium plan ANC 6D chairperson Litsky admitted IN WRITING he, along with his ANC colleagues, "has generally supported,"* a plan I have LONG expressed strong concern about to ANC 6D and to my 4th Street SW D.C. housing complex neighbors. Suddenly, now, in this tumultuous election time, Mr. Litsky is expressing his concerns about 4th Street traffic congestion resulting from the construction of a stadium he "has generally supported." But he has offered absolutely NO solutions. Of course not -- a bridge over 4th Street, or a tunnel under 4th Street are NOT solutions -- but, in my opinion, a stadium located at a better site MAY be a solution!

Look, neighbors, government officials, we must AT LONG LAST officially realize and publicly acknowledge that A DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IS A PACKAGE -- a WRAPPED-TOGETHER package containing INSEPARABLE COMPONENTS; not only "bricks and mortar" (for example, a soccer stadium by itself), but also safety, evacuation, area transportation patterns, congestion, parking, pollution, view-corridors and other community-affecting features! (Parenthesized words were ad lib. -- GS)

Our government, be it the government of Washington, District of Columbia or Washington, Douglass Commonwealth, MUST ENACT LEGISLATION ITS CITIZENS DESERVE: NOT airy-fairy "Comp Plans," but SUBSTANTIVE, COMMUNITY-BENEFICIAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANS ALONG WITH THOROUGHLY CONSISTENT ENFORCEABLE LAW!

And planning office officials and ANC commissioners MUST ACT IN A TIMELY MANNER, WHEN IT REALLY COUNTS -- on proposed COMPLETE DEVELOPMENT PACKAGES, PACKAGES THAT, AT THE TIME THEY ARE FIRST PROPOSED, INCLUDE ALL COMPONENTS, safety, evacuation, area transportation patterns, congestion, parking, pollution, view-corridors and other community-affecting features! Thank you.

-- Gene Solon
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* Source: Washington CityPaper, Volume 36, No. 44, October 28-November 3, 2016