

Community Testimony

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Bruce Monroe (16-11) and Park Morton (16-12) Zoning Hearings - Letter in Support December 5 and 8, 2016

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Zoning Commission:

My name is Jennifer Kuiper. I am writing to express my support for the redevelopment of the Park Morton and Bruce Monroe sites.

I have lived in the Park View neighborhood for the past seven years where I first rented a basement apartment on Newton Street. I now co-own a home at 644 Keefer Place NW, off Georgia Avenue, exactly two blocks from Bruce Monroe Park and two blocks from Park Morton. I love my neighborhood and am grateful to the long-term residents and businesses that have taught me about the rich history of this community.

I support this project because I believe that it will deliver on DC's commitment:

First, to the families living in Park Morton for a beautiful home where they can live in dignity and safety,

Second, to those seeking affordable housing in our neighborhood,

Third, to our seniors who need a supportive and accessible home close to their long-time friends and loved ones, and

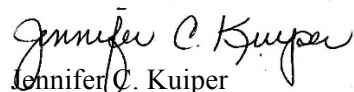
Fourth, to the school children, youth, dog owners, community gardeners and others who want to enjoy open space and recreational facilities that meet national standards of excellence.

But for me, personally, this undertaking represents much more than a redevelopment project. It represents a huge opportunity to translate values, creativity and hope into reality. As many of us here today are aware, our neighborhood is going through a significant process of change. The positive aspects include new small businesses, cleaner streets, activated vacant properties, artwork and community-based activities. However, we are also experiencing displacement that can come from higher property values for both residential and small business neighbors. In the many public workshops and presentations related to this project, I have heard conflicting emotions, including resentment coming from disruption of the familiar and fear of the unfamiliar. For many, I hear a sense of loss, whether it be the loss of the old Bruce Monroe school, or the hard-fought achievement of the interim park, or the social fabric of the Park Morton community.

My hope is that your decision today to support this development will be made in the spirit of a recommitment to those of us living in the Park View neighborhood. That through this project we can together work to create not just buildings but a real community. A community that enables all of us to live together, grow together, and take care of each other in a diverse, safe, respectful, creative, caring and beautiful place to live and work.

As you have seen today, there is a great deal of grassroots energy to monitor not just *what* but *how* the project is built. I believe that we can come together for a positive result and hope that the Council will provide us with the opportunity to move this process forward.

Thank you for your kind consideration.


Jennifer C. Kuiper