

**PLEASANT PLAINS CIVIC ASSOCIATION
SINCE 1921**

RE: Park Morton/Bruce Monroe PUD Hearing Testimony

December 5, 2016

DC Board of Zoning
441 4th Street, NW – Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

Dear DC Zoning Commission Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to you. My name is Darren Jones. I am the president of the Pleasant Plains Civic Association. I have served as president since 1996. I also served as vice president from 1985 to 1995. I was an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner for the neighborhood (in ANC 1B) from 1984 to 1988.

The Pleasant Plains Civic Association was founded in 1921. It is a civic association that has been continually active since its founding. Part of its mission is to consider and act upon any matters affecting the civic interest and general welfare of the residents within its boundaries. The Bruce Monroe Park site falls within the boundaries of the Pleasant Plains Civic Association.

Pleasant Plains has many members who live within a few blocks of the Bruce Monroe Park site and over a dozen members who live within 200 feet of the site. Our members mourned the loss of our beloved Bruce Monroe Elementary School that was closed on the site in 2008 with a promise to rebuild the school. We joined with other members of our community to protest and block a parking lot that was proposed for the site after the school was demolished. We even participated in the planning process that produced the park that is on the site today. That park is the jewel of our neighborhood and has served the neighborhood well by bringing our community together and reducing petty crime among our youth.

However, we agree that more affordable housing opportunities are needed for our neighborhood and for all District of Columbia residents. We support our Park

Morton neighbors who deserve better living conditions. Additionally, we support the New Communities Initiative.

We agree that part of the Bruce Monroe Park site should be used to build the Park Morton Redevelopment Project. However, our members are not pleased with the lack of input that we have been given regarding the proposed height of the buildings at the Bruce Monroe site.

Pleasant Plains residents have attempted to participate in the planning process. A community survey led by ANC 1A and ANC 1B that was commissioned to Howard University and answered by hundreds of residents was never considered. The Park Morton Planning Committee meetings have invited little input from our members regarding the size of the development from the very beginning. Additionally, the ANC representative for the single member district recused herself from the planning process for personal reasons early in 2016. With no direct ANC representation on this issue many in the community had no opportunity to express their views since ANC 1A did not appoint anyone else to work specifically with the community.

The Pleasant Plains Civic Association has a couple of requests for you.

First, we ask that the Zoning Commission vote to limit the height of the development on the Bruce Monroe site to no more than six stories so that it does not overwhelm the established community around it. The proposed height is too tall and is not compatible with the neighborhood. We believe this can be done by redistributing housing units across both development sites (Bruce Monroe and Park Morton).

Second, we ask you to require the developer to offer free underground parking to the new tenants at the Bruce Monroe site. If tenants are required to pay for parking many will opt to park on the streets. Parking in the neighborhood is already limited. A large influx of new cars will make it impossible for many residents to park near their homes.

Finally, we ask that more three bedroom affordable units be required at the site. We believe that the best use of this public land is to provide greater housing opportunities for public housing and low-income households.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee.

Respectfully yours,

Darren R. Jones, President

767 Columbia Road NW - since 1993 (less than 200 ft. from the Bruce Monroe Site)
762 Hobart Place, NW - personal representative for the estate of Lily R. Jones (less than 200 ft. from the Bruce Monroe Site)

***PLEASANT PLAINS CIVIC ASSOCIATION MEMBERS WHO LIVE WITHING 200 FEET OF THE BRUCE MONROE SITE: T. Turner, V. Campbell, T. Goddard, B. Kennedy, J. Ford, L. McNiesh, D. Jones, S. Jones, S. Levy, C. Pascal, M. Wojachowski, B. Lawson, C. Hines, M. Beck**

***The Pleasant Plains Civic Association has been allowed to participate in the following major neighbor development projects over the years: Sherman Avenue Redevelopment Project; Howard University 10-Year Campus Plan; Georgia Avenue Dedicated Bus Lanes Project; MPD Hobart Place Crime Hot Spot Initiative**