

Testimony for Bruce Monroe Zoning  
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My name is Bridget Collins and I live in Park View. I've been a DC resident for eight years, and have lived in Park View for six. For my day job, I work for an environmental non-profit. Environmental conservation and green space are very important to me. I am here today in support of the dispensation of the Bruce Monroe temporary park site. My support is not in spite of my commitment to green space, it is because of it. The proposed plan uses approximately 40% of the current site to create a permanent park for the community. The plan will also create a community park on the Park Morton site. I consider these important wins for the community.

To me, however, the most important win for the community in this proposal is a sustained and expanded commitment to public and affordable housing in DC. I am also a passionate advocate for affordable housing. DC has seen tremendous growth in recent years. It is imperative for DC's government and we, its citizens, to support and invest in affordable housing in DC. Displacement of DC's long-term residents is a huge and growing problem. Deliberate steps – such as this Bruce Monroe/ Park Morton proposal – are necessary to keep DC a diverse, inclusive city.

Using publicly owned land to provide quality, public housing for Park Morton residents is necessary and appropriate. The city has for far too long neglected Park Morton residents, and allowed the Park Morton apartments to deteriorate to truly unlivable conditions. Building first on the Bruce Monroe site can help us avoid the displacement caused by Hope VI projects. The Zoning Commission should also include: a strong commitment to Park Morton residents' right to return, a requirement for family sized (3 bedroom or larger) units on both sites, a commitment to hiring Park Morton and DC residents construction jobs, and policies to ensure Park Morton residents are not turned away from the new housing for arbitrary eligibility requirements.

Using publicly owned land to add quality, affordable housing for DC residents is also necessary and appropriate. DC is in an affordable housing crisis and the DC government should be actively pursuing ways to increase affordable housing availability. I urge the Zoning Commission to support deeply affordable housing as part of this proposal. Given that our AMI is based on a highly inflated regional estimate, I encourage the proposal to include housing at 40% AMI and below.

This evening you will likely hear from many of my neighbors who are frustrated with the process that has gotten us to this point. While I agree that there are lessons to be learned, and improvements to make, I urge the Zoning Commission to not lose sight of the key issues. The Bruce Monroe proposal should be approved, without delay, with a strong commitment to both public and affordable housing and to public parks.