

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Christina Houtz <christina.houtz@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 18, 2021 10:07 AM
To: DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ)
Subject: Written Testimony: Opposition to Case Number 16-11

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DC Zoning Commission:

I oppose replacing Bruce Monroe Community Park with a five-story consolidated Planned Unit Development. (Case 16-11)

The city's new Comprehensive Plan requires a thorough impact assessment -- ensuring that negative impacts on neighborhoods, transportation, environmental quality, and other issues are assessed and adequately mitigated. The DC Appeals court made clear this was not thoroughly done.

I'd like to focus on the adverse effects this proposed development will have on the community. For context, I am a homeowner and live directly across the Bruce Monroe Community Park and have come to greatly enjoy what this space offers for myself, my neighbors, and my community at large. This has been a crucial space for our community during the COVID-19 pandemic, which as we all know is still ongoing, and it is one of the largest green spaces around town. Everyday this park is used by so many people for safe and healthy recreational purposes. I personally frequent the tennis court and have aspirations to join the thriving community garden. I see others in the community using this space only for good - there are often cultural events, youth events, camps for kids during the summer, and tons of small groups practicing dance and other sports. This happens everyday. It honestly concerns me that DC would even consider the development of a new commercial/housing building.

Our Councilmember, Brianne Nadeau, told me that this was never intended to stay as a park once the school was removed years ago. She believes that we have plenty of other green space options which is simply not the case in Columbia Heights and certainly not of this caliber. DC is choosing to completely repurpose this space for housing and commercial purposes when there are several blocks of abandoned housing and vacant buildings all along Georgia Ave - why isn't DC proposing to repurpose buildings that already exist for new housing development? Instead they seek to destroy a centerpiece of our community.

In addition to the concern I have of taking away a thriving positive and safe public space used by people of all walks of life, I am deeply concerned about the immediate effect this will have on those that live around the park currently. We all know construction brings environmental concerns, runoff, sound pollution, and traffic (in an already highly trafficked area). I don't see these concerns addressed anywhere on the case record: https://app.dcoz.dc.gov/CaseReport/CaseReportPage.aspx?case_id=16-11

I appreciate that the builders and whoever else is in favor of pushing this through is trying to find concessions by reducing the number of stories, etc., but this is not what the community wants and or needs. It shocks me that in such a progressive and green forward city, that anyone would seek to take away such a productive, recreational and thriving space.

Kind regards,
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