



Southwest / Navy Yard / Buzzard Point Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6D

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December 10, 2019

Anthony Hood, Chair
DC Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

OFFICERS

Chairperson

Gail Fast

Vice Chairperson

Andy Litsky

Secretary

Rhonda Hamilton

Treasurer

Ron Collins

Re: ZC No. 17-05B Modification of Significance of Order No. 17-05 and 17-05A for 2121 First Street SW (Square 613, Lot 10)

Via email: zcsubmissions@dc.gov

Dear Chairman Hood and Members of the Zoning Commission,

COMMISSIONERS

SMD 1 *Gail Fast*

SMD 2 *Anna Forgie*

SMD 3 *Ronald Collins*

SMD 4 *Andy Litsky*

SMD 5 *Fredrica Kramer*

SMD 6 *Rhonda Hamilton*

SMD 7 *Edward Daniels*

At a regularly scheduled and properly noticed public meeting on December 9, 2019, with a quorum present, a quorum being four Commissioners, Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6D voted 6-0-1 to oppose ZC No. 17-05B Modification of Significance of Order No. 17-05 and 17-05A for 2121 First Street SW (Square 613, Lot 10) and voted 6-0-1 to authorize ANC-6D Chair Gail Fast to testify before the Zoning Commission on December 16, 2019.

ANC-6D believe that this Modification of Significance should be denied because the Applicant has not sufficiently demonstrated that the change is in concert with the original concept that had been put forward and approved by this ANC and the DC Zoning Commission as a rental apartment building just a few short years ago. This is not just any apartment building -- the Applicant is building 485 units of market rate housing located on, arguably, the most valuable piece of property on the Anacostia River. Of those 485 waterfront market rate units only 8 will be affordable.

While ANC-6D has no quarrel with the concept put forward by WhyHotel, its operation at this particular property causes us concern. First, other developers in the Capitol Riverfront district have **chosen** to invest in and gain appropriate regulatory approvals for actual, licensed, hotel space in the neighborhood. One logically wonders how changing the paradigm on this site -- at this juncture -- will impact both those existing and planned hotel operations in the

neighborhood. The economic impact of this requested Modification of Significance must not be focused on the Applicant alone.

The Applicant has stated that they believe that the addition of the WhyHotel will help them ease the pain of leasing up 485 units of market rate housing. It seems to the ANC that while that may be the case, absolutely no benefit accrues to wider community as a consequence of any action in support of this request.

Moreover, **ANC-6D believes that a greater benefit to the larger community may indeed accrue should this request be denied.** Indeed, if there is a surplus of available apartment rental units in the building, supply and demand will apply. One would assume, as has happened in other developing areas – such as in the early days of Capitol Riverfront --- with increased availability, incentives will be made to help lower the cost for everyone of “market rate” units on site in order to fill the building. Allowing the Applicant to put a hotel on site – albeit a temporary hotel (at the ANC’s specific insistence) – only helps to lower the availability of apartment units in this building and keep the rental price of such units artificially high.

ANC-6D strongly believes that the Zoning Commission should deny the requested Modification of Significance and let market forces prevail. We appreciate your consideration and urge you to give our recommendations great weight under law.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at 6D01@anc.dc.gov or 202-554-1795.

Sincerely,



Chair, ANC 6D
Southwest, Navy Yard, & Buzzard Point