

Testimony for Zoning Commission

Lawrence Johnston

Case 20-06

Good afternoon. My name is Lawrence Johnston. I am a resident of Ward 6B and a member of Capitol Hill Village. Capitol Hill Village has proposed that the developer in the PUD at 1333 M St., SE, contribute \$250,000 to establish Friends of Capitol Hill Adult Day Center. (See Exhibit 33.) Applicable regulations require proffered public benefits to be meaningful, and for that to happen in this case this contribution should be included in the package of public benefits. This would be a public benefit formulated to meet the criteria of 11X DCMR 305.3 and directed at attaining an elderly care facility within the meaning of 11X DCMR 305.5(i). It has received the support of ANC 6B.

Compared to the developer's "ask", its proffered benefits package is insufficient. The chart on pp. 18-19 of exhibit 33 goes into great detail. In general:

1. The proffer of an additional 4% reserved for affordable housing equates to only about 20 additional units in Phase 1.
2. Most of the other proffered benefits are necessary on site to attract residents; to mitigate design impacts on the environment; or to support retail.
3. Many of the proffered items like the M Street and Virginia Avenue extensions and some of the benefits already described would be included anyway in a "matter-of-right" design.

4. Effectively, this isolated PUD offers Ward 6 residents themselves only 2 meaningful public benefits—the biking trail improvements and the \$25,000 cash donation

More than these minimal benefits is necessary. This PUD will set a precedent by permitting the construction of a massive structure along the waterfront, at a location that is difficult to access from the existing neighborhood. Its size will place new stresses on the environment and traffic in the community. It is difficult to assess the size and architecture of the PUD because it is broken into 2 separate phases, the second of which may never materialize. In addition, the developer asks for a map amendment and 40 more feet in height. The result is one of the tallest buildings on the DC waterfront.

Also, the developer can afford a truly meaningful benefits package. As an example, a rough estimate of the net income to the developer for the additional 40 feet of height is over \$54 million, as shown on page 16 of exhibit 33.

In contrast, the “Friends of Capitol Hill ADC” would present a particularly strong public benefit. It would in fact be the only benefit that would be directed at meeting a serious need specific to Ward 6: the lack of adult day services for Ward 6 residents who are aging in place. And it would indeed help balance the scales.

Thank you.