

FROM THE DESK OF PAST COMMISSIONER KATHY HENDERSON, 5B10, 5D05



District of Columbia Zoning Commission Hearing

March 18, 2021

Testimony in Support of Project 20-34: The Cotton Annex

I am Kathy Henderson, an award-winning, ten-term past advisory neighborhood commissioner, former member of the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board, past Trustee of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City, and a strong proponent of the Height of Buildings Act of 1910. I am the coordinator of 5D Court Watch; our organization addresses matters of public safety and the impact of zoning cases before the Court on our neighborhoods.

First, my experience with Douglas Development the person, is that he is a visionary that has created an impressive portfolio of well-designed and executed development projects that benefit our great city. The Ivy City Hecht's Warehouse project, Gallery Place, Chinatown and the Mt. Vernon Square and the Woodward and Lothrop projects are some of the exciting development offerings from Douglas Development. No city can move forward without development and Douglas Development is a premier developer with a proven ability to respect, revitalize and restore grand old historic buildings that no one else is focused on. The Douglas Development team consistently engages with the public in a very respectful and constructive manner and implements constructive feedback into their projects, which results in even stronger, well-designed projects; that is my experience as a commissioner and the experience of communities throughout our city. The Cotton Annex has been dormant for approximately 15 years and now, thanks to Douglas Jemal and his wonderful team, we have an exciting project that will provide housing and retail, generating at least two million dollars annually in property tax revenue. Creating this new annual property tax increase will help to keep the city's budget balanced, our bond rating triple A and augment our ability to serve the needs of residents without a rush to raise our taxes across the board. This project also helps the District of Columbia overcome the structural imbalance that underscores our fervent need and quest for statehood status. This venerable, formerly GSA-owned building will chip away at the city's structural imbalance, which is good for residents, commuters and visitors.

Secondly, the project design is thoughtful and aesthetically pleasing architecturally and is a proposed LEED certified gold construction project, which is good for the environment, residents and our entire city. The project design is well executed and respects the Height of Buildings Act of 1910, with the proposed new construction height at 118 feet, while leaving the historic

original Cotton Annex building intact. The requested relief as depicted in the Applicant's Zoning Analysis (court diagram), Exhibit 11A1 appears to be largely technical and enhances the overall design integrity of the project, underscoring the kind of detailed problem-solving Douglas Development is known for. The project meets the standards of affordable housing creation outlined in the *inclusionary zoning* provisions administered by the D.C. Office of Planning. I acknowledge that the city has a far greater need for affordable housing; I look forward to all developers including affordable housing units in their respective projects, even outside of *inclusionary zoning* requirements to help address this critical need.

Finally, the Cotton Annex project is an exciting and creative project that will absolutely enhance revitalize and strengthen the National Mall area, community and our city. The Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6D, D.C. Office of Planning's Historic Preservation Office, U.S. Commission on Fine Arts and the Committee of 100 on the Federal City support this beautifully designed project and I join them without hesitation. I urge the Zoning Commission to approve Case 20-34, allowing this impressive project to move forward without delay. I appreciate the opportunity to offer my testimony regarding Case 20-34 to the Zoning Commission.

Respectfully Submitted By,

Kathy Henderson

Commissioner Kathy Henderson

5D Court Watch Coordinator

CC: Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton

U.S. Commission on Fine Arts