

Personal Testimony of Daniel Schramm, Resident, 5B04, and former president, Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association

Re: ZC Case 22-04 (Hanover Consolidated PUD and Related Map Amendment, Reed and Franklin Streets NE)

Virtual Public Hearing: July 21, 2022 @ 4pm

Good afternoon, commissioners. My name is Daniel Schramm, and I am a resident of Brookland. I live on 12th Street NE, within the relevant single member district, ANC 5B04, and just a couple blocks from this proposed development. I am also the former president of the Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association, a position I stepped down from earlier this year after six and a half years. I was elected to the board of BNCA in 2013 as vice-president and became president in 2015. I was subsequently unanimously reelected at each annual election, until I decided not to run again, in August of 2021.

I am here today to testify in support of this application in my personal capacity. BNCA submitted a comment letter in support on July 8, signed by our new president, Kathy Jacquart. I subscribe entirely to the views of the organization expressed in that letter.

It was just a few weeks after I had announced my intention to step down that this project, I believe the first PUD in Brookland since 901 Monroe failed, came back to our doorstep in the form of a request to meet by Hanover's advance team. I say "came back" because the immediate neighbors, BNCA, and our ANC for 5B04, Ra Amin, had already had several meetings over the past few years with representatives of the owner of the properties. They made clear their interest in a strong community-engagement process and having the support of the community.

Over the course of these meetings, we developed a rough, conceptual agreement on the nature and scope of the project. It would be a mixed-use development, featuring a tiered design that would not impose a massively tall structure immediately adjacent to existing residences. This general understanding became reflected in the amended Future Land Use Map in 2021.

After Hanover was selected as the developer, they approached ANC Commissioner Amin, myself, and the neighbors to begin a more formal community process. That process is detailed well in BNCA's support letter. I share this larger background because I believe it is important to emphasize the degree to which this property owner, and now Hanover, worked for years to engage the community. While that process has not been perfect, it is certainly far more than we typically experience when developers are able to build large projects "by right." (For example, see the Rowan building just south on Reed Street - built "by right" with minimum process and in the face of strong opposition from the community.)

In part because of that process, this is a project that enjoys a surprising degree of support from the immediate residents. Many are not satisfied with the existing industrial uses on these properties and are concerned about traffic, safety, and public health issues presented by the current configuration. This proposal offers a raft of benefits to the community, from providing much needed housing and ground level maker and community space (within easy walking distance of the Metro), to infrastructure upgrades, traffic safety and environmental improvements, and financial support for several organizations providing services in the immediate vicinity. For all these reasons, I personally think this is a project worth supporting. Thank you.