

GOVERNMENT OF
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

+ + + + +

ZONING COMMISSION

+ + + + +

REGULAR PUBLIC HEARING

CASE NO. 24-18

+ + + + +

MONDAY

JUNE 16, 2025

+ + + + +

The Public Hearing of the District of Columbia Zoning Commission convened via teleconference, pursuant to notice at 04:03 p.m. EDT, Anthony J. Hood, Chairperson, presiding.

ZONING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

ANTHONY J. HOOD, Chairperson
ROBERT E. MILLER, Vice Chair
JOSEPH IMAMURA, Commissioner
GWEN WRIGHT, Commissioner
TAMMY STIDHAM, Commissioner

OFFICE OF ZONING STAFF PRESENT:

PAUL YOUNG, Zoning Data Specialist
SHARON S. SCHELLIN, Secretary

OFFICE OF ZONING LEGAL DIVISION STAFF PRESENT:

HILLARY LOVICK, Esquire

HUNT REPORTING COMPANY
Court Reporting and Litigation Support
Serving Maryland, Washington, and Virginia
410-766-HUNT (4868)
1-800-950-DEPO (3376)

ALSO PRESENT:

SHEPARD BEAMON, Office of Planning
DAVID AVITABILE, ESQUIRE, Goulston & Storrs
DERICK WALLACE, ESQUIRE, Goulston & Storrs
TERESA MARTIN, Living Classrooms Foundation
ALEX DEFEE, STUDIOS Architecture

The transcript constitutes the minutes from the
Regular Public Hearing held on June 16, 2025.

HUNT REPORTING COMPANY
Court Reporting and Litigation Support
Serving Maryland, Washington, and Virginia
410-766-HUNT (4868)
1-800-950-DEPO (3376)

T-A-B-L-E O-F C-O-N-T-E-N-T-S

Case No. 24-18

Living Classrooms Foundation:

Introduction - Chairman Hood 4

Preliminary Matters 5

Applicant's Presentation:

Mr. Avitabile 6

Ms. Martin 8

Mr. Avitabile 11

Questions/Comments from Commissioners:

Chairman Hood 17

Commissioner Stidham 20

Commissioner Imamura 21

Commissioner Wright 21

Vice Chair Miller 22

Chairman Hood 26

Office of Planning Presentation - Mr. Beamon 27

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(4:03 p.m.)

CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. We are convening and broadcasting this public hearing by videoconferencing. My name is Anthony Hood. Joining me this evening are Vice Chair Miller, Commissioner Wright, Commissioner Stidham, and Commissioner Imamura. We're also joined by the Office of Zoning staff, Ms. Sharon Schellin, as well as Mr. Paul Young, who will be handling all of our virtual operations; also, our Office of Zoning Legal Division, Ms. Hillary Lovick. We will ask all others to introduce themselves at the appropriate time.

Copies of today's virtual public hearing notice are available on the Office of Zoning's website. Please be advised that this proceeding is being recorded by a court reporter and is also webcast live via Webex and YouTube Live. The video will be available on the Office of Zoning's website after the hearing. Accordingly, all those listening on Webex or by phone will be muted during the hearing, and only those who have signed up to participate -- to testify will be unmuted at the appropriate time.

Please state your name before providing oral testimony on your presentation. Oral presentations should be limited to a summary of your most important points. When you are finished speaking, please mute your audio so that your microphone is no longer picking up sound or background noise. If you experience

1 difficulty accessing Webex or with your telephone call-in, then
2 please call our OZ Hotline number at 202-727-0789 to receive
3 Webex log-in or call-in instructions or if you need assistance
4 to sign up to testify. All persons planning to testify either
5 in favor, opposition, or undeclared, must sign up in advance and
6 will be called by name. If you wish to file written testimony
7 or additional supporting documents during the hearing, then
8 please request that the submission be entered into the record and
9 be prepared to describe it at the time of your testimony.

10 The hearing will be conducted in accordance with the
11 provisions of 11-Z DCMR, Chapter 5, as follows: preliminary
12 matters; presentation, in this case, by the petitioner; report
13 of other government agencies; report of the ANC; testimony of
14 organizations and individuals, each five and three minutes -- for
15 the organizations, five minutes; individuals, three minutes,
16 respectively -- and we'll hear in the order from those who are
17 in support, opposition, or undeclared. While the Commission
18 reserves the right to change the time limits for presentations,
19 if necessary, it intends to adhere to the time limits as strictly
20 as possible and notes that no time shall be ceded. At this time,
21 the Commission will consider any preliminary matters. Does the
22 staff have any preliminary matters?

23 MS. SCHELLIN: Just very briefly. In this case, the
24 applicant is being -- or petitioner, rather, is being represented
25 by Dave Avitabile with Goulston and Storrs. They plan to take

1 about 15 minutes to present, unless the Commission directs them
2 otherwise. There's a letter from ANC 6/8F in the record at
3 Exhibit 17 in support. The OP hearing report is at Exhibit 18,
4 recommending that the Commission approve the text amendment
5 petition. And as far as other agencies, the Homeland Security
6 and Emergency Management Agency at Exhibit 16 submitted a report
7 stating they have reviewed the petition materials and have no
8 objection to the text amendment. So I believe this is ready to
9 turn over to the Commission for consideration. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you, Ms. Schellin. As Mr.
11 Avitabile is coming up, this is Zoning Commission Case Number 24-
12 18, Living Classrooms Foundation, text amendment to Subtitle A,
13 Section 301.3H, and Subtitle K, Sections 200.6 through 200.9;
14 230.5, 230.6, and 239. Again, today's date is June the 16th,
15 2025. That's the subject of our hearing this evening. So, with
16 that, I will turn it over to Mr. Avitabile, and he can introduce
17 everyone. And, Mr. Avitabile, you all may begin. The 15 minutes
18 is fine, if you can bring us up to speed. And, first, let me
19 ask also, is there opposition? I didn't see any opposition in
20 this record, unless some just came in, but --

21 MR. AVITABILE: I'm not aware of any, Mr. Chairman.

22 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Well, ten minutes is what you
23 can do. Thank you.

24 MR. AVITABILE: Sounds good. Thank you very much.
25 Good afternoon, Commissioners. David Avitabile from Goulston and

1 Storrs, joined by my colleague, Derick Wallace. And we're here
2 to present this petition for Living Classrooms. We're also joined
3 by Teresa Martin, who's the Executive Director of Living
4 Classrooms, and Alex DeFee, who is with STUDIOS Architecture and
5 is the project architect. So, Mr. Young, if we could bring up
6 the presentation please.

7 (PowerPoint presentation shared on screen.)

8 MR. AVITABILE: Very briefly, to sort of get started,
9 we're presenting this petition on behalf of Living Classrooms.
10 We'll go to the next page please. And Living Classrooms has long
11 planned, and as has the General Services Administrations and
12 Forest City and now Brookfield, all planned together for Living
13 Classrooms to occupy this little orange corner of Yards Park.
14 And so what we're here today is a text amendment that is the
15 first step towards realizing that vision. We will then file a
16 design review application to approve the design and use of the
17 building, but, in order to set the table for that, we need to
18 move forward the text amendments that are before you this
19 afternoon. And we are doing this on behalf of and for Living
20 Classrooms, and so I thought it made sense to start with a little
21 bit about Living Classrooms, and so I'll turn it over to Ms.
22 Martin to give you a brief overview of who they are. And if we'd
23 go to the next page please. This is just the existing site,
24 which is right now a grassy field. And next slide. All right.
25 And, with that, Teresa, I'll turn it over to you.

1 MS. MARTIN: Thank you so much for that lead-in. My
2 name is Teresa Martin. As David said, I am the Managing Director
3 for Living Classrooms National Capital Region. Living Classrooms
4 has been around for 40 years. We're actually celebrating our
5 40th anniversary this year, and 25 of those years in the District.
6 We bring a focus on hands-on education, job training, and health
7 and wellness of communities to whatever work we're doing, and we
8 really focus on trying to meet the needs of the communities that
9 we're serving, so what we do in Baltimore is a little different
10 than what we do in DC and what we've applied our learning-by-
11 doing approach to. We bring that to whatever Living Classroom
12 we encounter.

13 So over the last 17 years, part of our work has been
14 at Kingman Island, the District's only conservation area, and
15 there we have provided outdoor education programs. We have
16 provided access to a community green space, and we have developed
17 that through a Ranger Program. We have done workforce development
18 programming and training through that Ranger Program as well, so
19 training folks to work there full-time and create that access for
20 the community, but also training folks who are able to move on
21 to other positions within the District and building out those
22 programs.

23 We've also been here in our Community Center here at
24 Dent House in Southwest for about six years. And here we continue
25 some of that workforce training. It is -- if you're familiar

1 with this building, it's a small building and we are bursting at
2 the seams, especially as we go into the summer months right now.
3 We provide workforce training for adults, so, as I mentioned,
4 sort of that -- those green jobs related to Kingman Island, but
5 we also provided hospitality programs training in nationally-
6 recognized certifications for adults with barriers to employment.

7 And, as I mentioned earlier, we really are focused on
8 trying to meet the needs of the community wherever we are, and
9 we're watching -- as this neighborhood changes, there's a need
10 for folks in this neighborhood to be employed by the businesses
11 that are coming in, so we've really changed our focus into that
12 workforce training here. We've also offered robotics and music
13 programs, tutoring after school, things like that throughout the
14 year at the Dent House.

15 And, finally, we've been managing Yards Marina, at
16 first in partnership with Oasis, and now directly for a number
17 of years, which is part of why we're so excited and interested
18 in this particular site. It will really be able to grow the
19 capacity that we have for our programs there. We operate that
20 marina for the public, but we also have a historic ship, Mildred
21 Belle, that we bring to The Yards to run programming with youth
22 from different schools, as well as our interns, as well as other
23 community members, and having a building in that space would
24 enable us to really grow our capacity to be able to do that.
25 Right now we're limited by the size of the boat, but if we were

1 able to have STEM lab there or we're able to have other spaces
2 for youth to go to in between the time that they're on the boat,
3 and maybe have half of the students up in the STEM lab and then
4 be able to switch, it really grows our capacity to be able to
5 serve the students that we work with. We have a longstanding
6 relationship with DCPS, and we focus our work primarily on Title
7 I schools, but also a lot of our work is really on Wards 5, 6,
8 7, and 8. That's really the core of the work that we've been
9 doing over the years.

10 We're also looking to grow our Workforce Development
11 Program. As I said, we're kind of bursting at the seams at
12 this -- in this small space, and we really hope to grow out our
13 hospitality program into a culinary program, similar to what we
14 have up in Baltimore as well, where we have a fully functioning
15 restaurant, but it's used as culinary training space for
16 community members to grow their skills and then placed with folks
17 that are -- restaurants that are nearby. I think, actually, I've
18 talked a lot through this slide here. Our mission statement I've
19 kind of highlighted, but it's really those pieces around the
20 hands-on education, how we do that through -- when we work with
21 children all the way through adults.

22 If you want to go to the next slide for a moment there.
23 And then this slide goes a little bit more -- this is a quote
24 from my President and CEO of overall Living Classrooms, talking
25 about sort of facing the barriers that folks bring to these

1 things. People do not come to Workforce Development Programs
2 necessarily because they are ready to get a job tomorrow; they
3 may need some assistance and some barrier reduction, so we do
4 that through our very targeted, focused workforce development
5 training programs; also through case management, really providing
6 supports to individuals so they're able to work through those
7 barriers and be successful in whatever jobs they take on after
8 our trainings.

9 Same thing with all of our school programs; we're
10 really focused on working with youth from our youngest ones this
11 year were Pre-K-4, but all the way up through high school. And,
12 with our high school students, we're really looking at providing
13 hands-on education, science-based programming, but introducing
14 them also, really importantly, to experts in the fields, career
15 opportunities, and providing some of those career opportunities,
16 introducing them to internships, placing them in internships, and
17 then hopefully guiding them a little bit further beyond that.
18 I'm going to pause right there. I don't know. If it's appropriate
19 to ask for questions at this point or pass it back to David now.

20 MR. AVITABILE: I'll take it from here and go through
21 the rest of the presentation. Thank you, Teresa, very much.
22 That was perfect.

23 All right. Next slide please. So what we're doing
24 today is really implementing a vision that was long planned as a
25 part of the Southeast Federal Center Master Plan. And I know,

1 Chairman Hood, you've been there from the beginning for this.
2 Other members of the Commission have seen pieces of this over the
3 years, but just to remind everyone, everything that happens down
4 in this part of the District is pursuant to Southeast Federal
5 Center Master Plan, which was developed by the General Services
6 Administration over 20 years ago and really set forth the
7 blueprint for building out this 42-acre part of land. And one
8 of the parcels that was always contemplated down in the southeast
9 corner over here was the P3 parcel, right on the water, for this
10 particular use.

11 If we go to the next slide, you see here, this is the
12 use -- approved uses -- Land Use Plan from the Master Plan.
13 Again, you see this site envisioned as a cultural/community use,
14 which is exactly the use we're talking about today.

15 If we go to the next slide, again, Chairman Hood, you
16 will remember the Yards Park was built out, pursuant to this
17 Master Plan, through a series of Zoning Commission reviews, and
18 the vision -- this is from the 2008, the very first set of
19 drawings we shared with the Commission, always sort of envisioned
20 this idea of Yards Park being this five-acre park with a series
21 of pavilions in it that would include both retail pavilions, some
22 of which you see out there today, and this Living Classrooms
23 parcel over in the southeast corner.

24 If we go to the next slide, again, going back to that
25 visioning from 2008, this idea of this waterfront park with these

1 pavilions nestled within it. You can sort of see tucked into
2 the corner the Living Classrooms parcel.

3 Next slide please. So the first phase of Yards Park
4 was the park itself. This was actually I believe one of the very
5 first things that was built out as part of the Southeast Federal
6 Center, the Yards, was getting this park approved and underway.
7 And so the park was approved with sort of spaces carved out for
8 the future parcels. And if we go to the next slide, the next
9 phase happened shortly thereafter, a year later, which is when
10 we got the retail pavilions that are sort of in the core of the
11 park approved; Living Classrooms off to the corner, sort of a to
12 be -- to be presented later, and, well, later is now. So that's
13 why we're here today.

14 Go to the next slide please. The site here highlighted
15 in purple is in what we call the SEFC-4 zone, which is one of
16 those special purpose zones that was specifically created to
17 govern how Yards Park would be developed and improved over time.

18 If you go to the next slide, the existing zoning
19 requirements for the lot -- and this is all in our application,
20 so I won't go through it in detail, but the core thing I wanted
21 everyone to focus on, one of the core ideas of Yards Park was
22 this idea that you could have development within the park, and
23 there was a specific development area, which is this area in
24 purpose, and then the rest of it was supposed to be sort of
25 developed as park. And I think, for lack of a better way of

1 putting it, it was sort of an oversight and not thinking about,
2 well, the Living Classrooms parcel also needed to be a development
3 area to be able to build a building there that would be three
4 stories tall, consistent with the other three-story buildings.

5 And if we go to the next slide, really what we're
6 proposing to do in this text amendment is update the SEFC-4 zone
7 to allow for the development of this parcel, and it's really sort
8 of simple basic things. One, first and foremost, you know, create
9 Parcel P3 as part of that development area where we can build a
10 building; two, allow certain -- you know, the uses that we
11 envision on this site within that zone. Right now, this zone
12 only allows limited waterfront uses and some retail uses. And
13 in order to get to the mix of uses that the Living Classroom
14 parcel will have, which includes education and institutional
15 uses, we need to add those as permitted uses. In the process of
16 doing this, we also determined there was an oversight in 2016.
17 When the 2016 regs were adopted and use groups were created, the
18 permission for eating and drinking establishments to be within
19 this zone was inadvertently, I think, lost, and so we bring that
20 back.

21 And then last major thing here is sort of the idea
22 that -- there was always this idea that the SEFC-4 zone would
23 allow for essentially all the density to be aggregated across the
24 entire park, where you'd have a whole bunch of parkland where
25 there would be no density being built, and then you'd have a few

1 concentrated areas where the density would be located. And the
2 idea that across the entire thing it would be -- it would blend
3 to a .5 FAR. And right now, the zone, the way it's set up, calls
4 for using this combined lot development mechanism, which is
5 somewhat cumbersome and requires entering into agreements that
6 document it. And, instead, what we propose is a much more simple
7 and straightforward -- it's all one piece of property that's
8 managed collectively, so let's just acknowledge it that way and
9 just do it much more simply; you know, the Zoning Administrator
10 can easily account for it. And, frankly, our applications to the
11 Zoning Commission will be the way in which we document here's
12 where we are in terms of the density, here's how we're meeting
13 that requirement.

14 And if you go to the next slide, you know, why we're
15 doing this. Again, it's explained in detail in our application,
16 and it's really to implement the goals of the Master Plan, to
17 provide an increased mix of uses and levels of activity down
18 within this waterfront park. You know, The Yards is a wonderful
19 neighborhood and destination, but adding more activity,
20 particularly during the day, only helps to build this out. It
21 was just a few months ago that we were here before you asking to
22 make an office use in one of these retail buildings permanent,
23 and, you know, this, again, adds to that level of daytime
24 activity. We also think that the particular uses here, as Teresa
25 described, really will enhance the waterfront and create activity

1 on the waterfront and to be on the water. You know, these are
2 not uses that could just be located in any parcel, and they'll
3 benefit from the waterfront location. And then, finally, of
4 course, the use will bring education and workforce training
5 opportunities.

6 Next slide please. And this is just sort of an image
7 of where the building will sit relative to the area and how it
8 will be able to implement those goals by being located within the
9 Park and right next to the marina where the Mildred Belle is
10 docked.

11 Next slide please, and we're almost done. You know, I
12 think the planning justification for this is well laid out in the
13 application, but, again, the Southeast Federal Center Master Plan
14 specifically calls for this sort of use in this location. The
15 Future Land Use Plan calls for parks, recreation, and open space
16 in this location, which is exactly what this use will further.
17 This is a Regional Center under the Policy Map. This is not
18 inconsistent with all of the other elements in the plan. We
19 didn't identify any areas of expressed inconsistency. And,
20 finally, this use will further racial equity in creating these
21 opportunities for education, for workforce development.

22 And then, next slide please, just to close out where
23 we'll go from here. The parcel is already under review through
24 the federal review process that all of the parcels in the
25 Southeast Federal Center go through. In fact, we'll be presenting

1 to the Commission of Fine Arts on Wednesday on the actual
2 building, and NCPC will be in early July.

3 Next slide. Once we get through there, we will then
4 file an application with the Zoning Commission and return to you
5 for design review of the building and approval of the uses. A
6 lot of what this text amendment does is it sets up a further
7 review by the Zoning Commission of the actual building to make
8 sure it'll be consistent with the purposes and intents of the
9 regulations and the Master Plan and the Comprehensive Plan. So
10 this is really phase one, and phase two will come next, or step
11 one and step two I should say.

12 And then next and last slide. Really what this -- what
13 this will allow us to do is complete phase three of Yards Park,
14 which is the build-out of this corner, which has been long awaited
15 and we really look forward to the opportunity. So, with that,
16 we'll stop. I think we probably were closer to 15 than 10
17 minutes, so I apologize for that, but thank you for indulging us,
18 and we're happy to answer your questions.

19 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you, Mr. Avitabile and Mr.
20 Wallace and Ms. Martin. Even though you went over 10 minutes, I
21 think it was very helpful, so thank you. I have one or two
22 questions, and I'm going to go to Commissioner Stidham first this
23 time. I think I understand the proposed text amendment to K-
24 200.6 and 200.7, and I think you mentioned it, but can you kind
25 of just expound upon that a little bit; update the purpose, as

1 | you have in your PowerPoint? Can you kind of just give me a
2 | quick scenario of what you're doing again here for that text
3 | amendment?

4 | MR. AVITABILE: Yeah, for those provisions -- sorry
5 | (indiscernible) -- for those provisions, it's really just to make
6 | it clear that educational and institutional uses are also
7 | permitted.

8 | CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. I thought that was it. I
9 | know you mentioned that, but I just want to make sure I understood
10 | exactly. The rest of them I think are pretty straightforward for
11 | me. Ms. Martin, I do want to ask you a quick question. This
12 | may be off-scale a little bit. You mentioned the Kingman Island.

13 | MS. MARTIN: Yes.

14 | CHAIRPERSON HOOD: What is going on at Kingman Island
15 | now? You really -- what's going on over there?

16 | MS. MARTIN: Do you mean with the -- that we work there
17 | or the actual activities that happen there?

18 | CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Actually, I will tell you -- and the
19 | reason I -- when you brought up Kingman Island and I saw -- and
20 | I was thinking, you know, some 45 years ago I spent the night on
21 | Kingman Island. I was in the Boy Scouts. And that was a big
22 | deal. I know it was supposed to be an amusement park at one
23 | time; it was supposed to be -- so what's going on over there now?
24 | But I'm going way back. I'm sure that's off the table now.
25 | What's going on?

1 MS. MARTIN: Well, you'd be surprised. We actually
2 spent the night out there in 2019 for one exciting night and
3 camping comes up as a use every once in a while, but right now,
4 because of the discovery of a rare plant on the island in 2018,
5 Mayor Bowser declared it a conservation area, which means that
6 it cannot be developed beyond the uses of education and
7 conservation. So, at this point in time, we manage that space
8 (indiscernible) like they're there to make the space accessible
9 to the public, also to protect the wildlife (indiscernible)
10 additional programming for youth. We see about 2,000 students
11 out there a year at a time, and then we work with a variety of
12 partners to provide (indiscernible) programs (indiscernible due
13 to audio feedback).

14 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. That's good to hear, but I'm
15 going to push it a little more, see if we were tougher than they
16 are nowadays. Did you all have tents and stuff or did y'all just
17 sleep on the ground like we did? You're on mute. I think you're
18 on mute. I definitely want to hear that answer.

19 MS. MARTIN: Sorry. And you cut out. What was the
20 question?

21 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. For some reason, it put me
22 on mute without me touching it. Okay. Let me see. I just want
23 to know, did you all have tents -- did you all have tents, or
24 did you just -- we slept on the ground. We didn't have any tents.
25 We didn't have anything around us.

1 MS. MARTIN: We did have tents, and a generous donation
2 from REI, we had sleep bags.

3 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Well, we didn't have tents.
4 We had a half a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich with a half a
5 glass of milk, and they made us survive. So thank you for that,
6 Ms. Martin. All right. Commissioner Stidham.

7 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Thank you. While I have not
8 slept at Kingman Island, I have spent a fair amount of my time
9 in waders on the edge working the fringe wetlands, as well as
10 picking up trash and collecting trash and teaching kids about how
11 important it is to actually get the trash in the can versus how
12 hard it is to pick it up in waders, and after the second getting
13 stuck in the mud, I think they got it, that it's a lot easier to
14 making sure it gets put in the trash. Anyway, that is an aside.

15 I think this is a fairly straightforward case and, in
16 fact, maybe long overdue. The work of Living Classrooms and its
17 need to be adjacent to the water and these changes seem to go
18 hand in hand, as well as further seeing the Anacostia Waterfront
19 Initiative move forward. And I think amongst all of the
20 Comprehensive Plan policies that you are contributing to and
21 seeing move forward, I think that is an -- you know, not a Comp
22 Plan policy, but, you know, another initiative and policy that
23 will further the work on the Anacostia and the good work of Living
24 Classrooms, frankly. So thank you for bringing this. I don't
25 really have any questions. That was probably more than I needed

1 to say, but thank you very much. Back to you, Chairman Hood.

2 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank you. Commissioner
3 Imamura, any questions or comments?

4 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms.
5 Martin, thank you for the work that you do in Living Classrooms
6 for the community. It's important work, and so I'm glad that
7 this has come before us. Mr. Avitabile, you always do a great
8 job in distilling all the moving parts in a very simple way, so
9 I appreciate the lead-in and introduction and explanation and
10 description for setting the stage essentially for us to, you
11 know, review this again, and the design review later this summer,
12 so -- which I look forward to. So happy that we're able to set
13 the stage here and I'm prepared to vote in support and look
14 forward to seeing more down the road. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank you. Commissioner
16 Wright, any questions or comments?

17 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: No questions, just that I fully
18 support this application. I am familiar with the work of Living
19 Classrooms. I think this will be a great addition to the area.
20 I think it will enhance the waterfront activity, and I think the
21 technical changes that are being proposed, as was said by one of
22 my colleagues, are probably long overdue and very appropriate.
23 So I don't have any additional questions or comments.

24 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank you. Vice Chair Miller,
25 questions or comments?

1 VICE CHAIR MILLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank
2 you to the Living Classrooms team for your presentation in
3 bringing this text amendment forward. And, Ms. Martin, I
4 appreciate -- we -- as my colleagues -- I agree with all the
5 comments of my colleagues and appreciating all the work that
6 Living Classrooms provides for the community, particularly
7 youth -- particularly disadvantaged youth and the workforce
8 training and the educational opportunities, in-water training,
9 in-water activities. It will be a great -- I'm glad that you'll
10 be able to expand the programs that you currently have, and I
11 appreciate the community outreach that you've done, garnering the
12 support of ANC 6/8F, as Ms. Schellin indicated at the outset.

13 I guess I just had one question, and I think you've
14 covered it in your supplemental statement, Mr. Avitabile. But
15 the -- just on the -- on the DC Homeland Security and Emergency
16 Management Agency comments at Exhibit 16 -- I assume you saw
17 those -- where they support it, but they -- it's from Tony
18 Goodman, Senior Program Manager, who I recall is -- was an ANC
19 Commissioner I think in an adjacent ANC or NoMa. But, anyway,
20 the -- he -- they support it, but they -- they had no objection,
21 but they said that the text amendment would add educational and
22 institutional uses, and any such uses should still be subject to
23 the requirements -- the floodplain review requirements, I guess,
24 of -- Subchapter C, Chapter 11 is what they cite. I think you
25 said that the design review process -- the mandatory design

1 review process will cover all of that mandatory review, so if you
2 can just confirm that.

3 MR. AVITABILE: Yeah, that's exactly right. We'll
4 include that. When we come for the design review, it'll be the
5 design review of the building, approval of the various uses, and
6 then on top of that, we will also include the -- any special
7 exception or other relief we need, which would include that
8 relief. In fact, in an earlier iteration of this text amendment,
9 we considered asking for the property to be exempted from those
10 requirements for these uses, and our colleagues at the Office of
11 Planning said, no, no, no, you should have to go through that
12 process and use, and then we'll determine, as a part of that,
13 that it's appropriate. So that's exactly what we're doing, and
14 so we'll address it when we are back before you next.

15 VICE CHAIR MILLER: Well, we'll look forward to seeing
16 you then. There are (indiscernible) -- so when do you think
17 we'll see the design review (indiscernible due to connectivity
18 issues)?

19 MR. AVITABILE: It broke up at least a little for me
20 there.

21 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: I think it broke up for me too. Can
22 you repeat that? Unless it's just me, it was breaking up, Vice
23 Chair. Could you repeat your question?

24 (No response.)

25 MR. AVITABILE: I think I got the gist of it, which was

1 | when will we be back, so I can answer that.

2 | CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Mr. Avitabile, hold on tight. I'm
3 | not sure if he can hear. He disappeared now, so he may be down
4 | for a minute. I hate to have you repeat the question -- I mean,
5 | answer, so hold tight.

6 | (Brief pause.)

7 | VICE CHAIR MILLER: You don't see me?

8 | CHAIRPERSON HOOD: I don't see you. Can you hear us?

9 | (No response.)

10 | CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Commissioner Stidham, can you hear
11 | me?

12 | COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: (Nods head affirmatively.)

13 | CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Okay. Good. Vice Chair --
14 | okay. There you go. You back?

15 | (No response.)

16 | CHAIRPERSON HOOD: You might -- Vice Chair Miller, can
17 | you hear me?

18 | (No response.)

19 | CHAIRPERSON HOOD: You might want to turn your camera
20 | off and just unmute.

21 | (Brief pause.)

22 | MS. SCHELLIN: Mr. Young, do you have the number to
23 | reach out to him?

24 | CHAIRPERSON HOOD: He needs to reboot, just cut it off
25 | and come back on, if he can. Okay. He sent something. Hold

1 on. Okay. You can hear me? So that means you can hear Mr.
2 Avitabile, so -- oh, his name's gone. He just let me know he
3 could hear me. Technology is the best thing going, when it's
4 working.

5 MR. AVITABILE: Mr. Wallace and I were just talking
6 about before the hearing whether we might ever be back in person
7 doing hearings, and I guess the one good thing is (indiscernible).

8 VICE CHAIR MILLER: There's been a push for about a
9 year-and-a-half for us to go back in, and we're kind of pushing
10 that back a little bit, because we get -- I think we get more,
11 you know, participation here.

12 MR. AVITABILE: I think that's right.

13 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: And I appreciate the powers that be
14 kind of letting us get that participation.

15 VICE CHAIR MILLER: Can you hear me, Mr. Chairman?

16 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Yeah, we can hear you now.

17 VICE CHAIR MILLER: Okay. I don't know what the problem
18 was. I could hear and see you the entire time.

19 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. So, Mr. Avitabile, you
20 remember the question?

21 MR. AVITABILE: I do. It was what the timing would be
22 on the text amendment -- the design review case. And so, you
23 know, should the Commission take proposed action soon, as early
24 as this evening, if you so desire, we could be filed -- have an
25 application filed in the near term and get ourselves scheduled

1 for a hearing, so that by the time final action happens on the
2 text amendment, we could then have the hearing on the design
3 review shortly thereafter. It dovetails well with the federal
4 GSA process. We typically try to structure the design review
5 applications to the Commission so that they fall after the General
6 Services Administration has completed its reviews and brought the
7 case to the Commission of Fine Arts and NCPC, and we're at that
8 time as well. So it's been a long road to get there, but the
9 schedule is all sort of laying out the right way.

10 VICE CHAIR MILLER: Thank you. Thank you for all your
11 work on this case and thank you to Living Classrooms for all your
12 ongoing work. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Mr. Avitabile, I want to commend you
14 on saying if you get an approval today. I like the way you slid
15 that little bit in there, so I just want to commend you on that.
16 You're representing your client very well, so I'll leave it at
17 things at. I want you to know that did not go past me. All
18 right. So let's go to reports of other government agencies. I
19 thank the Vice Chair for already bringing up the Homeland -- DC
20 Homeland. He brought that up and discussed it. If that's the
21 Tony Goodman that I remember, he was a spectacular ANC
22 Commissioner. I just wanted to note that. Also, ANC 6/8F voted
23 in support, voted five to zero to zero for a resolution in support
24 of this application and petition and the text and what's being
25 proposed. And I think I've covered -- let me see. I think that

1 was it. Okay. All right. Ms. Schellin, do we have -- oh, let's
2 go to -- I'm sorry -- let's go to the Office of Planning. I
3 skipped by them. Let's go to the Office of Planning.

4 MR. BEAMON: So good afternoon, Commissioners. Shepard
5 Beamon with the Office of Planning. Since the application was
6 set down, the Office of Planning recommends that the Zoning
7 Commission approve the proposed text amendment for zoning
8 application 24-18 for Living Classrooms Foundation to amend
9 development standards and permitted uses within the SEFC zone for
10 Parcel 3 within The Yards.

11 The proposed educational, institutional, and
12 eating/drinking uses would not be inconsistent with the
13 Comprehensive Plan maps and would uphold several policies
14 relevant to the citywide and the Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near
15 Southwest Area Elements. When evaluated through a racial equity
16 lens, the proposal should not result in direct or indirect
17 displacement, as there are no business or residents on the site.
18 The zoning action could result in physical changes to the site,
19 as the action would facilitate new development of a site that is
20 currently undeveloped with a building or park space.

21 At the time of this public hearing, there are no plans
22 for development associated with this application, but as the
23 applicant has previously mentioned, any new development would be
24 subject to mandatory design review before the Zoning Commission
25 to insure that new development is compatible with the surrounding

1 historic context and waterfront development. Permitting the
2 requested uses would increase access to opportunities for jobs
3 in culinary training, health and wellness programs, educational
4 programming, and waterfront destinations for residents within the
5 planning area and across the District. And, with that, this
6 concludes OP's presentation, and I can take any questions. Thank
7 you.

8 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you, Mr. Beamon. A good
9 report, as always. Let me see if we have any questions.
10 Commissioner Stidham, any questions?

11 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Nope, no questions. Thank you
12 for your report.

13 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Commissioner Imamura, any questions

14 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: No questions. Thank you, Mr.
15 Beamon.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Commissioner Wright, any questions?

17 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: No questions.

18 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: And Vice Chair Miller, any
19 questions?

20 VICE CHAIR MILLER: No questions. Thank you, Mr.
21 Beamon.

22 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Beamon. And
23 I'm trying to remember, this is a rulemaking, so we don't have
24 questions from the applicant. Yeah, I get confused. We don't
25 do many of these. Thank you, Mr. Beamon, for your report. Well,

1 I can't say we don't do many; I just get them confused at times.
2 All right. Ms. Schellin, do we have any -- okay. We did mention
3 the ANC. We mentioned other government agencies. Ms. Schellin,
4 do we have anyone who's here in support, opposition, or
5 undeclared?

6 MS. SCHELLIN: We have no one in any of the categories.

7 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. And, in a rulemaking case,
8 we usually don't have any closing by the applicant, but since
9 this is -- Mr. Avitabile, I think you've already asked us what
10 you would like to see happen, so I think we're good. So with
11 that --

12 MS. SCHELLIN: Rebuttal.

13 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Rebuttal?

14 MS. SCHELLIN: Is there no rebuttal or no closing? No
15 rebuttal. I mean, no closing. I'm sorry. You're right.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: All right. I'm confusing myself.

17 MS. SCHELLIN: If there's no rebuttal, there's nothing.

18 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: I don't need any help to confuse me.
19 I'm already confused.

20 MS. SCHELLIN: I know. It's been a long day.

21 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: All right.

22 MS. SCHELLIN: There is no one in any category. I just
23 double-checked.

24 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. All right. Well, colleagues,
25 let's -- I think this is pretty straightforward, as -- you know,

1 as the recommendation has been as we've seen through this process.
2 So, with that, would somebody like to make a motion? Commissioner
3 Stidham, would you like to make a motion?

4 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: (Raises hand.)

5 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. And then Vice --

6 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: No, I'll defer to Commissioner
7 Stidham.

8 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Commissioner Stidham.

9 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: So I propose -- I am proposing
10 a motion to approve Zoning Case Number 24-18, Living Classrooms
11 Foundation text amendment to Subtitle A, Section 301.3(h) and
12 Subtitle K, Sections 200.6 through 200.9, 230.5, 230.6, and 239
13 for a text amendment and ask for a second. I hope I got all
14 that.

15 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Second.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. It's been moved and properly
17 seconded. Any further discussion?

18 (No response.)

19 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Not hearing any, Ms. Schellin, would
20 you do a roll call vote please?

21 MS. SCHELLIN: Commissioner Stidham.

22 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Yes.

23 MS. SCHELLIN: Commissioner Imamura.

24 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Yes.

25 MS. SCHELLIN: Commissioner Hood.

1 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Yes.

2 MS. SCHELLIN: Commissioner Miller.

3 VICE CHAIR MILLER: Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: And Commissioner Wright.

5 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yes.

6 MS. SCHELLIN: The vote is five to zero to zero to
7 approve proposed action in Zoning Commission Case Number 24-18,
8 and that's it for us.

9 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Ms. Schellin, do we have
10 anything else pertaining to this hearing?

11 MS. SCHELLIN: No, sir. No, sir.

12 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. The Zoning Commission will
13 meet again on June the 23rd I believe, and that's 901 Monroe
14 Street, LLC. I would ask my colleagues to come and let's be
15 patient. I think we have a lot to deal with that evening. It's
16 going to be a little longer than this case for sure. So, with
17 that, I want to thank the petitioner tonight and all the work
18 they've been doing and everyone who's participated in this
19 particular application. And, with that, this hearing is
20 adjourned. Good night, everyone.

21 MR. AVITABILE. Good night. Thank you so much.

22 (Whereupon, the above-entitled public hearing was
23 adjourned at 4:45 p.m.)

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Public Hearing - Case No. 24-18

Before: DC Zoning Commission

Date: 06-16-25

Place: Webex Videoconference

was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.



Deborah B. Gauthier