



Government of the District of Columbia

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6C

Anne Phelps, ANC 6C

B18-867

Tuesday, Sept. 28, 2010

Good afternoon Chairman Gray, Councilmembers, and staff. My name is Anne Phelps and I am testifying today in my role as Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner for ANC 6C04 and on behalf of the entire 6C Commission on two elements of Bill 18-867, the "Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2010." Both provisions deal with air rights projects in the District and two such projects are within the boundaries of ANC 6C.

On April 14, 2010 at the duly noticed, regularly scheduled, monthly meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission ANC 6C, with a quorum of 8 out of 9 commissioners and the public present, and after several months of review, Comprehensive Plan Amendments 228 and 229 came before us for a vote.

Amendment 228 (Land Use LU-1.1.8, LU-1.1.5 and LU-1.1.C) adds policy and language to the Comprehensive Plan specifying that wherever possible, the height of "air rights" developments in DC should be measured from grade level consistent with the adjacent land, but where such measurements are not possible, then the development should be measured "from a point that provides for densities and heights commensurate with the zone densities and heights" and sensitive to the surrounding neighborhoods developments.

ANC 6C, with a vote of 7-1-1 strongly supports this policy. It is critical for the economic growth and vitality of our neighborhoods that the District endeavor to knit the city back together, while at the same time create developments that integrate with existing structures, particularly neighboring rowhouses. We feel that 228 effectively captures and conveys this need.

Amendment 229 (Capitol Hill CH-2.1.7) modifies the existing language in the Comprehensive Plan regarding the air rights project adjacent to Union Station. The ANC voted 7-1-1 to support the removal of the existing exception that required allowable height to be measured from existing grade at 1st or 2nd Street NE. The current language has no relation to the actual frontage of the building – the project is planned to front on H Street and that should be the measuring point. The current language unnecessarily restricts the potential development of this site and is a departure from standard height measurement.

I understand that the Office of Planning and the National Capital Planning Commission have collaborated to further refine the language of Amendment 229 and have replaced the current language with a provision that requires height measurements consistent with the Height Act and that relates positively to the surrounding community. As an active participant of all 6C's discussions on this matter, I am confident the Commission would support this language, as it

relates positively to an H Street frontage, thereby allowing exploration for exciting development, yet adds in a provision of care for both the federal buildings and the rowhouse community.

I do not know if I can adequately convey the significance of the air rights projects – both the Center Leg Freeway and Union Station projects – have for our community. These projects have the potential to be wholly transformative for the neighborhoods. Think of the Hopscotch Bridge as it is now, a forbidding and unwelcoming overpass that offers nothing between 3rd street and North Capitol. Now imagine that space instead as a cresting connection, linking the vibrant H Street corridor to the rest of DC, with the sidewalks brimming with pedestrians enjoying the retail and other amenities along the street and using multiple modes of transit.

The Comprehensive Plan Amendments 228 and 229 will help our community achieve this vision, allowing development to bridge gaps created by transportation infrastructure, build with height and density commensurate with surrounding growth, while still meshing with the existing buildings that are so clearly part of our community. ANC 6C urges Council to support Bill 18-867.

Thank you.



Government of the District of Columbia

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6C

July 26, 2010

Council Member Tommy Wells
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

Re: Comprehensive Plan Amendments 228 and 229

Dear Council Member Wells:

On April 14, 2010 at the duly noticed, regularly scheduled, monthly meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission ANC 6C, with a quorum of 8 out of 9 commissioners and the public present, Comprehensive Plan Amendments 228 and 229 came before us.

Amendment 228 adds policy and language to the Comprehensive Plan specifying that wherever possible, the height of “air rights” developments in DC should be measured from grade level consistent with the adjacent land but where such measurements are not possible, then the development should be measured “from a point that provides for densities and heights commensurate with the zone densities and heights” and sensitive to the surrounding neighborhoods developments.

It is important to the economic growth of our city and neighborhoods that “air rights” projects be able to create developments that integrate with the existing commercial buildings and residential properties. ANC 6C, with a vote of 7-1-1, feels that Amendment 228 provides that ability.

Amendment 229 modifies the existing language in the Comprehensive Plan with regard to the possible air rights project over the tracks behind Union Station, to remove the explicit statement “The allowable height of any building constructed in the air rights should be measured from the existing grade of 1st street or 2nd street NE, rather than from the overpass.”

The removal of the exception stated in Amendment 229 would allow the development of the “air rights” property directly behind Union Station to proceed; bridging the eastern and western sides of the city together and allowing building densities and heights to be measured similar to other areas of the District of Columbia and to mesh with the existing commercial and residential buildings already in place. ANC 6C supported amendment 229 with a vote of 7-1-1.

ANC 6C recognizes the significance of changes to the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission did not render this vote after minimal preparation; rather, the Commission’s

Planning, Zoning, and Economic Development Committee discussed these modifications over several months and those discussions were shared with the full Commission each time. ANC 6C believes both modifications to the Comprehensive Plan are important to spur development in areas designated as "air rights" and voted to support both Comprehensive Amendments 228 and 229 as presented in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Amendments.

On behalf of the Commission,

Karen J. Wirt

Karen Wirt
Chair, ANC 6C