

**Testimony**

**By**

**Brian Flahaven<sup>1</sup>,**

**Commissioner, ANC 6B09**

**Before the**

**Committee on Economic Development and**

**Committee on Government Operations**

**Joint Public Roundtable: Hill East Redevelopment Phase I Resolutions**

**Tuesday, December 9, 2014**

**2:00 pm**

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Good afternoon Chairpersons Bowser and McDuffie and members of the Committees on Economic Development and Government Operations. My name is Brian Flahaven, and I serve as chair of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6B. My single member district, 6B09, lies in Hill East and includes Barney Circle, the Historic Congressional Cemetery, and borders Reservation 13.

I'm here today to testify on two resolutions related to the Hill East Development, also known as Reservation 13, the 67-acre former site of DC General Hospital. On Nov. 5, 2014, at a properly noticed meeting with a quorum present, ANC 6B voted 6-0 to support the surplus declaration of parcels F-1 and G-1 of the Hill East Development, essentially the action prescribed in PR20-1152. While I'm testifying on behalf of myself and not on behalf of ANC 6B on the disposition approval act (PR20-1153), the commission will consider retroactively approving my testimony at tonight's Dec. 9 commission meeting. My testimony is consistent with ANC 6B's support of mixed use development at Reservation 13.

On PR20-1152, ANC 6B strongly supports the surplus declaration of parcels F-1 and G-1 with the requirement that any future use of the two parcels is consistent with the DC Council-approved Reservation 13 master plan. We clearly support the declaration that this property is surplus and should be redeveloped. We urge the committees and full Council to pass the surplus declaration.

On PR20-1153, testifying on behalf of myself and not ANC 6B, I strongly support the disposition approval act. Twelve years ago, the DC Council approved a master development plan for Reservation 13. The plan, created with substantial community input, envisioned a mixed-use development that would finally connect surrounding neighborhoods to the Anacostia River waterfront. The plan recognized the site's many advantages – waterfront location, access to Metro and close proximity to two wards – and it envisioned bringing housing, retail and office space to an area of the city in desperate need of all three.

After more than a decade of numerous setbacks and distractions, and three RFEIs, the city is finally ready to move forward on the first phase of the Reservation 13 master plan. My colleagues and I on ANC 6B unanimously supported the Donatelli/Blue Skye response to the most recent RFEI, and the major aspects of

the response are codified in the resolution and in the negotiated land disposition agreement.

The Donatelli/Blue Skye plans – which consist of two mixed-use residential/retail buildings– is consistent with the community-supported Reservation 13 master plan and the Hill East District zoning on the site. Once completed, the mixed-use project will bring significant housing and retail to the site, surrounding a new “Village Square” at the Stadium-Armory Metro entrance.

I’m particularly pleased to see that Donatelli/Blue Skye will meet the affordable housing requirements on the site with 106 affordable units – 53 at 30 percent of AMI and 53 at 60 percent of AMI. Our city faces an affordable housing crisis and projects like these should include significant affordable units.

Most importantly, the Donatelli/Blue Skye project represents the first step in realizing the vision of the Reservation 13 master plan – a first step towards finally connecting the neighborhood to the Anacostia waterfront. This is the type of project that the city needs – one that creates jobs, includes significant affordable housing, maximizes use of an existing Metro station and converts surface parking into a vibrant community.

Unfortunately, progress on the rest of Reservation 13 remains stalled. While Mayor Gray has released a plan to close the Temporary Emergency Family Shelter at DC General, the Mayor and Council have not funded the plan nor made it a priority. Instead, the city will once again use a dilapidated, deteriorating hospital to house up to 300 homeless families this winter. The Mayor and Council need to commit to closing DC General and to investing in new, smaller scale shelters spread throughout the city.

I’m also very concerned about plans to use the remaining parcels of Reservation 13 for venues related to the Washington 2024 Summer Olympics bid. Media reports suggest that the site is being considered for an Olympic Village, something that would potentially delay development – including retail and affordable housing - at the site for another decade. It is amazing to me how the city can find taxpayer dollars to build sports facilities at the site but always cries poor when it

comes to funding the community-supported master plan. The Mayor, Council and Washington 2024 should release details on how they plan to use Reservation 13 in an Olympic bid before the U.S. Olympic Committee selects a bid city. In other words, the details should be released now.

Overall, I believe that the Donatelli/Blue Skye plans will help catalyze development on the rest of the site, assuming the city makes the investments and policy decisions necessary to make the long-stalled vision of the Hill East waterfront a reality.

Again, I urge the committees and Council to pass both PR20-1152 and PR20-1153. And I want to thank Interim Deputy Mayor Miller, DMPED Hill East Redevelopment Director Ketan Gada, Councilmembers Alexander and Wells, ANC 7F, Donatelli Development and Blue Skye Development for their hard work in getting to this point and for their engagement and outreach with ANC 6B and Hill East residents. I'm excited to see this first phase move forward.

Thank you for your time, and I'd be happy to answer any questions.