



Southwest, Buzzard Point and The Wharf Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6D

February 21, 2024

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Elliott Garrett,
Chair
Public Space Committee
DC Department of Transportation
250 M Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

OFFICERS

Chairman
Fredrica Kramer
Vice Chairperson
Bob Link
Secretary
Bruce Levine
Treasurer
Ron Collins

VIA Email: Elliott.garrett@dc.gov

Re: Permit #423507 Street Sculpture at 60 I St.SW

Dear Chair Garrett:

COMMISSIONERS

SMD 1 *Bob Link*
SMD 2 *Ronald Collins*
SMD 3 *Gail Fast*
SMD 4 *Andrea Pawley*
SMD 5 *Vacant*
SMD 6 *Bruce Levine*
SMD 7 *Fredrica Kramer*
SMD 8 *Rhonda Hamilton*

At a regularly scheduled and properly noticed public meeting held on February 12, 2024, with a quorum present, a quorum being 4 Commissioners, Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6D voted 6-0 to put on record its opposition to the installation of a statue at 60 I St. SW in public space. Since we have broad concerns about several aspects of the project that provide context for our continuing concerns, we are sharing our comments with the departments of Buildings, Energy and the Environment, and Parks and Recreation, whose jurisdictions cover various aspects discussed below.

This project has been developed as a matter of right, with little to no notice or engagement of the community for review and comment, and several aspects in its development have caused widespread concern. ANC 6D has concerns with both the merits of the request to use public space and the process with which the application has been handled, resulting in an inability of the ANC Commissioner for SMD 6D05 to give proper voice to the Public Space Committee. Although we realize that the window to weigh in has expired, we hope that our concerns will provide the basis for improved communication with the ANC on aspects of concern to the community we represent.

With regard to the processing of this application by the Public Space Committee, the ANC Commissioner for SMD 6D05 was noticed by the PSC on October 18th requesting a response to the application within 30 days. The Commissioner learned shortly thereafter that the PSC hearing was to be held on October 26, 2023, which gave no time to consider comments from the ANC that would be due on November 17th. The application was apparently approved at the October 26th hearing, but without considering any of the arguments or concerns of the ANC with regard to this permit.

Recent communication from the PSC indicated that the permit had not been issued due to a pending covenant of maintenance in process. Another letter from the PSC to SMD 6D05 dated January 8, 2024 again asked for a response within 30 days but on further inquiry it appeared that the TOPS file was closed to the ANC.

On substance, the proposed sculpture, partially in public space thus necessitating PSC permission, might be placed farther back toward the building in private space. ANC 6D notes that the entrance to the church on Half Street has a dramatic sculptural piece on the building's façade above the proposed placement of the sculpture and prominently demarcating the church's presence; the statue would complement that piece while not interfering with public space.

With regard to the broader concerns, the project has raised multiple issues in the course of its construction, and provide context for ANC 6D's continuing concern that the final design and use may be inconsistent with a respectful addition to the community.

The project is built nearly or up to the property line, necessitating the use of a corner of Lansburgh Park as a construction staging area, and resulting in the destruction of several trees that had been curated by the Southwest Community Garden, to the great distress of members of the community and the Garden. Again, this decision was made without any consultation with the ANC or community members.

The building's lighting uses a complex grid of window bays that define the entire façade and result in an unusual amount of night light, which is uncharacteristic of other residences in Southwest that have respected the community's desire to minimize façade lighting to maintain the community's residential character. The lighting system has on different occasions also employed bright colors in addition to white, further raising concerns about its impact on the surrounding buildings and its incongruity with the rest of Southwest.

ANC 6D Commissioners communicated their concerns to the developer during his presentation at the December 11th 6D Business Meeting, questioning whether the applicant had made any effort to reach out to the project's neighbors about lighting in particular, and requested precise specification of the magnitude, intensity, color and times of deployment, which could allow for consideration of less obtrusive alternatives. Commissioners also asked about the plans for reconstruction of the landscaping destroyed in Lansburgh Park to make space for the project's construction staging. ANC 6D has yet to receive any response to any of the information requested.

Given the history of the project, the absence of demonstrated concern for community input and impact, and the potential opportunity to situate the statue out of public space, ANC 6D does not support the taking of more public space for project accoutrements.

ANC 6D cares greatly about its relationship with the Public Space Committee and the opportunity to share its perspective, which should enhance the ability of the PSC to consider the impact of proposed projects on the community. It is in that spirit that we write to share our experience with this project. As provided by law, we request that our comments be given “great weight,” both on the merits of the use of public space and the opportunity for proper review and comment in your consideration of applications going forward.

Should you have any questions, I can be reached at 202-352-0129 or 6D07@anc.dc.gov.

Sincerely,



Fredrica Kramer,
Chair ANC 6D

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