



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

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May 16, 2012

Ms. Catherine Buell, Chair
Historic Preservation Review Board
1100 4th Street, S.W. Suite E650
Washington, DC 20024

RE: McMillan Park Reservoir Site

Dear Ms. Buell and Members of the Board:

I understand that next Thursday the Board will consider a proposed master plan and design guidelines for development of the historic McMillan Reservoir sand filtration site. For years I have worked with residents of Ward 5 who live near the site and have opposed previous development plans. I am now aware that residents of Ward 1, too, are opposed, including Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1B.

I agree with the sentiments of ANC 1B: that the present design plans propose to demolish too much of the site, including structural resources, landscape resources, and historic vistas. The plans do not incorporate options for mitigation including adaptive reuse and rehabilitation. Therefore, the Historic Preservation Review Board should reject the master plan and design guidelines as proposed for development of this historic site.

Not only is the sand filtration site historic for a number of reasons, but it is unique. As a member of the Council I am aware of the desire of the government to see this site developed: presumably the District would recoup its 1987 financial investment, this fallow land would be put to use, new housing units would be built and commercial opportunities created, and the tax base would grow. But enthusiasm for development must be tempered against the qualities of this unique site – exactly the purpose for the Landmark Preservation Act – which is why the proposed plan should be rejected.

Thank you for consideration of these views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil Mendelson".

Phil Mendelson

PM/ms