PRESS RELEASE
Friends of McMillan Park

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CM McDuffie Rejects Appeal to Cancel Surplus Meeting,
Supports Mayor’s Plan to Destroy McMillan Park

Ward 5 Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie flatly rejected the appeal on Monday, June 3rd from Friends of McMillan (FOM) to intercede with Mayor Gray to cancel the meeting on Thursday, June 6th to declare the McMillan Park Sand Filtration Site surplus public property. “You’ve raised legitimate concerns [but] I just don’t know that it’s necessary to postpone the meeting... to get those questions answered,” the Councilmember told FOM. “I support the development of this project and I think we are just on different sides of that issue.”

FOM presented the Councilmember a petition with some 2,000 signatures against the current plan by Vision McMillan Partners (VMP) and the District Government. Pointing to the petition, the Friends asked him directly how many opposed constituents it would take to change his mind. “I can’t answer that question,” McDuffie replied.

Gwen Southerland, former Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner (ANC) of SMD 5C05 and current McMillan Advisory Group member, at the Wilson Building meeting, told McDuffie: “I’m going to be quite frank with you. History is not going to treat you well; it’s going to treat you like a fool. This is a historic site [and] they’re going to say, ‘Why didn’t that Councilmember speak up?’ There are so many other creative things, so many other plans... this could be something so fabulous.”

“We are very disappointed in Councilmember McDuffie,” said Hugh Youngblood, also a former ANC and another member of the FOM delegation. “It would be a simple thing for the Councilmember to stop this rush to judgment and ask Mayor Gray to cancel the surplus meeting. We now plan to show our opposition to their flawed plan at the Thursday meeting at 6:30pm, at All Nations Baptist Church located at 2001 North Capitol Street NE, and at other venues.”

Friends of McMillan Park opposes to the VMP plan because it is too dense, too tall, and too suburban. It calls for massive development, including 12-story buildings on the north-end and destruction of 90% of the historic underground caverns plus generation of gridlock-level traffic. FOM also points out that the city has aggressively ignored all other development alternatives such as The People’s Plan, designed by the Collage City Studio, that would preserve the historic nature of McMillan Park (including its underground cells) and allow for greater contiguous park space and more appropriately sized buildings while still providing a generous amount of development.

Other members of the Friends attending the meeting with Councilmember McDuffie included: Tony Norman, Chairman of ANC 1B and Founder and Chairman of McMillan Park Committee; John Salatti, former ANC and former VP of Bloomingdale Civic Association; Patrick Hudak, member of the Bloomingdale Civic Association; and, Kirby Vining, member of the Stronghold Association.

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