

PRESS RELEASE

Friends of McMillan Park

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CM McDuffie Challenged for Irresponsible Support of McMillan Development

Against the expressed will of thousands of DC residents, Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie testified before the DC Zoning Commission on May 13th that he firmly supports the Gray Administration's application to re-zone historic McMillan Park for massive development. McDuffie noted that "for the 38-39 years I've been on this Earth" the fence has cut off residents' access to the park, so he supports the Mayor's plan that would bring high-rise buildings, destroy the majority of the landmark's historic resources, and cripple the surrounding communities with gridlock traffic.

Former Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner (ANC) for Bloomingdale, Hugh Youngblood, strongly contested McDuffie's position. "Being fed-up with a chain-link fence is insufficient excuse to bulldoze an Olmsted park listed on the National Register of Historic Places to make room for more cookie-cutter condos and office buildings that they could build on any parking lot in the District. This ill-conceived proposal would overwhelm our neighborhoods with [tens of thousands of new car trips per day](#) and toxic air pollution. Councilmember McDuffie should relocate the project somewhere near the metro and save our park."

Mr. Youngblood added, "The Councilmember misleadingly claims that the plan has been 'worked on for the last seven years by the development team, the city, and the community.' In fact, the multitudes who oppose the plan have been marginalized, ignored, characterized as NIMBYs, and otherwise excluded from the process by the powers that be. The Mayor even [hired a PR firm from Baltimore to discredit the community.](#)"

McDuffie recently appeared on Kojo Nnamdi's [The Politics Hour](#) where he claimed that the development proposal would provide residents desired amenities like a grocery store, park, and recreation center. He again argued that the plan reflects community input. But when asked to comment on the majority opinion revealed by the [door-to-door community survey performed by neighbors in 2012](#), he said, "I don't know if there's a way of identifying what a clear majority is" and called the survey "unscientific."

Mark Mueller, a career scientist, former ANC for Bloomingdale, and chief architect of the 2012 survey emphatically defended the study's rigor. "I've worked in science for almost 2 decades. I, along with 15 community members, made a conservative unbiased survey. Nobody working on the survey stands to gain financially or politically. Surveyors were strictly scripted as to avoid leading respondents while administering the survey. The data was analyzed by a statistician from George Washington University who confirmed a 95% confidence level and identified no concerning bias."

Mueller added, "Councilmember McDuffie reviewed the draft survey form at a 2012 McMillan Advisory Group meeting where [the questionnaire](#) was approved. The Councilmember's claim of the project's alignment with community wishes is based solely on the developer's version of input received during outreach meetings. For all those meetings, no data was produced. Why does McDuffie dismiss the community's survey as 'unscientific' but rely on the developer's claims of what came out of community meetings? Does he consider developer meetings to be 'scientific'? Does he believe that the *developer's* record of what the community wants is 'unbiased'? Perhaps McDuffie sees the survey as being unfair because it reflects a community whose ideas are better (or different) than his and the developer's."

Beyond dismissing the community survey while on the Kojo Show, McDuffie appeared misinformed about the details of the development proposal, underscoring the irresponsibility of his blanket endorsement of the plan. He was unaware that the proposal includes constructing new private streets in the park and that the plan lacks any assurance of including a grocery store. He gave only passing mention to the overwhelmingly unacceptable traffic impacts that the project would create.

The Zoning Commission is scheduled to conclude its deliberations on the McMillan Park case in late July.

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