

Minutes of the Navy Hill Development Advisory Commission December 19th Public Hearing

Thurs., Dec. 18, 2019

**6:00
PM**

**Southside Community Services Center
4100 Hull Street Road, Richmond, VA**

Members Present

Pierce Homer (Chair), John Gerner (Vice Chair), Suzanne Long, and Mimi Sadler, and Dr. Corey Walker.

Call to Order

Pierce Homer called the meeting to order and welcomed the attendees.

Introductions

Individual commission members introduced themselves.

Public Comment Period

There were 18 speakers. Kathryn Whittington is concerned about the maintenance of the arena, since there have been school building maintenance problems. Former City Council member Marty Jewell is for the private development in the project, but is vehemently opposed to the proposed new arena. Joyce Smith is concerned about the homeless downtown who desperately need help. Kasiem Lewis supports the project because it increases economic growth. Whitney Whiting opposes the project and talked about the RFP process and affordable housing. Earl Bradley is a procurement specialist, and said that the RFP process was not competitive. Lawrence West supports the project because of its workforce development. Freddie Robertson is a case manager for a workforce development company and supports the project because of its jobs, opportunities, and training. Al Bowers said that if a city does not include all of the people in the growth of it, economically, educationally, socially, then the leaders have not led. Kenneth Jones supports the project because it's an economic boom for the city that's been vetted for the last 24 to 30 months. Tommy Davis built the city jail and supports the project because the city can't expand its tax base. Shannon Gonzales is a Richmond school teacher and supports the project because of its future funding for schools. Felicia Coles supports the project because it's about progress. Former City Council member Michelle Mosby supports the project and said the Mayor's RFP addressed city needs. Beverly Fox is a promoter and supports the project because current city facilities are inadequate. Robert Winfree is a pastor and supports the project because it gives opportunities, especially for minorities and ex-felons. Reggie Bates supports investing in the city, but is concerned about the arena's future profitability. Simon Hetzler said the project is controversial because of the track record of those behind it, especially Dominion. Charles Willis has spoken at many meetings and supports the project because of its benefits.

Ben Himmelfarb and Thomas Burkett spoke at the public hearing and provided follow-up email messages. These are attached. Brook Rich, Leslie Rubio, Shawn O'Hern, Chad Burns, Mary-Helen Sullivan, Justin Griffin, Jeff Thomas, and Omari Al-Qadafi emailed written public comments, which are also attached. Anna and Michael Bell also emailed written comments.

Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the December 17th and 18th public hearings were approved.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

There were no FOIA requests since the December 18th public hearing.

Disclosures

Mimi Sadler disclosed that she is touring the project site with Jennifer Mullen and Grindly Johnson. Suzanne Long talked with the bond underwriters.

Adjournment

Audio Recording of Entire Public Hearing

Available at:

http://www.navyhillcommission.org/2019-12-19_Navy_Hill_Commission_Hearing.mp3

Recent Press Coverage of Commission Efforts and Members:

<http://richmondfreepress.com/news/2019/dec/20/new-details-emerge-about-coliseum-replacement-plan/?page=1>

Navy Hill Development Advisory Commission

Public Hearing Speakers

Name	General Description of Where You Live
Kathryn L. Whittington	4 th district
Marty Jewell	7 th Dist.
Joyce Smith	9 th Dist.
RASIM Lewis	7 Dist
Whitney Whiting	4 th District
EARL Bradley	Richmond, VA
Lawrence West	Henrico
FREDDIE ROBERTSON	Richmond
Al Bourn	
Tom BUCKETT	Richmond 2nd.
Kelly Jones	
Jason Jones	
Colby Jones	Richmond
Beverly Fox	Richmond
Simon Hetzler	HOSEA Productions
	2nd District

Navy Hill Development Advisory Commission

Public Hearing Speakers

[illegible]

Navy Hill

Anne Brooks Rich <brook.rich@icloud.com>

Fri 12/20/2019 4 50 PM

To: All Members <members@navyhillcommission.org>

Cc: Kimberly.Gray@richmondgov.com <Kimberly.Gray@richmondgov.com>

Public Comment Navy Hill

As a recent transplant to Richmond, I am having a hard time understanding why the city would want to commit themselves to the Navy Hill project. There are too many “ifs” in the whole scheme.

Where is the money coming from to build out the GRTC transfer station?

Where is the money coming from for the build out of the actual arena?

Why does Richmond need an arena when there will be hourly train service to DC in the future? And there is an arena in Charlottesville 55 minutes away!

Why does the arena need to be in Richmond city as opposed to the suburbs where there is more parking? The arena will mainly be used by non-community members for short term consumption. How does that help Richmonders on a daily basis?

How does this help the RPS system?

Thirty years is a long time to carry this debt without a lot of guarantees for *affordable* housing and quality jobs all while the schools struggle. The jobs cited seem to be short term construction jobs and then hospitality jobs. Those jobs, although needed, will not pay enough for workers to actually live in Navy Hill.

The list of questions goes on and on.

My experience living in Norfolk (where the city struggles to maintain Waterside) and San Diego (where the residents refused to give the city away to the SD Chargers) leads me to believe this is a bad idea. Until the schools receive their due, I would like to voice my opinion against the Navy Hill project as it stands. I believe that something should be developed in this area to maintain the integrity of NH and it's history. A new arena that does not benefit the community as a whole is not that project.

Brook Rich
1509 Hanover Ave
Richmond, VA 23220

Navy Hill Project

Leslie R <lesliesu123@gmail.com>

Fri 12/20/2019 9:04 AM

To: All Members <members@navyhillcommission.org>

I am a resident of the 5th district in the City, and I strongly oppose this development. I understand that this area of the city is in need of development, but I oppose this particular development and those involved in this particular plan.

The City of Richmond cannot afford to be on the hook for 20-30 years of tax revenue for a project that is not beneficial to the community and ALL of our city's residents. I am in disbelief that Tom Farrell and other members of NHP are the ONLY folks that can develop the area, and if we, as a city, aren't on board, then no one will develop the area. The secrecy of this plan, who the members of NHP are, and almost every detail of the project were hidden from the public and rolled out and pushed on residents as the ONLY plan that will "save" our city. It's simply not true!

City schools and basic city services are already lacking. This plan takes money from 80 blocks of tax revenue and hands it directly to NHP...for the next 30 years. The revenue that the plan blissfully projects it will generate is not based on actual numbers, and indeed has been inflated in order to "sell" the deal to taxpayers and city council members.

The fact is, Richmond needs to get its house in order, to remove top heavy management, and fund our schools and basic city services before it invests tax revenue in a development that may or may not produce revenue the city needs.

Funds from our city have already been allocated to pay a fact finding commission who has members on the commission that want to see this plan be pushed through..not an independent council who will put our City first.

This entire deal has been a sham from the start. The fact that 80 blocks of tax revenue would go to Mr. Farrell and the NHP, revenue that includes Dominion Energy buildings, and buildings where other members of this group work is disingenuous at best. Taking property tax revenue to pay Mr. Farrell's NHP group is a scam. How could anyone not see this plan for what it is?

Our city deserves better. Folks considering a move to our city look for excellence in public education and top notch city services, not an arena!

I hope our City Council can see through this scam and will vote NO on this proposal.

Concerned Citizen,

Leslie Rubio
1705 Georgia Avenue
Richmond, VA 23220

Oppose Navy Hill

Sean O'Hern <taphouse.sean@gmail.com>

Thu 12/19/2019 8:39 PM

To: All Members <members@navyhillcommission.org>

My name is Shawn O'Hern and I live in Richmond's 1st district on Cutshaw Ave. These are my written public comments. I am writing to add my name and voice to the growing opposition to the Navy Hill Development Project. To be clear, I am not against the revitalization of the Navy Hill area, but I am against the city footing the bill. The developers make this project sound ironclad. Fine, let them put their money on the line. All these endeavors have a risk involved. Our schools and children shouldn't be the ones who's future is at risk.

My primary concern is that this money should go directly to schools. It is no secret that Richmond Public Schools could use every cent. The Richmond Education Association in their press release opposing the project states, "funding for the schools would be a long way off and is not guaranteed." We need to do all we can to improve our schools now. There is no reason to wait.

Surely, you wouldn't want to wait on the education, health, and safety of your own children.

Thank you for your time and I hope you do the right thing and oppose public funding for the Navy Hill Project.

Sincerely,
Shawn O'Hern

Sent from my iPhone

Navy Hill Advisory Commission Public Comments

Chad Burns <cdburns62@gmail.com>

Thu 12/19/2019 9:48 PM

To: All Members <members@navyhillcommission.org>

Good Evening,

Thank you for all your work and time working on this effort. I was hoping to attend this evening's meeting, but was unable to.

I'm a 3rd district resident, Brookland Park area, that moved into the city almost three years ago. I started attending meetings and reading up on the Navy Hill proposal as a resident that wanted to see our city thrive while addressing the issues we have. I wanted to learn and understand the pros and cons of the proposal. As I attended more and more meetings and read more and more about the project, my mindset as a Project Manager took over. It immediately went to evaluating risk, good and bad, short and long. The one risk that I don't believe this project or the City has a plan for is the post-delivery risk to the people that live in the TIF district and in proximity to the TIF district, which is critical. You can argue that it isn't the responsibility of the NH team, but it is the City's responsibility. I choose to speak on this issue while others will speak on other issues with the proposal, many that I also agree with.

One of the touted benefits is the increase in property values and new revenue. We all know that comes with pros and cons. For those that can afford the increasing property taxes and rent, life goes on with some minor sacrifices. Maybe you scale back on going out or eating out. For others, it will mean keeping their home or being able to continue to pay rent and live in the area. It is this long-term impact "IF" the project was a success that there is no mitigation strategy in place. This isn't just about Sr. Citizens, this could impact any age group. Based on responses to questions, the City advised in their 11/21 response that there are currently no such grants of RE taxes w/in the incremental financing area. What about around the area? Will there be increased grants submitted/approved when property taxes go up?

Wouldn't this have an impact on paying off the TIF & impact revenue to the city in the non-TIF area if grant submission increase?

Late 20 year old me was conducting work in Brooklyn in the late 2000s. I was having lunch at the shopping center that is across from the Barclays (Brooklyn Nets NBA Arena). One of my teammates made the comment that "right out there is where the new Nets' arena is going. I said that is awesome!

I've been to the Barclays' for the ACC tournament and eaten at the wonderful restaurants in Brooklyn. As a result of the NH Arena project and some reading, 43-year-old Chad now

knows the project wasn't so awesome in regards to the residents in the area. Residents ended up displaced. Instead of having 15-30 min train rides to work, some have up to two hours because they had to move so far out to find Affordable Housing. This is a similar concern with all large scale RE project that I believe the City has to have a plan for unless they want to displace and disrupt the lives of current residents with new ones that can afford the rent and property taxes. The Tax Relief for the Elderly and Disabled Program will not be enough.

I know some members will argue Affordable Housing wasn't a task for the Commission to address. I would disagree when it is being used by NH in their advertisement, is a current problem and one of the proposed benefits will have a negative impact on what should be a right, affordable housing in the city. We all know what the value of the Gilpin court land will be "IF" this project is a success. Developing that land will be the next big thing to the expense of city residents that need our assistance.

I worked on a project where we were relocating our office building. We did a spider chart of all our employees by zip code to see how tolls would impact our workforce because while for some a \$1.50 a day might be immaterial, for others the cumulative impact is material. We used the data on determining relocation options that would minimize disruption. I hope the City has completed some type of exercise to see how their employees that live in the direct and indirect areas might be impacted. After all, they say there is "NO RISK" to THE CITY.

Thank you,

Chad Burns

Navy Hill proposal

Mary-Helen Sullivan <sulgray4@verizon.net>

Thu 12/19/2019 903 PM

To: All Members <members@navyhillcommission.org>

Please see the attached and add my comments to the record.

Thank you,

Mary Helen Sullivan (Mary-Helen, not Mary H)

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you so very much for the many unpaid hours you have devoted to considering the proposed Navy Hill development. What I heard at a Second District meeting recently gave me faith that commission members are knowledgeable and care very much about their work on this proposal.

I am against the proposal as it stands. I will refer you both to the statement by Partnership for Smarter Growth--

<https://files.constantcontact.com/59729d99001/b4900ed9-07ee-437c-8d04-c89e47b4c9c5.pdf>--and to Ed Slipek's recent article in Style Weekly:

<https://www.styleweekly.com/richmond/15-questions/Content?oid=15340696>.

The process has been flawed from the beginning; the public should have been invited to the table at the start and not after a long period of closed-door negotiations.

I certainly favor developments in those ten blocks that will make that area more lively, rather than a wasteland of parking lots and speeding cars. I would also welcome a transit center for bus riders and a restoration of the street grid, which would make life much easier for pedestrians, as well as drivers. Further, like most cities in the country, Richmond desperately needs affordable housing and not just at the price point for people earning \$50,000 and up.

I understand that the private developers now involved in the proposal will not go forward with any of their plans unless the city commits to constructing the coliseum, and the bonds aren't viable unless the TIF is expanded to 80 blocks of downtown. Despite all the assurances—and the public relations campaign has certainly been robust on the part of the Navy Hill Development Project—the city would be making a huge gamble and for the sake of a coliseum with more seats than any other Virginia coliseum. The fact that the performing arts center on Grace cannot fill its stages regularly does not bode well for the viability of such a venue.

If a new coliseum is so desirable, the surrounding counties should contribute to its cost and it should be located where those county residents feel comfortable coming. Many suburbanites continue to consider downtown Richmond to be dangerous. Further, it should be sized more appropriately. Even if we imagine that Richmond will grow a lot over the next 20 years, not everyone in the metropolis will be able to afford tickets to sports and entertainment events requiring a larger venue than the Siegel Center, Kickers soccer stadium, the National, etc.

A hugely troubling aspect to the current proposal is that, when the state is applying its school finance formulas, it would include all the property taxes collected by the city, despite the fact that many of those would be going to finance the bonds paying for the coliseum. This risk to the schools, which are already in crisis, and to other public services is simply unacceptable.

I feel confident that the city, its residents, and “the market” can together come up with a plan for Navy Hill that makes more sense, allows for “organic” growth, and makes Richmond a more vibrant and equitable place to live, work, and play.

Addendum: I have just read Whitney Whiting’s remarks and hope that you will take them under consideration!

Public comment

Anna On Grace <annaongrace@gmail.com>

Fri 12/20/2019 2 29 PM

To: All Members <members@navyhillcommission.org>

Cc: Gray, Kimberly B. - City Council <Kimberly.Gray@richmondgov.com>; Craig.Bieber@richmondgov.com <Craig.Bieber@richmondgov.com>

If this is ***a take it or leave it*** decision, I say LEAVE IT.

Navy Hill project in its current form **leaves** much to be desired.

- **Plan:** Only **one** exists—the one that stakeholders favor (and Mayor Stoney).
- **Money:** TIF proposal risky. The stakeholders propose a build-out of the Dominion Energy Arena will be done without any tax burden to citizens. Really, what's a TIF? Additionally, who is going to be responsible for whatever cost are associated with whatever comes along during the life the Arena?
- **TIF: Too bIg to Fail?** If this project fails, wont' the owners (taxpayers) of the Arena be held accountable to do something to fix the failure? The investors may get paid, but the owner of the property needs to deal with its failures. Thirty (30) years is a *long, long time* to carry a debt. Will the lost opportunity of revenue due to diversion of revenue to this project not be too BIG of a loss to our city? Do we have a guarantee the ARENA will not FAIL? Many of the stakeholders will no longer be around, but our grandchildren will. Should we divert tax revenue because of a TIF structure away from schools and public services?
- **Jobs:** Who are we kidding? Construction jobs are short-term. The long-term jobs being sold to city by developers are in hospitality, food (restaurants), and retail. These are not exactly high paying. And really, how much training do you need? Would not most training be done by proprietors of businesses?
- **Affordable housing:** If the majority of the jobs are retail, hospitality, and food, will these low paying jobs result in income sufficient enough to live and work in Navy Hill? Will we not make the lives of the people that have to work here worse? Think transportation costs to get to work. Think 24/7 jobs.
- **Hidden Costs:** If families move into these new, high-rise apartments, where are they going to go to school? With all these added developments, where is the money for public services and new schools coming from given diversion of revenue for the TIF structure?
- **Transfer station:** More hidden costs. Where is GRTC going to come up with the money to build-out and maintain this station?

Social Service building: More hidden costs. Once the city gives up ownership of the parcel, it will have to relocate. Where is the money for a new building (or rental) and costs associated from relocation and build-out of new location coming from?

Arena: Just because everyone does it, you should too? Is this model right for Richmond? We are already surrounded by arenas. Amtrak is spending \$4billion to do a separate **rail line from Richmond to DC with hourly trains**. Attending concerts in DC will be even more attractive.

Secondly, how do you build a community around a structure that will be used by non-community people for **short-term consumption**? The argument that it improves quality of life is subject for debate. But, say it is, why not relocated the arena to a place that is more convenient to event attendees—such as Arthur Ash Boulevard Diamond land track. Sauer's is developing the area nearby-

-with huge success. And let's not forget the nearby Scott's Addition. **City Council open your eyes**— CAPITALIZE on existing opportunity. Don't be led by this one ARENA based proposal. CAPITALIZE on what you have!

In summary, the **former** community known as Navy Hill is no longer. It's history. From the ashes something should take place, but the new cannot come at the expense of a financially risky proposal that compromises our future. I suggest that we look at different options. PLEASE. We are currently considering an arena- driven plan. **It locks the City up for 30 years.** That's **a long, long time** in a fast moving, high-tech world. Let's look at different options.

Maybe we should look at a bio-tech, medical anchor driven area, which by the way is there. No need to invent the wheel. Current and future jobs are in this area. (and btw higher paying)

Maybe to satisfy the tourism needs, you can develop the armory area and add a hotel (maybe sell the Coliseum land and get rid of this albatross).

In any event, if it sounds too good to be true—**it probably is NOT.** Mayor Stoney and the Navy Hill Group have good intentions—but I think all of it is *too good to be true*.

Council needs to reject this proposal. It is flawed in many ways.

Thank you.

Anna and Michael Bell

2nd district residents--for over 40 years. We have seen a lot in our years as city residents. We have worked at MCV and very are familiar with the area and the city.

NH Dist. already failing to meet financial projections

Justin Griffin <JG@nocoliseum.com>

Sat 12/21/2019 3:16 AM

To: All Members <members@navyhillcommission.org>

Cc: Pierce Homer <piercehomer@navyhillcommission.org>; John Gerner <johngerner@navyhillcommission.org>

Commission Members,

Because the new Dominion Tower has been separated out since the beginning proposal, we can see that the project is already failing to meet projections.

The original projections from the developers had the tax assessed value of the Dominion Tower being \$357 million at this point (pg 26 original proposal).

Calendar Year	Tax Due Date	Bond Year	Inflation Factor	Dominion Tower 1 (Anticipated Building)
31-Dec-18	14-Jan-20	1-Mar-20	102%	\$178,500,000
31-Dec-19	14-Jan-21	1-Mar-21	104%	\$357,000,000

If you look at the current property assessments it is assessed at only \$307 million.

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Property: 600 E Canal St Parcel ID: W0000019002

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Assessments				
Assessment Year	Land Value	Improvement Value	Total Value	Reason
2020	\$7,972,000	\$299,169,000	\$307,141,000	Reassessment
2019	\$7,972,000	\$117,341,000	\$125,313,000	Reassessment
2018	\$7,972,000	\$30,381,000	\$38,353,000	Reassessment
2017	\$7,972,000	\$2,729,000	\$10,701,000	Reassessment
2017	\$7,972,000	\$0	\$7,972,000	Reassessment
2016	\$7,971,000	\$2,729,000	\$10,700,000	Reassessment
2016	\$7,971,000	\$2,729,000	\$10,700,000	Reassessment
2015	\$7,971,000	\$2,729,000	\$10,700,000	Reassessment
2014	\$7,015,000	\$3,685,000	\$10,700,000	Reassessment
2013	\$7,015,000	\$3,685,000	\$10,700,000	Reassessment
2012	\$7,015,000	\$5,085,000	\$12,100,000	Reassessment
2011	\$4,780,000	\$7,320,000	\$12,100,000	CarryOver
2010	\$4,780,000	\$7,320,000	\$12,100,000	Reassessment
2009	\$4,780,000	\$7,320,000	\$12,100,000	Reassessment
2008	\$4,780,000	\$7,320,000	\$12,100,000	BOR
2007	\$6,490,000	\$10,561,000	\$17,051,000	Reassessment
2006	\$5,500,000	\$8,950,000	\$14,450,000	Reassessment
2005	\$5,500,000	\$8,000,000	\$13,500,000	Reassessment
2004	\$5,304,000	\$7,956,000	\$13,260,000	BOR
2003	\$5,100,000	\$7,650,000	\$12,750,000	Reassessment
2002	\$5,000,000	\$7,500,000	\$12,500,000	Not Available
1998	\$5,000,000	\$7,500,000	\$12,500,000	Not Available

Richmond City Assessor's Office | 900 E. Broad St, Rm 802 | Richmond, VA 23219 | Phone: (804) 646-7500 | Fax: (804) 646-5688
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It is also important to remember that the developer's projections were significantly lower than the Hunden projections which are the ones that show the large "surplus" that can be provided for general fund.

With the developer's projections the city will see less money into the general fund than the do nothing scenario for at least 21 years. They are failing to meet those projections so that means even less into the general fund for schools and other projects.

It is not often you get to see that a project is a failure before it is ever voted on, but we have the unique insight here because of the amount of time this has taken.

<https://nocoliseum.com/2019/12/18/navy-hill-plan-is-already-not-meeting-projections/>

Best,
Justin Griffin

Public Comment: Concern with Freedom of Information Act Requests

Jeff Thomas <jeffthomasrva@gmail.com>

Thu 12/19/2019 7:06 PM

To: All Members <members@navyhillcommission.org>

To the Navy Hill Commission Members:

There have been a total of four Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to this Commission posted on <http://navyhillcommission.org/>. I have concerns about two of them.

First, I am concerned about the response Commission Member Hakim Lucas gave to a FOIA request from the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*.

http://www.navyhillcommission.org/FOIA_Request_Documents-Lucas_Communications_with_Minor.pdf

1. On Saturday, December 14, 2019, *Richmond Times-Dispatch* reporter Mark Robinson submitted a FOIA request for correspondence between Member Hakim Lucas and JJ Minor.
2. Dr. Lucas received this request the next business day and replied "I do not know who JJ Minor is." He further claimed there was no correspondence between him and Mr. Minor.
3. Dr. Lucas is the President of Virginia Union University and JJ Minor is the President of the Richmond NAACP.
4. Navy Hill District Corporation (NHDC) spokesperson Jeff Kelley wrote an op-ed for Tom Farrell and submitted it to the *RTD* under Farrell's byline in late November 2018. The op-ed was scheduled to run on December 10, 2018.
5. I published a piece on *Blue Virginia* on the morning of December 9, 2018 that documented the racism of the Navy Hill project.
6. Someone from NHDC called the *RTD* on the afternoon of December 9, 2018 to change the 'author' of the op-ed from Tom Farrell to Dr. Lucas and Dr. Makola Abdullah, President of Virginia State University. The changed byline further noted: "Others who contributed to this column are Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson, James "J.J." Minor III, Sam Young, and Adele Johnson. All are active in the community and may be reached at create@navyhill.com." Tom Farrell is white, the 'new' authors are all African American.
7. The column authorship was subsequently changed again to include white people like Tom Farrell and Marty Barrington who are behind NHDC.
8. Dr. Lucas was appointed to this Commission in the week following the revelation that NHDC had ghostwritten 'his' column as well as a column 'from' VCU President Michael Rao, and that NHDC had lied to the *RTD* and the public about these columns for nearly one year.
9. Dr. Lucas is a pawn that NHDC put in front of the public to hide the project's racism. If not, then why was his name placed on a NHDC-drafted op-ed only after a viral article proved this project's racist origins?
10. It is not believable for Dr. Lucas to claim that he "do[es] not know who JJ Minor is."

Sources:

A. The ghostwritten column from "Dr. Lucas" is at: https://www.richmond.com/opinion/their-opinion/guest-columnists/hakim-j-lucas-and-makola-m-abdullah-we-commit-to/article_329cdb83-1066-5255-84d6-cbdede66f76f.html

B. The December 9, 2018 column byline is archived

at: https://web.archive.org/web/20181210070425/https://www.richmond.com/opinion/their-opinion/guest-columnists/hakim-j-lucas-and-makola-m-abdullah-we-commit-to/article_329cdb83-1066-5255-84d6-cbdede66f76f.html

C. Articles exposing NHDC ghostwriting:

i. <https://vpm.org/listen/articles/6666/vcu-presidents-pro-coliseum-op-ed-ghostwritten-by-developer>

ii. https://www.richmond.com/news/local/vcu-president-s-column-endorsing-nh-district-corp-s-coliseum/article_0f968271-4077-533a-9b00-c712e5920af6.html

Secondly, I am concerned about a FOIA request from Ryan Keiper of Arlington on November 20, 2019.

http://www.navyhillcommission.org/2019-11-20_NHDAC_FOIA_Request-With_Cover_Emails.pdf

1. Mr. Keiper asked the Commission for communication with Paul Goldman, Jeremy Lazarus, and/or Joe Morrissey.

2. The request further noted: "As you direct members of the Commission to search for and turn over responsive records, please remind them that these e-mails are public records under the Code of Virginia - § 2.2-3700 and that hiding or failing to disclose these e-mails is a violation of Virginia law. **This requestor is already in possession of some communication obtained through a third party. If members of the Commission fail to turn over public records to the city responsive to this request - particularly copies of records already in our possession - this requestor will refer this matter to the Office of the Attorney General for prosecution.**" (emphasis added)

3. The only two items found were (1) an email in which Mr. Lazarus asked Chairman Homer for a public document "on projected Coliseum usage by attendance that was presented to City Council in October," which Mr. Homer then forwarded, and (2) an email to Member Schewel and two members of the Better Housing Coalition about affordable housing that Mr. Schewel did not respond to. Mr. Lazarus is a reporter for the *Richmond Free Press*.

4. *Therefore, the only two possible 'records' that could be in possession of FOIA requester Ryan Keiper of Arlington were given by Mr. Homer and/or Mr. Schewel to "a third party."* This record made its way to Mr. Keiper. Mr. Keiper then 'independently' followed up on what could charitably be called a conspiracy theory for correspondence from one Richmonder who is prominently opposed to the project but has nothing to do with its formulation, a state senator-elect who has nothing to do with the project whatsoever, and an independent journalist who, again, has nothing to do with Navy Hill, while at the same time threatening Commission Members with prosecution. A sincerely interested person looking to learn the truth about this project would ask for emails from people like Levar Stoney and Tom Farrell who actually created it.

5. Mr. Goldman posted on his Facebook page on November 26 that he called Mr. Keiper to ask him why he requested emails concerning Mr. Goldman when no such emails exist. Mr. Keiper answered, "I'm just a cog in the wheel" who was involved in a "project."

6. The only reasonable conclusion is that this bizarre FOIA request is a failed attempt to sabotage and discredit the Commission that resulted from a Commission Member secretly working with supporters of the project while trying to hide his own tracks.

Honest people have the advantage in settings of fairness and transparency; dishonest people manipulate in the shadows.

I bring these important matters to your attention because you cannot risk the future of Richmond by blindly trusting the Navy Hill developers, whose promises have all proven upon scrutiny to be bankrupt.

I will conclude with a quote from Esson Miller, a measured attorney and public finance expert who served as staff director of the Virginia Senate Finance Committee and director of the Virginia General Assembly Legislative Services Division (emphasis added) "I recently awoke at 4 a.m. from a recurring nightmare I have when suffering from any type of personal fiscal stress. In my nightmare, a burglar has broken into our home and is rummaging through our valuables. I confront him, after hearing an unrecognizable noise downstairs, and then immediately wake up from the nightmare in a cold sweat. This morning, however, my fiscal stress was not produced by actions I have taken or not taken, but by those already taken by our mayor and about to be confirmed by our City Council. That action is the Coliseum replacement proposed by important leaders doing business within the city. **They are rummaging through the city's fiscal well-being, putting it at severe risk that could have long-term detrimental impact.**"

Thank you.

Jeff Thomas
Washington, DC

Navy Hill Advisory Commission Hearing Comments

Omari A. <oalqadaffi@gmail.com>

Fri 12/20/2019 10:14 AM

To: John Gerner <johngerner@navyhillcommission.org>; All Members
<members@navyhillcommission.org>

■ attachments (29 KB)

Omari AlQadaffi - NHAC 2019_12_18.docx;

Omari AlQadaffi - NHAC 2019_12_16.docx;

Attached you will find my comments from Navy Hill Advisory Commission Hearings, which I would like included in the public record and made available for all Commission members.

Thanks very much for your hard work.

Omari Al-Qadaffi

Community Organizer / Strategic Planner

Richmond Food Justice Alliance

IG: @RVAFoodJustice

Leaders Of the New South - Community

Council OC Consulting

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Navy Hill Advisory Commission Public Hearing (12/18/20)

Omari Al-Qadaffi
7th District Resident

My name is Omari, and I'm a resident of Richmond. I'm from Church Hill and graduated from Armstrong High School. And I still live in Church Hill. I had planned to speak on this plan's impact on housing and displacement of residents of color, but I come with a heavy heart to speak on something far more dangerous to Richmond. Comcast-Spectra whose parent company and sole investor is Comcast has been selected to be the operator of the proposed Coliseum. Comcast spends \$11B on licensing TV networks and spends less than \$5M on Black owned networks. When this was shown, Comcast lost a racial discrimination lawsuit in the federal courts which was based on violations to the Civil Rights Act of 1866. They chose to then appeal it to the US Supreme Court to have them undo the country's first Civil Rights Act. That legislation ensures equal treatment for Blacks in terms of business contracts. Last month Donald Trump sent his DOJ lawyer to court to argue on behalf of Comcast.

There are many who see this project as an opportunity for Black businesses to get a boost because of promises of MBE participation. Not only has Governor Wilder informed the public that type of preferred treatment was ruled illegal by the Supreme Court in 1989. But Comcast - and by extension Spectra - is fighting to destroy our right to even be treated equally. My ancestors along with 100s of 1000s of Americans did not die in the Civil War for a multibillion dollar company to come back 160 years later to make their deaths meaningless.

By approving the NHDC's plan we would be agreeing to further financially empower a racist juggernaut of a media company in taking the present and future generations of Black Americans back to Reconstruction Era. We would be agreeing to empower this corporation to possibly relegate HBCU graduates to poverty. That will make Governor Northam's recent promise of funding of HBCU's virtually meaningless.

We cannot afford to look at this project in a vacuum. I guarantee you that Comcast-Spectra and NHDC is not looking at this project in a vacuum. I guarantee you that these corporations are aware that when Kansas City did their TIF project the lead developer simply gave their contracts to a sub-developer who cant be legally required to include any minority businesses – any gay business – any women owned business.

On Monday night I encouraged my advocates on the other side of the aisle supporting this plan to get the minority businesses into the contract in writing. I wonder if these loopholes are the reason that no Black owned or woman owned business names are included in the contract.

We need to also be aware that Trump's DOJ is also moving forward to undo the Fair Housing Act's disparate impact protections, which is the foundation of housing discrimination claims. This is important because if Trump is successful with that, there could possibly be no Blacks in the proposed housing in the plan. There could legally be no gay people. No women.

People are speaking of this project as if it is progress for our city - progress for Black people - progress for women. Given the behavior of the partners in this project this is quite possibly the very opposite. And instead of progress, this could be part of efforts to take Richmond and the nation of Blacks and women backwards 160 years to a time before there were any free Blacks residing or owning businesses in Jackson Ward, in Richmond, and throughout this country. Read the writing on the wall. This is not the plan for this city or this country.

Navy Hill Advisory Commission Public Hearing (12/16/20)

Omari Al-Qadaffi
7th District Resident

My name is Omari Al-Qadaffi and I chair the Housing Committee for a social justice coalition called Community Unity In Action. It's a group made of Black owned social justice organizations working in housing, transportation, juvenile justice reform and other areas. A large amount of our work is around getting Black residents in the forefront of the creation and implementation of solutions to problems affecting the Black community. But in the early 2000s I was a software engineer specializing in systems architecture solving complex problems involving how different applications interact with each other.

For the past 5 years I have studied Richmond's issues of housing, transportation, job access, and economic mobility and I can tell you with full confidence that the plan, as presented, does not bring us closer to solving issues of job access. It's a little disingenuous to tell the residents of Richmond that thousands of jobs will be available when we can read the fine-print and see that a lot of these jobs would be created in the surrounding counties. We have to realize that measuring job access is about more than a job being located near you. Transit planners claimed that downtown is a major job center when they sold the new transit network to us. The reason why this didn't help with jobs is that access is also about qualifying to work the banking and government jobs located downtown.

The Citizens Budget Commission says *"that retail TIFs tend to shift consumer spending and retail jobs within municipalities without producing a net gain in economic activity."* And this is very important: *"This most often occurs for retail and entertainment projects, for which there is a finite level of consumer demand within a region."*

Now we haven't been told how many of these jobs would be hotel workers or restaurant workers because in all honesty the planners don't know. But what this means that quite possibly people would merely be laid off from other places downtown when ppl start using the new hotels and restaurants.

A wise man learns from their mistakes but a WISER man learns from the mistakes of others. Although this project's planners highlighted Kansas City as a successful similar project, they fail to mention the vacant buildings that were left all over for years with no employees. And they fail to mention how the anchor developer handed the contracts to other developers and those other developers cant legally be required to uphold the promises for minority business.

When looking at the Kansas City project the executive director of Good Jobs First, says "the savviest economic development professionals look more holistically at placemaking: it takes schools, parks, transportation, housing and amenities to provide a meaningful economic boost. Had the incentive package paid more attention to those issues, it could have helped the surrounding community capture more workers and businesses."

I would ask advocates on the other side of the aisle to get it in writing and let the public see. The same as we see Better Housing Coalition's name in the agreement. Let's see the names of these Black owned business spelled out. Any ambiguity will not work in our favor.

Comments to the Navy Hill Development Advisory Commission December 19, 2019

Thomas Burkett <tomburkett@gmail.com>

Fri 12/20/2019 11:28 AM

To: All Members <members@navyhillcommission.org>

■ 1 attachments (74 KB)

Comments to the Navy Hill Development Advisory Commission December 19 2019 .pdf;

Hello Commission members,

Thank you for allowing me to speak at yesterday's public hearing. Attached is a copy of my public statement for your records and I hope you will take the time to read it and fully consider my concerns and proposals regarding NHD Corporation's development plan.

I look forward to reading your report and recommendations to the City Council.

Kindest,

Thomas Burkett
3rd District

Comments to the Navy Hill Development Advisory Commission
re: NH District Corp. Proposal and Democratic Process

Submitted by Thomas Burkett, resident of Richmond 3rd District, on December 19, 2019

Good evening members of the Independent Commission,

I am Thomas Burkett, I live in the 3rd district. Thank you for this opportunity to speak about my concerns regarding the Navy Hill District Corporation and their proposed development plan.

I come here as a concerned Richmond resident to firmly reject any statements made by the Navy Hill District Corporation or their beneficiaries that their development proposal for our city has been devised in good faith or for the health and interests of the public.

I say this because I have personally witnessed a history of corporations partnered with Navy Hill District Corporation continuously put the profits of their corporations before the health of communities their projects directly impact. Just over a year ago [Dominion Energy mislead the Virginia State Air Quality Control Board](#) by compiling and submitting misleading demographics of the [Community of Union Hill](#). This was done in order to skirt around state board members' concerns that Dominion Energy's ACP proposal to put a gas compressor station in a historic black community would violate state laws protecting a majority minority community from excessive air pollution emissions. Dominion Energy's actions in this particular case showed their willingness to literally erase black residents from the map in order to build a key portion of a gas pipeline that would bring in profits for Dominion Energy shareholders. We must consider these facts in regard to this proposal because it portrays a larger history of Dominion Energy and corporations like [Spectra](#) continuing a legacy of white supremacy and racial and class oppression through development projects and land ownership. We should not award these corporations who have shown themselves to be such bad actors with the keys to our city. Their decision to target marginalized communities in the past should disqualify them from even being considered as a viable applicant, let alone the primary partners and beneficiaries of this proposed development project.

Navy Hill District Corporation's proposal still falls short of answering many questions and concerns. My concerns being:

1. The original RFP released itself from being subject to virtually any City Code, Chapter 21 or otherwise. [As stated on Page 1 of the original Request for Proposals released on November 9, 2017](#), *"This Request for Proposals ('RFP') does not represent a procurement. Therefore, the process described herein is not subject to Chapter 21 of the City Code or any other public procurement law."*
2. [Dominion Energy, registered the domain name DominionEnergyArena.com on Feb 6, 2017](#), a full 9 months before the Mayor released his RFP showing that this particular development deal was orchestrated behind closed doors long before the RFP was open to the public.

3. The project is not actually good for schools (in reference to the school board's 7-2 vote to opt out as well as the statement released by the Richmond Educators Association opposing the Navy Hill Project).
4. The project has been brokered in a way that cannot effectively secure protections of hiring and employing; achievement of MBE goals.
5. The project is fiscally irresponsible due to the lack of due diligence concerning the base assessed value lack of sunset provision, and lack of a requirement to prevent capturing existing growth.
6. The project fails to meet the need of the low-income housing crisis of Richmond City.
7. NHD Corp fails to honor the legacy of Navy Hill by selecting members and partners with a damning case history of racial discrimination.
8. The proposal has not effectively secured a way for developers to make master plan and material changes through deemed approval, and secured protections for investors to get their money first.
9. Historical TIF districts have failed to produce the promise of jobs, business development, or real estate activity at the neighborhood level beyond what would have occurred without TIF. [T. William Lester, "Does Chicago's Tax Increment Financing \(TIF\) Program Pass the 'But-For' Test? Job Creation and Economic Development Impacts Using Time-series Data," *Urban Studies* \(July 10, 2013\).](#)
10. A community benefits agreement falls short of righting the inequities of the proposal and has no way of upholding or monitoring guarantees.

I have listed local organizations that have come out against NHD Corporation's development proposal as a reminder that opposition to this project is widespread among Richmonders and that your opposition to this project is backed with the solidarity and demands for a more equitable and just solution. The following local community organizations have all made public statements in opposition to the current NHD Corporation development proposal.

[Legal Aid Justice Center](#)

[Richmond Education Association](#)

[Partnership for Smarter Growth](#)

New Virginia Majority

Virginia Poverty Law Center

[Initiatives of Change](#)

Richmond For All - [Original Statement](#) (Dec 2018)

Organizational Co-signators:

Richmond Teachers for Social Justice

Justice and Reformation Coalition

Virginia Defenders

Community Unity In Action

Leaders of the New South

Leaders of the New South - Community Council for Housing

Richmond Food Justice Alliance

Virginia Student Environmental Coalition

Divest RVA
Virginia Interfaith Power & Light
No ACP!
Virginia River Healers
VCU Adjuncts Organizing for Fair Pay
Richmond DSA
Virginia Pipeline Resisters
YDSA at VCU
Rockingham Alliance for the Protection and Transformation of our Resources &
Society
Readjust Richmond
Richmond Business Alliance
RVA Coalition of Concerned Civic Associations
Richmond Food Not Bombs

I urge you to call upon City Council and Mayor Stoney to invest in real communities, not speculative ventures. I would like to see a city that prioritizes the needs of its residents over corporate interests and this could be done by rejecting the proposed plan and beginning a new proposal process that involves the public and our health and interests from the start.

Thank you for your consideration and time.

Thomas Burkett

Public Comment Submission

Ben Himmelfarb <benhimmelfarb@gmail.com>

Fri 12/20/2019 1:51 PM

To: All Members <members@navyhillcommission.org>

■ 1 attachments (108 KB)

Himmelfarb-NHDC-PublicComment.pdf;

My name is Ben Himmelfarb, I live in the Museum District in Richmond's 1st City Council District. Please add my attached comment to the public record. I'm happy to correspond or speak with any commission members who wish to do so.

Thank you for your time, attention, and labor!

Ben Himmelfarb
1st District, Richmond

Statement to Navy Hill Development Advisory Commission
December 20, 2019

Note: In general, my comments are directed to this commission and Richmond residents at large, but my most critical comments are directed at City Council and people who support the Navy Hill project. I am very pleased by this commission's existence and grateful for the important work of hosting a meaningful, rigorous discussion of the proposal. Much appreciation to all Public Advisory Commission members and special recognition for volunteering time, labor, and mental energy on this endeavor.

Background

My name is Ben Himmelfarb, I'm a resident of Richmond's 1st district, and I'm a public librarian and historian who has lived in Albany and White Plains, NY before coming to Richmond. As someone who lived and worked in places reshaped by enormous urban renewal and interstate highway projects and as someone who has extensive historical knowledge about these projects and the processes that brought them about, I would like to comment on the proposed Navy Hill project and state my opposition.

You might ask--what is the relevance of urban development projects in White Plains and Albany to the NH District Corporation's plans for Richmond? White Plains and Albany have never been the same. Decision makers should know their history, should know that the structures and forces promoting Navy Hill have a lot in common with those of the past that effectively destroyed whole neighborhoods, reshaped cities in favor of car commuters, made entire areas into wastelands outside of business hours, constructed heinous architectural monuments that alienate people, inhibit the growth of community, and have negative environmental consequences. And all this was done in the name of growing the unaccountable power of the state and facilitating the accumulation of private capital.

The human costs of these projects was also enormous. Racial minorities were further marginalized with innumerable small businesses moved or closed, neighborhoods exploded, and whole ecosystems of community shredded. Multi-ethnic working class neighborhoods became a thing of the past, with those deemed white enough voluntarily ghettoized in well-resourced suburbs and those deemed too black involuntarily ghettoized in urban areas with less civic investment in infrastructure, education, and public goods.

While no one remembers the liabilities of the pre-urban renewal areas fondly, almost no one likes what has taken their place. No one, that is, except the capitalist class that profits from the construction and commercial renters and politicians who made hay out of "getting things done!" Ironically, capitalist developers and cynical politicians are now returning to the urban core,

bringing new schemes and promising to have “learned the lessons” of mid-century disasters. And this is where we must analyze the Navy Hill project.

Undemocratic Processes

Let us dispense with the notion that involving more people in decision making is “impractical.” That’s true if you’re trying to maximize profit and limit the power of a majority of people. We could do a lot better than informational meetings where we hope the “soft influence” of “good ideas” and “community input” will mean a more equitable result (again, grateful for this commission--I’m angry at structures, not individuals for the most part!). The outcome of large, opaquely administered projects will always favor a minority of people if the underlying power structures that shape the process (capitalist developer class gets all the deference, the public has to organize itself) don’t change. If civic engagement is an activity that only people with some amount of leisure time can engage in (time when they don’t have to work whether paid at a job or unpaid in the home), then the process will never be truly democratic.

Let us agree on some basic values. The people most affected by changes to a given area should be privileged. And I don’t mean the people who stand to make the most money, I mean the people who are already marginalized, who have a historic or cultural connection/investment in an area, people who are suffering rather than thriving due to a lack or insufficient amount of housing, food, healthcare, or education. There are models for decision making and organizing that empowers currently disempowered people and diffuse decision making power among more people, and if there aren’t models we like, then we can work together to figure one out. But we need to return to a one-person, one-vote baseline before anything else happens. Right now those with more money and more political power get more say, and it’s not right.

Let us not rely on capitalist and political elites’ claims that their plans are “great” or “the only way.” If true, it would be revealed by a rigorous, methodical, bottom-up process. If we took the time to bring the most marginalized to the center of the conversation and they decided an arena is what this area needed, then great, we’ll talk arenas.

Capitalist and political elites have long used divide-and-conquer tactics to undermine popular resistance, defeat organizing projects, and reframe issues in ways favorable to themselves at the expense of others. The Navy Hill process has its share of divide-and-conquer going on. At public meetings and in public discourse (online and published) the NH Dev Corp and its paid allies have used racial identities to drive a wedge between the public and people organized against the project (even though the main opposition group, Richmond For All, is a multi-racial, multi-issue organization). In my opinion, supporters of the project, whether wealthy elites or more middle class workers and small business owners, have used cynical and paternalistic arguments to evade answering significant, substantive objections. For instance, when seemingly refuting people with

knowledge of how TIF schemes have negatively affected municipal budgets in other American cities, supporters of the project will avoid addressing that point and shift the conversation to one about jobs or business for African American residents of Richmond.

While there is ***no doubt*** about the historical and contemporary exclusion of African Americans from urban planning and economic development projects, the way to overcome those injustices is through multi-racial, class solidarity that insists on tying racial justice to economic justice in a comprehensive, structural way. From the destruction of Jackson Ward for the interstate to the targeting of Union Hill for Dominion's fossil fuel infrastructure, there is no doubt about which way the arc of history bends when it comes to big projects in Virginia.

In a moment that opened my mind to new perspectives, I heard a public speaker at a commission meeting tout minority-owned construction firms' participation in building the Richmond city jail as an example of economic development achieving a racial justice goal. While I can easily understand this perspective on his terms (he is an African American man who owns a business and won a contract on the project), I sincerely believe that when we take the conversation one step further, we can find common ground from which to oppose the Navy Hill project. Surely economic development that benefits a few at the expense of many others (as I and advocates of criminal justice reform and racial justice would contend the jail project did overall), is not the best we can do as a city of people working together to increase economic development and improve the lives of residents in a just, sustainable way.

It is up to us to bend the arc of history back towards justice--justice for all people, regardless of their racial identity, regardless of their class position within the 99%, regardless of their age, regardless of where they were born. The threats of racial prejudice, collusion between political and capitalist elites, and environmental disaster are too great for us remain divided.

Public Debt, Private Profit

The NH Development Corporation exists because capitalist and political elites decided it benefits them, presumably, by generating wealth and conferring control over land and planning processes--both of which are public goods and should not be voted away to private interests. It must be said that whatever wealth trickles down to the working class people who will build the Navy Hill projects or staff the restaurants, hotels, cafes, shops, or venues will not be equal to their fair share. The developers' and politicians' math is this: how much trickling down will mollify the rabble? I'm here to say no amount should--let's end trickle down once and for all!

Others have spoken eloquently about the dangers of TIF schemes. In fact, people speaking *against* the financial structure of this project have done a much better job supporting their claims with facts, empirical evidence, and historical context. Other than the speculative growth that

capitalists always promise will come (and, to be fair, does seem to come to them), I have not been satisfied by any of the developers' or city officials' defenses of the TIF scheme.

The entire structure of this deal is short-sighted. What is the demonstrated need for a new Coliseum? What is the demonstrated need for housing that is only affordable to people well above the actual AMI of the city? What is the demonstrated need for more chain stores and franchise businesses? What is the demonstrated need for more low-paying, no-benefits service industry jobs? What is the demonstrated need for mortgaging our public schools' futures by tying their budget to an astronomical debt?

And what is responsible about a city government inviting a development project that will overtax an already overburdened and under-resourced public sector? If cars are running into houses on Semmes Avenue multiple times a year and the city can't stop that, how will the city safely and efficiently deal with a huge swath of downtown being under construction? If sidewalks are closed and barriers erected with no concern for pedestrian safety, how can the city deliver on adding even more construction to the mix? And if the city's lawyers, accountants, investigators, regulators, and planners will always be outmatched by deep-pocketed private capitalists and developers, how can residents trust our government to make sure the entire project is conducted in the best interest of the public?

I don't believe we can, and a whole lot of other people feel the same way.

I urge council to vote No on this deal and start working with residents on more democratic, more sustainable, more fundamental planning and development ideas.

A Place to Start: Empowered and Resourced Civic Engagement

I spoke with a former council member at a commission meeting. She is an ardent supporter of the Navy Hill project and is a business owner and woman of color already benefiting from the Navy Hill Development Corporation's work. She said she has literally been "at the table," which does distinguish the Navy Hill project from thoroughly private development in other parts of the city. While we disagreed on the project overall (I'm a "No," she's a "Yes"), we didn't disagree on everything. And even though she's far more pro-capitalism than I may ever be, we agreed on a substantive, structural change to the way planning and development is done in Richmond.

Community-based planning commissions *empowered* and *resourced* to do needs assessments, collaborative planning, and support civic engagement would be a great thing for Richmond to support. Others have mentioned it in comments to the commission as well. If residents of every district were able to organize groups to review *and* propose planning or development schemes for the city, we would surely see fairer, more sustainable, more just economic development.

These commissions would need to be meaningfully *empowered*--able to generate binding, substantive decisions for council members or the mayor to abide by. These commissions would need to be *resourced*--civic engagement can no longer be the privilege of those with enough free time or money to participate. Community-based planning commissions must be supported through provision of food, childcare, flexible scheduling, technology for participants, and accessibility benchmarks. Working parents must be able to come to meetings and have their children fed and cared for. People with disabilities must be able to be physically present and, if that is not possible in all cases, have their views officially recognized and shared. Meetings must be held at various times and made open to all. Information must be 100% publicly accessible through FOIAs, online, public libraries, and relevant departments. And while leadership of such commissions may have to be elected, participation should be open to all. Those doing labor for the good of the public must be compensated for it through stipends or other materials benefits that do not make civic engagement cost anything for individuals.

I've strayed from the original purpose of my statement, but with good reason. Whether this version of Navy Hill is approved or not, we have a future to consider. The course of totally private sector development in places like Scott's Addition and Manchester is clearly not meeting the needs of a majority of residents in Richmond--especially if they are working class, living in poverty, or people of color--and we need a systemic solution. Opposition is not enough, which is why I want to submit this lengthy, but important comment.

Thank you once again for your time, attention, and labor.

Ben Himmelfarb
1st District, Richmond