

**OPEN LETTER TO WARD 5 COUNCILMEMBER KENYAN MCDUFFIE FROM
WARD 5 RESIDENTS; *IN RE*: DEFUNDING MCMILLAN PARK PROJECT AND INSTEAD
FUNDING OTHER FAR MORE IMPORTANT WARD 5 HUMAN NEEDS**

July 14, 2020

Dear Councilman Kenyan McDuffie, and staff,

We are longtime residents of Ward 5 in the District of Columbia and as your constituents, we want to preserve the historic public green space of McMillan Park at North Capital and Michigan Avenue, NW, for my community and for all DC residents for generations to come.

Black DC residents like ourselves are disproportionately carrying the burden of the pressing COVID-19 pandemic. We are requesting that you, our Ward 5 Council representative, work with your Council colleagues to strike the \$75.5 million in the Mayor's FY2021 budget for the demolition and redevelopment of the McMillan site, that is to Defund McMillan, and instead redirect this money to truly help Ward 5 -- and the city as a whole -- in addressing critical and immediate needs during what is projected to be a long-term crisis for everyone's health and finances.

It's become obvious that the physical and mental health of Ward 5 residents could have been much better served over the past several months, and even now, by allowing public use of the vast open space that is the historic McMillan Park. Social distancing would have been easier among residents of our neighborhoods, especially for families and seniors who could then walk safely in the fresh air of McMillan Park. In fact, McMillan was an integrated, accessible park until it was fenced off for security reasons during WWII. It's been unfairly fenced off from the public since that time.

Councilmember, we want you to remove the \$75.5 million proposed by the Mayor to demolish McMillan Park and instead, use that money to focus on communities now facing the greatest suffering, such as low-income families in Ward 5.

We want the McMillan demolition/construction monies to be diverted in order to financially stabilize DC's Black communities, as the Black Lives Matter movement is demanding, and provide greater health protections in the form of new health clinics, testing centers, and open public spaces to prevent further loss of life and the further spread of COVID-19 and future viruses. For our youth especially, as they hopefully return to school, this money could help to ensure that Ward 5 schools in vulnerable communities are retrofitted and staffed to minimize virus spread and to provide laptops and internet resources for distance learning. It could be used to bring back Crummell School as a community center for Ivy City's youth. And, it can be used to provide for much larger family-sized units at Brookland Manor.

Overall, the appropriateness of the proposed McMillan project, with its 2+ million square feet of high-rise, suburban-style design and subsequent massive traffic, will be harmful to your constituents by increasing the adverse air, water and noise impacts and the project's small segment of affordable housing is highly suspect, especially now. Additionally, the current redevelopment calls for only a small 6-acre green space next to DC Water's 1st Street tunnel vent. This crumb of public space is not acceptable in view of the current health crisis, as the pandemic is not going away anytime soon.

The McMillan plan should be revisited in light of our need for greater open public space and the necessary changes the pandemic is mandating. Just as the American way of travel and life changed after September 11th, the pandemic now requires us to look into the future by demanding new work-spaces, new living-spaces and new ways to deliver medical services -- all yet to be fully envisioned and for which the future, wise use of McMillan Park can play a fundamentally positive role.

Sincerely yours,

- Jimmie and Joanne Boykin
202-486-8883, sapphire91264@gmail.com

*PS: The Black families of Ward 5 want Councilmember McDuffie to understand what McMillan Park meant for us when we couldn't go to Glen Echo park or Rock Creek park to enjoy fresh air and the sun with our neighbors. We want our Councilmember to protect us from unnecessary luxury overdevelopment and stop the displacement of Black residents being pushed out by the terrible policies of the Mayor. Please take a stand now.
– Jimmie Boykin, Ward 5 and McMillan neighbor since 1969*

- Cynthia Carson
202-210-3094, cynccarson@gmail.com

PS: In a May 21, 2020 Washington Post article, Attorney General Karl Racine said about buses at Union Station: "Air pollutants from excessive vehicle idling harms human health and contributes to premature deaths from heart attacks, strokes, and respiratory diseases every year." I agree. According to the developer's own expert study, the McMillan Town Center as proposed will bring tens of thousands of additional vehicular trips to and from the area every day, dangerously increasing air pollution and imposing harmful health impacts onto residents of Bloomingdale and surrounding neighborhoods. Restoring our McMillan Park will much better serve our community and entire city. – Cynthia Carson, McMillan Park neighbor

- Sharia Shanklin
202-236-3629, stims28@hotmail.com

PS: As a Ward 5 Bloomingdale resident since 1995, I have firsthand awareness of the vast development that has occurred in mid-town DC. As the former DPR Community Services and Programs Officer and Interim Director, knowing the value of green space for holistic wellbeing is a part of the research base knowledge of recreation and leisure. Given these two perspectives, I request that the McMillian Park be restored to provide the city and its residents a viable way to promote healthy physical, mental, emotional quality of life. Providing adequate green space in urban communities are significantly beneficial. --Sharia Shanklin, McMillan neighbor

- Joyce Chandler
202-526-3554, bettercity2020@gmail.com

*PS: As a voting Ward 5 resident for 30+ years, I believe that it is timely that these concerns and input for allocating our tax dollars be heard and incorporated in the FY21 budget. Restoring the green space at McMillan Park for families and seniors rather than demolishing it begins to provide safer, healthier venues for Blacks in Ward 5, the people who have been disproportionately devastated by COVID-19 and other health inequalities.
– Joyce Chandler*

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PS: As a resident of Ivy City, and a Native Washingtonian, keeping our historic Alexander Crummell school, which sits in the heart of our community, preserved, restored, and once again open as a central resource for our families is a key priority especially during this pandemic. We want Crummell opened as soon as possible for the community and ran by the community. This is important now more than ever and its needed for a healthy safe place for healing and to promote and build up our youth, elders, and community strength, leadership, success, and support. Defund McMillan and fund Crummell now for our children and for generations to come. We can't wait any longer.
– **Sebrena Rhodes**

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