To: 901 Developer Team, ANC 5B Commissioners, ANC 5B Development, Zoning, and Land Use, Zoning Commission, Councilmember Zachary Parker's Office, Ward 5 Mayor's Office of Community Relations & Services (MOCRS), Office of Planning, and Other Stakeholders

From: Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association (BNCA)

Date: April 27, 2025

Re: Summary of Community Feedback related to the 901 Monroe Street NE Development Project (Office of Zoning Case Number 24-15) from April 15, 2025 BNCA Member Meeting 4/15/2025

Dear Stakeholders,

I am writing to you in my capacity as the President of the Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association (BNCA). BNCA, founded in 1880, provides a forum for considering and advancing the interests of Brookland residents on issues affecting the Brookland community. The proposed development at 901 Monroe Street has been a topic of interest and concern for our Brookland community. On Tuesday, April 8, 2025, I attended a meeting hosted by the development team where it presented its latest plans. While there was helpful information shared, it also made clear to me that more dialogue is needed--especially from the people most directly affected.

As the BNCA's President, it is my responsibility to carry out the BNCA mission and to ensure that its members' voices are heard and that this critical project, one with the potential to transform our neighborhood, reflects our shared vision for Brookland. Most conversations have been one-way presentations from the development team with little time for community feedback, and we wanted to rebalance that dynamic.

To that end, we dedicated our April 15 member meeting to a community listening session regarding the 901 Monroe development. Approximately 40 Brooklanders, including ANC 5B03, 5B04, and 5B05 commissioners, attended the standing-room-only meeting at historic Brooks Mansion. The 901 Monroe development team kindly attended so that they could hear the community feedback firsthand.

We are presenting you with a summary of key issues raised at this listening session. Our aim is to clearly articulate the primary issues identified by our community, including nearby residents ("200 Footers"), to facilitate a productive dialogue ahead of the zoning public hearing scheduled for June 23, 2025. We want to emphasize that community members generally support the development of this long-vacant site. However, in the words of one 200 Footer: "This is not about 'no.' It's about 'let's do it right.' Don't just do this fast, do it well." The discussion raised four main issues and concerns:

1. **Scale and Character:** Community members have expressed strong concern regarding the scale and height of the proposed building, currently planned at six stories. The primary issue is that the height is inconsistent with the surrounding residential neighborhood, particularly affecting properties on 10th Street NE due to loss of sunlight and compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. Neighbors request a reduction in scale, with increased setbacks and a design that scales downward closer to adjacent streets to preserve neighborhood character.

2. **Health and Safety:** The community highlighted critical concerns regarding vehicular access and traffic management. Currently, the proposed sole vehicular entry and exit point via the Lawrence Street alley poses significant safety risks, particularly given existing traffic congestion associated with nearby schools. Neighbors strongly advocate relocating the vehicle access to either 9th Street (as it was designed—and DDOT approved—in the previous proposed Monroe Street development) or on Monroe Street to alleviate safety concerns and traffic bottlenecks. Additionally, concerns about adequate safety and security, including potential issues related to evacuation and vandalism risks, were underscored.
3. **Monroe Street Life:** The development, as currently proposed, lacks meaningful retail or mixed-use components. Community members emphasized the importance of foot traffic to activate Monroe Street, enhance pedestrian safety, and support local economic vitality. While the 200 Footers did not define a solution for street life, a petition signed by approximately 120 Brookland residents and nearby neighbors underscores community-wide support for integrating “retail ready” spaces within the project design to allow flexibility for the space to allow retail in the future. Stakeholders urged developers to reserve at least a modest portion (approximately 2,000 sq ft) of ground-floor space capable of future retail use to meet community needs and enhance street-level vibrancy.
4. **Community Amenities:** The proposed development's limited green space and lack of sufficient family-oriented and ownership opportunities were raised as points of concern. Community members request enhanced provisions for accessible green space, including more trees at ground level rather than primarily on upper floors. Additionally, there is strong community interest in increasing the availability of larger, family-sized residential units (3-4 bedrooms), as well as providing opportunities for partial tenant ownership, such as condominiums, to support long-term community stability. The community was pleased that the power lines on Monroe Street would be put underground. Additionally, the community request prioritizes actual project-related amenities to benefit the immediate neighbors instead of dollar contributions to unrelated non-profit organizations.

Next Steps and Community Expectations

The BNCA intends to apply for party status in the zoning hearing process and strongly encourages the developers to consider revisions addressing the outlined concerns before the zoning hearing date. Community feedback has highlighted a clear expectation for thoughtful adjustments to the current project proposal, reflecting our shared commitment to sustainable growth, enhanced neighborhood safety, and livability. We look forward to engaging with the ANC and the new Zoning and Land Use Committee as they work with the developers to incorporate neighborhood feedback into the plans.

Thank you for your consideration and engagement in addressing these critical community priorities. We look forward to ongoing collaboration to ensure the 901 Monroe Street NE development aligns positively with the values and needs of the Brookland community.

Sincerely,

Dawn Amore
President, Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association

Distribution List

901 Monroe Development Team
- pconway@horningdc.com
- natasha@menkitigroup.com
- 901monroe@horningdc.com

ANC 5B SMD Commissioners
- 5B01@anc.dc.gov
- 5B02@anc.dc.gov
- 5B03@anc.dc.gov
- 5B04@anc.dc.gov
- 5B05@anc.dc.gov
- 5B06@anc.dc.gov
- 5B07@anc.dc.gov

ANC 5B Development, Zoning, and Land Use (DZLU) (Select members)
- Jingwen Sun & Sarah Woodhead

Councilmember Parker's Office
- zparker@dccouncil.gov
- mlittlepage@dccouncil.gov
- ostoute@dccouncil.gov
- cshaw@dccouncil.gov

Ward 5 Mayor’s Office of Community Relations & Services (MOCRS)
- anthony.black@dc.gov
- christian.starghill@dc.gov

Zoning Commission - ZC No. 24-15
- zcsubmissions@dc.gov

Office of Planning
- matthew.jesick@dc.gov
- joel.lawson@dc.gov

District Department of Transportation (DDOT)
- erkin.ozberk1@dc.gov
- noah.hagen@dc.gov

BNCA 2025 Officers
- Dawn Amore, John Leibovitz, Josh Bercu, Kathy Jacquart, Rene McCray, Elise Scott, Kinyofu Mlimwengu