



ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3E

TENLEYTOWN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PARK FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS

WAKEFIELD CHEVY CHASE FORT GAINES

c/o Lisner Home 5425 Western Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20015

ANC 3E Testimony in support of B25-0149

Good Afternoon Councilmember McDuffie and members of the Committee on Business and Economic Development.

My name is Tom Quinn and I am an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner representing single member district 3E04, testifying today on behalf of ANC 3E in support of bill 25-0149 which would authorize the establishment of the Friendship Heights Business Improvement District.

ANC 3E enthusiastically supports the formation of the Friendship Heights Business Improvement District. The BID builds on two years community engagement and programming that has garnered broad support from businesses, property owners and residents.

Friendship Heights is on the cusp of significant change. Ensuring that Friendship Heights thrives in today's competitive environment will take cross-jurisdictional collaboration, careful planning, and extensive stakeholder engagement.

Based on recommendations from a 2021 ULI TAP panel on Friendship Heights, a group of major property owners from both DC and Maryland formed the Friendship Heights Alliance to coordinate place management, community building and revitalization along the Wisconsin Avenue corridor on both sides of Western Avenue.

Since 2022, supported by funding from major property owners, the District and Montgomery Count, the Friendship Heights Alliance conducted robust engagement with residents, business owners, community Based on community and business feedback, the Alliance initiated a range of placemaking, research and community building efforts, including:

- Placemaking installations along Wisconsin Avenue featuring new seating areas and plantings
- Two Pop Up Galleries featuring renowned local artists
- Three Makers Markets featuring a diverse range of artisans and entrepreneurs
- The Friendship Heights portion of an incredibly successful Open Streets event in October 2022.
- A public history exhibit and discussion series focused on the history of Reno in collaboration with Jackson Reed and UDC students
- A pop-up bookstore featuring ice cream socials and outreach events.

In addition, the Alliance has built a marketing infrastructure to support local businesses, promote neighborhood events and happenings and share key information. Through this programming, rooted in ongoing community engagement, the Alliance has built a strong network of support and enthusiasm for the future of Friendship Heights.

These efforts demonstrate the value of a cross jurisdictional, place focused approach to shepherding transformation and revitalization. As a result of this success, property owners on both sides of Western Avenue have come together with DC and Montgomery County government leaders to develop a sustainable funding model that will support this place focused work into the future. By forming a Business Improvement District, Property owners are co-investing in programs and services that will improve the public realm, promote collaboration and create more opportunities for stakeholders on both side of the DC and Maryland border to participate in shaping the future of the neighborhood.

There are currently at least 5 residential development projects with imminent construction start dates on both sides of Western Avenue and a WMATA led planning process to re-develop 2 additional properties totaling 10 acres on the DC side of the line and DDOT is also studying several opportunities to build bike infrastructure in Friendship Heights in addition to the WMATA Better Bus planning effort which is proposing several improvements to bus service in the neighborhood.

A sustainably funded cross jurisdictional organization with a strong track record in engaging community and delivering programming aligned with hopes and priorities will bring much needed coordination and engagement around how to shape a better future for Friendship Heights, a neighborhood with immense potential. Like the Tenleytown Main Street which has helped improve the Tenley commercial district through events, placemaking and support, we believe the Friendship Heights Alliance will bring similar benefits to Friendship Heights.

For these reasons, ANC 3E enthusiastically supports the formation of the Friendship Heights Business Improvement District.

ANC 3E approved this testimony at its meeting on May 11, 2023, which was properly noticed and at which a quorum was present. The resolution was approved by a vote of 0-0-0. Commissioners Jonathan Bender, Matthew Cohen, Jeffrey Denny, Ali Gianinno Rohin Ghosh, Amy Hall and Tom Quinn were present.

Thank you for your time today.