

The Committee of 100

on the Federal City



TESTIMONY Before the COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

2019 May 2

PR23-0163 Historic Preservation Review Board Linda Greene Confirmation Resolution

Founded 1923

Chair

Stephen A. Hansen

PR23-0164 Historic Preservation Review Board Outerbridge Horsey Confirmation Resolution

Vice-Chair

Kirby Vining

PR23-0165 – Historic Preservation Review Board Chris Landis Confirmation Resolution

Secretary

Erik Hein

Dear Chairman Mendelson,

Treasurer

Carol F. Aten

My name is Sally Berk. I'm testifying on behalf of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City, a planning and preservation advocacy organization that was founded nearly a century ago. The Committee is most concerned that a few HPRB members are making decisions based on irrelevant personal preferences, rather than on the criteria mandated by federal and DC laws and regulations; Most seriously, in relation to landmark nominations.

Trustees

Charlie Bien

Judy Chesser

George R. Clark

Monte Edwards

Alma Gates

Larry Hargrove

Kathy Henderson

Naima Jefferson

Nancy MacWood

Meg Maguire

Elizabeth Purcell

Marilyn Simon

Jim Smailes

Pat Tiller

Evelyn Wrin

Our preservation ordinance is a direct result of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which was enacted to acknowledge the importance of protecting our nation's heritage. It mandated that local governments are to identify and save significant historic sites. These local designations do not require owner approval because they have been viewed to be within the city's regulatory power -- like a zoning ordinance or other land use program.

The criteria is not whether there is owner objection, nor whether a certain cultural group thinks the site is important or not, but whether the property meets the criteria for significance. Once a reviewing body votes subjectively, consistency is lost, as is fair and equitable evaluation of the property.

945 G Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20001

202.681.0225

www.committeeof100.net

info@committeeof100.net

The Committee of 100 is convinced that HPRB members have been adequately educated about the criteria for designation, as well as the standards for judging compatibility of proposed changes to landmarked property. Yet some HPRB members persist in ignoring the criteria and standards. On March 14 of this year, in conjunction with the DC Preservation League, we submitted a letter to you detailing the events that have contributed to our concerns. That letter is attached to this testimony.

Page 2: Committee of 100 testimony before the Committee of the Whole
Regarding proposed HPRB confirmations

Regarding the reappointments that are before you today, the Committee of 100 is in strong support of Mr. Horsey. He has demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the procedures before HPRB, the criteria for the designation of landmarks and historic districts, and the criteria for compatibility of proposed changes to designated sites. Furthermore, we are aware that Mr. Horsey does significant research on the issues that go before HPRB; and have observed Mr. Horsey gently guiding those HPRB who have forgotten or simply ignore the rules and procedures of the hearings. We look forward to Mr. Horsey's continued service on HPRB.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.