

National Coalition to Save Our Mall



an organized voice for the public on Mall matters

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers:

Judy Scott Feldman, Ph.D.
Chair

W. Kent Cooper, FAIA
Vice Chair

George H.F. Oberlander, AICP
Vice Chair

Joseph D. West, Esq.
Treasurer

Kay Murphy
Secretary

Lisa Benton-Short, Ph.D.
Director

Charles I. Cassell, FAIA
Director

George Idelson
Director

Thomas C. Jensen, Esq.
Director

David H. Marlin, Esq.
Director

3rd CENTURY MALL ADVISORS

Henry Arnold
Landscape Architect

Gordon Binder
Senior Fellow
World Wildlife Fund

M.J. "Jay" Brodie, FAIA, AICP
Baltimore Redevelopment Corp.

Louis Kriser
Kriser Enterprises, LLP

Frank Mankiewicz
Hill & Knowlton

Amy Meyer
Co-chair, People for A Golden Gate
National Recreation Area

William K. Reilly
Former Administrator, EPA

Robert E. Simon, Jr.
Founder, Reston, Va.

November 2, 2010

Chairman L. Preston Bryant, Jr.
National Capital Planning Commission
401 9th Street NW North Lobby, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chairman Bryant and Commissioners:

We would like to submit for the Commission's consideration the following questions regarding the **National Park Service's planned Temporary Office Unit in East Potomac Park**, which you will be reviewing during the November 4, 2010 NCPC public meeting.

During the September review of this project, NPS Superintendent Piltzecker stated, "One of the reasons this trailer is as big as it is, is because it does have a meeting space for people who are seeking to obtain permits for the National Mall." But we see no mention of this permitting function in either the NPS response to Coalition comments or in the NCPC staff's EDR.

- Was Mr. Piltzecker mistaken, or will this traditional NPS administrative function now housed in the National Capital Region building, and not associated with short-term construction projects, be moved here?
- If NPS plans to move permitting, why not locate the public function near Metro, instead of in this remote, hard-to-get-to area? Could NPS permitting and DC Parks & Recreation permitting for the National Mall be consolidated in one office near Metro?

The EDR states that the project will not impact NCPC's Framework Plan proposals for visitor amenities in this area of East Potomac Park because the structure will be temporary, and NPS is working on a new administrative office master plan.

- What if that NPS plan determines that the proper permanent location for future NPS offices is this "temporary" location, as it did with the "temporary" stables near the Korean Memorial soon to be joined by a new water filtration/pumping building?
- What authority will NCPC have to remove this "temporary" structure after four years?

The EDR rejects the Coalition's request for NPS to put aside the Categorical Exclusion and instead open the proper NEPA and Section 106 public consultation process. Staff agrees with NPS that the Exclusion is warranted because this is a temporary structure, and since there has been no community opposition or controversy. We would point out to the Commission that due to that Exclusion, there was no public scoping meeting before NPS made its decision and drew up plans for this "temporary" structure. We believe this is totally contrary to the Section 106 process as enacted by Congress.

- Besides sending out emails to select individuals and posting documents on their website, what meaningful outreach did NPS undertake to find out what the public thinks, particularly since the whole Southwest Waterfront area is undertaking a major rejuvenation and NCPC's Framework Plan points out this area of East Potomac Park will no longer be a backwater but will be connected by bridge across the Washington Channel?

Sincerely,

Judy Scott Feldman, PhD
Chair and President