

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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COMMISSION MEETING

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OPEN SESSION

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THURSDAY,
JULY 9, 2026

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The meeting convened via Videoconference, at
1:09 p.m. EDT, William Scharf, Chair, presiding.

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS
PRESENT:

WILLIAM SCHARF, Chair,
 Presidential Appointee (At-Large)
STUART LEVENBACH, Vice Chair,
 Mayoral Appointee
LINDA ARGO, Mayoral Appointee, District of
 Columbia
MICHAEL BLAIR, Presidential Appointee
JESSICA BOWRON, Acting Director, U.S. National
 Park Service
STEPHEN BRUCH, Director, Facilities Services
 Directorate, Washington Headquarters Service
EVAN CASH, Office of the Chairman of the Council
 of the District of Columbia
ANITA COZART, Office of the Mayor of
 the District of Columbia
ARRINGTON DIXON, Mayoral Appointee, District of
 Columbia
DANIEL FALCONE, U.S. House Committee on
 Oversight and Government Reform
WILLIAM HENDERSON, U.S. Senate Committee on
 Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

1 PAUL INGRASSIA, Government Service
2 Administration

3 NCPC STAFF PRESENT:

4 MARCEL C. ACOSTA, Executive Director
5 MEGHAN HOTTEL-COX, General Counsel & Secretariat
6 DIANNE SULLIVAN, Director, Current Planning
7 Division

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 1:09 p.m.

3 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Sorry, can everybody
4 hear me? Barely. Okay. I'll try to speak up
5 for those in the room.

6 My parents have been telling me my
7 whole life I speak too loudly. So, this is a
8 difference.

9 Good afternoon and welcome to the
10 National Capital Planning Commission's July 9th,
11 2026 open session. First, Madam Secretary, can
12 you please take the roll call?

13 COMMISSION ROLL CALL

14 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes. Commissioner
15 Cozart?

16 COMMISSIONER COZART: Here.

17 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Bruch?

18 COMMISSIONER BRUCH: Here.

19 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Bowron?

20 COMMISSIONER BOWRON: Here.

21 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Argo?

22 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Here.

1 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Vice Chairman
2 Levenbach?

3 VICE CHAIRMAN LEVENBACH: Here.

4 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Chairman Scharf?

5 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Here.

6 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Blair?

7 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Here.

8 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner
9 Ingrassia?

10 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: Here.

11 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Dixon?

12 (No response.)

13 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Cash?

14 COMMISSIONER CASH: Present.

15 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner
16 Henderson?

17 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Present.

18 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Falcone?

19 COMMISSIONER FALCONE: Here.

20 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Marcel Acosta,
21 Executive Director and Diane Sullivan, Current
22 Planning Division Director are, also, in the

1 meeting.

2 And, with those present, Mr. Chairman,
3 we have a quorum to proceed.

4 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Madam
5 Secretary. Noting the presence of a quorum, I'd
6 like to call this meeting to order.

7 Today's meeting is live streamed and
8 will be available in a few days on video on the
9 NCPC's website, as is our customary practice.

10 If there's no objection to the agenda,
11 the agenda as posted is adopted as the order of
12 business.

13 And if you would all please stand for
14 the pledge of allegiance.

15 (Pledge of Allegiance.)

16 REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN

17 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Agenda item two is
18 the Report of the Chairman. First, I hope
19 everybody had the opportunity to enjoy July 4th,
20 the semisesquicentennial celebrations of our great
21 republic.

22 One thing that I would just note, is

1 that as I move through the various celebrations
2 that have been kind of ever present in the
3 District over the last month, whether it was the
4 events on the mall or the fireworks show, I was
5 really struck by the number of people who had
6 come to D.C. from all over our country and all
7 over the world, to take in this momentous
8 occasion here in our nation's capital.

9 As I've said consistently at meetings
10 in the past, D.C. and the capital region is
11 truly how America holds itself out to the world.

12 And it certainly means a lot to Americans of
13 all stripes from all over our country.

14 And I think preserving the beauty of
15 our capital, making sure that this incredible
16 city remains as unique and remarkable as it has
17 always been over its long and storied history.
18 It's obviously something that's crucial to the
19 mission of this commission.

20 It's a job that I hope we all take very
21 seriously. And I know that the work that we've
22 done and others have done to beautify the

1 capital in the lead up to these celebrations
2 certainly was remarked upon, certainly was
3 appreciated.

4 And I think it goes without saying that
5 we should continue those sorts of practices. We
6 should continue making sure that this capital
7 remains as beautiful a public resource as it has
8 been long into the future.

9 I've been honored to lead this
10 Commission over the past year. I think it's
11 been exactly a year now.

12 So, we've made it through 12 eventful
13 months. It's been a great honor to get to chair
14 this Commission with a history of well over a
15 century now.

16 And I sincerely hope that NCPC will
17 continue doing the outstanding work that it's
18 done, will continue serving an important and
19 productive role in the future of Washington,
20 D.C. just as it has in the history of
21 Washington, D.C.

22 Second, I'd note that we do have the

1 monumental arch back on our agenda today. Last
2 time when we considered this project for concept
3 review, there were unfortunately a number of,
4 let's say, disturbances in the public gallery,
5 which I thought were unproductive.

6 I think it's very important that these
7 meetings continue to remain open to the public.

8 I've tried to ensure that these meetings
9 remain, to the extent possible, in person as
10 opposed to online.

11 We have a lot of people signed up to
12 testify today, which is absolutely a good thing.

13 I think the public deserves the right to
14 comment on matters that come before this
15 Commission.

16 And I hope that the public who are
17 present here today are respectful, both of the
18 people who have come here to comment on the
19 project, as well as the various Commissioners,
20 as we deliberate both the arch and really all
21 the other matters that come before this
22 Commission for consideration.

1 With that having been said -- oh, we
2 have a new representative here today, Daniel
3 Falcone, who's been designated by Congressman
4 Comer's team at the House.

5 Welcome, Mr. Falcone. You follow in
6 big footsteps. First, Ellie McPherson and was
7 it Paul Giacchetti? I believe was his name.

8 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Ellie McGowan.

9 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Ellie McGowan. I'm
10 getting these names mixed up.

11 MS. HOTTEL-COX: And Ryan Giacchetti,
12 yes.

13 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: I apologize. I got
14 back to America at about 2:00 a.m. last night.
15 But yeah, Ellie McGowan and Commissioner
16 Giacchetti.

17 But, Commissioner Falcone, welcome.
18 We're excited to have you here, and we look
19 forward to having you on our team going forward.

20 That's all I really have today. Thank
21 you as always to the professional staff, both
22 for your diligent work in the lead up to this

1 meeting, and, also, for really teaching me and
2 instructing me over the last year as to the work
3 of this Commission.

4 It's been an incredibly rewarding
5 experience for me. And I really appreciate
6 everything that you do and everything that
7 you've done to help me get up to speed and get
8 more familiar with the important work that we
9 do.

10 With that, agenda item number three is
11 the Report of our Executive Director, Marcel
12 Acosta. Marcel, you can proceed whenever you're
13 ready.

14 REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

15 MR. ACOSTA: Yeah. Thank you, Chair
16 Scharf, and good afternoon. We're pleased to
17 welcome two urban planners who have recently
18 joined NCPC's Long Range Planning Division.

19 First, we have Will Oliver, okay. Will
20 is an urban planner and policy analyst with
21 experience of land use planning, housing and
22 community development, and federal regulatory

1 analysis.

2 Most recently, he served at the U.S.
3 Department of Housing and Urban Development.
4 He, also, worked at the D.C. Office of Planning
5 and at the Urban Institute.

6 Will holds a bachelor's degree in urban
7 studies and sociology from the University of
8 Pennsylvania.

9 We, also, have Michael Bochynski.
10 Michael is a transportation land use
11 professional who, also, worked as a research and
12 project assistant for the National Center for
13 Smart Growth and the Environmental Finance
14 Center at the University of Maryland. He, also,
15 worked at the Clean Water Fund.

16 Michael holds a master's in community
17 planning from the University of Maryland.

18 Again, welcome to Will and Michael. My
19 written report is in your packets and I'm happy
20 to answer any questions that you might have.

21 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Marcel.
22 Do any Commissioners have any questions or

1 comments for our Executive Director?

2 (No response.)

3 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Hearing and seeing
4 none, Will and Michael, welcome to the team.
5 We're excited to have you.

6 This is an incredible group of people,
7 and I'm sure if you've been chosen by our
8 outstanding leadership team that you're up to
9 the job. And we look forward to hearing more
10 from you in meetings in the future.

11 Agenda item number four is the
12 Legislative Update. Meghan, do you want to
13 proceed with that?

14 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

15 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Sure. I don't have
16 any specific legislation with an update this
17 month. But, I'm happy to answer any questions
18 on pending legislation if Commissioners have
19 any.

20 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Do any Commissioners
21 have any such questions for our esteemed
22 Secretary/General Counsel?

1 (No response.)

2 CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS

3 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Hearing and seeing
4 none, thank you, Meghan.

5 And, with that, we'll proceed to agenda
6 item number five, which is our Consent Calendar.

7 There are two items on this month's Consent
8 Calendar.

9 The first is an application from the
10 National Gallery of Art for approval of comments
11 on concept plans for the West Building 7th
12 Street entrance improvements.

13 The second item is another application
14 from the National Gallery of Art for approval of
15 preliminary and final site development plans for
16 their exterior signage project.

17 Are there any questions or matters for
18 discussion on the Consent Calendar from any
19 Commissioners?

20 (No response.)

21 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Hearing and seeing
22 none, is there a motion to approve the Consent

1 Calendar?

2 VICE CHAIRMAN LEVENBACH: So moved.

3 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Vice
4 Chairman Levenbach. Is there a second?

5 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Second.

6 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you. I didn't
7 catch who was first on the second there. That
8 was the reason for my momentary pause.

9 Is there any discussion on this item
10 before we proceed?

11 (No response.)

12 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Hearing and seeing
13 none, Madam Secretary, can you please confirm
14 the motion and the second and take the vote by
15 roll call?

16 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes. The motion was
17 made by Vice Chairman Levenbach and seconded by
18 Commissioner Henderson.

19 With that, Commissioner Cozart?

20 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes.

21 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Bruch?

22 COMMISSIONER BRUCH: Yes.

1 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Bowron?

2 COMMISSIONER BOWRON: Yes.

3 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Argo?

4 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes.

5 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Vice Chairman

6 Levenbach?

7 VICE CHAIRMAN LEVENBACH: Yes.

8 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Chairman Scharf?

9 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Yes.

10 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Blair?

11 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Yes.

12 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner

13 Ingrassia?

14 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: Yes.

15 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Dixon?

16 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

17 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Cash?

18 COMMISSIONER CASH: Yes.

19 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner

20 Henderson?

21 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Yes.

22 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Falcone?

1 COMMISSIONER FALCONE: Yes.

2 MS. HOTTEL-COX: The motion carries
3 unanimously.

4 ACTION ITEMS

5 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Madam
6 Secretary. With that motion having passed, we
7 have two items on our Open Session Agenda for
8 today.

9 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
10 MEMORIAL AVENUE, WASHINGTON, D.C. - NEW

11 MONUMENTAL ARCH

12 The first is agenda item 6A, which is a
13 request to approve preliminary site and building
14 plans for the new monumental arch.

15 And, from our team, we have Jamie Herr
16 presenting. Jamie, you can proceed whenever
17 you're ready.

18 MS. HERR: Members of the Commission,
19 the U.S. Department of the Interior has
20 submitted preliminary site building plans for a
21 new monumental arch in Memorial Circle in
22 Washington, D.C. for Commission approval.

1 At the preliminary stage, the
2 Commission is focused on whether the applicant
3 addressed the comments made during the concept
4 review, general consistency with the
5 comprehensive plan, and a range of building and
6 site design topics including viewsheds, building
7 massing, landscape, and circulation.

8 The project is proposed for Memorial
9 Circle, an existing traffic circle on Columbia
10 Island in Washington, D.C. The project site,
11 circled in green, connects the Arlington
12 Memorial Bridge to Memorial Avenue and the
13 George Washington Memorial Parkway.

14 The site on Columbia Island is in
15 between the boundary channel.

16 (Audio interference.)

17 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: That's a sound I've
18 never heard before in these meetings. Sorry.

19 (Laughter.)

20 MS. HOTTEL-COX: As a reminder, can all
21 virtual attendees please mute their microphones
22 during the presentation. Thank you.

1 MS. HERR: All right. To the west, the
2 Arlington National Cemetery and to the east is
3 the Lincoln Memorial.

4 Now, I'll give a brief overview of the
5 site history. As a reminder from the concept
6 review, the need for a bridge connecting the
7 northern and southern shores of the Potomac
8 River in the area of the Arlington Memorial
9 Bridge was documented as early as the mid-1800s.

10 The concept for a Memorial Bridge and
11 Avenue first emerged after the Civil War and
12 gained momentum when it was included within the
13 McMillan plan, which proposed improvements to
14 the Washington, D.C. Park system.

15 According to the cultural landscape
16 report published by the National Park Service in
17 2024, the Memorial Avenue corridor was designed
18 as a symbolic and physical link between the
19 Lincoln Memorial, a tribute to the 16th American
20 President, the entrance to Arlington National
21 Cemetery, and Arlington House, the former
22 plantation home of Confederate General Robert E.

1 Lee.

2 The design of the corridor took shape
3 amidst the City Beautiful movement, which
4 promoted formal and classical treatments for
5 architectural, engineering, sculptural, and
6 landscape features, all of which were
7 incorporated into the evolving designs for the
8 Arlington Memorial Bridge and the Memorial
9 Avenue corridor.

10 The corridor was built in phases.
11 Arlington Memorial Bridge was constructed
12 between 1926 and 1932. The Boundary Channel
13 Bridge was built between 1929 and 1930.
14 Memorial Avenue was built beginning in 1930.

15 And, finally, Memorial Circle was
16 constructed on Columbia Island beginning in
17 1940. Memorial Circle was designed as part of
18 the Western terminus of Arlington Memorial
19 Bridge as a means to connect the George
20 Washington Memorial Parkway, Arlington
21 Boulevard, and Memorial Avenue.

22 Now, we'll review the existing site

1 conditions. The area has changed significantly
2 since the original design to the current
3 conditions today, with several connecting roads,
4 highways, parkways, merge lanes, off-ramps, and
5 trails both at grade and below.

6 The most recent design changes to the
7 Circle from 2020 were intended to improve
8 transportation safety at and near Memorial
9 Circle while maintaining the memorial character
10 of the area. The goals were to reduce risks at
11 key locations within the corridor and to reduce
12 conflicts between trail, walkway, and roadway
13 users.

14 These changes included splitting the
15 eastern traffic island to create continuous
16 vehicular movement as shown here. These
17 changes, also, restricted pedestrian access
18 around the Circle, and currently there is no
19 pedestrian access across Memorial Avenue on the
20 east side of the Circle or to the center of the
21 Circle itself.

22 The existing site sits in the middle in

1 the center of an important view corridor along
2 Memorial Avenue between the Lincoln Memorial and
3 Arlington House.

4 Now, with that as background, I will
5 review the proposed preliminary design. I will
6 give an initial overview of the updated project
7 and the review elements in more detail in the
8 order of the Executive Director's Report.

9 The applicant is proposing a 250-foot
10 tall arch as shown here in this rendering.
11 According to the applicant, the purpose of the
12 arch is to celebrate 250 years of American
13 independence by honoring America's founding
14 principles through installation of a structure
15 at the intersection of Arlington Memorial Bridge
16 and Memorial Avenue within the George Washington
17 Memorial Parkway, in a manner consistent with
18 the avenue's established role as a ceremonial
19 gateway and avenue of heroes celebrating valor,
20 sacrifice, and American heritage.

21 Staff supports the celebration of the
22 250th anniversary of the nation's independence

1 and recommends the Commission support the
2 purpose of the project to celebrate America's
3 semiquincentennial.

4 The proposed arch consists of an arch
5 structure with two legs at a height of 166 feet
6 to the top of the mezzanine. The observation
7 deck and statuary plinth is 24 feet in height,
8 and the larger central statue is 60 feet, for a
9 total of 250 feet.

10 The exterior of the proposed arch will
11 be clad in stone. The vertical faces of the
12 arch facing east and west, previously at the
13 concept plan, included recessed or framed spaces
14 that would typically house statuary or relief
15 sculpture, but have been replaced with a smooth
16 surface.

17 The remaining sides retain these
18 recesses. As of the concept review, no specific
19 details on the future use of these spaces has
20 been identified.

21 The remaining details are consistent
22 with the concept design, including the top area

1 of the arch gold lettering, quoting the American
2 Pledge of Allegiance on both east and west-
3 facing sides.

4 Above the primary arch structure and
5 mezzanine is a recessed area housing the
6 observation deck, interior space, and above that
7 the proposed statuary. The proposed design
8 still includes a central gold statue flanked by
9 smaller gold eagles on each side.

10 All the statuaries facing east toward
11 the Lincoln Memorial, there are, also,
12 additional gold decorative elements on the
13 underneath side of the arch and on each vertical
14 face. The proposed interior of the arch has
15 been updated.

16 At the ground level in the south leg is
17 ticketing and security, back of house spaces,
18 stairwells, and elevators. In the north leg is
19 an exit hall, back of house spaces, stairwells,
20 and elevators.

21 At the mezzanine level above the legs,
22 the plans include a stair hall, restrooms,

1 program spaces, and stair and elevator lobbies.

2 Two of the staircases and one elevator in the
3 center of the mezzanine provide access to the
4 observation level above.

5 The proposed arch sits within a plaza
6 that includes granite pavers encircled by a seat
7 wall and two pedestrian access points lined with
8 bollards. The two access points face east and
9 west aligned with the opening of the arch.

10 The Circle is shown with the new
11 pedestrian crosswalks connecting visitors via
12 pedestrian refuge islands and new traffic
13 signals.

14 This enlarge detail of the proposed
15 site plan shows the Belgian block apron, a
16 planting strip that will be used for storm water
17 management, a barricade seat wall, granite
18 pavers, and bollards. The updated design
19 includes recessed lighting and traffic signals
20 at the crosswalks.

21 The Circle is shown with new pedestrian
22 crosswalks and post-mounted pedestrian actuated

1 traffic signals, connecting visitors via
2 pedestrian refuge islands next to the traffic
3 circle.

4 Pictured here on the east side, there
5 are two new crosswalks that will start at the
6 landing of the Memorial Bridge, crossing the
7 traffic onto an island before crossing the
8 circle drive lane into the arch plaza itself.

9 The applicant has updated the plans
10 with four traffic signals at each pedestrian
11 crosswalk, and actuated signal posts will be
12 used to control vehicular traffic and allow
13 pedestrians to use the various crosswalks.

14 Now, I'll review the Height of
15 Buildings Act and recommendations for the
16 project.

17 NCPC's role as the central planning agency for
18 the federal government in the nation's capital
19 has included application of the Height of
20 Buildings Act to preserve the horizontal skyline
21 of the District.

22 NCPC has historically held that the

1 Height of Buildings Act is binding on federal
2 projects, and NCPC has consistently applied that
3 position in project reviews since being tasked
4 with that authority in 1938.

5 As such, staff recommends the
6 Commission finds that the Height of Buildings
7 Act applies to the project, and consistent with
8 NCPC's role, to apply the Act through its review
9 of projects, the project as designed is
10 inconsistent with the Act.

11 Therefore, staff suggests the
12 Commission request the applicant revise the
13 project design to comply with the Height of
14 Buildings Act and return to NCPC for final
15 review.

16 As noted in the Executive Director's
17 Report, application of the Height of Buildings
18 Act would not prevent the stated goal of 250
19 feet as the Act differentiates between habitable
20 building space and architectural embellishments
21 like statuary.

22 While the habitable building space

1 would be limited under the Heights of Building
2 Act to 130 feet plus the 20-foot penthouse, NCPC
3 could approve statuary above that height. Here,
4 the applicant would need to redistribute 40 feet
5 from the arch structure to the statuary to
6 achieve the intended 250-foot height.

7 I will now review the updated
8 pedestrian accessibility plans and
9 recommendations. The concept plans indicated
10 new pedestrian crosswalks with pedestrian
11 actuated signals, but no other details about
12 pedestrian access or safety.

13 And the Commission requested a
14 transportation study that evaluated the proposed
15 pedestrian access to ensure visitors could avoid
16 pedestrian vehicular conflicts.

17 The applicant has updated the plans and
18 included a preliminary traffic study showing the
19 same traffic island configuration with the
20 addition of four full signals at each of the
21 eight pedestrian crosswalks to stop traffic for
22 pedestrians.

1 This plan detail shows the three
2 crosswalks in the traffic island on the east
3 side of the Circle with the new crosswalk from
4 the Mount Vernon Trail at the south.

5 In addition to the proposed traffic
6 signals, the plans reconfigure the Circle and
7 connecting roadways to eliminate vehicular merge
8 movements through the Circle, including the
9 northbound and westbound traffic through
10 movements around the circle from northbound
11 Washington Boulevard. The preliminary traffic
12 study states this is to improve pedestrian
13 safety and driver expectations.

14 Staff finds the traffic movement will
15 be simplified and the addition of pedestrian
16 activated traffic signals will provide safer
17 pedestrian and bicycle circulation for visitors
18 to the arch, as well as daily commuters.

19 Staff, also, finds that while the
20 proposed traffic signals will improve pedestrian
21 safety, the inclusion of 32 individual traffic
22 signal poles around the Circle could also create

1 visual clutter in the viewshed and recommends
2 the Commission encourage the applicant to
3 consider fewer individual traffic signal poles
4 should additional analysis warrant a reduction
5 without compromising safety.

6 Now, I'll review the proposed vehicular
7 network changes and recommendations. As
8 previously noted, there is currently no
9 pedestrian access via crosswalks to the Circle
10 or across Memorial Avenue on the east side, as
11 the Circle sees heavy volumes of traffic,
12 especially from northbound Washington Boulevard
13 to eastbound Memorial Bridge and from the bridge
14 to northbound Arlington Boulevard. Both of
15 these move-ins have continuous lanes around the
16 Circle currently.

17 At the concept review, the Commission
18 requested a transportation study that identifies
19 any potential impacts of the proposed project on
20 the road network and level of service.

21 The applicant has prepared a
22 preliminary traffic study, and according to the

1 submission, the plans include removing the left
2 turn lane on northbound Washington Boulevard to
3 enter the Circle and continue north and west.
4 The plans also include moving the trail
5 crossings closer to the Circle from the existing
6 location and adding the four full traffic
7 signals at each crosswalk.

8 The study notes that there will be
9 impacts to vehicular traffic and access around
10 the Circle, including the removal of the
11 northbound and westbound movements around the
12 Circle, where visitors will no longer be able to
13 access Arlington National Cemetery directly from
14 Washington Boulevard.

15 The study notes that there will be --
16 yeah. Let's see. The applicant has, also,
17 stated that further refinement of traffic signal
18 timing will occur as visitation to the arch is
19 better understood.

20 The District Department of
21 Transportation, or DDOT, and Arlington County
22 have submitted comments on their preliminary

1 information, and staff recommends the Commission
2 request the applicant provide, as part of the
3 final submission, updated information regarding
4 the potential offsite impacts to the vehicular
5 transportation network in response to comments
6 from DDOT and Arlington County, and requests the
7 applicant continue to work with the Federal
8 Highway Administration, District Department
9 Transportation, Arlington County, and other
10 agencies, as appropriate, regarding the proposed
11 changes and impacts to the surface
12 transportation network.

13 Now, I'll review the proposed loading
14 and unloading plan and recommendations. At the
15 concept review, the Commission requested
16 information regarding parking and loading and
17 unloading for visitors to the arch to ensure
18 safe access for those of all abilities and
19 minimize disruption to the traffic network.

20 The applicant is proposing to utilize
21 the Arlington National Cemetery garage for
22 visitor parking and Memorial Avenue for visitor

1 pickup and drop-off.

2 As such, staff recommends the
3 Commission request the applicant provide details
4 regarding pickup, drop-off, and loading
5 locations, and coordinate with Arlington
6 National Cemetery prior to final review
7 regarding the use of the Memorial Avenue and the
8 cemetery parking garage for arch visitor
9 parking.

10 Next, I will review visitor safety and
11 their recommendations. At concept review, the
12 Commission requested the applicant provide as
13 part of this review a risk assessment and
14 evaluation of the project to ensure that the
15 proposed design will address security
16 considerations.

17 The applicant included a summary of the
18 project's security considerations and details
19 regarding the site elements, including the
20 barricade seat wall, bollards, security cameras,
21 and interior screening features.

22 As such, staff recommends the

1 Commission support integration of site security
2 features, including the seat wall, to help
3 protect the visitor experience while not
4 detracting from the project design.

5 Next, I will review aviation safety and
6 the recommendations. The Commission previously
7 recommended during the concept review, the
8 applicant continue consultation with the Federal
9 Aviation Administration, or FAA, to evaluate
10 potential impacts of the proposed project on air
11 navigation and provide an update to the
12 Commission as part of this review.

13 The Commission, also, advised the
14 applicant that any design recommendations
15 provided by the FAA should be incorporated into
16 the proposed project prior to the Commission's
17 final action.

18 According to the submission, the FAA
19 conducted a limited aeronautical review
20 concerning the feasibility of the arch and found
21 the structure would have no significant adverse
22 effect on airspace and visual instrument

1 procedures at Ronald Reagan Washington National
2 Airport, subject to the inclusion of red
3 obstruction lights.

4 The FAA still requires a full
5 aeronautical study for the actual -- the final
6 design of the arch prior to its construction.
7 And, therefore, staff recommends the Commission
8 requests the final plans include any
9 navigational or safety lighting as required by
10 the Federal Aviation Administration, and advises
11 the applicant that if, subject to the full
12 Federal Aviation Administration study, any
13 component of the project design that must be
14 altered, the updated design must be submitted to
15 the Commission for review.

16 This section will cover viewsheds and
17 their related recommendations. At concept
18 review, the Commission requested updated photo
19 visualizations of existing and proposed
20 pedestrian level views from, number one, the
21 north steps of the Jefferson Memorial looking
22 toward the Lincoln Memorial, and from the George

1 Washington Memorial Parkway; number two, looking
2 south toward the Circle from a point immediately
3 south of I-66; and number three, looking north
4 toward the Circle from a point near the Lyndon
5 B. Johnson Memorial Grove.

6 The applicant has included updated
7 renderings from some of these vantage points,
8 which demonstrate the visual impact of the arch,
9 which I will review now.

10 This is a new rendered view from the
11 Jefferson Memorial looking toward the arch with
12 before on the left and after on the right. This
13 is a new rendered view from the George
14 Washington Memorial Parkway looking south,
15 before on the left and after on the right.

16 Based on the new submitted renderings
17 of distant views, visual impacts will be evident
18 but less visible than the direct views from the
19 Memorial Avenue Arlington Bridge access.

20 At the concept review, the Commission,
21 also, requested to see the design options that
22 were explored to avoid or minimize impacts on

1 the visual connection between Arlington House
2 and the Lincoln Memorial. This is the before
3 and after view from the Arlington House to the
4 Lincoln Memorial, which is one of the
5 obstructive views.

6 According to the applicant, during and
7 prior to the design process, various smaller
8 arch heights were evaluated.

9 The smaller arches were ultimately
10 dismissed, because the applicant believes they
11 would have had greater impact on the cultural
12 landscapes, specifically the views between the
13 Lincoln Memorial and Arlington National
14 Cemetery. The smaller designs fully obstructed
15 this view and did not create any new viewing
16 opportunities.

17 By contrast, the proposed arch would
18 allow a less obstructed view through its central
19 opening. In addition, it states that because
20 the arch is intended to celebrate 250 years of
21 American independence, the smaller heights were
22 not considered representative of this milestone.

1 Based on the submission, staff
2 recommends the Commission find the scale of the
3 arch and its openings have a relational impact
4 on direct and panoramic views from different
5 elevations resulting in trade-offs, which should
6 be considered in balance with the project's
7 overall purpose and need.

8 In its current form, the proposed arch
9 will allow for framed views of the Lincoln
10 Memorial and Arlington House from the lower
11 elevations of Memorial Bridge and Memorial
12 Avenue. It will fully obstruct reciprocal views
13 of the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington from the
14 higher elevations of Arlington House and the
15 Lincoln Memorial Terrace.

16 And it will introduce a new panoramic
17 view of the monumental core from the observation
18 deck. As such, staff recommends the Commission
19 request the applicant continue to consult, as
20 necessary, with the federal agencies and the
21 Section 106 consulting parties needing --
22 consulting parties, to continue to explore ways

1 to minimize impacts to historic resources and to
2 determine appropriate mitigations to resolve
3 adverse effects to be included in a programmatic
4 agreement.

5 The next session for review and
6 recommendations is project design and materials.

7 At the concept review, the Commission requested
8 the applicant provide as part of this
9 submission, information regarding the proposed
10 arch and site materials pallet, including
11 cladding, paving, pedestrian features and
12 security elements, the proposed lighting
13 strategy, including nighttime renderings from
14 key views, demonstrating the lighting concept in
15 context, and the proposed storm water management
16 strategy.

17 The applicant has submitted the
18 proposed materials, including three potential
19 granite cladding options for the exterior of the
20 arch shown on the left, with the paving
21 materials and other materials as shown.

22 Staff recommends the Commission request

1 that prior to final review, the applicant
2 provide information about the final granite
3 cladding selection.

4 Submission states the applicant intends
5 to include lighting at the site, including in-
6 ground recess up-lighting, up-lights above the
7 impost base, and tabature attic story into an
8 up-lighting of the statuary. And eight 14 to
9 20-foot tall ground-mounted light stanchions,
10 pictured here, are planned around the Circle to
11 ensure the arch is brilliantly illuminated.

12 The applicant has provided two rendered
13 nighttime views, shown here, and staff
14 recommends the Commission request the applicant
15 submit a narrative describing the proposed
16 lighting concept and its relationship to the
17 Lincoln Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery
18 that includes relevant details on the proposed
19 lighting stanchions and any other site lighting,
20 including illumination levels proposed, such as
21 foot limbers or other measure, to understand the
22 relative brightness of the monument as compared

1 to other national monuments and memorials, and
2 to protect the lighting hierarchy of the
3 National Mall.

4 The applicant has included storm water
5 management details in the submission, and
6 indicated that they will utilize bio-retention
7 with native grasses and shrubs around the
8 perimeter of the Circle to accommodate runoff.

9 Additional coordination with the
10 District Department of Energy and Environment
11 will be necessary to meet all applicable
12 permitting requirements.

13 Finally, our project coordination
14 recommendations for the applicant to consider
15 that were not already mentioned. At the concept
16 review, the Commission previously requested, as
17 part of this submission, updates on the Section
18 106 process and the National Environmental
19 Policy Act evaluation process, as completion of
20 both is required prior to the Commission's final
21 action.

22 The applicant is lead federal agency

1 for the preparation of the environmental
2 assessment, and finding of no significant impact
3 pursuant to the National Environmental Policy
4 Act, and NCPC utilized the applicant's
5 environmental assessment for purposes of
6 compliance with NEPA.

7 The National Park Service initiated the
8 Section 106 process of the National Historic
9 Preservation Act on June 6th, 2026, and prepared
10 a draft assessment of effects and programmatic
11 agreement and held a consulting party's meeting
12 on June 15th, 2026.

13 NCPC designated the National Park
14 Service as lead federal agency for the purpose
15 of compliance with the Section 106 process of
16 the National Historic Preservation Act.
17 Completion of this process will be necessary
18 prior to final review.

19 As a reminder for the next stage, a
20 final review, the Commission will focus on
21 topics such as if the comments provided during
22 this review were adequately addressed,

1 architecture and lighting details, and ensuring
2 confidence that the plans will not substantially
3 change.

4 This concludes my presentation. As
5 noted previously at this preliminary review
6 stage, the Commission is currently focused on
7 topics such as the project's consistency with
8 the federal elements of the comprehensive plan,
9 the architectural and landscape strategy, the
10 appropriateness of the site for the given
11 context, and how the project will affect views,
12 viewsheds, and circulation.

13 I have incorporated those
14 recommendations into the presentation, so I will
15 not read them again. They are included here for
16 your reference.

17 In conclusion, staff recommends the
18 Commission approve the preliminary site and
19 building plans for the proposed monumental arch
20 located on Memorial Circle and Columbia Island
21 in Washington, D.C., with comments to be
22 addressed prior to final review.

1 Finally, I want to acknowledge that
2 NCPC has received a substantial number of public
3 comments on the project. The vast majority of
4 the comments received were in opposition, and
5 the most common concerns related to the impact
6 to the setting of Arlington National Cemetery,
7 views, height, and scale, and safety.

8 The applicant team and the architect
9 are here to answer any questions the Commission
10 may have and staff is available, as well. Thank
11 you.

12 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Jamie. I
13 have a couple questions, actually, for the
14 project team, if there are folks who are
15 available?

16 First, how far, with respect to
17 parking, how far is the Arlington, sort of,
18 parking complex from the arch itself? Do we
19 know that?

20 (Off-microphone comments.)

21 MS. HOTTEL-COX: And while she does
22 that, if you could introduce yourself for the

1 record, that would be great.

2 MS. FETZER: Yeah, sure. Hi everyone.

3 Good afternoon. My name is Julie Fetzer. I'm
4 currently acting as the Transportation Program
5 Manager for the National Capital Region of the
6 National Park Service.

7 So, as you can see on the map here, the
8 ANC parking areas, which are indicated on the
9 bottom left-hand side of the screen, are
10 generally the areas where people would park and
11 then walk up King Street and then down Memorial
12 Ave.

13 So, it's about a 10-minute walk.

14 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay.

15 MS. FETZER: I don't have the linear
16 feet handy. We can include that in our final
17 submission.

18 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: And if somebody were
19 like, taking an Uber over or whatever, they
20 would be dropping off in that proposed
21 loading/unloading area? Is that the idea?

22 MS. FETZER: Either in that loading and

1 unloading area, or more likely along Memorial
2 Ave.

3 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Interesting, okay.
4 Will we have details on what's going into the
5 recessed spaces and sort of the, I guess,
6 statuary type stuff prior to final in September?

7 Is that something that's -- what I'm
8 trying to avoid is having to come back in with
9 new plans and go through this whole process
10 again.

11 MR. SHARP: Yeah, the plan is that the
12 structure -- this is Nicholas Sharp, with
13 Harrison Design.

14 The plan is that the monument itself
15 will not change. But, the statuary will be
16 fitting in within the niches and areas that have
17 been created within it.

18 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay, gotcha.

19 MR. SHARP: And that'll be submitted to
20 the Commission of Fine Arts on its own track,
21 and then ultimately here.

22 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Do you know rough

1 timeline on that or?

2 MR. SHARP: I don't know.

3 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay. And then,
4 lastly, before we bring this in for final, would
5 it be possible to get rendered views from the
6 observation deck itself?

7 Of what it would look like looking out
8 from the observation deck of the proposed arch
9 over both D.C. and in the direction of D.C. and
10 then over Arlington?

11 Is that something that's feasible?

12 MR. SHARP: Yes, we can produce that.

13 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay,

14 MR. SHARP: Yes, certainly.

15 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: That's all I have.

16 Do any other Commissioners have questions either
17 for Jamie or for the project team?

18 Vice Chairman Levenbach?

19 VICE CHAIRMAN LEVENBACH: So, I want to
20 talk about the traffic pattern and make sure I
21 understand what you've done here.

22 So, did you look at the option of just

1 accessing Memorial Circle from Memorial Avenue,
2 and not having the access coming from Memorial
3 Bridge?

4 MS. FETZER: Yes, we did. We looked at
5 a range of different alternatives, which varied
6 from a tunnel underneath the Circle, all the way
7 to, what we would call having the lightest touch
8 on the landscape, which would be limiting access
9 to the western side of the Circle, where traffic
10 volumes are relatively low.

11 As we evaluated those alternatives, one
12 of the things that we found is that concern for
13 safety by limiting access to just one side of
14 the Circle.

15 Generally, pedestrians are going to
16 take the path of least resistance. So, if they
17 have to go out of their way in order to reach a
18 crosswalk, they're more likely to take unsafe
19 behaviors and try to divert into traffic in
20 order to get to where they're going.

21 So, as folks are walking along
22 Arlington Memorial Bridge, they're going to be

1 very drawn to the arch, kind of want to get
2 there as quickly as possible.

3 So, because of that, the expectation
4 for them to go out of their way and walk around
5 the Circle in order to access it, did not feel
6 like a realistic expectation. In order to
7 provide that safe crossing opportunity and
8 encourage people to use the crosswalk, having
9 access on both sides of the Circle was generally
10 preferred as the safest option.

11 VICE CHAIRMAN LEVENBACH: Okay. And
12 did you -- I think we talked about how many
13 estimated visitors you think you were going to
14 get in a year in the last meeting.

15 Have you run those numbers to get an
16 idea?

17 MR. SHARP: I don't have the total
18 numbers, but the park service -- the security
19 will be the bottleneck really. And so, they
20 said that they can process roughly about 80
21 visitors an hour, and I think open, roughly the
22 hours of Arlington National Cemetery, which I

1 believe was 9:00 to 5:00.

2 VICE CHAIRMAN LEVENBACH: You said 80
3 an hour? Okay.

4 And if you think about visitation to
5 the cemetery as a benchmark, you know, what do
6 you think demand versus supply is going to be?

7 MR. SHARP: I don't have those numbers,
8 but I can produce them for you.

9 VICE CHAIRMAN LEVENBACH: Yeah, because
10 that'll give you an idea of foot traffic. I
11 think it's four million people that visit the
12 cemetery every year.

13 Not that everybody would go to the arch
14 or other people would go just to the arch and
15 not necessarily to the cemetery. But, it'd
16 probably be good to think through, like, how
17 much foot traffic you're going to get, supply
18 and demand, how 80 would match up with demand.

19 MS. FETZER: We did evaluate a higher
20 number of pedestrians visiting. The number that
21 Nick gave was generally folks who will be able
22 to have a ticket to visit the inside of the arch

1 in a given hour.

2 We evaluated a much higher number. We
3 evaluated up to 900 pedestrians visiting the
4 center of the Circle every hour.

5 What we found, was that can generally
6 be accommodated without major impacts to traffic
7 by strategies like creating very wide
8 crosswalks, balancing the amount of green time
9 for those pedestrians, versus vehicles doing
10 things like adaptive signal timing to make sure
11 that pedestrians have enough time to cross with
12 that demand.

13 So, we are confident that we can -- the
14 traffic signals that are proposed surrounding
15 the Circle, in combination with the pedestrian
16 infrastructure that is proposed, is able to
17 handle a much higher number of visitation per
18 hour.

19 VICE CHAIRMAN LEVENBACH: Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: I have a
21 question.

22 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Commissioner

1 Ingrassia?

2 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: Thank you for
3 the presentation. I thought it was very
4 detailed, especially with the planning and
5 attention that went into safety features,
6 managing foot traffic, car traffic.

7 I just had a question. It seems like
8 there's a lot of like, you know, traffic signs
9 now and lights and posts combined with the
10 lighting surrounding the arch itself.

11 I'm wondering if there's concern that
12 there may be a little too much visual clutter at
13 this stage, at least based on these plans?

14 And if there's anything being
15 considered to potentially mitigate some of that
16 visual clutter?

17 MS. FETZER: Of course. Thank you for
18 the question there. The number of traffic
19 signals that are currently proposed was a
20 conservative look at potentially the maximum
21 number that would be needed at this point in
22 schematic design.

1 As we move forward, those number of
2 traffic signals will be reduced to those that
3 are needed in order to provide visibility for
4 drivers to the signals themselves.

5 So, right now there's four proposed per
6 crosswalk. We would anticipate that number to
7 go down to between two to three for most of the
8 crosswalks as the design progresses.

9 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: Okay.

10 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Any other questions
11 before we proceed to public testimony? Yes?

12 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Back on
13 transportation related questions.

14 MS. FETZER: I was just sitting down.

15 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: The estimates
16 that I saw that were submitted of traffic
17 impacts after the arch is completed, is that
18 correct that these are for after completion, as
19 opposed to during construction?

20 MS. FETZER: Yes.

21 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Okay. Are
22 there estimates for the impact during

1 construction?

2 MS. FETZER: We do have those and we
3 can provide them in the final submission.

4 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: That's
5 something I would like to see then.

6 MS. FETZER: Okay.

7 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: There's also,
8 I think, from looking at the maps, but I'm not
9 entirely clear, during construction, is there
10 going to be eastbound traffic from the direction
11 of the cemetery or southbound parkway to the
12 bridge?

13 MS. FETZER: Yes. So, eastbound
14 traffic coming from the cemetery will be routed
15 to the northern side of the Circle.

16 So, the northern side of the Circle,
17 which is currently one way westbound, will now
18 feature two-way traffic during that temporary
19 maintenance of traffic period during
20 construction.

21 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Okay.

22 MS. FETZER: And then, the other

1 movement that you asked about, can you remind
2 me?

3 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: No, that was -
4 -

5 MS. FETZER: That was it?

6 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: That was it.

7 MS. FETZER: Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Other than
9 also noting that, you know, there is a
10 significant rehabilitation of the Roosevelt
11 Bridge going on at the same time.

12 MS. FETZER: Correct.

13 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: So, we're
14 going to be layering traffic impacts upon
15 traffic impacts for roughly the same three-year
16 period. So, that would be just a consideration
17 in how to execute.

18 A separate question, and this was
19 raised in the comments by various Arlington
20 County entities was, and I appreciate the
21 contact with the FAA on the design and the
22 lights, and I think that's very important.

1 But, they raised two issues. One is
2 the height of the cranes during construction and
3 impact on air traffic with that. Is that
4 something that's being discussed?

5 MR. SHARP: Yes, it is. And that's
6 currently being evaluated. So, we'll have
7 something to submit by final submission.

8 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Okay. And the
9 same thing with the concern that they raised
10 about the airline's plans for if an engine goes
11 out on a plane, that the path, because their
12 comment at least, and I don't know if it's true,
13 is that is where a plane would go to turn
14 around.

15 MR. SHARP: Yeah, we're still in
16 communication with the FAA and evaluating all
17 the scenarios that could potentially happen.

18 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Will that be
19 done in time for the final submission?

20 MR. SHARP: Yes.

21 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay. And when we
22 see the final lighting plan, I'm assuming

1 that'll include at nighttime the sort of FAA-
2 mandated red lights? Is that correct?

3 MR. SHARP: Yes.

4 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay. Any other
5 questions?

6 Hearing and seeing none, thank you,
7 Jamie, and thank you, Nicholas. And I'm sorry I
8 missed your name. Julie, thank you for your
9 insightful testimony.

10 We'll now turn to public testimony
11 today. We have about 40 people signed up to
12 testify today, some in person and some online.
13 As we usually do, we're going to hear from
14 witnesses in groups of five and hold on
15 Commission questions until after we move through
16 five witnesses.

17 Our first group of witnesses are
18 Cynthia Morrison, Susan Douglas, Jimi
19 Shaughnessy, Priya Jain, and Shady Migally.

20 Cynthia Morrison, Ms. Morrison, I
21 believe you're here in person. I see somebody
22 coming forward. There we are. Thank you,

1 ma'am.

2 You'll have three minutes to provide
3 your testimony. And as I've done in previous
4 meetings, I try to give at least a little bit of
5 leeway towards the end of that period.

6 But, also, try to keep things on time
7 in order to keep things going, and make sure
8 we're staying in concert with our rules.

9 But, Ms. Morrison, you have three
10 minutes to provide your testimony, and please
11 proceed whenever you're ready.

12 MS. MORRISON: Okay. Good afternoon.
13 My name is Cynthia Morrison. I'm from North
14 Carolina and I'm a gold star mother.

15 My perspective comes from generations
16 of service. My father served our country, my
17 grandfather and my uncles on both sides of our
18 family served, as well.

19 Service, sacrifice, and honoring those
20 who wear the uniform have always been part of my
21 family's story. My son, Landon Joseph Morrison,
22 carried forward that tradition.

1 He was a graduate of the United States
2 Air Force Academy, and he served honorably in
3 both the United States Air Force and the United
4 States Space Force. Tragically, he passed away
5 last July, and his death was determined to be
6 100 percent service connected.

7 I want to begin by saying that I am not
8 opposed to honoring our nation or commemorating
9 the 250th anniversary of the United States. My
10 concern is not with commemoration itself, but
11 with this specific proposal, its location, its
12 scale, and its impact on a historic memorial
13 landscape.

14 The open space between the Lincoln
15 Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery is not
16 just empty land. It is deliberately designed
17 and historically significant memorial vista.

18 That unobstructive corridor was
19 intended to create a direct visual and symbolic
20 relationship between President Lincoln's
21 leadership in preserving the union and an
22 immense human cost represented by those interred

1 at Arlington National Cemetery.

2 The Arlington Memorial Bridge is not
3 simply a crossing between two points in
4 Washington, D.C. It's part of a carefully
5 designed connection between two sacred spaces.

6 Whether looking toward Arlington from
7 the Lincoln Memorial or back toward the Lincoln
8 Memorial from Arlington, that unobstructed vista
9 creates a powerful relationship between
10 leadership, history, service, and sacrifice.

11 When I cross that bridge, my attention
12 is drawn toward Arlington National Cemetery and
13 what lies beyond those gates. Those are grounds
14 I have walked with my son as he was beginning to
15 think about his own path in life.

16 When he was in the eighth grade, we
17 watched the changing of the guard at the tomb of
18 the unknown soldier together. We stood among
19 those rows of headstones and reflected on what
20 service and sacrifice truly mean.

21 And even after that experience, he
22 chose to serve this country. For me, that view

1 is not merely visual, it is remembrance.

2 It represents continuity and sacrifice
3 and the lived reality of military service and
4 loss. I'm deeply concerned that placing a large
5 monument in this corridor would alter that
6 experience by shifting the focus away from
7 Arlington itself and toward the structure.

8 The landscape was long -- has long
9 allowed reflection and reverence to remain in
10 its center. Some landscapes derive their
11 meaning not from what is added to them, but what
12 -- but from what has been intentionally left
13 undisturbed.

14 I respectfully ask the Commission to
15 consider not only what is being proposed, but
16 what already exists in this space and what could
17 be lost if its character is permanently changed.

18 Thank you for your time and
19 consideration.

20 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Ms.
21 Morrison. Our next witness is Susan Douglas,
22 who I believe is, also, here in person.

1 Ms. Douglas is representing the Third
2 Act Virginia, and will therefore have five
3 minutes to provide her testimony. Ma'am, you
4 can proceed whenever you're ready.

5 MS. DOUGLAS: Good afternoon. In June,
6 I voiced concern about the arch and its
7 disregard for the historical viewshed, the
8 disrespect it would convey to those who fought
9 for our country, traffic issues at Memorial
10 Circle, FAA concerns about local air safety, and
11 a pending lawsuit and Congressional Bill both
12 intended to stop construction of the arch.

13 Today I have two additional concerns.
14 Construction of the arch requires Congressional
15 approval, and the National Environmental Policy
16 Act, NEPA, must be carefully considered.

17 We have just celebrated the 250th
18 anniversary of our independence, which was
19 secured and has been sustained by the U.S.
20 Constitution since 1787. That is the supreme
21 law of the land and it serves as the foundation
22 for our legal system.

1 Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the
2 Constitution states in part, "The Congress shall
3 have power to dispose of and make all needful
4 rules and regulations respecting the territory
5 or other property belonging to the United
6 States."

7 Known as the property clause, it grants
8 Congress supreme authority over these assets.
9 Simply put, Congress decides whether, where,
10 when, and what may be built on federal land.

11 Memorial Circle is administered by the
12 National Park Service. It is federal land and
13 falls under the jurisdiction of the property
14 clause of the Constitution.

15 Approval for building on this land
16 rests solely with Congress. Trump's assertion
17 that he does not need congressional approval for
18 the arch is absurd.

19 He is relying on congressional
20 authorization granted in 1925 for two pillars
21 that were never built and bear no resemblance
22 whatsoever in size, scope, or style to the

1 proposed arch. This 100-year-old authorization
2 provides no legal standing given the updated
3 federal laws and review processes.

4 At your June meeting, you agreed that
5 NEPA requires you to assess the environmental
6 effects of the arch before rendering a decision.

7 The NEPA process provides for public review and
8 comment on any significant impact on human
9 environment resulting from the arch to include
10 human relevance.

11 In other words, any direct or indirect
12 threat or harm to cultural resources. The arch
13 is a direct threat to the historic and cultural
14 significance of the viewshed between Arlington
15 National Cemetery and the Lincoln Memorial.

16 That viewshed symbolizes the
17 reunification of the North and South following
18 the Civil War. This is our history. It must
19 not be rewritten.

20 Memorial Circle is an open and
21 reflective space which commands the solemnity
22 owed to the hallowed grounds where over 40,000

1 service members and their families are buried.
2 This peaceful space is a cultural resource and
3 must be preserved.

4 The arch would be a slap in the face to
5 our veterans. And it would directly harm those
6 for whom this space is sacred.

7 Public comments provided to CFA, NCPC,
8 and NPS have been overwhelmingly opposed to the
9 arch for this very reason, harm to human
10 relevance. Over 1,600 written comments were
11 sent to the CFA, 99.8 percent opposed.

12 You received nearly 2,000 written
13 comments between this meeting and last. The
14 vast majority strongly opposed.

15 During a recent public comment period
16 provided by the National Park Service, 100,936
17 comments were submitted. And an AI-conducted
18 review by NPS showed that those comments are
19 overwhelmingly in opposition.

20 Very little support for the arch. The
21 people have spoken. We do not want this arch
22 built at Memorial Circle, sacred ground for

1 Arlington National Cemetery and part of the
2 historically significant view from the cemetery
3 to the Lincoln Memorial.

4 The preamble to the Constitution begins
5 with three iconic words, we the people. Those
6 all-important words symbolize the foundation of
7 American democracy and the power of its citizens
8 to self-govern.

9 I urge you to listen to and respect the
10 wishes of the people, and to acknowledge that
11 Congress has the final say in this matter.
12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Ms.
14 Douglas. Next, we have Jimmy Shaughnessy, who I
15 believe is in person.

16 Mr. Shaughnessy, you'll have three
17 minutes to provide your testimony. And please
18 proceed whenever you're ready.

19 MR. SHAUGHNESSY: Good afternoon,
20 everyone. I'm here today to voice my opposition
21 to the planned construction of the Triumphal
22 Arch in Memorial Circle.

1 I speak as a private citizen, a Marine
2 Corps combat veteran, son of a veteran, and
3 grandson of generations of combat veterans
4 spanning nearly 200 years.

5 Buried in Section 60 are my great-
6 grandfather and my great-grandmother, both of
7 whom served in our nation's conflicts. He with
8 sword and rifle on horseback, she working triage
9 in Army field hospitals.

10 The origin of this arch was not born
11 from conversation and contemplation with
12 military members, veterans, their families, or
13 the entities that serve these populations. It
14 was not a discussion with the American people,
15 not a discussion for the American people, but
16 rather an attempt to gain the attention of one
17 man.

18 Are we worth so little that at the core
19 of our remembrance and the pillars of this arch
20 will be rebar and poured concrete, gnarled and
21 stamped for quick erection with no time for
22 delicate conversation?

1 We don't want stunning views and fees.
2 We want our peace. We want the integrity of
3 Arlington's entrance to be preserved.

4 This arch is not for the people. This
5 arch is for one person. For whom do we owe our
6 allegiance? Our nation's warriors learn from
7 history and from ancient history to craft new
8 forms of fighting in hopes of preserving our
9 democracy.

10 Our democratic values have been tested
11 within our ranks before. They did not cease to
12 prevail then and they have not ceased to prevail
13 for the next generation. At the previous
14 meeting, there was discussion of stunning views
15 gained from this arch. What are the views that
16 we lose?

17 Every view from our contemplated
18 landscape will be dominated by this overt symbol
19 of hasty, selfish celebration. Approaching
20 drivers will have their view of Arlington
21 obstructed as they gawk at the mammoth sterling
22 white blocks of stamped facade.

1 Once atop the observation deck, there
2 are two choices, gawk with an amusement-like
3 stare at the cotton bright gravestones
4 diligently plotted across the hillside, or turn
5 your back on our fallen comrades and take in the
6 stunning views.

7 The Administration has chosen to ignore
8 the established protocol and the precedent for
9 this project, which is allowing Congress to
10 write into law the authorization for
11 construction of a memorial structure. Instead,
12 rubber stamping every aspect of this project
13 contradicting the very purpose of pre-
14 established criteria meant to determine the
15 structure's path.

16 The precedent cited for this project is
17 beyond flawed and outdated, 100 years old and
18 two pillars apart is hardly sturdy footing for
19 an arch. This project does not honor any living
20 or deceased patriot of ours.

21 This is not political. This is
22 eternal. We, the uniformed, fought for a better

1 life for ourselves, our families, and the next
2 generation of patriots.

3 We united around the flag during
4 deployments and incredibly hard times. We
5 united around the upturned rifle, skewered into
6 their empty boots.

7 We are still united by our service. We
8 are continually united by these places. We find
9 unity in these spaces.

10 We will be united by parks. We will
11 not be united by an arch. Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Mr.
13 Shaughnessy. Next up, we have Priya Jain who
14 is, I believe, with us virtually.

15 She is representing the Society of
16 Architectural Historians, and we'll have five
17 minutes to provide testimony. Ms. Jain, please
18 proceed whenever you're ready.

19 MS. JAIN: Thank you. Good afternoon,
20 Commissioners, and thank you for the opportunity
21 to speak.

22 My name is Priya Jain, and I speak here

1 today as Chair of the Heritage Conservation
2 Committee of the Society of Architectural
3 Historians. These views do not represent those
4 of my employer, Texas A&M University.

5 The Society of Architectural Historians
6 founded in 1940, is the leading organization for
7 architectural history in North America. We
8 previously voiced serious concerns about the
9 proposed monumental arch at your last meeting in
10 June, particularly that it disrupts historically
11 significant views of our national landmarks.

12 Despite any substantive improvements,
13 the applicant has resubmitted their plans for
14 approval in less than a month. All information
15 the applicant has added, for example, for
16 Section 106 compliance, overwhelmingly indicates
17 that the arch will have detrimental impacts on
18 our national historic properties.

19 We therefore ask you to vote not to
20 approve this project and offer the following
21 reasons in support. First, the assessment of
22 effects report submitted by the applicant

1 determines a finding of adverse effects to a
2 very large number of cultural resources such
3 that their integrity will be irreparably harmed.

4 This should trigger a serious
5 reconsideration of this entire project.

6 Moreover, as pointed out by Section 106
7 stakeholders, the applicant has missed many
8 affected cultural resources, which means that
9 their submission is woefully incomplete and
10 harmful impacts of the project are even more
11 substantial than currently known.

12 Second, this project does not stem from
13 any critical public needs, but simply from an
14 executive order to broadly promote
15 beautification in the nation's capital. This
16 beautification should not come at the cost of
17 causing grave harm to our existing historic
18 properties.

19 The executive order also calls for
20 preservation of our history and heritage, which
21 this project runs counter to.

22 Third, the applicant is required to

1 develop and present alternatives that will
2 mitigate the project's adverse effects. We
3 believe this effort has been seriously lacking.

4 The applicant briefly states looking at
5 one option of smaller arch heights. Where is
6 the assessment of other sites and locations or
7 non-arch designs for the monument?

8 Fourth, the applicant has submitted a
9 draft programmatic agreement to resolve adverse
10 impacts. However, we contend that this
11 agreement is ill-suited, premature, and
12 ineffective.

13 The applicant should execute a
14 memorandum of agreement instead, with specific
15 pre-established litigation measures after and
16 not before consulting parties and public
17 comments have been received, reviewed, and
18 meaningfully considered.

19 Fifth, the required Section 106 NEPA
20 and other processes have been rushed and
21 perfunctory. Consulting parties and the public
22 were given a mere ten calendar days to provide

1 comments on a nationally significant project
2 with such substantial adverse effects.

3 Many relevant cultural organizations
4 were not even allowed to be part of the
5 consultations.

6 Sixth, the project is still missing
7 important reviews and clearances, for example,
8 under Section 4F of the U.S. Department of
9 Transportation Act. Environmental reviews must
10 be efficient, effective, and inclusive of all
11 federal requirements at the outset to minimize
12 duplicative effort and wasted taxpayer dollars.

13 And, finally, the proposal continues to
14 have various unresolved functional issues
15 related to traffic, pedestrian safety, storm
16 water management, lighting, aviation compliance,
17 et cetera, that should be addressed before
18 pushing this design to approval.

19 In closing, we want to reiterate that
20 the United States has a long and fine tradition
21 of public debate over the meaning and form of
22 monuments in Washington, D.C.

1 From the rejection of an 1841 sculpture
2 depicting George Washington as a Roman emperor,
3 to the long deliberative process that led to the
4 2004 World War II Memorial, Americans have
5 fostered a culture of debate and open-ended
6 public participation.

7 While these long timelines do provoke
8 frustration, they also ensure results of which
9 we can be proud. We do not rush decisions about
10 our memorial landscape and welcome broad public
11 input.

12 We change ideas when they are bad and
13 reject memorials that are unsuitable. We urge
14 you to do the same, reject this hasty and
15 inappropriate proposal, respect public opinion,
16 and engage in a deliberative design process to
17 ensure that we end up with a fitting memorial
18 for America's 250th anniversary.

19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Ms. Jain,
21 or Professor Jain, I should say. Next on the
22 list, we have Shady Migally, who I believe is

1 also attending virtually.

2 Mr. Migally, you have three minutes to
3 provide your testimony. And, please proceed
4 whenever you're ready.

5 MR. MIGALLY: Okay. Good afternoon,
6 Chairman and Commissioners. My name is Shady
7 Migally.

8 I speak as a professional architect,
9 founder of ME Innovations, and the designer of
10 the Independence Arch an alternative proposal
11 for the monumental arch at Memorial Circle.

12 The updated design is displayed behind
13 me today, and I have submitted revised hard
14 copies to the Commission.

15 These revisions address the historic
16 preservation and visual concerns identified
17 during the Section 106 review and in public
18 comments, preserving key historic sightlines
19 while creating a distinctly American national
20 land.

21 I agree with a key point raised by
22 architectural critics. Authentic classical

1 architecture is defined by proportion,
2 hierarchy, and discipline composition rather
3 than the replication of historic monuments.

4 The Independence Arch was conceived as
5 an original American civic monument that
6 preserves the historic landscape, ensure public
7 safety while minimizing the conflict with
8 structure, and incorporate a meaningful American
9 independence day event that commemorates the
10 signing of the independence, that Declaration of
11 Independence in a way found nowhere else in the
12 world rather than an imitation.

13 The proposal demonstrates that we can
14 achieve the project's patriotic purpose while
15 preserving Memorial Circle's proud character and
16 creating a landmark worthy of America's 250th
17 anniversary.

18 As a practicing architecture, I am
19 presenting and submitting a complete
20 architectural solution, rather than simply
21 expressing opposition of the current proposal.
22 The design package documents the architectural

1 concept, site planning, preservation
2 consideration, and public benefits, supporting
3 analysis for the Independence Arch.

4 In the spirit of Section 106 process,
5 which encourages that consideration of
6 alternative that avoid or minimize adverse
7 effects, I respectfully ask the Commission to
8 recognize this fully developed alternative and
9 give it thoughtful consideration.

10 Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Mr.
12 Migally. That concludes our first group of five
13 witnesses.

14 Do any Commissioners have any questions
15 for any of these five witnesses?

16 (No response.)

17 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Hearing and seeing
18 none, we'll move to our next group of five
19 witnesses who are, and again, excuse me if I get
20 any name pronunciations wrong, but Meg Cowan,
21 Carolinn Kuebler, Michael Lemmon, Neil Rocklin,
22 and Gary Langston.

1 Ms. Cowan, I believe, is attending
2 virtually. Are you with us, ma'am?

3 MS. COWAN: I am, yes.

4 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Ms. Cowan, you have
5 three minutes to provide your testimony. And
6 please proceed whenever you're ready.

7 MS. COWAN: Thank you. My name is Meg
8 Cowan and I live in Wilmot, New Hampshire. As
9 an American citizen, I strongly oppose approval
10 of the preliminary and final site and building
11 plans for the proposed new monumental arch.

12 NCPC should not approve this project.
13 At its June meeting, the Commission identified
14 serious unresolved issues involving traffic and
15 pedestrian safety, parking and loading, height
16 justification, FAA coordination, materials,
17 lighting, security, Section 106, and NEPA.

18 These are not minor details to be
19 cleaned up after approval. These are threshold
20 issues that go to whether this project is
21 appropriate, lawful, safe, and respectful of its
22 setting.

1 The aviation issue alone should prevent
2 approval at this time. A preliminary FAA review
3 is not the same as a completed aeronautical
4 study, especially for a 250-foot structure near
5 Reagan International Airport in its approach and
6 departure corridor.

7 The fact that this so-called monument
8 would require red obstruction lights, only
9 underscores how inappropriate it is for the
10 solemn landscape near Arlington National
11 Cemetery.

12 I have worked in New Hampshire tourism
13 for more than 40 years, including as a tour
14 guide in the White Mountain National Forest. I
15 know what happens when a place becomes a
16 required stop.

17 Buses arrive, crowds gather, traffic
18 backs up, trash appears, restrooms and walkways
19 are strained, and the place itself starts
20 serving the attraction instead of the other way
21 around.

22 That may be manageable in a large

1 recreation area designed for visitors. It is
2 entirely wrong for the solemn, civic, and
3 commemorative landscape near Arlington National
4 Cemetery and the nation's memorial core.

5 Most importantly, this proposal is an
6 affront to the men and women buried at Arlington
7 National Cemetery. Those who gave their lives
8 and service to this country should not have a
9 250-foot vanity monument looming over the
10 landscape where they are laid to rest.

11 Arlington is not a backdrop, a branding
12 opportunity, or a place for self-glorification.

13 To impose this arch there would be, in my
14 opinion, a desecration of the memory of our war
15 dead.

16 A 250-foot occupied arch with
17 elevators, ticketing, restrooms, programming
18 space, and an observation deck would create a
19 spectacle and a pressure point in a place that
20 demands restraint. This project would not honor
21 that landscape, it would desecrate it.

22 NCPC should not approve the preliminary

1 or final site and building plans. This
2 application should be rejected, deferred, or
3 withdrawn.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Ms. Cowan.

6 Next up is Carolinn Kuebler, who, I believe, is
7 with us in person.

8 Ma'am, I'm sorry if I'm getting your
9 last name very wrong. How do you pronounce it
10 for the record?

11 MS. KUEBLER: Good afternoon. My name
12 is Carolinn Kuebler.

13 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Kuebler, I apologize.

14 MS. KUEBLER: I am an architect who has
15 been practicing in Washington, D.C. for almost
16 50 years. I am also an inveterate history buff,
17 especially of American history.

18 As both, I appreciate the profound
19 significance that D.C.'s iconic buildings have
20 on the symbolic expression of that history. The
21 very fabric of the federal city is itself a
22 monument to the founding of this country, a

1 constitutional republic based on the radical
2 idea that the people can govern themselves.

3 Now, on the 250th anniversary year of
4 that idea, I fear that NCPC in conjunction with
5 NPS, is about to approve and embark on a project
6 that will destroy one of the most symbolic
7 aspects of that physical monument. That project
8 is a Triumphal Arch at Memorial Circle.

9 NCPC and NPS have already received
10 thousands of comments, most of which are
11 adamantly opposed to the construction of this
12 arch. We've heard some of them already.

13 Major objections are based on important
14 considerations such as safety, pedestrian,
15 vehicular and air, design, the height and the
16 mass of the arch are wildly inappropriate.
17 Environmental impacts, studies are incomplete.

18 Legal, various federal laws governing
19 construction of federal monuments as well as
20 those requiring adherence to local review
21 processes have been flouted. Funding, Congress
22 must appropriate this and to date has not.

1 Structural, can the island on which
2 Memorial Circle sits support the arch's massive
3 stone and concrete piers and constructability.
4 The logistics of shutting down the GW Parkway
5 for construction of this arch are alone mind-
6 boggling.

7 But, the most important one, the one
8 that threatens the monumental expression of the
9 federal city as a symbol of American democracy
10 is the destruction of the iconic access between
11 the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington House.

12 Described on the National Park
13 Service's own website as the Memorial Avenue
14 Corridor, this access was conceived as a grand
15 entryway to Arlington Cemetery and a symbolic
16 link between the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington
17 House.

18 The sightline established between the
19 D.C. and Virginia anchors was intentional, and
20 meant to symbolize the call for national
21 reconciliation that occurred after the Civil
22 War. And this it has profoundly, majestically,

1 meaningfully.

2 But, over the years, the Memorial
3 Avenue corridor has become so much more. Not
4 only as an integral part of the nation's
5 architecture of remembrance, but also as a
6 profound memorial for veterans, for families of
7 the fallen buried at ANC, for all Americans who
8 honor and cherish the service rendered by our
9 troops.

10 The monstrously inappropriate size of
11 this triumphal arch will block this sightline
12 destroying the visual connection and its
13 symbolic memorial to sacrifice, honor, and
14 valor.

15 NCPC must stop this obscene proposal
16 before it is ever built and before it can
17 further desecrate the brave men and women who
18 are buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

19 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Ms.
20 Kuebler. Next up we have Michael Lemmon who, I
21 believe, is attending virtually.

22 Mr. Lemmon, are you with us?

1 MR. LEMMON: I am.

2 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Well, sir, you have
3 three minutes to provide your testimony. And
4 please proceed whenever you're ready.

5 MR. LEMMON: Thank you. I'm having a
6 little technical problems on this end, but I
7 will do my best.

8 First of all, I would note that I'm
9 most concerned with process. I should also note
10 that I'm one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit
11 opposing the arch.

12 Such important enduring monumental
13 undertakings should undergo a careful review by
14 concerned stakeholders to include veterans and
15 their families, local residents and the general
16 public, historians, architects, and our local
17 and congressional representatives, and all
18 Section 106 stakeholders.

19 In particular, congressional
20 consideration and approval of such monuments
21 essential to the capital's national character
22 and broad public support and legitimacy.

1 Integrity matters.

2 Failure to proceed in keeping with the
3 integrity of the statutory and congressional
4 process will profoundly undermine the integrity
5 of the result and its durability. I read the
6 185-page report, very impressive, but I note
7 there are significant issues outstanding that
8 need to be addressed before proceeding further.

9 As a proud Vietnam vet, I recall the
10 early intense controversy surrounding the design
11 and construction of the Vietnam Veterans
12 Memorial. An often painful process of
13 discussion and debate, nonetheless produced an
14 outcome with broad public acceptance and veteran
15 support, making it one of the most revered and
16 visited sites in Washington, D.C.

17 Such a deliberative consultative
18 process about this planned arch could lead to a
19 more lasting and positive results than a rushed
20 top-down imposed outcome that is broadly and
21 intensely opposed, as illustrated by public
22 comments to date.

1 Lastly, I urge members to walk the
2 hallowed grounds at Arlington National Cemetery
3 if they have not yet done so, to assess the
4 impact of this monumental arch, especially on
5 internment ceremonies and graveside visitation
6 and access.

7 As a combat veteran, I feel a duty to
8 protect the memory and honor the sacrifice of my
9 comrades and all those buried there. This
10 vainglorious monumental arch does neither.

11 Thank you for your consideration.

12 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Mr.
13 Lemmon. Next up we have Neil Rocklin, who, I
14 believe, is with us in person.

15 Mr. Rocklin, you have three minutes to
16 provide your testimony. And please proceed
17 whenever you're ready.

18 MR. ROCKLIN: Thank you. I am Neil
19 Rocklin. Three and a half years ago I was
20 elected to serve as Commissioner for ANC 2F02,
21 and I am also on the Community Development
22 Committee for 2F02.

1 Last month I attended the National
2 Capital Planning Commission meeting. I heard
3 testimonies regarding the monumental arch and
4 returned to my district planning to poll my
5 constituents to gather their opinions about the
6 arch.

7 And I asked if they wanted me to
8 testify before you and it was unanimous. All
9 respondents wanted their voice to be heard and
10 all were opposed to the monumental arch.

11 On July 2nd, I read in the Washington
12 Post, D.C. official tells Trump to build his
13 arch somewhere else. Then I reviewed all of my
14 constituents' opinions to discover what was the
15 basis for their opposition.

16 My constituents objected to the
17 monumental arch blocking the sightlines from the
18 Lincoln Memorial to the Lee House, destroying
19 the solemnity of Arlington National Cemetery.

20 The scale of the arch exceeded the
21 height restriction dwarfing the Lincoln Memorial
22 and the unclear intent and meaning of the arch.

1 These objections would be mitigated by placing
2 the arch in an alternate location, specifically
3 located at the oval at the arrival of South
4 Capitol Street and the Anacostia River.

5 It would create an energizing focal
6 point for a still emerging neighborhood,
7 suitable for a celebratory crowd as shared by
8 the District of Columbia State Historical
9 Preservation Officer David Maloney in his June
10 26 letter to the National Park Service.

11 I conclude that by adopting the
12 recommendation for an alternate site, the
13 monumental arch would not become an object of
14 divisiveness and win the support of my
15 constituents, serving to unite people in the
16 District of Columbia and become another reason
17 for citizens throughout the country to visit
18 their nation's capital.

19 I understand when I came in today that
20 I am listed as a consulting party and I would
21 welcome the Commission reaching out to me.
22 Thank you for your time.

1 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Mr.
2 Rocklin. Next up we have Gary Langston, who, I
3 believe, is with us in person as well.

4 Mr. Langston, you have three minutes to
5 provide your testimony. And please proceed
6 whenever you're ready.

7 MR. LANGSTON: Thank you. My comments
8 today focus on the Section 106 review results
9 and the Executive Director's recommendation.

10 We're informed by recent conversations
11 with multiple members of Congress as well as
12 Gold Star family members. I've been encouraged
13 to speak out by all of them to inform more of
14 the American people about how the arch would
15 harm these hallowed grounds.

16 Even former Washington Post publisher
17 Don Graham weighed in on this in a Facebook
18 post, encouraging residents and visitors to
19 Washington to view the eternal flame at night
20 from the Potomac Waterfront before the arch or
21 its lighting blocks that uniquely Washington
22 experience, this viewshed.

1 I'm a retired officer and a
2 Washingtonian. My parents are interred at
3 Arlington. My wife is a Persian Gulf War vet.

4 I would happily, to pick up on what Mr.
5 Lemmon said -- I visit the cemetery often. I
6 would happily walk the grounds and host anyone
7 involved in this project to accompany me, to
8 understand the perspective from a funeral, the
9 perspective from inside the grounds of the
10 cemetery.

11 That said, I have four very specific
12 comments. The direct effects boundary that's in
13 the assessment report is misleading, because it
14 does not include cemetery grounds themselves in
15 the direct effects boundaries.

16 So, it overlooks specific sections of
17 the cemetery that will be in view of the arch.
18 I'll name the sections 55, 56, 57, 60, 66, 73,
19 74, 75 and 76.

20 Those are, what I would recommend is
21 simulated views from inside the cemetery from
22 those affected sections so that you can see

1 better for yourselves what the impact would be.

2 Secondly, the simulations we've seen so
3 far are summertime, leaves on simulations.

4 Someone else in the comments had made a
5 suggestion that simulations include not just
6 night, but also leaf off simulations. The
7 cemetery takes on a -- it's a very different
8 viewshed in the winter when the leaves are off.

9 Third, just as important as the tone
10 and solemnity of the formal entrance is, so too
11 is the solemn environment of the actual grave
12 site locations. That gets back to walking the
13 ground.

14 Go to these affected sections and think
15 about how the arch changes the tone not only at
16 the entrance, but also within certain sections
17 of the cemetery.

18 Lastly, I read surprisingly that the
19 NCPC's own memorials and museums master plan
20 explicitly states that the existing circle at
21 the west end of Memorial Bridge is not viewed as
22 an appropriate location for a future memorial.

1 Instead, there's a prime site located
2 nearby near the Spanish American War Memorial,
3 the smaller piece of ground obviously for
4 something on that scale, not like this.

5 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Sir, I'm going to
6 have to cut you off there. But, thank you very
7 much for your insightful comments, for your
8 testimony.

9 Do any Commissioners have any questions
10 for these five witnesses?

11 (No response.)

12 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Hearing none, we'll
13 proceed to the next group of five. Next up we
14 have, those are Bryan Green, Linsay Burnett,
15 Edward Stierli, Peggy Barlett, and Amy Ballard.

16 Mr. Green, you're with us virtually. I
17 can see you. You have three minutes to provide
18 your testimony. And please proceed whenever
19 you're ready.

20 MR. GREEN: Thank you very much, Mr.
21 Chair. My name is Bryan Green. I'm an
22 architectural historian in Richmond, Virginia.

1 I would like to spend my three minutes
2 on a question this Commission has not yet been
3 asked to consider. Whether a monumental arch is
4 the right structure for the site?

5 Apart from its height, its cost with a
6 sequence of approvals behind it, I believe it is
7 not. And the reason lies in the arch is a form
8 as well as in the form of this particular arch.

9 A triumphal arch is a powerful
10 architectural form. Its meaning and use have
11 remained clear and consistent for centuries.

12 History supplies the examples. The
13 Arch of Titus in Rome displays in relief the
14 spoils carried home from the sack of Jerusalem.

15 The Arc de Triomphe in Paris is inscribed with
16 the names of Napoleon's victories and the
17 generals who won them.

18 The soldiers and sailors memorial arch
19 in Brooklyn commemorates the Union Civil War
20 victory, not the war's brutal human cost.

21 Each of these commemorates a victory,
22 the vanquishing of an opponent, a triumph

1 brought home and paraded about. That's what the
2 form says, whatever the inscription carved upon
3 it says.

4 But, the language, but this is not the
5 language this corridor has ever spoken.

6 Arlington National Cemetery holds the nation's
7 dead not because they won, but because they
8 served in war and peace across the full span of
9 the nation's history.

10 The Lincoln Memorial at the eastern end
11 of this axis speaks in the register of the post-
12 Civil War, binding up of the nation's wounds,
13 not celebrating the victory of one section over
14 another.

15 The bridge that carries the axis across
16 the Potomac designed by McKim, Mead & White was
17 built between 1926 and 1932, is a memorial
18 bridge, not a triumphal one.

19 The Hemicycle for the Women in Military
20 Service for America Memorial that later occupied
21 it in 1997, extended that through a quiet on-
22 grade amphitheater rather than through any

1 vertical gesture of conquest.

2 Every element the McMillan commission
3 and its successors placed along this axis for
4 more than a century spoke the language of memory
5 and service. None of it spoke the language of
6 triumph, because service and not victory is what
7 this corridor was built to honor.

8 The proposed arch breaks that grammar
9 rather than extending it. It does not matter
10 for this argument whether the structure is 250
11 feet tall or 150 feet tall, a triumphal arch of
12 any size announces a victory.

13 And the cemetery does not exist to
14 announce victories. It exists because the
15 nation asked people to serve and they answered.

16 And it is that service, not triumph that's
17 being honored.

18 A monument that speaks otherwise at the
19 threshold of that cemetery misunderstands what
20 this corridor has spent more than a century
21 saying.

22 I've submitted in prior testimony and

1 in writing the scale of legal and procedural
2 objections to this proposal, and I stand by all
3 of those. But, I ask the Commission today to
4 weigh this along one item alongside this.

5 The form itself is wrong for what lies
6 at the end of the axis. It would interrupt.
7 For that reason, together with the many other
8 reasons the public has raised, I urge this
9 Commission not to approve this proposal.

10 Thank you for the opportunity to
11 testify today.

12 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Mr. Green.

13 Next up we have Linsay Burnett, who, I believe,
14 is with us in person.

15 Ms. Burnett, you will have three
16 minutes to provide your testimony. And please
17 proceed whenever you're ready.

18 MS. BURNETT: Thank you. My name is
19 Linsay Rousseau Burnett. I was a combat
20 photographer and public affairs sergeant with
21 the First Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne
22 Division deployed to Iraq in 2004.

1 One day I may be laid to rest in
2 Arlington across the river from where you
3 propose to build. I'm also the daughter of two
4 retired national park rangers who spent their
5 careers protecting places like this one across
6 our country.

7 And I come to you as the person that
8 this arch claims to honor and the person raised
9 to protect what it would destroy. It betrays
10 both.

11 The Park Service's own report says this
12 can be built 20 hours a day year round for up to
13 three years under cranes taller than the arch
14 itself.

15 Arlington buries its dead close to 30
16 times a day. Under this plan, families would
17 lower their loved ones into the ground to the
18 sound of pile drivers, taps against concrete
19 pumps.

20 We ask our dead for everything. The
21 least we owe them is silence. And for three
22 years we would deny them even that.

1 You may look at Memorial Circle and see
2 an empty lawn, but it is not empty. It was left
3 open on purpose.

4 Ninety years ago, two columns were
5 approved for that spot, but they were never
6 built. Fourteen feet across set hundreds of
7 feet apart, they would not have touched the
8 view.

9 The open ground is the design. It lets
10 the line between the Lincoln Memorial and
11 Arlington hold its meaning. A country made
12 whole after the Civil War.

13 And the excuse for skipping Congress is
14 that same permission for columns we were wise
15 enough to never raise. Free nations build
16 arches to the dead.

17 In Belgium, the Menin Gate is a
18 triumphal arch carved with 54,000 names of the
19 missing. And every night a town stops its
20 traffic to the sound of the last post beneath
21 it.

22 America's own law carries the same

1 instinct. The Commemorative Works Act forbids a
2 memorial to any person under 25 years after
3 their death so that history, not vanity,
4 decides.

5 America does not build monuments to its
6 living rulers. Dictators do. Kim Il-sung built
7 one in Pyongyang for his birthday and Saddam
8 built one in Baghdad, cast from molds of his own
9 arms.

10 Asked by CBS's Ed O'Keefe who this arch
11 was built for, President Trump said, me.
12 America does not guild the living.

13 On June 4, this Commission refused to
14 approve the arch. You demanded answers from the
15 Interior Department on the height under the
16 Height of Buildings Act, on the danger to air
17 traffic, on pedestrian safety, and from what
18 we've heard today, those answers and those
19 problems have not been cured and the deepest
20 ones cannot be.

21 Congress has never authorized it, the
22 design was sole sourced through an unrelated

1 contract to avoid open bidding.

2 And Interior now swears it is not a
3 memorial, even as the President calls it his, so
4 it can slip past the Commemorative Works Act
5 entirely.

6 This is National Park Service land, the
7 ground my parents gave their careers to keep.
8 In the words of the Park Service's own founding
9 law, quote, unimpaired for those who come after
10 us.

11 Your Commission has its own charge, to
12 protect the design of the city. Reject this
13 arch. Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, ma'am.
15 Next up we have Edward Stierli. And again,
16 forgive me if that pronunciation is a bit off.

17 Sir, you're here with us in person.
18 And you'll have, or sorry, excuse me, you're
19 representing the National Parks Conservation
20 Association.

21 And, as a result, you'll have five
22 minutes to provide your testimony. Please

1 proceed whenever you're ready.

2 MR. STIERLI: Thank you. Good
3 afternoon. Thanks for the opportunity to speak
4 today. I'm Ed Stierli, I'm with the National
5 Parks Conservation Association.

6 We're a nonpartisan nonprofit
7 organization, and has about 1.9 million members
8 around the country. And we've advocated for
9 national parks in this region for decades.

10 So, let me just say at the outset,
11 NPCA, we're very supportive of commemorating the
12 250th anniversary of the United States.

13 And we've supported many of the
14 investments we've seen leading up to July 4th
15 and honoring American history and strengthening
16 our parks. But, that's unfortunately not what's
17 before you all today.

18 So, first and foremost, you know,
19 Congress has not authorized this work. The
20 Commemorative Works Act allows for a
21 commemorative work on National Park Service land
22 at this site only to move forward if it's

1 authorized by law.

2 The authorization that's been cited so
3 far for this project dates back to the 1920s.
4 It directed a commission that no longer exists
5 to place two decorative columns at the
6 bridgehead within a spending limit that has long
7 since been spent and those columns were never
8 built.

9 So, whatever that provision once
10 contemplated, it was not the 250-foot arch and
11 cannot provide the authorization that the
12 Commemorative Works Act requires today.

13 So, the District's preservation
14 officer, I think, put it pretty plainly. I
15 mean, this would be the largest and most visible
16 memorial constructed in the capital since the
17 Washington Monument. So, only Congress can
18 decide if such a work belongs here.

19 Second, after reviewing, I mean, the
20 environmental review has some real holes in it.

21 The environmental assessment examined only two
22 alternatives, essentially build it or do

1 nothing.

2 So, there were no alternative sites, no
3 alternative designs, no reduced heights. For a
4 project of this magnitude, that is not a very
5 good alternatives analysis.

6 The document also concedes that the
7 arch would obstruct the reciprocal view, as was
8 stated earlier, between the Lincoln Memorial and
9 Arlington House. It identified the impact on,
10 you know, many national historic landmarks,
11 including Arlington National Cemetery.

12 It discussed, you know, drilling into
13 bedrock, cranes 320 feet high, construction up
14 to 20 hours a day for three years, 80 to 100
15 truckloads going through this circle every
16 single day at the gateway to a cemetery where 30
17 funerals are conducted every weekday.

18 So, in this case, you know, with
19 impacts of that significance, a full
20 environmental impact statement would be
21 necessary.

22 Additionally, you know, the historic

1 review has been compressed. And it left out the
2 people that were most at stake, which is
3 probably why you're hearing particularly from so
4 many veterans today.

5 Virginia's historical preservation
6 officer described the consultation as fait
7 accompli, and noticed that the applicant's plans
8 were already marked released for construction.

9 The District's preservation officer had
10 never even been contacted with the project until
11 June 5, and declined to concur in the draft
12 programmatic agreement.

13 So far in the Section 106 process, no
14 veterans organizations were named as consulting
15 parties, not one. You know, and this is at the
16 gateway to Arlington.

17 The public was given ten calendar days
18 to review more than 180 pages of technical
19 material. And, even though there was a
20 significant number of comments, over 100,000,
21 you know, a ten-day comment period is not
22 enough.

1 And, particularly when it excludes
2 veterans, you know, that's not a deliberate
3 process and these landscapes generally have been
4 given much more time to make considerations,
5 especially of something that's this immense.

6 And, I should note, you know, NPCA,
7 we're a consulting party in the Section 106
8 review that's ongoing right now for the White
9 House visitor screening facility. And that
10 process has worked.

11 You know, relevant partners were
12 brought to the table early, concerns were heard,
13 new alternatives were suggested and recommended,
14 and historic resources surrounding that are
15 going to be better protected as a result.

16 So, it does show that you can build and
17 preserve at the same time when the consultation
18 is given room to function. I feel like that's a
19 really good recent example of that.

20 So, you know, we're asking you, given
21 everything that's happening thus far, we're
22 asking you to decline approval of the

1 preliminary site and building plans until such a
2 record exists.

3 Congressional authorization needs to be
4 provided, because of the Commemorative Works
5 Act, before an environmental impact statement,
6 you know, with NCPC, of course, as a cooperating
7 agency and, there's been a genuine analysis of
8 alternative sites and locations and designs, and
9 a Section 106 process that has a meaningful
10 comment period and full participation from a
11 range of stakeholders that'll be impacted by
12 this project.

13 You know, the National Mall, George
14 Washington Memorial Parkway, Arlington National
15 Cemetery, these are products of generations of
16 deliberate planning and public stewardship.

17 And, you know, the Commission has the
18 authority to insist upon a complete record
19 before it acts, and we respectfully urge you to
20 exercise that today.

21 So, thank you very much for the time.

22 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Mr.

1 Stierli. Next up is Peggy Barlett, who, I
2 believe, is here with us in person.

3 Ms. Barlett, you have three minutes to
4 provide your testimony. And please proceed
5 whenever you're ready.

6 MS. BARLETT: Thank you. My name is
7 Peggy Barlett. And my parents and grandparents'
8 remains are at Arlington National Cemetery and I
9 treasure the quiet dignity of this site.

10 Visible from many vantage points, it is
11 elegant and spacious yet connected to the
12 monuments across the beautiful river.

13 The new monumental arch, as proposed,
14 will clash with these surroundings. It's much
15 too big. Its design is fussy, imitative, and
16 intrudes on the harmony of the surrounding area.

17 A female figure with large wings and
18 two enormous birds are not consistent with the
19 dignity of the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials.

20 The scale of the arch contaminates the
21 sightlines from both sides of the bridge and
22 seeks to dwarf and intimidate the visitor.

1 I share concerns about lighting, such a
2 tall and intrusive structure requiring perhaps
3 eight 20-foot tall light stanchions and the
4 pinnacle light, red blinking light required by
5 the FAA. I share the concern that the project
6 as conceived may violate the lighting hierarchy
7 of the National Mall.

8 I'm also concerned about pedestrian
9 safety. The arch is located in the middle of a
10 busy traffic circle, and the addition of traffic
11 lights does address this safety concern but will
12 also cause significant traffic delays.

13 I wonder if the Commission has really
14 thought about the public attitude toward the
15 arch if it turns out that the estimate of one
16 half mile pileups every rush hour is really
17 true.

18 Backups, a proposed 32 traffic signal
19 poles do not support a serene environment and I
20 was glad to hear today that that number may be
21 reduced.

22 Such a construction is fundamentally

1 flawed. It is egotistical in size and ambition
2 and is jarring to the aesthetics of the mall.

3 I urge you to reject this proposed
4 design as not in keeping with Arlington's solemn
5 memorial to service and sacrifice.

6 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Ms.
7 Barlett. Next up is Amy Ballard, who is with us
8 here in person, I believe.

9 Ms. Ballard, you have three minutes to
10 provide your testimony. And please proceed
11 whenever you're ready. Thank you.

12 MS. BALLARD: Good afternoon. My name
13 is Amy Ballard and I am speaking today as an
14 individual citizen.

15 My perspective is shaped by my career
16 with the Smithsonian Institution where I served
17 as senior historic preservation specialist.
18 Because I spent years navigating the regulations
19 of the Section 106 National Historic
20 Preservation Act process, I am deeply concerned
21 by how this review is being conducted for the
22 proposed monumental arch.

1 A project of this scale demands
2 transparent consultation, not an accelerated
3 rubber stamp. Federal regulations explicitly
4 dictate that Section 106 must be initiated very
5 early in the project planning state, so that a
6 broad range of alternatives can be generally
7 considered.

8 Instead, what we see here is the
9 definition of putting the cart before the horse.

10 The design and specifications are at an
11 advanced phase before even engaging the Section
12 106 review.

13 Rushing a massive array of documents
14 and even a draft programmatic agreement treats a
15 mandatory federal review like a bureaucratic
16 roadblock. The expedited Section 106 process
17 does not apply here. This is clearly explained
18 in letters from the Virginia and District of
19 Columbia State Historic Preservation Officers,
20 the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation,
21 and the National Historic Landmarks Commission.

22 Because the proposed structure alters a

1 premier national historic landmark viewshed, it
2 triggers a heightened statutory duty under
3 Section 110(f) to minimize harm to the maximum
4 extent possible.

5 I urge the National Park Service, the
6 Administration, and this Commission to pause,
7 reset, and champion a thorough review process.
8 Let the 106 review run its proper course so we
9 can find a path that truly respects our historic
10 landscape and rule of law.

11 General Norman Schwarzkopf once
12 observed that, quote, the truth of the matter is
13 that you always know the right thing to do. The
14 hard part is just doing it, end quote.

15 Protecting the integrity of this
16 process is the right thing to do, and I urge you
17 to find the institutional courage to do it.
18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Ms.
20 Ballard. Do any Commissioners have questions
21 for any of these last five witnesses before we
22 proceed?

1 Hearing and seeing none, our next
2 witnesses will be Kristopher Reichert, Stephanie
3 Fisher, Larry Madison, Sam Van Kopp, and Rob
4 Nieweg.

5 Kristopher Reichert, I believe you're
6 here with us in person. Do we have Kristopher
7 with us? Are you Mr. Reichert?

8 MR. REICHERT: I am.

9 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Well, you've got
10 three minutes to provide your testimony. And
11 please proceed whenever you're ready, sir.

12 MR. REICHERT: Great, thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you.

14 MR. REICHERT: I'm Kristopher Reichert,
15 and I grew up in Arizona and have called the DMV
16 and D.C. specifically home for the better part
17 of a decade.

18 I currently serve as co-chair of
19 Principles First for the DMV chapter. We're a
20 community of principled moderates from all walks
21 of political life, and we believe in principles
22 over party and meeting in the middle to make a

1 difference.

2 Growing up in Arizona, I was raised in
3 the tradition of Barry Goldwater, John McCain,
4 and Jeff Flake, who believed public service was
5 defined not by loyalty to a person, but by
6 constitutional principles. Today, I consider
7 myself an Eisenhower independent because I
8 believe that kind of principled steady
9 leadership is becoming increasingly rare.
10 Professionally, I've spent my career in U.S.
11 healthcare where I've seen firsthand how broken
12 institutions erode public trust.

13 I'm here today to oppose the proposed
14 monumental arch, not simply because of who
15 occupies the White House, but because of what
16 this proposal signals to every administration
17 that follows.

18 One enduring tradition of the American
19 republic has been restraint in elevating sitting
20 Presidents through permanent monuments and civic
21 symbolism. Our greatest memorials emerged
22 through time, public consensus, and history's

1 judgment, not the preferences of those holding
2 office. That tradition reflects a fundamental
3 American principle. Our institutions, our
4 symbols, and our nation are larger than any one
5 individual.

6 History reminds us that the
7 authoritarian governments often elevate living
8 leaders through monuments, architecture, and
9 civic symbolism. We saw it in Stalin's Soviet
10 Union, Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy,
11 Mao's China, Saddam's Iraq, and countless other
12 authoritarian regimes.

13 America intentionally rejected this
14 model. No kings, no personality cults. We
15 built a republic where the Constitution, not any
16 one individual, is meant to endure.

17 Restoring monuments and fountains is
18 worthwhile, but restoration cannot stop at the
19 surface or it becomes a cosmetic distraction
20 from the real work of strengthening the
21 institutions, civic trust, and democratic norms
22 that made those monuments worth building in the

1 first place. The greatness of our capital is
2 never measured in marble, but in principles it
3 represents. Eisenhower once said, a people that
4 values its privileges above its principles soon
5 loses both.

6 No administration, regardless of party,
7 should claim the privilege of reshaping
8 America's monumental core without first
9 demonstrating the restraint that has defined our
10 republic for nearly 250 years. If this
11 Administration had demonstrated that restraint,
12 we would not be here today. Instead, it has
13 exercised a consistent pattern of disregard for
14 democratic norms, institutional restraint, and
15 constitutional traditions.

16 This proposal should be understood
17 within that broader context, not as an isolated
18 decision. I respectfully ask the Commission to
19 reject this proposal. Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Mr.
21 Reichert. Next up we have Stephanie Fisher, who
22 is with us virtually. Ms. Fisher, you have

1 three minutes to provide your testimony. And
2 please proceed whenever you're ready.

3 Ms. Fisher, are you with us?

4 MS. FISHER: Yes.

5 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Can you hear me,
6 ma'am?

7 MS. FISHER: Yes.

8 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: You have three
9 minutes to provide your testimony. And please
10 proceed whenever you're ready.

11 MS. FISHER: There we go, the video.
12 Good afternoon, thank you for having me. My
13 name is Stephanie Fisher, and I've been a Gold
14 Star mother for over 14 years now. My son, Army
15 Sergeant Thomas Fogarty, is buried in Section 60
16 of the cemetery. He died in a roadside bomb
17 attack in Afghanistan while serving on his third
18 tour, one that he asked to go to.

19 And he previously served in Iraq for
20 two tours. He was 30 years old, and he left
21 behind two little boys for me to raise, three
22 and five years old. I was their permanent legal

1 guardian. Over the years, I've brought his boys
2 to the cemetery multiple times to visit their
3 father's grave, to explain where their father
4 was, to tell their story, why he volunteered,
5 why we lost him.

6 And I wanted to console them by showing
7 them that he was resting in a very beautiful,
8 special spot reserved for the heroes in our
9 country. I wanted them to know exactly where to
10 find him in the years to come.

11 And the choice to bury Tom so far from
12 home, because we're on the West Coast, I needed
13 to ensure that he would be where he wanted to
14 be, with his fellow soldiers on sacred ground
15 that defines our country. Arlington epitomizes
16 and honors the sacrifices made in human flesh by
17 our nation. And so many have died defending
18 this democracy and upholding the rule of law
19 outlined by our founding fathers.

20 When I visit the grave site, I always
21 gaze out at the vistas of the greater D.C.,
22 focusing on the Capitol and the Lincoln

1 Memorial. Seeing them clearly always gives me
2 so much comfort, pride, and renews my strength.

3 But, most of all, I want everyone to
4 know the solace that is provided there with the
5 quiet and the honor and the dignity. I cannot
6 describe to you what that solace does as a balm
7 to my heart.

8 The architects of Arlington were
9 geniuses in their design, and anyone tampering
10 with that demonstrates a complete lack of
11 hubris. The audacity of putting any structure
12 of that type in Memorial Circle shows a complete
13 lack of respect for Arlington National Cemetery.

14 And I'm going to stop here on my
15 remarks because every speaker who has spoken
16 before me has covered my feelings and more
17 beyond expectations. I think that the
18 presentations here this afternoon are complete.

19 I concur with them. The laws, all the things
20 that should be done before any project like this
21 is approved, I concur with the remarks of my
22 fellow speakers and objectors.

1 And I want to thank you for allowing me
2 to speak today just as a mom who lost my son.
3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you very much
5 for being with us, Ms. Fisher. Next up we have
6 Larry Madison, who, I believe, is also with us
7 virtually. Mr. Madison, can you hear me?

8 MS. HOTTEL-COX: I believe Mr. Madison,
9 as well as Sam Van Kopp, unless he is here in
10 person, both of those individuals are missing.
11 So we can move on to number 20.

12 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Next up then we'll
13 have Rob Nieweg, who's representing the National
14 Trust. Sir, you have five minutes to provide
15 your testimony. Please proceed whenever you're
16 ready.

17 MR. NIEWEG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
18 Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of the
19 Commission, staff of the National Capital
20 Planning Commission. My name is Rob Nieweg, and
21 I speak here on behalf of the National Trust for
22 Historic Preservation. We're grateful for the

1 additional opportunity to provide input.

2 We've already shared serious concerns
3 with this Commission about earlier iterations of
4 this proposal. To be clear, we strongly oppose
5 construction of the monumental arch at this
6 location for the following reasons.

7 First, the location and scale of the
8 arch would overwhelm nearby historic landmarks
9 such as Lincoln Memorial, Arlington House, and
10 Memorial Bridge. The arch would be inconsistent
11 with the solemn character of Arlington National
12 Cemetery and would mar the highly meaningful
13 vista across Memorial Bridge, which has long
14 been defined by restrained grandeur in its
15 memorials and long open sightlines honoring the
16 surface and sacrifice of the veterans buried at
17 Arlington and the national unification after the
18 Civil War.

19 Second, the proposal would be
20 inconsistent with Washington's urban planning
21 framework. This Commission has applied the
22 Height of Buildings Act to federal projects for

1 the last 88 years. The result is a capital city
2 beloved for its low horizontal skyline that
3 rightly emphasizes the U.S. Capitol Building and
4 the Washington Monument.

5 We support the staff legal analysis
6 that continues to apply the Height Act to
7 federal projects. Abandoning this approach now
8 would upend a consistent urban planning
9 principle that's been a century in the making.

10 Third, federal law requires the review
11 of the proposed arch under Section 106 of the
12 National Historic Preservation Act, and for that
13 review to be completed prior to approval by NCPC
14 and other agencies. The purpose of this review
15 is an important one, to ensure that new
16 construction does not needlessly harm the
17 nation's historic places without at least
18 considering less harmful alternatives.

19 We were pleased to see this Section 106
20 process begin in recent weeks. We are deeply
21 concerned, however, about the limited nature of
22 the consultation, the rushed timeline, the

1 exclusion of many parties, including the
2 exclusion of the National Trust, from the
3 consultation process, and concerned about the
4 failure to consider less harmful alternatives.
5 We urge this Commission to fully consider the
6 Section 106 findings before granting final
7 approval.

8 Fourth, flaws and uncertainties remain
9 in the updated proposal under review by you
10 today. Each new rendering submitted underlines
11 our primary concern that the proposed arch is
12 totally inappropriate in its scale and its
13 location. The new images clearly show that the
14 arch blocks the view of the Lincoln Memorial
15 from vantage points on the Virginia side. It
16 looms larger on the skyline than everything
17 other than the Washington Monument. From the
18 District side, placing the arch in the
19 foreground completely overpowers the sacred
20 rolling hills and rows of grave markers at
21 Arlington National Cemetery.

22 Fifth, we disagree with the argument

1 that the proposed arch is not subject to the
2 Commemorative Works Act. The arch requires the
3 approval of Congress, which has not yet been
4 obtained. And we urge the Commission to proceed
5 with your review in accordance with the
6 requirements of the Commemorative Works Act.

7 We also support the suggestion of the
8 D.C. State Historic Preservation Officer to
9 consider alternative locations that would be
10 more appropriate for this project. In a June 26
11 letter, the Preservation Officer proposed
12 shifting the arch to the base of South Capitol
13 Street at the Anacostia Riverfront. Moving the
14 project to this location would avoid adverse
15 effects on existing memorials.

16 This alternative location would also
17 place the arch on a direct access with the U.S.
18 Capitol Building and would create a celebratory
19 focal point for the bustling neighborhood that
20 continues to emerge between Audi Field and
21 Nationals Park. It's a much more inviting and
22 hospitable place for crowds of visitors to see

1 the arch.

2 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Time.

3 MR. NIEWEG: Thank you. Thank you for
4 hearing our comments.

5 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, sir. Did
6 either of the two witnesses we missed, Larry
7 Madison or Sam Van Kopp, appear while Rob was
8 speaking?

9 MS. HOTTEL-COX: No, they did not.

10 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay. With that,
11 we'll move on. We're obviously sorry to have
12 missed them. Do any Commissioners have
13 questions for these last three witnesses?

14 Hearing and seeing none, we'll proceed
15 to the next group of five, who are Rebecca
16 Miller, Geoffrey W. Barron, James Lardner,
17 Jackie Ostfeld, and Robert Harris.

18 Ms. Miller is attending virtually and
19 is representing the D.C. Preservation League.
20 Ms. Miller, can you hear me? Ms. Miller?

21 MS. MILLER: Yes, I can hear you.

22 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay. We've got Ms.

1 Miller. Ma'am, you have five minutes to provide
2 your testimony. And please proceed whenever
3 you're ready.

4 MS. MILLER: Thank you, Chairman and
5 members of the Commission. My name is Rebecca
6 Miller. I'm the Executive Director of the D.C.
7 Preservation League. We were founded in 1971,
8 and DCPL has spent more than five decades
9 advocating for the protection of Washington's
10 historic and built environment. Thank you for
11 the opportunity to testify today.

12 I am testifying on behalf of the
13 organization in opposition to both the proposed
14 construction of the monumental arch within
15 Memorial Circle and the National Park Service's
16 deeply flawed handling of the Section 106 review
17 process under the National Historic Preservation
18 Act.

19 The proposal to insert an oversized
20 historically discordant triumphal arch into
21 Washington's meticulously planned landscape
22 represents a profound misunderstanding of the

1 city's civic architecture. This landscape is
2 defined by the L'Enfant and McMillan plans,
3 which emphasize open vistas and democratic
4 symbolism.

5 As we have stated previously, the
6 precedent images shown by the applicants are in
7 fact not precedent setting. They were never
8 built. There are thousands of sketches of areas
9 of Washington that have never been -- come to
10 fruition. So these are not, in fact, precedents
11 that should move forward, and they also ignore
12 the capital's unique cultural landscape.

13 The applicant's assertion that the 1910
14 Height of Buildings Act does not apply to
15 federal buildings and memorials is false. When
16 Pierre L'Enfant designed Washington, D.C. in
17 1791, he envisioned a grand horizontal city
18 modeled after Paris, featuring wide avenues and
19 clear sightlines radiating towards monumental
20 public buildings.

21 While the McMillan Plan of 1902 was a
22 visionary report and not a binding law, it

1 completely shifted the political climate in
2 Washington. When Congress drafted the revised
3 Height of Buildings Act of 1910, lawmakers used
4 the exact aesthetic logic of the McMillan Plan
5 to justify the math cementing the plan's
6 horizontal European-style vision into law.

7 The 1910 Height of Buildings Act
8 rendered the 1899 law moot, and specifically
9 states that no building, I repeat, no building
10 shall be erected, altered, or raised in any
11 manner to exceed the height of 130 feet. It
12 goes on to speak about the different avenues
13 that could have up to 160 feet. This is not one
14 of those streets.

15 To diminish the federal law to simply
16 one that limits D.C. zoning is not correct. Not
17 only does the D.C. government have no ability to
18 change this law, but exempting this project from
19 the Act would set a precedent that would unravel
20 more than a century of careful planning and
21 practice by this Commission.

22 I will move on to the regulatory

1 vehicle by which the NPS is attempting to bypass
2 public accountability. The Section 106 process
3 hasn't devolved into a bureaucratic farce; it
4 started as one. It is clearly an exercise
5 designed to shield the controversial project
6 from genuine public and expert scrutiny, rather
7 than to reduce the harmful impacts of our shared
8 heritage, which is owned by the public.

9 The implications of this heavy-handed
10 maneuver extend far beyond the immediate threat
11 of the triumphal arch. If allowed to stand,
12 this exclusion would set a devastating precedent
13 for future of federal historic parks, historic
14 sites, and National Register of Historic places
15 itself.

16 If these could arbitrarily lock out
17 long-established preservation organizations from
18 Section 106 review, any federal agency can do
19 the same. The action signals that the public
20 and its nonprofit advocates are merely
21 impediments to be managed and excluded rather
22 than legitimate partners in stewardship.

1 To retain a semblance of legitimacy,
2 the National Capital Planning Commission, which
3 has Section 106 authority, should take over this
4 process to ensure it is carried out in a manner
5 that includes site alternatives, minimization
6 alternatives, and inclusion of consulting
7 parties like the D.C. Preservation League and
8 other nonprofit preservation organizations and
9 veterans groups that have requested this
10 inclusion.

11 The Section 106 process should be
12 reset, and review of alternative sites should
13 begin as has happened on other major memorials
14 and monuments in the past. The cultural
15 landscapes of our nation's capital belong to the
16 American public, not to a single administration
17 or individual's whims.

18 It is crucial to address this mockery
19 of a process before irreversible damage is done
20 to our historic and built environment, as well
21 as the integrity of the regulatory framework
22 designed to protect it. Thank you for your

1 time.

2 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Ms.
3 Miller. Next up, we have Geoffrey W. Barron,
4 who I believe is with us here in person. Mr.
5 Barron, you are representing the Third Act
6 District of Columbia, and you will have five
7 minutes to provide your testimony. Please
8 proceed whenever you're ready.

9 MR. BARRON: Thank you for the
10 opportunity to speak. I am Geoffrey Barron on
11 behalf of Third Act D.C. Third Act is a
12 national organization mobilizing older Americans
13 to help protect our climate and our democracy.
14 Founded four years ago, the organization
15 includes 100,000 volunteers in 29 states. Third
16 Act D.C. is the organization's D.C. chapter,
17 with 1,200 local members.

18 We members of Third Act D.C. join the
19 many hundreds of individuals and organizations
20 who overwhelmingly have made it clear in
21 testimony before the Commission of Fine Arts and
22 before you that we do not want an arch at

1 Memorial Circle. It will take over, block, and
2 dominate the vistas and reverential spaces of
3 and between the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington
4 Cemetery that planners designed and visitors
5 have cherished for generations.

6 In addition, I speak here in line with
7 Third Act's mission to protect democracy. In
8 1986, Congress passed a law, the Commemorative
9 Works Act, specifically to ensure democratic
10 accountability and participation in the
11 approving of new monuments in Washington. Yet,
12 the Trump Administration is coming to your
13 Commission and mountain a legal battle, not to
14 follow the intent and guidelines of that
15 legislation, but rather to attempt an end run
16 around it. And as with the demolition of the
17 East Wing of the White House, it is already
18 having initial work done at the site.

19 As we celebrate our nation's 250th
20 anniversary, I trust that everyone in this room
21 cherishes Lincoln's vision of our government as
22 of the people, by the people, and for the

1 people. We elect presidents in the hope and
2 trust that they will forward this vision and
3 work on behalf of all Americans. That is their
4 job. But that is not what President Trump is
5 doing with this arch. He is attempting to
6 impose his will and his desires on the American
7 people and the people of Washington.

8 Our monuments, like our government,
9 should be of the people, by the people, and for
10 the people. When a leader attempts to impose
11 his will on his people without their consent,
12 when he uses the powers of his office to try to
13 skirt the law or act in spite of it, we call
14 that authoritarianism. We could also call it
15 bullying.

16 A monument that is erected through
17 bullying will be resented and reviled by the
18 people it is imposed on. Do you Commissioners
19 want to be part of that? Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Mr.
21 Barron. Next up, we have James Lardner, who is
22 also here with us in person. Mr. Lardner, you

1 have three minutes to provide your testimony,
2 and please proceed whenever you are ready.

3 MR. LARNER: Thank you. My name is
4 James Lardner. I'm testifying as an individual.

5 I am also a member of Third Act, as are several
6 other witnesses here. Many people have made
7 many arguments against this proposal. Others,
8 witnesses and commenters, have talked about the
9 impact on Arlington National Cemetery and the
10 experience of visiting there. You have heard
11 testimony about the carefully constructed
12 sightline from Arlington House to the Lincoln
13 Memorial, the Washington Monument, and the
14 Capitol, about the complicated mix of feelings
15 evoked by that sightline, feelings of grief and
16 reflection as well as pride and gratitude.

17 I would like to home in on one simple
18 point, something all of us assembled here know
19 in our bones. This arch would never be built,
20 would never even be considered with or without
21 modifications, but for the fancy of one man.
22 One would-be autocrat who, acting in the

1 tradition of thuggish dictators around the world
2 and throughout history, wants to build over-the-
3 top monuments, a whole bunch of them, that tell
4 a simple, jingoistic national story of winning
5 and triumph and smug self-congratulation.

6 The thing is, people like that cannot
7 build those monuments alone. They need helpers,
8 not just paid laborers and contractors to do the
9 physical work, but also the members of bodies
10 like yours. They need public officials charged,
11 in theory, with making a careful and independent
12 evaluation and bringing their best professional
13 judgment to bear, but who are willing in
14 practice to set other considerations aside in
15 order to satisfy the whims of the supreme
16 leader.

17 The English language is rich with words
18 for such people. Sycophants. Bootlickers.
19 Lackeys. Suck-ups. Toadies. And so far, that
20 is how the majority of this panel's members have
21 chosen to act. While you cannot by yourselves
22 guarantee the arch's construction, you

1 absolutely do have it in your power right here
2 and now to decide if that is how you truly wish
3 to go on defining yourselves and to be
4 remembered when America, as it surely will,
5 thinks better of this moment of ugly leadership.

6 Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Mr.
8 Lardner. Next up is Jackie Ostfeld, who I
9 believe is with us virtually. Ms. Ostfeld, are
10 you with us?

11 MS. OSTFELD: Yes, I'm here.

12 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Ma'am, you have three
13 minutes to provide your testimony, and please
14 proceed whenever you are ready.

15 MS. OSTFELD: Okay. I don't know if my
16 camera is on. It's telling me the host needs to
17 do it. There you go. Thank you so much.

18 Thanks for the opportunity to be here
19 today. When President Trump first unveiled a
20 model of the proposed triumphal arch, a reporter
21 asked him a simple question, who is it for? His
22 answer was just as simple. Me, he said. That

1 answer should tell us everything we need to
2 know. Our public lands are not here to serve
3 the vanity of any president. They belong to
4 every American, and they should be managed with
5 future generations in mind.

6 As a director for Sierra Club's
7 Outdoors for All campaign, I spend every day
8 working to expand access to our public lands
9 while protecting the places that make those
10 experiences possible. Across the country,
11 America's national parks are facing a crisis.
12 The Trump Administration has cut National Park
13 Service staff through widespread reductions in
14 force, even as parks continue to welcome
15 millions of visitors every year.

16 Visitors are seeing the consequences,
17 as fewer people are left to care for the places
18 they came to experience. Now, instead of
19 directing resources to those parks, the
20 Administration is taking money that visitors
21 paid through National Park entrance fees and
22 redirecting it to the President's personal

1 vanity projects in Washington. Trump's proposed
2 arch is simply the latest example of those
3 misplaced priorities.

4 Americans pay those entrance fees
5 because they expect that money will be used to
6 care for the parks they visit. They expect it
7 will preserve historic places, improve visitor
8 experiences, and protect the landscapes for
9 future generations. That is not what is
10 happening. This proposal would permanently
11 alter National Park Service land that frames the
12 entrance to Arlington National Cemetery.

13 At 250 feet, the proposed structure
14 would be twice as tall as the Lincoln Memorial,
15 and would block the line of sight that connects
16 the Lincoln Memorial with the entrance to
17 Arlington. This is the gateway to Arlington
18 National Cemetery, where more than 400,000
19 servicemembers are laid to rest. It is a place
20 that calls for thoughtful stewardship and deep
21 respect. Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Ms.

1 Ostfeld. Next up, we have Robert Harris, who I
2 believe is with us here in person. Mr. Harris,
3 you'll have three minutes to provide your
4 testimony, and please proceed whenever you're
5 ready.

6 MR. HARRIS: Can you hear me?

7 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Yes sir.

8 MR. HARRIS: Good. I want to thank the
9 board for letting us come to this meeting today,
10 for all these wonderful people that have stepped
11 up here and spoke. I can't even begin to cover
12 everything they did and said because they know
13 so much more than I do, but when it comes to the
14 arch, the young lady just said, originally it
15 was going to be the arch, and now it's memorial
16 arch.

17 But originally, it was the arch, and
18 they're going to put this thing in front of
19 Arlington Cemetery, and that whole area down
20 there is sacred ground for the military. You
21 got the Vietnam Memorial, you've got the World
22 War II memorial, you've got Arlington Cemetery.

1 I think the Korean memorial is down there, too,
2 but no one seems to notice that all these
3 monuments are around the military.

4 And there's lots of places to put this
5 memorial, like somebody suggested, down by the
6 Capitol. There's plenty of land around the
7 Capitol, that we could put it there, or we could
8 put it in East Potomac Park because -- right on
9 the river. People would see it coming and
10 going, which would be a nice feature.

11 Long story short, I want to thank this
12 board for letting us come here today, and I
13 think this board should find a way to put this
14 on public television so people can see what goes
15 on with the response that you have from the
16 people that come here to speak today, because
17 there's a lot of good information here today for
18 the board to take into consideration when you go
19 to vote.

20 The last time you voted, you voted
21 almost 100 percent to have it put in where it's
22 going to go. Hopefully, this time, with the

1 people that spoke, because there was a lot of
2 good information, you may change your minds,
3 which would make me very happy, because I
4 normally don't step up for this kind of thing.
5 But this is one thing that has to be stopped
6 immediately because it cannot be put in front of
7 Arlington Cemetery or the bridge.

8 Thank you very much for your time and
9 your effort to do the right thing here because
10 some day there will be reports after this is all
11 done, and hopefully you'll be on the side of the
12 team that said not to do this. Thank you very
13 much for your time.

14 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Mr.
15 Harris. Do any Commissioners have any questions
16 for these last five witnesses before we proceed
17 to the next group?

18 Hearing and seeing none --

19 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Mr. Chairman?

20 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Oh, yes. I'm sorry.

21 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Apologies. If we
22 could take a brief recess so that we can reset

1 the streaming service, so that we don't run out
2 of time?

3 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: That seems quite
4 reasonable. We'll take a brief -- you think you
5 need five minutes? We'll take a five minute
6 recess at this time, and then we will pick back
7 up with witness testimony on agenda item 6A.
8 Thank you.

9 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
10 went off the record at 3:23 p.m. and resumed at
11 3:31 p.m.)

12 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: We'll move on at this
13 point to our next set of witnesses on agenda
14 item 6A. Those are Karen Shemwell, David
15 Parker, Frances Macdonald, John Ayers, and Susan
16 Grodsky. Ms. Shemwell, I believe, is attending
17 virtually. Ma'am, can you hear me?

18 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Unless Ms. Shemwell is
19 here in person, it appears that she has not
20 joined, so we can move on to David Parker.

21 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay. Mr. Parker,
22 you're also attending virtually. Can you hear

1 me, sir?

2 MR. PARKER: Yes, I can.

3 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Mr. Parker, you have
4 three minutes to provide your testimony, and
5 please proceed whenever you are ready.

6 MR. PARKER: Thank you, Chairman Scharf
7 and Commission members. I'm David Parker,
8 practicing architect, preservationist, and
9 fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

10 I spoke before on this application but would
11 like to make additional observations.

12 First, the proposed location is highly
13 problematic, and the adverse impacts it will
14 create cannot be mitigated. The NEPA compliance
15 table lists 299 contributing resources that will
16 be directly affected. The NCPC Executive
17 Director's report acknowledges the proposed arch
18 will, quote, fully obstruct reciprocal views of
19 the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington. The arch
20 will be an imposition and an impediment, a
21 direct violation of the McMillan Plan, and the
22 most basic rationale for the Lincoln Memorial's

1 placement, and of Memorial Bridge.

2 Furthermore, the 2001 NCPC Memorials
3 and Monuments Master Plan, which was done in
4 conjunction with CFA and the National Capital
5 Memorial Commission specifically states, quote,
6 the existing circle at the west end of Memorial
7 Bridge is not viewed as appropriate for the
8 location of a future memorial.

9 Second, the symbolism of the proposed
10 arch is contradictory and incongruent.

11 Throughout history, triumphal arches have been
12 built to, quote, present a particular narrative
13 about rulers and nation states. This arch is
14 proposed as a monument, rather than as a
15 memorial. Monuments are built for admiration
16 and historical celebration, while memorials are
17 built for respectful remembrance.

18 Third, the height of the proposed arch
19 exceeds Washington's Height of Buildings Act,
20 which NCPC has always considered binding on
21 federal projects. The NCPC Executive Director's
22 recommendations to make the arch compliant would

1 significantly change its proportions while
2 dramatically enlarging the top statuary,
3 alterations that would undoubtedly require
4 reducing the size of the arch's opening, further
5 diminishing keyhole views that the applicant
6 claims it will frame.

7 Fourth, alternatives with less adverse
8 impacts should be considered. The D.C. State
9 Historic Preservation Officer recently proposed
10 an alternative site at the three-acre Capitol
11 Street oval, adjacent to the Anacostia
12 waterfront, which is much closer to the Capitol
13 than the present location. One and a quarter
14 versus two and three quarter miles, which the
15 current site is from the Capitol. A monumental
16 arch at that location would avoid adverse
17 effects, while eliminating interference with the
18 solemnity of the Lincoln Memorial and graves at
19 Arlington National Cemetery. This site would
20 position the arch as a celebratory gateway to
21 Washington, directly on axis with the Capitol
22 and the new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge,

1 creating a dramatic focal point for the vibrant
2 neighborhood between Audi Field and Nationals
3 Park, while yielding cultural and economic
4 benefits to the area.

5 Finally, this project should be subject
6 to the congressional approval under the
7 Commemorative Works Act. The claim that
8 Congress authorized the arch when it considered
9 two columns a century ago is not credible, and
10 those widely spaced columns, which would not
11 have blocked any views, are fundamentally
12 different from the proposed monumental arch.
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Mr.
15 Parker. Next, we have Frances Macdonald, who is
16 also with us virtually. Do we have Frances
17 Macdonald with us?

18 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Unless Frances
19 Macdonald is here in person, it appears they
20 have not joined, so we can move on to John
21 Ayers.

22 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay. John Ayers,

1 who I believe is with us in person. Mr. Ayers,
2 you have three minutes to provide your
3 testimony, and please proceed whenever you are
4 ready. Thank you, sir.

5 MR. AYERS: My name is John Ayers. I'm
6 speaking today as a D.C. resident for almost 40
7 years. At the June meeting, Commissioner Blair
8 explained his support for this project, saying,
9 in my view, the fact that the scale is so grand
10 is part of the allure. I think that our
11 nation's 250th birthday is a testament to how
12 big our nation is and how great it is. Frankly,
13 I think that's how the President means it too,
14 so I am in support, end quote.

15 Commissioner Blair also observed,
16 rightly, I think, I think we all agree, that
17 everyone is entitled to their view, and that is
18 precisely why Congress designated this
19 Commission as the central planning agency for
20 the capital. Because views will differ, its
21 task is not to decide whether a proposal is
22 alluring or favored, but to apply the laws and

1 planning framework that protect the nation's
2 capital. It is also why Congress required the
3 Commissioners appointed by the President be
4 qualified and experienced in city or regional
5 planning. Decisions of this magnitude demand
6 discipline, planning, judgement.

7 When decisions are reviewed under the
8 Administrative Procedure Act, the question is
9 whether the agency is engaged in reasoned
10 decision making. In plain terms, the action you
11 take must be supported by the findings you make.

12 Through that lens or simply a sound decision
13 making, the recommendation does not justify the
14 approval it seeks.

15 First, plans or drawings that were
16 shown today to address the recommendation's
17 concern over the Height Act do not resolve the
18 problems before you. In fact, they confirm it.

19 Plans changed enough to comply to the Height
20 Act are plans for a different building. We're
21 talking about a 22 percent reduction in the
22 principal structure as well as other changes to

1 the structure. It's a different building. And
2 the record contains no analysis of that
3 building, no staff evaluation of published
4 recommendation, no opportunity for public
5 review.

6 The recommendation's treatment of the
7 Comprehensive Plan is also fundamentally flawed,
8 and the conflicts run far beyond the Height Act.

9 In June, I identified at least 12 plan policies
10 with which the project is inconsistent.

11 Commissioner Cozart expressed her hope that when
12 this project returned, the submission would
13 address them. The project has returned, and
14 these points remain unaddressed.

15 In 185 pages, the recommendation cites
16 four policies by number, and engages only one of
17 the twelve that I cited. The recommendation
18 tries to blunt this by reminding us that the
19 Commission takes a holistic approach, and that,
20 on the whole, the project is generally
21 consistent. But a holistic approach, a holistic
22 weighing, must actually weigh, not skip the

1 considerations.

2 A vote to approve the plans because the
3 plans are preliminary is not harmless kicking
4 the can down the road. Agency action becomes
5 part of the record and communicates that these
6 plans are sufficiently consistent with governing
7 law to move forward. Now, not later, is the
8 time to discharge your statutory responsibility.

9 The recommendation does not justify the
10 approval it recommends. I respectfully ask that
11 you vote no. Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Mr. Ayers.

13 Next up, we have Susan Grodsky, who I believe
14 is joining us virtually. Ms. Grodsky, can you
15 hear me?

16 MS. GRODSKY: Yes, I can. Let me make
17 sure my video is on.

18 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: We can see you ma'am.

19 You have three minutes to provide your
20 testimony, and please proceed whenever you are
21 ready.

22 MS. GRODSKY: Well, I'd like to start

1 by saying good afternoon, and thank you for
2 listening. My name is Susan Grodsky. I'm a
3 native Washingtonian. I was born at Columbia
4 Hospital. I attended Watergate concerts when I
5 was a child. You'd sit on the back steps of the
6 Lincoln Memorial and listen to the service
7 bands. And as you might guess from someone
8 who's grown up here, I have friends buried at
9 Arlington National Cemetery.

10 Now, all the points I was going to make
11 in opposition to this arch have already been
12 made. I'm not going to repeat them. I'm going
13 to tell you a story. So the story is, when I
14 was in fourth grade, we began our day the same
15 way every day. We all stood up, and we faced
16 the flag, and we put our hands over the hearts,
17 and we said the Pledge of Allegiance. And then
18 we did what our teacher called democracy in
19 action, which was we voted on what game we were
20 going to play at recess.

21 Now, one day, the freeze tag contingent
22 was really well organized, and they won the

1 vote. And I was really unhappy about that
2 because I had voted for red rover. So I started
3 to object, and then all of the freeze tag kids
4 started yelling at me, majority rules, majority
5 rules, majority rules. And one kid, Patrick,
6 really obnoxious kid, he yells at me, shut up,
7 Susan. Majority rules.

8 So, I don't know where you all stand on
9 red rover versus freeze tag, but there's a
10 takeaway point, and the takeaway point is this.

11 In a democracy, majority rules. I have been
12 listening to all of this testimony. Everyone
13 has spoken out against that arch. There is not
14 one vote in favor of it. And I hope you people
15 learned in fourth grade the same thing that I
16 learned, and that's that in a democracy,
17 majority rules. Thank you very much.

18 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Ms.
19 Grodsky. And I'm sorry for that traumatic
20 experience that you had in fourth grade. Do any
21 Commissioners have questions for, I guess, these
22 three witnesses? Or did either of the two

1 witnesses we missed join us?

2 MS. HOTTEL-COX: No, they did not.

3 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay. Do any
4 Commissioners have any questions for these past
5 three witnesses?

6 Hearing and seeing none, we'll move on
7 to the next group of five, who are Anne
8 Jaegerman, Sherman Neal II, Frederick
9 Gottschalk, Darrell Stamper, and Lawrence
10 MacDonald. Anne Jaegerman, I apologize if I'm
11 getting that wrong, is with us in person.
12 Ma'am, you'll have three minutes to provide your
13 testimony, and please proceed whenever you're
14 ready.

15 MS. JAEGERMAN: Okay. My name is Anne
16 Jaegerman. I'm a resident of D.C. and a private
17 citizen. I want to talk about the hasty process
18 for the arch's design and approval. I did some
19 research about other relatively recent additions
20 to Washington's memorials using a book about
21 Washington's outdoor sculpture by James M.
22 Goode, Wikipedia, and the Park Service website.

1 About the World War II Memorial. In
2 1987, a vet asked a representative if a World
3 War II Memorial could be constructed.
4 Representative Kaptur had to introduce a bill to
5 the House four times before it was passed in
6 1993. A nationwide design competition drew 400
7 submissions. Goode says, the original design
8 underwent many changes between 1996 and its
9 completion in 2004. St. Florian's design went
10 through two dozen public reviews. All of these
11 changes over a seven-year period were
12 refinements that enhanced the design of the
13 memorial.

14 Wikipedia notes that critics were
15 bothered by the expedited approval process.
16 Congress, worried that World War II vets were
17 dying before the memorial could be built, passed
18 legislation exempting the World War II Memorial
19 from further site and design review. The site
20 selection and finished memorial were criticized
21 extensively.

22 About the Korean War Veterans Memorial.

1 At the request of the Korean War Veterans
2 Association, Congress and President Reagan
3 approved a memorial in 1986. Four architects
4 from Penn State University won the design
5 competition from a group of 543 entrants. Their
6 design was rejected by the CFA, as was a second
7 design by another firm. In 1992, a final third
8 design was accepted. It took seven years to
9 finalize the memorial's design. The memorial
10 was completed in 1995.

11 About the Martin Luther King Jr.
12 Memorial. The efforts of Alpha Phi Fraternity,
13 of which King had been a member, to build an MLK
14 monument in D.C. gained momentum in 1986, the
15 first year King's birthday was celebrated as a
16 federal holiday. In '96, Congress authorized
17 the Department of the Interior to permit the
18 fraternity to establish a memorial on government
19 land. In '98, Congress authorized a nonprofit
20 foundation. In '99, the CFA and the NCPC
21 approved the site.

22 The foundation held a design

1 competition, which drew 906 entries. In 2000,
2 the judges selected a design. There was a delay
3 in 2008 because the design that was approved by
4 the CFA and NCPC was not approved by the Park
5 Service due to security concerns. A compromise
6 was approved in 2009. The memorial opened in
7 2011.

8 It is notable that all of these
9 memorials had public constituencies that
10 supported their construction, that the design
11 processes took years, and that congressional
12 approval was required. In a democracy, things
13 often move slowly to consider expertise from
14 many disciplines, to allow for public
15 participation, and to build consensus.
16 President Trump's impatience does not create the
17 kind of emergency that would justify abridging
18 the customary processes for deciding whether,
19 when, where, or how to build a memorial to the
20 sesquicentennial. I oppose the arch. Thank
21 you.

22 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Ms.

1 Jaegerman. Next up, we have Sherman Neal II,
2 who I believe is with us virtually. Mr. Neal,
3 you are representing the Sierra Club, and you
4 have five minutes to present your testimony.
5 Please proceed whenever you are ready.

6 MR. NEAL: Thank you, Chairman.
7 Honoring the legacy of the service members who
8 gave their lives in defense of this country
9 requires protecting the hallowed ground where
10 they rest from desecration by all persons, both
11 foreign and domestic. That includes the
12 President. This vanity project threatens the
13 eternal rest that those service members have
14 earned. Every day I choose to honor the triumph
15 and legacies of service members like Medgar
16 Evers, Lieutenant Colonel Hector Santa Anna,
17 Major Megan McClung, and those who served this
18 nation and represent the soul of what this
19 nation could be.

20 I'm speaking to you on behalf of the
21 millions of members of the Sierra Club, 3.5
22 million, to be exact, as the Director of their

1 Military Outdoors Campaign, where for 20 years
2 we've supported and uplifted the veteran
3 community by creating spaces to heal in nature
4 and uplift veteran voices in conservation. I'm,
5 also, speaking to you as a Marine Corps veteran,
6 the son of a sailor, the brother of an airman,
7 the cousin, nephew, and friend to countless
8 members of my extended family who have served in
9 every branch of America's military. I have
10 earned the right, and I have the obligation to
11 speak for the people currently interred at
12 Arlington, people who gave their lives to defend
13 an imperfect nation with the expectation that
14 people like you would protect their legacies,
15 our land, and the integrity of our republic
16 today by rejecting this monument.

17 I was in my mid 20s and just months
18 away from my first deployment when I first gave
19 serious thought to where I'd want to be buried
20 if I died at war. Every material possession I
21 owned could fit in my Jeep Wrangler. Materials
22 didn't stress me out. Contemplating death

1 itself did not stress me out. Nothing made me
2 stop and think more than the question of whether
3 I would earn the right to be buried in America's
4 most hallowed ground, Arlington National
5 Cemetery, by displaying valor in combat.

6 In 2014, I drove alone to Arlington
7 from Marine Corps base, Quantico, to better
8 understand what it meant to make the ultimate
9 sacrifice. I departed from Manion Hall, a
10 barracks named after First Lieutenant Travis
11 Manion, a young man who was killed in battle in
12 2007. I knew his grave would be located in
13 section 60, where the people close to my age, in
14 a conflict that I would eventually join, were
15 laid to rest. Over 7,000 of them are there
16 today. I certainly didn't want to die, but I
17 trusted that my country would treat my final
18 resting place with the solemn honor and respect
19 that the service members buried in Arlington
20 have earned.

21 I thought about these things in the
22 spring of 2015, where I would support the

1 establishment of Camp Manion, where Marines led
2 the effort to defeat ISIS in western Iraq, at a
3 place formerly known as Al-Taqaddum Air Base.

4 Since then, I've seen families hosting picnics
5 as the grave sites with their young ones, I've
6 seen soldiers wipe away tears for the brothers
7 they've lost, I've felt the heaviness of the
8 moments watching the guards post at the tomb of
9 the unknown soldier. I know that ensuring that
10 none of these lives were expended in vain
11 requires defending democratic practices at home
12 today, and increasing support to the veterans
13 among us.

14 I'm testifying today, again, on behalf
15 of 3.5 million people, but I'm, also, testifying
16 for myself. I'm testifying as a person who
17 still needs to know, believe, hope, that you,
18 and the people that follow you, will take these
19 opportunities to declare that this still
20 matters, that the soul of the country still
21 matters, and that this is going to be a place,
22 the main place, where we honor the legacies of

1 those who have served the country honorably.
2 So, to do that, we must protect these lands from
3 further desecration, and share adherence to the
4 law, regardless of the pressures from the exec,
5 and most importantly, refuse any monument to a
6 monarch who has not served to cast a shadow on
7 those who have gave their lives in service to
8 this country.

9 When I drove to Arlington before my
10 time at the basic school in Quantico, I believed
11 that if the worst happened, my country would
12 protect that sacred landscape and give it the
13 dignity it deserves. This is an important time
14 to remember the steps this administration has
15 already taken to diminish the legacies of those
16 heroes at Arlington. Many of those legacies are
17 already in jeopardy while they rest, from
18 erasure due to their sexuality, the color of
19 their skin, their ethnicity, their willingness
20 to dissent. We're fighting those battles today,
21 while at the same time, we're fighting these
22 battles on land. We're fighting for souls,

1 we're fighting for places, we're fighting for
2 communities. It's time to honor the commitments
3 to living veterans by committing resources to
4 individual wellness and correcting systemic
5 environmental injustices in the communities
6 where they live, instead of committing future
7 crime to the environment and their place, and
8 their souls.

9 So, while many of us may never find
10 sustained rest after service while we live, I
11 respectfully request that you permit us to allow
12 them to find dignity and rest in death. I know
13 I personally would never find rest under the
14 shadow of this arch. I appreciate your time.

15 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Mr. Neal.

16 Next up, we have Frederick Gottschalk, who I
17 believe is with us here in person. Mr.
18 Gottschalk, you're representing Common Defense,
19 and you have five minutes to provide your
20 testimony. Please proceed whenever you are
21 ready.

22 MR. GOTTSCHALK: Okay. I thought I

1 would be the most casual person dressed, but Ms.
2 Jaegerman has put me to shame. I want to point
3 out that these are my views, and the views of
4 thousands of veterans across the nation that
5 are, also, members of Common Defense. Are there
6 veterans on this Commission? Okay, I saw one
7 hand go up. That's good. These words should
8 resonate with you, and I hope you take them to
9 heart.

10 This structure seems to be planned as
11 poorly as the reflecting pool renovation and our
12 national fair. It has not been planned on the
13 scale of the more than six years of careful,
14 deliberative, planning that went into the
15 construction of the World War II Memorial or
16 similar monuments. The Chairman, you used
17 powerful words at the beginning of this meeting.
18 You want to preserve the beauty of our capital.
19 This proposal does not facilitate that goal. It
20 detracts from the beauty of our capital.

21 The memorial would detract from the
22 natural, peaceful, serenity of the memorial area

1 outside of Arlington National Cemetery. I go
2 there all the time, and I love just being there
3 in the nice, quiet area that it is there. I
4 don't often state this, but like several of the
5 speakers today, I'm a decorated combat veteran.

6 I have stood under Saddam Hussein's concrete
7 arch. It was crumbling in 2009, less than 25
8 years after it was constructed in Iraq. It's
9 crumbling because it was built by a man that was
10 disdained by the population of the nation, and I
11 just want that to be noted.

12 I am further appalled that a monument
13 of this nature would block the view between
14 where I am to be buried with all of my friends
15 in Arlington National Cemetery, the view between
16 my fair city, Arlington National Cemetery, and
17 the seat of our nation's leadership. Actions,
18 not objects, are what commemorate and
19 memorializes an administration. I'm further
20 appalled by that the funding that would be
21 allocated for this monument, when there are so
22 many other needs in the veteran community. If

1 you want to commemorate veterans, if you want to
2 talk about how you support veterans, put the
3 money where it's needed, not in some object.

4 Currently, permanently combat disabled
5 veterans that have been medically retired are
6 not being fully supported by this
7 administration. Let that sink in for just a
8 second. Permanently disabled veterans, combat
9 disabled veterans are not being supported by
10 this administration, yet this administration
11 wants to put an arch in front of the cemetery.
12 In addition, this administration is considering
13 cutting earned benefits from veterans like
14 myself who suffer from hearing loss and sleep
15 apnea. So, they're trying to take more money
16 away from veterans while they're building an
17 arch in front of the cemetery. Surely whatever
18 money that is being considered for this memorial
19 could be better allocated to support veterans in
20 need.

21 The administration is remembered by
22 veterans for what they have done to them or for

1 them, not piles of gilded marble. Actions, not
2 objects. I think that the statement is lost
3 when folks who are not veterans are trying to
4 develop ways to commemorate our nation. They
5 often forget that if you want to commemorate
6 veterans, take care of the veterans. This does
7 not do that.

8 As others have stated much more
9 eloquently than I can, no matter how you twist
10 your words, this proposed monument is illegal
11 under the Commemorative Works Act, which
12 requires congressional approval for memorials on
13 federal land in and near D.C. Commemorative
14 Works Act both requires express authorization
15 from Congress before any monument or structure
16 is built on federal reservations, parks, public
17 grounds, and the nation's capital. The arch
18 slated for Memorial Circle and Lady Bird Johnson
19 Park has received no such congressional
20 authorization.

21 For anyone that feels the need for a
22 commemorative arch or an avenue of heroes, I'd

1 like to point out that there are 430,000 such
2 commemorative stones in Arlington National
3 Cemetery. All of those stones would be blocked
4 from view of the city. They deserve something
5 better than some poorly planned and hastily
6 constructed memorial that has been conceived by
7 the same administration that has brought you a
8 horribly executed renovation of the reflecting
9 pool and an ill-conceived and executed national
10 fair that is the laughing stock of the world.

11 In conclusion, my Common Defense
12 compatriots and I urge you to reject this
13 proposal. It is not appropriated or authorized
14 by Congress, and it will mar the natural
15 serenity of Arlington National Cemetery. Thank
16 you.

17 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Mr.
18 Gottschalk. Next up, we have Darrel Stamper,
19 who I believe is joining us virtually today.
20 Mr. Stamper, are you with us?

21 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Unless Mr. Stamper is
22 here in person, we don't have him. So, we can

1 move on to Lawrence MacDonald.

2 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay. Lawrence
3 MacDonald, I believe is with us here in person.

4 Mr. MacDonald, you have three minutes to
5 provide your testimony, and please proceed
6 whenever you're ready.

7 MR. MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr.
8 Chairman. It's a privilege to speak to members
9 of the Commission. I spoke with you at the
10 previous meeting. Some of what I have to say
11 will be familiar, but I hope that this time, my
12 words might be more effective in reaching you.

13 I'm Lawrence MacDonald, a volunteer
14 with Third Act, a movement of older Americans
15 working to protect democracy and a livable
16 planet. As elders, we care deeply about the
17 legacy we will leave to those who come after us.

18 I urge you to consider your own legacy and vote
19 against this arch. The arch cannot be separated
20 from Donald Trump. He has said it is an arch to
21 honor himself. This is a man who as President
22 in 2018, refused to visit a World War II

1 American cemetery near Paris, saying, why should
2 I go to that cemetery? It's filled with losers.
3 This is the man who called the 1,800 Americans
4 who died at Belleau Woods in World War I
5 suckers, and ridiculed Senator John McCain for
6 having been captured in Vietnam.

7 His projects in our nation's capital
8 have been steeped in corruption and plagued with
9 failure. This is a man who can't even repair
10 the reflecting pool. How is he going to oversee
11 the construction of a massive arch? Are we
12 going to see billions of dollars in corrupt no-
13 bid contracts go to Trump cronies who are unable
14 to perform the work? The arch is fascist in
15 intent and design. Not surprisingly, it has a
16 striking resemblance to a sketch that Hitler
17 himself made for an arch that he wanted to be
18 built in Berlin. Photographs of Hitler admiring
19 a scale model of his arch are creepily similar
20 to the photos of Trump showing off the model of
21 his arch. That resemblance is not a
22 coincidence. Trump and his ex-wife Ivana both

1 said that he once kept a notebook of Hitler's
2 speeches at his bedside.

3 There is another striking similarity
4 between these two arches. Neither of them will
5 ever be built. Plans for Hitler's arch were
6 scrapped when the Nazis were defeated in '45.
7 The end of Trump's reign will be less dramatic
8 and less bloody, but one way or another, his
9 time as our nation's leader will end well before
10 this monstrous arch can be completed. Whoever
11 succeeds him will be very unlikely to pursue
12 this project, given the massive cost and massive
13 public opposition.

14 The question before you today concerns
15 your legacy. Your vote will determine how you
16 will be remembered. If you vote in favor of
17 this arch, you'll cast your lot on the wrong
18 side of history. Your friends and relatives,
19 your children, and your children's children will
20 forever be ashamed of you. There's good news.
21 It's not too late to change your mind.

22 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Your time has

1 expired, sir.

2 MR. MACDONALD: You can avoid this fate
3 by voting against the arch. It might be hard.

4 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: You're done, sir.

5 MR. MACDONALD: Most of you sit on the
6 Commission because Trump appointed you. Be
7 brave. Vote against the arch.

8 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: I'm just going to say
9 something. As a Jew, as an American Jew who had
10 family fight against Hitler in World War II, and
11 who lost family in the Shoah, in the Holocaust,
12 the idea that because of some picture you've
13 dragged out of the archives that the President
14 of the United States, the duly elected President
15 of the United States, is somehow comparable to
16 the most evil man who's probably ever lived in
17 history, is just deeply, deeply offensive to me.

18 We can disagree about this project without that
19 sort of invective being leveled against members
20 of this Commission, and I just don't know what
21 you think you're accomplishing, sir.

22 But we'll move on to our next witnesses

1 now, unless anybody has questions for the last
2 four who have spoken. The next people to speak
3 are Teresa Szewczyk, Kathy Linneweber, Karen E.
4 Santiano Francis, Jim Horton, Melissa Millhorn,
5 and Tom Moore. Miss -- I know I'm butchering
6 this pronunciation and I apologize for that, but
7 Ms. Szewczyk is supposed to be with us
8 virtually.

9 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Mr. Chairman, I
10 believe that the first four individuals that you
11 listed all were scheduled to join virtually, and
12 unless any of them are here in person, we don't
13 have them. So, we can move on to Melissa
14 Millhorn and Tom Moore as our final two
15 witnesses.

16 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay. Melissa
17 Millhorn, I believe is with us here in person.
18 Ma'am, you can proceed whenever you're ready,
19 and you'll have three minutes to provide your
20 testimony. Thank you.

21 MS. MILLHORN: Members of the
22 Commission, thank you. My name is Melissa

1 Millhorn. I'm here as an individual citizen. I
2 oppose this arch, not because of its scale or
3 cost, those objections are already on the
4 record. The Applicant calls it a monumental
5 arch, not a triumphal one. Like a previous
6 speaker previously noted, whatever it's called,
7 it adopts the architectural language of empire
8 foreign to the American founding. A new label
9 doesn't change the symbolism.

10 A roman triumph was an honor granted by
11 the senate. When Augustus reserved the triumph
12 for the imperial family, one of the republic's
13 defining civic honors became an imperial
14 prerogative. The triumphal arch became one of
15 history's clearest symbols of imperial power.
16 The early American republic chose a different
17 path. Triumphal arches in the founding era were
18 intentionally temporary. The defining image of
19 our founding is not a conqueror passing beneath
20 an arch, it is Washington resigning his
21 commission and returning power to civilian
22 authority.

1 In nearly two and a half centuries, the
2 federal government has never built one in the
3 monumental corps. That's not an oversight.
4 It's a consistent republican tradition. I
5 wanted to note that Washington is the only major
6 western capital without such an arch, but every
7 capital in that comparison, Paris, London, Rome,
8 was the seat of an empire or a monarchy. That
9 absence is a distinction to be preserved, not a
10 deficiency to correct. Consider the company
11 this arch would keep. Napoleon's Paris,
12 Pyongyang, where the arch of triumph glorifies
13 Kim Il Sung. In a Roman triumph, the procession
14 displayed captives and spoils. A victory arch
15 at the threshold of Arlington turns more than
16 400,000 Americans buried there into a backdrop
17 for a presidential vanity project. The long,
18 open approach from the Lincoln Memorial was
19 designed as an act of humility. It needs no
20 gate. In a republic, the honored dead answer to
21 no one who passes above them.

22 Today, I speak as a retired federal law

1 enforcement officer, a military spouse, and
2 granddaughter of a soldier killed in Okinawa.
3 In every case, our oath was the same, not to a
4 ruler, but to the Constitution. Our capital
5 reflects that distinction. A triumphal arch has
6 no place in it. I urge you to reject this
7 proposal. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, ma'am.
9 Next up, we have our last witness, Mr. Tom
10 Moore, who I believe is with us in person. Mr.
11 Moore, you have three minutes to provide your
12 testimony, and you can proceed whenever you are
13 ready.

14 MR. MOORE: Good afternoon. My name is
15 Tom Moore. I've been a resident of the national
16 capital area continuously since 1976. I was a
17 resident and taxpayer in the District of
18 Columbia from 1976 to 1981, and from 1981 to
19 date I've been a resident and taxpayer in
20 Virginia. I have for five decades regularly
21 traveled over the Memorial Bridge between
22 Virginia and the District, and I am familiar

1 with the area around the Memorial Bridge.

2 The proposed new monumental arch is
3 completely out of character for the area. The
4 only structures over five stories visible from
5 Memorial Bridge are the high rises in the areas
6 of Virginia known as Rosslyn, Crystal City, and
7 Pentagon City. I understand that the new
8 monumental arch is proposed to have a height of
9 250 feet, or about 25 stories. This is out of
10 character with the low-rise architecture of
11 Washington D.C., and would block the current
12 panoramic views available from Memorial Bridge
13 from the west side of the Lincoln Memorial, and
14 from most of Arlington National Cemetery. I
15 encourage you to reject the new monumental arch,
16 as currently planned. Thank you for having a
17 public hearing.

18 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Mr. Moore.

19 At this time, Madam Secretary, are any of the
20 people who originally signed up to testify but
21 who weren't able to join us -- or have any of
22 them now joined us?

1 MS. HOTTEL-COX: No, Mr. Chairman.

2 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay. With that,
3 we're going to conclude public testimony for
4 today. I've said this before, and I'll say it
5 again. It's -- I think it's really great and
6 it's a real testament to each and every one of
7 you that you've sat through a very long
8 commission meeting to make your voice heard.
9 Public testimony at a commission like this can
10 often not be for the faint hearted. This has
11 been a long meeting. I know that you all are
12 busy people with other things to do in your
13 lives, and it's meaningful to me personally that
14 you took time out of your busy lives to come
15 share your opinions with us here today. So,
16 truly, thank you for being here, thank you for
17 making your voice heard, and I would encourage
18 you to continue making your voices heard at
19 other commissions' opportunities for public
20 testimony that I know occur on, you know, not
21 just this issue, but any number of issues
22 particularly here in the D.C. area, which is

1 such a locus of government, particularly federal
2 government commissions and other public bodies
3 of the sort.

4 Before we move on to a motion to
5 approve preliminary site plans on this project,
6 Commissioner Dixon mentioned before this meeting
7 started that he wanted to make a motion.

8 Commissioner Dixon, are you still with us, and
9 is that still your intent? Commissioner Dixon?

10 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I'm still with
11 you, Mr. Chairman.

12 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay.

13 COMMISSIONER DIXON: And I'm not going
14 to -- I have -- I want to make a statement, but
15 maybe I'll wait until it's my turn to vote.

16 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay. Well, we can
17 take that up with the project itself, if that's
18 okay with you, sir. Before we move on to formal
19 consideration of preliminary site and building
20 plans, though, I have a motion myself, and
21 that's relating to the Height of Buildings Act
22 issue, which has come up before on consideration

1 --

2 (Off-microphone comments.)

3 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: I think Commissioner
4 Blair was unmuted there for a second. As some
5 of you may recall, at our last meeting, I raised
6 the issue of the Height of Buildings Act
7 applicability to federal buildings, that was
8 when we considered this project for concept
9 review. At that time, I asked the Applicant to
10 provide legal analysis on this issue, which they
11 did in their application materials before us
12 today. Those materials provide what I believe
13 is a compelling argument that the Height of
14 Buildings Act is not binding on the federal
15 government.

16 Our general counsel additionally
17 provided a memo, which is attached to the
18 Executive Director's Report, that details NCPC's
19 historic position, a long-held historic
20 position, I would add, which as I mentioned last
21 month, is that the Height of Buildings Act is in
22 fact binding on the federal government. Our

1 Commission had some discussion on this issue
2 this morning, and we obviously need to consider
3 this overall issue, the applicability of the
4 Height of Buildings Act, prior to finally
5 approving this project, or indeed any project
6 that would test the bounds of the Height of
7 Buildings Act.

8 My view is that today, we are just
9 considering this project for preliminary
10 approval, and that as a result, it's not
11 necessary for us to take up this broader issue
12 of the applicability of the Height of Buildings
13 Act to federal construction, until our next
14 meeting at the earliest, which would be the
15 earliest time that this project could be finally
16 approved. And to that end, because this issue
17 is still under consideration, I'd like to make a
18 motion to amend the Commission actions that are
19 included in the Height of Buildings Act section
20 of the Executive Director's Recommendation on
21 Pages 2 to 3 as follows. This is the section of
22 the EDR that addresses the Height of Buildings

1 Act specifically.

2 My recommendation is to keep the first
3 Commission action as drafted by staff, delete
4 the second, third, and fourth Commission actions
5 of the section, add one Commission action in
6 this section reading notes that in light of the
7 Applicant's submission, NCPC is continuing to
8 consider the positions regarding the Height of
9 Buildings Act, and whether it is binding on the
10 federal government, which the Commission will
11 need to decide prior to taking final action on
12 the project, and then revising the final
13 Commission action of this section to read,
14 request the Applicant provide a justification
15 for the project height when the project returns
16 to NCPC for final approval.

17 This last item, just to explain
18 slightly, if we were to rule that the Height of
19 Buildings Act is inapplicable against federal
20 construction, we still have an independent
21 statutory obligation as the NCPC, based on our
22 authorizing statute, to consider the height of a

1 project independently. So, this would be an
2 action requesting, regardless of what happens
3 with the Height of Buildings Act issue, that the
4 Applicant provide us with a rationale for the
5 height that we could then take up for
6 consideration along with final approval.

7 So, to summarize, if my motion passes,
8 the Height of Buildings Act section of the
9 Commission actions relating to this project
10 would read as follows. Notes NCPC's role as the
11 central planning agency for the federal
12 government in the nation's capital has included
13 application of the Height of Buildings Act to
14 preserve the horizontal skyline of the District,
15 notes that in light of the Applicant's
16 submission, NCPC is continuing to consider the
17 positions regarding the Height of Buildings Act
18 and whether it is binding on the federal
19 government, which the Commission will need to
20 decide prior to taking final action on the
21 project, and requests the Applicant provide a
22 justification for the project's height when the

1 project returns to NCPC for final approval.

2 If this motion were to pass, I think we
3 could then proceed to a vote on preliminary
4 approval of this project. If that motion were
5 to pass, then at our next meeting or a future
6 meeting, we could take up this project for final
7 approval along with a motion to determine as a
8 commission our view of whether the Height of
9 Buildings Act is applicable against federal
10 construction. That's my motion, and at this
11 time, I'd ask if there's any second.

12 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I second your motion,
13 Mr. Chairman.

14 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
15 Commissioner Dixon. I'll now open it up to the
16 Commission for further discussion on this
17 amendment regarding the Height of Buildings Act
18 section of our agency actions. As a reminder,
19 at this time, the only motion on the floor
20 relates to this amendment, and we'll obviously
21 have full deliberations on the project itself
22 after this motion has been addressed. I'll

1 start deliberations, I guess, with Commissioner
2 Blair, to my right. James, are you still with
3 us? Hearing nothing from Commissioner Blair,
4 we'll proceed with Commissioner Ingrassia?

5 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: I have no
6 further comments, thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
8 Commissioner Ingrassia. Commissioner Dixon?

9 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

10 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
11 Commissioner, but we haven't proceeded quite to
12 a vote yet, so -- but I appreciate your
13 statement of support. Commissioner Cash?

14 COMMISSIONER CASH: On the amendment,
15 I'll just say that I find the current EDR very
16 specific. It says the Height of Buildings Act
17 applies. I don't see any reason to change that,
18 so I'm -- I'll be voting against this amendment,
19 but thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
21 Commissioner. Commissioner Henderson?

22 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Given that the

1 Applicant is arguing that the 1925 law
2 authorizing the Arlington Memorial Bridge
3 construction provides authorization for this
4 project, I wonder should we not seek their
5 opinion when they come back in the next
6 iteration of this, or at least not foreclose the
7 possibility that that statute actually
8 authorizes or acts as a waiver of the Height of
9 Buildings Act in this instance, given its
10 contemplation of at least two structures above
11 the height in the law?

12 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: I think that's
13 certainly an argument they could make. Do you
14 want to change to the amendment to reflect that,
15 or does the broader language, request the
16 Applicant provide a justification for the
17 project's height when the project returns to
18 NCPC, that seems pretty broad, are you
19 comfortable with that language?

20 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: If you think
21 that that contemplates the possibility that
22 maybe they already have authorization that they

1 could rely on, and that would be an argument
2 that they could make in fulfilling that, I think
3 that would be sufficient.

4 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: I certainly believe
5 so. If you're comfortable with it, then I think
6 we can proceed on that basis. Anything else?

7 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: That's my only
8 --

9 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay. Commissioner
10 Falcone, are you with us?

11 COMMISSIONER FALCONE: Yes, I am. I
12 have no comments.

13 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
14 Commissioner. Commissioner Cozart?

15 COMMISSIONER COZART: I'll just
16 associate myself with the comments of
17 Commissioner Cash.

18 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
19 Commissioner. Commissioner Bruch?

20 COMMISSIONER BRUCH: Sir, I have no
21 comments or further insights. Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,

1 Commissioner. Commissioner Bowron?

2 COMMISSIONER BOWRON: Thank you,
3 Chairman. I'm here today representing the
4 Department of the Interior which in its
5 submission, I think, made very clear its
6 perspective on the Height of Buildings Act. And
7 so, for the probably opposite reason of
8 Commissioners Cash and Cozart, I will, also,
9 vote no.

10 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay, thank you,
11 Commissioner. Vice Chairman Levenbach?

12 MR. LEVENBACH: I also found the legal
13 arguments compelling, and I think you'd have a
14 reasonable path forward here. So, I appreciate
15 that. I think Commissioner Henderson made an
16 interesting point that I haven't heard, as well.

17 And so, I look forward to -- I'm going to vote
18 in favor of this, and I look forward to see a
19 justification should it pass.

20 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: All right. Okay. If
21 there are no further questions --

22 MS. HOTTEL-COX: I believe we skipped

1 over Commissioner Argo.

2 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Oh, I'm sorry,
3 Commissioner Argo. Commissioner Argo? I
4 apologize, ma'am.

5 COMMISSIONER ARGO: No, no, no. Would
6 you read the motion again, please?

7 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Sure. So, the motion
8 would amend the Commission actions that relate
9 to the Height of Buildings Act in the Executive
10 Director's Recommendation. That's on Pages 2 to
11 3. And if it passes, the section would read as
12 follows. Notes NCPC's role as the central
13 planning agency for the federal government. I
14 guess it should be notes that the NCPC's role as
15 the central planning agency for the federal
16 government in the nation's capital has included
17 application of the Height of Buildings Act to
18 preserve the horizontal skyline of the District,
19 notes that in light of the Applicant's
20 submission, NCPC is continuing to consider the
21 positions regarding the Height of Buildings Act,
22 and whether it is binding on the federal

1 government, which the Commission will need to
2 decide prior to taking final action on the
3 project, and request the Applicant provide a
4 justification for the project's height when the
5 project returns to NCPC for final approval.

6 COMMISSIONER ARGO: I'm going to
7 abstain.

8 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Okay, Commissioner.
9 Do any other Commissioners have questions or
10 comments at this time? Hearing and seeing none,
11 Madam Secretary, can you please confirm the
12 motion and second, and take the vote by roll
13 call?

14 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes. The motion was
15 made by Chairman Scharf and seconded by
16 Commissioner Dixon. With that, Commissioner
17 Cozart --

18 COMMISSIONER COZART: No.

19 MS. HOTTEL-COX: -- on the amended
20 motion. Commissioner Bruch?

21 COMMISSIONER BRUCH: Yes.

22 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Bowron?

1 COMMISSIONER BOWRON: No.

2 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Argo?

3 COMMISSIONER ARGO: No.

4 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Vice Chairman

5 Levenbach?

6 VICE CHAIRMAN LEVENBACH: Yes.

7 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Chairman Scharf?

8 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Yes.

9 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commission Blair?

10 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Yes.

11 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commission Ingrassia?

12 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: Yes.

13 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Dixon?

14 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

15 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Cash?

16 COMMISSIONER CASH: No.

17 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner

18 Henderson?

19 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Yes.

20 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Falcone?

21 COMMISSIONER FALCONE: Yes.

22 MS. HOTTEL-COX: The motion to amend

1 passes.

2 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Madam
3 Secretary. Now, at this time, is there a motion
4 to approve preliminary site and building plans
5 for the new monumental arch with the amended
6 Commission actions as just passed by this
7 Commission?

8 VICE CHAIRMAN LEVENBACH: So moved.

9 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Vice
10 Chairman Levenbach. Is there a second?

11 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: Second here.

12 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
13 Commissioner Ingrassia. With that, we'll
14 proceed to discussion on approving -- or
15 providing preliminary approval on the monumental
16 arch project, and I'll start deliberations with
17 Commissioner Bowron.

18 COMMISSIONER BOWRON: Thank you. So,
19 first, I want to thank the NCPC staff. As
20 always, an incredible job digesting and then
21 sharing information in a way that was so
22 relevant and accessible.

1 I, also, want to echo the Chairman's
2 comments to the members of the public that are
3 here today or were online and provided comments.

4 It is truly inspiring to hear from all of you.

5 And to the project team from the Park
6 Service and the Department and the design firm,
7 thank you for all your work to be responsive to
8 the comments of the Commission from last June.

9 On behalf of the Department, I can
10 certainly commit that we will continue to work
11 to be responsive to the comments of the
12 Commission. You know, everything that was
13 called out in the staff report regarding
14 transportation, materials, siting, aviation
15 coordination, we'll continue to do that.

16 The Department supports continuing to
17 move this project forward.

18 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
19 Commissioner.

20 Commissioner Argo? I think you're
21 muted, ma'am. I'm sorry.

22 COMMISSIONER ARGO: I have nothing

1 more. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
3 Commissioner Argo.

4 Vice Chairman Levenbach?

5 VICE CHAIRMAN LEVENBACH: I want to
6 thank the project team for looking at one issue
7 in particular, which I think is really
8 important, which is how we're going to
9 deconflict a pretty busy traffic area with what
10 could be a lot of visitors.

11 And one of the things, I think, that
12 came up as we were going back and forth is
13 thinking about the number of visitors that are
14 going to be there and, just even on a sort of
15 hourly basis, how are people going to access the
16 site.

17 I appreciate the point about people are
18 going to find the least -- the shortest distance
19 to the circle. So, I think I find that pretty
20 persuasive, but still trying to figure out how
21 you can mitigate interactions and if there's
22 anything else that can be done.

1 If we do see the type of visitation
2 that we could, then there's just going to be a
3 lot of people. So, trying to model that or
4 looking at, specifically, the number of people
5 might -- if you haven't done that already, or if
6 you have done it. Bring it forward next time,
7 when you come back for the final project
8 approval.

9 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Vice
10 Chairman Levenbach.

11 Commissioner Blair?

12 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: No comments just,
13 other than thank you for the work, as always,
14 staff and team.

15 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
16 Commissioner Blair.

17 Commissioner Ingrassia?

18 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: Yeah. I want
19 to commend again the project team for all the
20 work that's gone into this and all the time and
21 resources and progression that we've seen.

22 I also appreciate the level of public

1 engagement surrounding a very important and
2 meaningful project for the District. And for
3 those of you who kept your comments civil,
4 especially the military families, I just really
5 want to acknowledge and appreciate that.

6 I just want to also say that, you know,
7 a lot of strong positions were raised here
8 today. I do also believe that there is strong
9 support from the public for this project.

10 In addition to some of the comments
11 that were raised here, many of you were in
12 attendance for the state fair that has been
13 going on in Washington, D.C., over the past
14 couple of weeks or so to celebrate America 250.

15 I think we were expecting several million
16 people to attend these festivities from now
17 until the end of the celebratory period.

18 One of the most popular attractions
19 there was a model replica of an arch very
20 similar to what we're considering here. That
21 display was attended by veterans, families,
22 American citizens across the political spectrum,

1 many of whom were supporting that project and
2 voicing strongly their positive support for a
3 project of this type.

4 Washington, D.C. is notable in being
5 the only major city, it's my understanding and
6 awareness, in the United States without an arch
7 or an arch-like monument, and I think it's long
8 overdue as something that should be seriously
9 considered in the city.

10 Also, I just want to say, kind of
11 associating myself with Vice Chair Levenbach's
12 comments, for the project team, any more
13 information that we could get to find ways to
14 sort of mitigate congestion; detail, especially
15 how tourists may be able to be picked up through
16 rideshare services, through bus services and
17 other forms of public transit, that information
18 is always much appreciated.

19 And also, in reference to a comment I
20 made earlier today, with regard to visual
21 clutter, with regard to traffic displays,
22 signage and other sorts of things that may help

1 assist with traffic navigation; if there's room
2 for potentially mitigating some of that visual
3 clutter, so the focus and emphasis is on the
4 beauty of the arch and its design, that being a
5 central pillar in that area would be my sort of
6 suggestion here.

7 Beyond that, I appreciate all the
8 comments made today, and I have nothing further
9 to add.

10 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
11 Commissioner Ingrassia.

12 Commissioner Dixon?

13 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Mr. Chairman, I,
14 first of all, have been intrigued and interested
15 in this idea about bringing something that might
16 strengthen Anacostia River East by moving it to
17 an area that would impact our community, which
18 could be positive maybe.

19 I also want to make it kind of clear
20 that I've served on this Commission for 30
21 years, representing a lot of mayors and a lot of
22 the city. And it's been a great privilege to me

1 to do that.

2 I always have to keep within my focus
3 two things. One, our mission as a Commission,
4 which is the federal interest, but I have to
5 think about how it will affect my community,
6 what the impact is.

7 And that's why I mentioned something
8 coming to our neighborhood, if possible. But
9 that's not (audio interference). Maybe it will
10 be.

11 I also want to make it pretty clear
12 that I come in with some other credentials.
13 One, I'm a retired Army colonel and a retired
14 Air Force airman, too. My brother and my uncle
15 are buried in Arlington, and a lot of my
16 classmates from my tenure at the United States
17 Air Force Academy. So, I have some deep
18 concerns about this place.

19 I don't think that the height for me is
20 the issue. I think that those who have been
21 speaking out believe, and I believe -- and I
22 supported height for some number of years in

1 office and while out of office on this
2 Commission, but my concern is not about the
3 height.

4 I'm hoping that the results that you
5 get back, Mr. Chairman, may be helpful in
6 dealing with that issue. And that's why I
7 supported getting more information, giving a
8 chance for this to be dealt with. And
9 hopefully, it will come out favorably for us who
10 want to keep the heights controlled.

11 I also want to make it pretty clear
12 that I am definitely going to have some problems
13 with the arch because I think that it does
14 affect people I care about in my history, in the
15 military, in my service. I retired in both Air
16 Force and Army.

17 But it also is important that we have a
18 lot of issues that face our city that are in the
19 hands of many people, and we have to be very
20 cautious and thoughtful about how we move,
21 because the most important thing about all my
22 services in government, in military, and in the

1 community has been my city and my neighborhood.

2 So, I want to be sure that we protect
3 the ability for us to maneuver through some
4 delicate waters at this time. So, that's going
5 to be behind my vote on this particular issue.

6 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
7 Commissioner Dixon.

8 Commissioner Cash?

9 COMMISSIONER CASH: Thanks so much, Mr.
10 Chairman. And thanks again to the staff for the
11 report and the work that's gone into this.

12 And, more importantly, thanks to
13 everyone who came out here today and testified.

14 I thank the over 100,000 people that have
15 submitted testimony or submitted comments online
16 already.

17 I've just got to say that, I talked
18 about this last month, but I still have the
19 basic problems that I discussed at our last
20 meeting.

21 A lot of the technical information that
22 we asked for was provided, but none of it's

1 resolved any of the underlying issues about why
2 this project belongs in this place and what the
3 framework is that we should evaluate it in.

4 I continue to object to a process that
5 did not start with congressional authorization
6 and is proceeding outside of the Commemorative
7 Works process.

8 This project is described as
9 celebrating 250 years of American independence
10 and honoring America's founding principles.

11 Whatever label the applicant gives it,
12 a 250-foot triumphal arch topped with a
13 statuary, placed in a memorial landscape on an
14 axis between the Arlington House and Arlington
15 Cemetery, all the way to the Lincoln Memorial,
16 is plainly a commemorative.

17 Calling it a celebration does not make
18 it less of a monument. And if this is not a
19 commemorative work, I don't know what is.

20 All this matters because the
21 Commemorative Works process is not just supposed
22 to be paperwork. It's how Congress, NCMAC, the

1 public, and this Commission are supposed to test
2 the basic questions:

3 What's being commemorated, why it has
4 long-lasting national significance, and whether
5 this site is appropriate, what alternatives
6 should be considered, and how the work affects
7 the historic and memorial landscape around it.

8 That should include real site
9 selection, meaningful alternatives analysis, and
10 a Section 106 process that informs the project
11 rather than catches up to it.

12 A few of those questions are being
13 asked after the site, the scale, and the form
14 have already been chosen.

15 That's how we end up with an applicant-
16 driven analysis asking us to believe that a 250-
17 foot arch that blocks out the Lincoln Memorial
18 from Arlington House is somehow the viewshed-
19 sensitive option, while a smaller arch would
20 actually be worse.

21 And while the applicant has given us a
22 clearer purpose statement, it has still not

1 supplied the missing public process or
2 authorization.

3 But now, we also have the more urgent
4 issue of the Height of Buildings Act. Not just
5 whether this arch's design complies with it, but
6 whether this Commission should approve a path
7 that either avoids it in substance or says it
8 does not apply at all.

9 So far as I can tell, for this 250-foot
10 project to proceed without congressional
11 authorization, we're left with two paths.

12 First, as laid out in the EDR before we
13 amended it, the applicant could redistribute the
14 proportions of the building, the roof structure
15 and the statuary, which may preserve the Height
16 Act in form, but still signals that we can
17 engineer around it on paper while ending up with
18 the same 250-foot structure.

19 The other path would be for this
20 Commission to somehow agree or acknowledge that
21 the Height Act does not apply to this or any
22 other federal building.

1 I have concerns with both. To begin, I
2 think we need to dispel the notion that the
3 Height Act is simply local zoning.

4 It is an act of Congress legislating
5 for the nation's capital at a time when Congress
6 directly controlled the District's government in
7 1910. This is not some act of an elected local
8 government or municipal government or of the
9 modern DC Council.

10 Even today, the DC Home Rule Act, which
11 is a congressional law, precludes the District
12 from legislating above the Height Act limits,
13 reserving that question to Congress itself.

14 The applicant offers ways to read
15 around that history, but the arguments do not
16 change the basic fact that the Height Act is
17 still an act of Congress, it is still enforced,
18 and it is still the framework that this
19 Commission has applied to federal projects for
20 decades and must apply here.

21 I also don't want to lose sight of the
22 word Congress used in the Height Act. A

1 building erected in violation of the act is not
2 treated as a harmless technical defect. It is
3 declared a common nuisance. And here, that word
4 has real meaning.

5 As I mentioned, this structure would
6 sit in the middle of one of the most important
7 memorial corridors in the country, a structure
8 that, by and large, in that place, does not
9 merely occupy the landscape. It changes the
10 meaning of the landscape around it.

11 So, if we buy the applicant's argument
12 that this arch is not commemorative, then what
13 we're being asked to approve is a non-
14 commemorative structure inserted into a solemn
15 commemorative landscape, and that is exactly the
16 kind of harm the Height Act's nuisance language
17 should make us take seriously.

18 So, whatever questions others may raise
19 about litigation and enforcement, this
20 Commission does not have to approve a project
21 that treats the Height Act as an obstacle to
22 maneuver around rather than a law to be applied.

1 I'm not coming at this as someone who
2 believes every inch of the Height Act is sacred,
3 but one of the most important aspects of the
4 Height Act, especially in federal areas and the
5 monumental core, is that it's part of what makes
6 Washington remarkable. It's why the city
7 skyline remains horizontal, civic, and legible.

8 The result is that monuments,
9 memorials, civic buildings, and natural
10 topography still read against the sky instead of
11 disappearing into a competition for height.

12 And if the Height Act in this context
13 is to mean anything, it cannot be ignored
14 whenever a building is federal.

15 Our skyline didn't happen by accident.
16 It's a congressional choice carried forward for
17 more than a century.

18 This is not to say that Congress
19 couldn't authorize something taller. Congress
20 has in the past, Congress could now, but
21 Congress is not here.

22 Instead, the applicant's come to this

1 Commission with a legal opinion in hand,
2 offering a sweeping theory that the Height of
3 Buildings Act doesn't apply to federal buildings
4 at all, changing the ground rules for every
5 future federal project in the District, whether
6 this arch ever actually gets built or not.

7 The precedent set here would outlive
8 this project. Going forward, NCPC could be
9 deciding federal building heights on a case-by-
10 case basis, a major institutional change that
11 the staff report acknowledges.

12 But I'll make the point even more
13 directly. The consequences would not be limited
14 to this arch.

15 If federal buildings are categorically
16 outside the Height Act, then future federal or
17 federally controlled projects, whether it be
18 leased federal land, redevelopment projects,
19 public-private partnerships, or projects where
20 the federal government keeps any kind of
21 control, could be evaluated under a new
22 discretionary standard.

1 NCPC would not just be reviewing
2 buildings in the federal interest. We would be
3 deciding development potential, land value,
4 skyline, and the balance between federal and
5 local planning authority.

6 This would implicate major aspects of
7 the comprehensive plan that we'll need to
8 grapple with. And this is not a small thing.

9 So, now before us, we have an executive
10 branch applicant asking this Commission, one way
11 or another, to accept its stated purpose, its
12 preferred location, and now its desire for
13 height, all without congressional authorization
14 and all without a Commemorative Works process,
15 leaving this Commission to contend with a
16 backwards planning process.

17 I understand Congress may eventually
18 appropriate funds for this project, but for me,
19 that is not sufficient, and it's not resolving
20 any of these broad concerns.

21 Absent clear authorization, I don't
22 think we should approve these preliminary site

1 and building plans. And I do not think we
2 should reinterpret the Height Act out of the way
3 or preserve it only in form to make this project
4 work.

5 The fact that the applicant has come to
6 us with this legal opinion makes it clear that
7 this is no longer theoretical.

8 The Department of the Interior, one of
9 the largest stewards of federal land in the
10 District, is signaling that the Height Act does
11 not apply to federal buildings. That's really
12 staggering.

13 So now, our action today will either
14 resist that notion or help normalize it for
15 every future federal project.

16 I'm not willing to lend my vote to
17 plans that could have the effect of upending
18 decades of NCPC practice and the century-old
19 height framework, all without congressional
20 authorization or a Commemorative Works process,
21 for a project that, as far as I can tell, has
22 only one real advocate, and that advocate is not

1 Congress.

2 So, respectfully, I will not be
3 supporting the EDR. Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
5 Commissioner.

6 Commissioner Henderson?

7 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: I had not
8 intended to go back to traffic, as we started
9 with earlier, but Vice Chairman Levenbach and
10 Commissioner Ingrassia bringing it back up made
11 me want to go back to at least suggest
12 considering again the idea of a tunnel, a
13 District tunnel to the circle, or some other
14 means other than the proposal that's on the
15 table.

16 So, I'll just say that. And aside from
17 that, I will be supporting this project forward
18 and look forward to doing that in a few minutes.

19 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
20 Commissioner.

21 Commissioner Falcone?

22 COMMISSIONER FALCONE: I have no

1 further comments beyond just thanking the NCPC
2 staff and the project team for the excellent
3 presentation and for answering our questions.

4 I also want to associate my thanks for
5 the members of the public who shared their
6 perspectives in a civil manner.

7 And Chairman Scharf, I want to thank
8 you for kindly welcoming me to this Commission
9 meeting and for your generous and kind opening
10 remarks.

11 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: I appreciate that,
12 Commissioner.

13 Commissioner Cozart?

14 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes. I would
15 also like to join my fellow Commissioners in
16 thanking members of the public who have written
17 in and who have also spent time in the chamber
18 testifying at our last hearing and at this
19 hearing. Invaluable insights from you.

20 And in particular, there was one that I
21 picked up on who encouraged that the Section 106
22 process should be allowed to run its proper

1 course. I hope I didn't butcher how that
2 testifier shared that.

3 That's very important. And thinking
4 about, in particular, other locations that would
5 mitigate the impacts, even considering locations
6 outside of the District of Columbia.

7 Lastly, I just want to thank the staff
8 for their extensive work on this and providing
9 us with such a good analysis of the materials.

10 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
11 Commissioner Cozart.

12 Commissioner Bruch?

13 COMMISSIONER BRUCH: Chairman, I'd like
14 to echo the thanks for the professional
15 presentation of the NCPC staff, as well as their
16 management of hosting such a robust public
17 dialogue on this subject. I want to salute
18 that.

19 I do look forward to the further
20 development as the project team develops the
21 aspects of safety and traffic and pedestrian
22 access. I think that we can never over-plan

1 that as we look through different models.

2 And so, I look forward to the
3 finalization of the plans. And thanks for the
4 opportunity to participate in this public
5 debate.

6 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
7 Commissioner.

8 Speaking for myself, first, just to
9 address some of Commissioner Cash's comments, I
10 think the Commemorative Works Act is beyond the
11 scope of this Commission's authority, so I won't
12 address it now.

13 With respect to the Height Act, I'm
14 guessing that we're going to have a vigorous
15 debate on this subject when this project next
16 comes before the Commission. So, I'll keep my
17 comments on that relatively brief.

18 I think the common nuisance language
19 you cited is probably the strongest argument in
20 favor of the Height Act being inapplicable to
21 federal construction because of the sovereign
22 immunity issues we've discussed before.

1 And I would note that, regardless of
2 what happens in terms of the applicability of
3 the Height of Buildings Act to federal
4 buildings, height is still a required
5 consideration for this Commission.

6 So, the nightmare scenario, the
7 slippery-slope scenario of skyscrapers going up
8 on federal land all across the District, as long
9 as I'm Chairman of this Commission, that's
10 certainly not going to happen. And I hope the
11 rest of my fellow Commissioners would share that
12 basic sentiment.

13 I continue to support this project. I
14 think commemorating America's 250th anniversary
15 is important. I think that the proposed arch is
16 a fitting commemoration of 250 years, or a
17 fitting celebration of 250 years, or whatever
18 particular word we want to use there.

19 I do have a couple of items that I'd
20 like the project team to work on before we take
21 this up for final approval, which I'm assuming
22 is going to be in September.

1 A number of Commissioners have spoken
2 to the traffic issues, which have come up
3 consistently since this project first came
4 before us.

5 I would echo at least some of those
6 concerns. I think they're real concerns, and
7 we've got to get that right before we finalize
8 this project.

9 Second, I've asked before, I think we
10 need a view of what it's going to look like from
11 the observation deck. I'm particularly
12 interested in the views both over Arlington
13 National Cemetery and then over the Lincoln
14 Memorial and the rest of the District of
15 Columbia.

16 Before we proceed, I think that we're
17 effectively replacing one viewshed with a new
18 viewshed, that being a significantly elevated
19 one that's unique in the DC area. And I'd just
20 like to know what that's going to look like
21 before we proceed further.

22 Lastly, there was an item that came up

1 during public comment that I hadn't thought of
2 previously. I forget who raised it, but I'm
3 glad that they did. And that's the issue of
4 construction noise during funerals at Arlington.

5 I'd like the applicant team to have
6 some sort of mitigation plan, because I think
7 the idea that funerals at Arlington would be
8 disrupted by jackhammering and pile driving and
9 the latter aspects of construction noise, if at
10 all feasible, I'd like some sort of plan to
11 ameliorate that particular concern. This is an
12 example of how public testimony can really
13 inform our Commission's deliberative process.

14 To the extent that's possible, I'd like
15 the applicant team to include something on that.

16 It's not something we would want, given the
17 solemnity of those ceremonies at Arlington.

18 All that having been said, I'd like to
19 thank NCPC staff for their customary diligence.

20 This is a complex project, and I think we've
21 seen at every stage the expertise that NCPC
22 brings to bear on projects like this. So, I'd

1 like to thank you all for that.

2 I'd like to thank the project team for
3 their diligence in responding to comments from
4 the last round, from concept review, and for
5 their continued cooperation with our process
6 going forward.

7 And with that, are there any further
8 questions or comments from the Commission before
9 we proceed to a vote?

10 Hearing and seeing none, the motion on
11 the floor is for preliminary approval of the
12 monumental -- sorry, let me be more formal -- to
13 approve preliminary site and building plans for
14 the new monumental arch with the prior
15 amendments relating to the Height of Buildings
16 Act section of the Executive Director's Report
17 that were made by motion previously.

18 Madam Secretary, can you please confirm
19 the motion and second and then take the vote by
20 roll call?

21 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes. The motion was
22 made by Vice Chairman Levenbach and seconded by

1 Commissioner Ingrassia.

2 Commissioner Cozart?

3 COMMISSIONER COZART: Present.

4 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Bruch?

5 COMMISSIONER BRUCH: Yes.

6 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Bowron?

7 COMMISSIONER BOWRON: Yes.

8 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Argo?

9 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Present.

10 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Vice Chairman

11 Levenbach?

12 VICE CHAIRMAN LEVENBACH: Yes.

13 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Chairman Scharf?

14 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Yes.

15 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Blair?

16 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Yes.

17 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner

18 Ingrassia?

19 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: Yes.

20 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Dixon?

21 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I vote present.

22 And I want to make the comment that, as I said

1 earlier, I'm concerned about the arch itself.
2 And the height limitation will be resolved,
3 hopefully, in our next meeting. So, I vote
4 present on this.

5 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Cash?

6 COMMISSIONER CASH: No.

7 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner
8 Henderson?

9 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: On behalf of
10 Chairman Paul, yes.

11 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Falcone?

12 COMMISSIONER FALCONE: Yes.

13 MS. HOTTEL-COX: The motion carries.

14 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Madam
15 Secretary. This motion has indeed carried.

16 AGENDA ITEM 6B: UNITED STATES GENERAL SERVICES

17 ADMINISTRATION, 2701 MARTIN LUTHER KING

18 BOULEVARD, SE, WASHINGTON, DC -

19 ST. ELIZABETHS WEST CAMPUS

20 GATE 7 GARAGE AND SITE DEVELOPMENT

21 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: With that, we will
22 move on to Agenda Item 6B, which is a request to

1 approve preliminary and final site and building
2 plans for the St. Elizabeth's West Campus Gate 7
3 Garage and Site Development.

4 From our team, we have Laura Shipman
5 presenting. And I believe members of the
6 applicant team will also be available virtually
7 to answer any questions.

8 Laura, do you want to proceed?

9 MS. SHIPMAN: Yes. Good afternoon,
10 Chairman Scharf and Commissioners. The General
11 Services Administration has submitted
12 preliminary and final plans for the Gate 7
13 Parking Garage at the St. Elizabeth's West
14 Campus.

15 At the preliminary and final review
16 stage, the Commission is focused on whether the
17 applicant addressed the comments made during
18 concept review, general consistency with the
19 comprehensive plan, and a range of building and
20 site design topics, including viewsheds,
21 building massing, landscape, and circulation.

22 The St. Elizabeth's West Campus is a

1 176-acre site located in southeast Washington,
2 DC, that is designated as a National Historic
3 Landmark. The garage site is off of St.
4 Elizabeth's Road Southeast, and is bordered by
5 the Barry Farm housing development and I-295.

6 The proposed garage is being developed
7 to meet the parking needs of the growing number
8 of employees assigned to the campus. The
9 approved master plan includes 4,448 planned
10 parking spaces at build-out.

11 Of the total allowable parking spaces,
12 almost 2,000 have been built at the existing
13 Gate 4 garage. The first phase of the Gate 7
14 garage and surface parking includes 1,250
15 employee parking spaces, and the remaining will
16 be built in the garage's second phase and other
17 projects.

18 The proposed plans are generally
19 consistent with the 2020 Master Plan approved by
20 NCPC and do not impact the established parking
21 ratio.

22 As a reminder, the applicant's concept

1 plan submission, shown here, was reviewed by the
2 Commission in September 2025. It included
3 modulated vertical fins, horizontal planters,
4 and planted mesh panels cladding the concrete
5 garage structure to create visual screening.

6 After the Commission's review, the
7 applicant re-evaluated the design to ensure
8 alignment with guidance in Executive Order 14344
9 on federal architecture.

10 The revised design largely maintains
11 the previous site design approach, but revises
12 the building's facades to reflect the
13 traditional architectural language of existing
14 historic buildings on the campus.

15 The historic center building and
16 administration row buildings on the plateau of
17 the campus are built in the Gothic Revival and
18 Italian Renaissance Revival style, and are clad
19 primarily in red brick.

20 Support buildings throughout the
21 campus, constructed in the late 19th and early
22 to mid 20th century, are similarly clad in brick

1 and stone, and use large arched windows on the
2 building's expansive facades.

3 At almost 500 feet in length, the
4 proposed parking garage draws on the language of
5 these campus support buildings, with a
6 symmetrical facade incorporating large arched
7 openings inlaid with metal mesh panels and dark
8 concrete.

9 For human scale, the building's brick
10 base provides horizontal articulation, and the
11 fifth level includes framed brick screens, with
12 a brick cornice to articulate the building top.

13 The garage also reflects the context material
14 palette and color tones to ensure compatibility.

15 This is the proposed site plan for the
16 first phase of the project. It has not changed
17 significantly since the Commission's concept
18 review, which was generally supportive of the
19 siting approach.

20 The garage will be approximately
21 394,000 gross square feet, with an interim
22 gravel-surface parking lot. The future second

1 phase is anticipated to replace the surface lot
2 with a warehouse and 450 additional parking
3 spaces. The five-level garage will be built
4 into the hillside to minimize visual impacts to
5 the campus.

6 At concept, the Commission recommended
7 continued study of strategies to minimize the
8 potential impacts to the residential area plan
9 for the adjacent Barry Farm development.

10 In response, the applicants sited the
11 garage 82 feet from the property line, with
12 layered and dense vegetation primarily
13 consisting of evergreen trees to screen views of
14 the parking lot, garage, and lighting year
15 round.

16 This site circulation diagram shows the
17 proposed new Gate 7, located north of the
18 existing Gate 6 truck entry. The entry gate
19 will include vehicular screening, and there will
20 be a shuttle route to take employees up the hill
21 after parking, shown in blue.

22 The second phase of the garage

1 development is expected to include an accessible
2 pedestrian pathway connecting from a screening
3 building on the roof of the garage. Pedestrian
4 paths are not feasible in this phase due to the
5 grade change.

6 At concept review, the Commission
7 requested additional information on planned tree
8 preservation, removal, and replacement. Nine
9 hundred and three existing trees will remain,
10 and 713 trees comprising 4.3 acres will be
11 removed to construct the garage, parking lot,
12 and other needed site elements.

13 These trees will be replaced on-site
14 with 4.3 acres of trees at approximately the
15 same level of density as what exists today, in
16 accordance with tree preservation and
17 replacement policies in the federal environment
18 element of the comprehensive plan.

19 The proposed plant palette includes
20 native trees, shrubs, ground cover, and meadow
21 species, with many that are beneficial to
22 pollinators.

1 NCPC received public comments regarding
2 the selection of specific milkweed species,
3 native plants, cultivars, grasses, and
4 additional suggested plants. The applicant
5 revised the plant palette to address these
6 comments, and overall, the palette is generally
7 consistent with the Cultural Landscape Report
8 for the St. Elizabeth's Campus, NCPC's
9 Pollinator Best Practices Resource Guide, and
10 other federal resources.

11 I will now walk through views of the
12 proposed garage, starting from the point at the
13 top of the hill looking west, where the
14 panoramic viewshed is maintained but the garage
15 below is screened; and a view over the shuttle
16 loop looking north towards the garage; a view of
17 the redesigned west facade from I-295 as shown
18 previously; and a view from Barry Farm showing
19 the layers of proposed vegetation.

20 When looking towards the garage across
21 the Anacostia River, it is partially visible.
22 However, vegetative screening along the edges of

1 the structure are intended to further minimize
2 visibility from regional vantage points.

3 As noted in the Commission's last
4 review, the applicant conducted transportation
5 analysis, which indicates the garage project may
6 cause impacts to traffic operations in specific
7 locations in the area.

8 With mitigation measures including
9 intersection improvements and a program
10 encouraging multiple travel modes, the analysis
11 found these impacts can be minimized.

12 The project team is coordinating with
13 the District Department of Transportation on
14 additional requested analysis as the project
15 moves closer to construction and permitting.

16 Additionally, carrying forward the
17 Commission's recommendation at concept review,
18 staff encourages the applicant to continue to
19 coordinate with the Washington Metropolitan Area
20 Transit Authority to address long-term plans for
21 shuttle access to St. Elizabeth's from nearby
22 Metrorail stations.

1 Overall, staff supports the project's
2 sensitivity to the historic campus context and
3 efforts to minimize the structure's visual
4 impacts through the integration into the
5 landscape, and recommends that the Commission
6 approve the preliminary and final plans for the
7 St. Elizabeth's West Campus Gate 7 Garage and
8 Site Development, with the comments highlighted
9 throughout my presentation and noted on the
10 slide.

11 This concludes the presentation.
12 Members of the applicant team from the General
13 Services Administration and ZGF Architects, as
14 well as Olin, are also available virtually to
15 answer any questions from the Commission. Thank
16 you.

17 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Laura.
18 Do Commissioners have any questions
19 either for Laura or for the project team?

20 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Mr. Chairman, I
21 do.

22 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Commissioner Dixon.

1 COMMISSIONER DIXON: One, first, I'm
2 happy to see something over in Anacostia River
3 East. I'm particularly happy to see that this
4 structure in Barry Farm, which is where my house
5 is, is going to be there and be improved.

6 But I want to know whether or not there
7 is any option here for some solar paneling on
8 the roofs. I constantly want to ask that
9 question. I think it's wise to do it when we
10 can.

11 MS. SHIPMAN: I defer that question to
12 the project team, if a representative from ZGF
13 or Ms. Tunstall-Williams is on the line.

14 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: It looks like Kristi
15 is raising her hand in the Zoom. No?

16 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay, sorry for the
17 delay. Can you hear me?

18 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: We can hear you.

19 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay.

20 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: And good to hear from
21 you, former commissioner.

22 MS. WILLIAMS: I know. I miss you

1 guys, but you're in good hands with Paul.

2 Arrington, to answer your question, one
3 of the most sensitive pieces of trying to design
4 this site and this building was to minimize
5 impact on the historic core.

6 And so, one of the agreements that we
7 got to with our Section 106, Historic
8 Preservation Consulting Parties, is that in the
9 second phase, it's not going to happen in phase
10 1, but the second phase of the parking will
11 actually be adding a green roof to minimize the
12 visibility from the upper campus.

13 And so, while we would like to include
14 solar, given the requirements for reducing
15 visibility, a green roof will be put in this
16 location.

17 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Well, you know I'm
18 not happy with that answer because the way we
19 increase visibility is to make sure we have
20 lights on at night. And that's where the energy
21 comes from, not the plants.

22 But, at any rate, I'm sure you're

1 constrained. In the future, I will constantly
2 press for solar.

3 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. And on many of the
4 other buildings where you can't see the roof
5 from above, that has been a plan for the campus.

6 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Well, I think
7 visibility is less important than energy, but
8 that's okay. That's my mind right now.

9 I also want to make a point. The
10 pollination plants, the pollinators -- and this
11 is not for you -- the pollinators, I'm very
12 happy about that. Let me tell you why.

13 Blue Plains, as some may know, has a
14 beehive operation. And they generate honey
15 right at Blue Plains.

16 I've gotten a number of the bottles.
17 Believe me, that's good for your allergies if
18 you live in this area because the bees are
19 getting pollinated in our community. So, I just
20 call attention to that.

21 The pollination is not just an idea,
22 but the bees do -- we know how important they

1 are, but they also are being -- the honey is
2 being captured at Blue Plains.

3 At least, it was. I hope it's
4 continually doing it. And I suggest you all get
5 a jar, if you can, because it's good for
6 allergies.

7 MS. WILLIAMS: We have some beehives on
8 campus. We have some beekeepers. And so, there
9 is a small colony.

10 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I wish the honey
11 was distributed. I don't know how it's being
12 distributed or made available.

13 I've got a few bottles, but I just
14 think it's very valuable. People who have
15 allergies, this helps them, natural honey.

16 A little off subject, I guess. That's
17 it for me.

18 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: I'm glad that, in Mr.
19 Berne's absence from this month's meeting, we
20 nevertheless had comments on the pollinator
21 policy and the use of local cultivars on the St.
22 Elizabeth's site. So, thank you, Arrington.

1 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes, I miss Mr.
2 Berne's too much because I love his input. I'm
3 actually working with him on some things now.

4 I just want to make sure people know
5 the bee honey is available. I'm not sure how,
6 but it's a valuable resource and a valuable
7 asset. It probably has money value but -- just
8 health value.

9 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Yes. Thank you,
11 Commissioner Dixon.

12 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I'm voting
13 present. I think I said that, but yes, there we
14 are. Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Do we have any other
16 questions or comments either for Laura or for
17 the project team?

18 Hearing and seeing none, is there a
19 motion to approve comments on the preliminary
20 and final site and building plans for the St.
21 Elizabeth's West Campus Gate 7 garage and site
22 development?

1 COMMISSIONER DIXON: So moved, Mr.
2 Chairman.

3 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
4 Commissioner Dixon.

5 Is there a second?

6 COMMISSIONER ARG0: Second.

7 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
8 Commissioner --

9 COMMISSIONER ARG0: Argo.

10 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: -- Argo. Sorry, I
11 was looking down at the wrong time.

12 I'll now open it up to the Commission
13 for discussion. we'll start with Commissioner
14 Ingrassia.

15 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: No additional
16 comments. I really appreciate the presentation
17 today.

18 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
19 Commissioner.

20 Commissioner Dixon?

21 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

22 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: We're still just at

1 comments. We're not voting quite yet, sir.

2 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I thought I made
3 my comments already, so I'm jumping the gun.

4 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: You absolutely did,
5 sir.

6 Commissioner Cash?

7 COMMISSIONER CASH: I don't have
8 another three pages. Thanks, everyone, for the
9 information.

10 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
11 Commissioner.

12 Commissioner Henderson?

13 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: I'll just say,
14 I think this was a project at the first meeting
15 that I attended as a member of this Commission
16 last year. The whole process has opened my
17 eyes, and I appreciate all the work that the
18 staff does.

19 I know, particularly, the last project
20 we talked about was a complicated one. And
21 everybody is doing a lot of hard work to make
22 this place work and to give serious

1 consideration to all these projects.

2 So, I just appreciate what you all have
3 done. So, thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
5 Commissioner.

6 Commissioner Falcone?

7 COMMISSIONER FALCONE: No comments
8 again. I just want to thank the team for the
9 presentation.

10 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, sir.
11 Commissioner Cozart?

12 COMMISSIONER COZART: I'll commend the
13 work of the staff as well. No additional
14 questions or comments.

15 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
16 Commissioner.

17 Commissioner Bruch?

18 COMMISSIONER BRUCH: No additional
19 comments, but again, I thank the professionalism
20 of Laura and the staff for this presentation.

21 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
22 Commissioner.

1 Commissioner Bowron?

2 COMMISSIONER BOWRON: I also appreciate
3 that we take a parking garage as seriously as a
4 monumental arch. It is equally as important to
5 the landscape of our city. So, thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
7 Commissioner.

8 Commissioner Argo?

9 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes, I'll echo
10 Commissioner Bowron. Is that it, Jessica?

11 COMMISSIONER BOWRON: It's Bowron, but
12 it's okay.

13 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Bowron. I'll echo
14 her comments. Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
16 Commissioner.

17 Vice Chairman Levenbach?

18 VICE CHAIRMAN LEVENBACH: I just want
19 to build on Commissioner Dixon's remarks about
20 the pollinators. I was driving from South
21 Dakota to North Dakota over the weekend, and
22 it's a long drive. It's five hours.

1 And I thought of one of our favorite
2 commenters because there were so many bee boxes
3 everywhere. So, the NCPC is always on my mind,
4 I guess.

5 In all seriousness, I really like the
6 redesign here. I think to me, one interesting
7 thing about the final project here is that, I
8 think, it speaks to the executive order, and I
9 think that this is -- I'm glad to see that the
10 project proponents have been responsive to the
11 original comments to try to seek a design that's
12 more in line with the President's vision in
13 terms of architecture.

14 I think this is a significant
15 improvement. So, thanks for the work that went
16 into this.

17 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Vice
18 Chairman Levenbach.

19 Commissioner Blair? We may have lost
20 Commissioner Blair.

21 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Sorry about that.
22 I was on mute, Chairman.

1 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Do you have any
2 comments on the St. Elizabeth's West Campus Gate
3 7 Parking Garage?

4 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Nothing to
5 register. Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you,
7 Commissioner.

8 Speaking for myself, first of all, as
9 always, thank you, Laura. Thank you, team.
10 Thank you to the project team.

11 I stand corrected. When this project
12 came before us last September, I made snarky
13 remarks to the extent of I've never seen a
14 beautiful parking garage before. I wouldn't
15 call this building beautiful, but it's really,
16 really nice.

17 This is an example where I think the
18 project team, between concept and final, went
19 back and dramatically improved the key facade of
20 this building. I'm proud to vote for it.

21 And as Stuart said, I think it's a
22 great example of the President's executive order

1 on federal architecture, perhaps striking in
2 ways that aren't necessarily anticipated.

3 I think when that order was signed,
4 most people read it as referring to courthouses,
5 grand public buildings.

6 But I think that even these
7 improvements to the facade of a parking garage
8 that many, many people will see are worthwhile.

9 And I'm glad that, between concept and now,
10 that this project has come such a long way.

11 And I'm thankful also, obviously, that
12 the project team has been so responsive to our
13 Commission's comments and to our Commission
14 staff's involvement and suggestions, I guess,
15 during the process.

16 If there are no further comments or
17 questions, we can proceed to a vote. Does
18 anyone else want to be heard on this item?

19 With that, hearing and seeing none,
20 Madam Secretary, can you please confirm the
21 motion and second and then take the vote by roll
22 call?

1 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Yes. The motion was
2 made by Commissioner Dixon and seconded by
3 Commissioner Argo.

4 Commissioner Cozart?

5 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes.

6 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Bruch?

7 COMMISSIONER BRUCH: Yes.

8 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Bowron?

9 COMMISSIONER BOWRON: Yes.

10 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Argo?

11 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes.

12 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Vice Chairman
13 Levenbach?

14 VICE CHAIRMAN LEVENBACH: Yes.

15 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Chairman Scharf?

16 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Yes.

17 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Blair?
18 Commissioner Blair?

19 COMMISSIONER BLAIR: Yes.

20 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner
21 Ingrassia?

22 COMMISSIONER INGRASSIA: Yes.

1 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Dixon?
2 Commissioner Dixon?

3 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

4 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Thank you.

5 Commissioner Cash?

6 COMMISSIONER CASH: Yes.

7 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner
8 Henderson?

9 COMMISSIONER HENDERSON: Yes.

10 MS. HOTTEL-COX: Commissioner Falcone?

11 COMMISSIONER FALCONE: Yes.

12 MS. HOTTEL-COX: The motion carries
13 unanimously.

14 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Thank you, Madam
15 Secretary. That concludes our open meeting
16 agenda for today.

17 Our next meeting, we will not meet in
18 August, as is customary for us. Our next
19 meeting will be in September.

20 Is that September 2nd?

21 MS. HOTTEL-COX: September 3rd.

22 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: September 3rd, excuse

1 me. Our next meeting will be at September 3rd,
2 or on September 3rd, at 1:00 p.m.

3 Do any Commissioners want to be heard
4 on any other items before we adjourn for the
5 day? Hearing and seeing none --

6 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Mr. Chairman?

7 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Yes, Commissioner
8 Dixon?

9 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I just want to say
10 that I'm going to spend some time going through
11 the testimony. I'm going to be looking for some
12 of those folks who were on the Mall who were
13 supportive of the arch.

14 I just want to go through it myself to
15 see what I can discover some. Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN SCHARF: Yes, sir. Thank you
17 for that. I hope everybody has a great summer.

18 I look forward to seeing you all again in the
19 fall. And, with that, if there's nothing
20 further, this meeting is adjourned.

21 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
22 went off the record at 5:04 p.m.)

1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2 This is to certify that the foregoing transcript
3 was duly recorded and accurately transcribed
4 under my direction; further, that said
5 transcript is a true and accurate record of the
6 proceedings; and that I am neither counsel for,
7 related to, nor employed by any of the parties
8 to this action in which this matter was taken;
9 and further that I am not a relative nor an
10 employee of any of the parties nor counsel
11 employed by the parties, and I am not
12 financially or otherwise interested in the
13 outcome of the action.

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20 Shakil Azizi
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