



## *Near Southeast/Southwest*

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6D

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October 17, 2016

**Mayor Bowser, DCRA Director Bolling, DDOT Director Dormsjo, DC Office of Zoning and Zoning Commission, DC Council, Events DC President O'Dell, Capitol Riverfront BID President Stevens, NCPC Executive Director Acosta**

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### **RE: Proposed Video Signage at Nationals Park**

At a regularly scheduled and properly noticed public meeting on October 17, 2016 with a quorum being present, a quorum being 4 Commissioners, Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6D voted 7-0-0 to send this resolution in opposition to the Washington Nationals' plan to install video signage in, on, and around Nationals Park.

**Whereas**, the Washington Nationals propose installation of 12 digital displays on the exterior of their stadium, on the concourse leading into the stadium, and on adjacent parking garages, and

**Whereas,** the proposed digital displays can use LED technology to play video, rotate through still images, or display other graphics, and

**Whereas,** the 12 proposed displays are as tall as 38 feet and as wide as 45 feet, with a total of 7,785 square feet of video display area (7,035 excluding the two in the concourse area) and

**Whereas,** the planned digital displays will face South Capitol Street and other roads, as well as the Anacostia River and

**Whereas,** the proposed displays will be directly across the street from several existing or planned residential buildings (with Dock 79, 1250 Half Street, and Yards Parcel H the most directly affected) and the Hampton Inn hotel, and

**Whereas,** the proposed digital displays would cause light pollution into the windows of hundreds of planned or existing residential and hotel units, and

**Whereas,** video, scrolling text, static images that rotate in sequence, and other graphical displays will be distracting and therefore dangerous to drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, boaters, and other users of nearby roads and rivers, and

**Whereas,** South Capitol Street is currently at the beginning phases of a major overhaul to create a “beautiful scenic boulevard that increases pedestrian and vehicular safety” (<http://ddot.dc.gov/page/south-capitol-street-corridor-project-frederick-douglass-memorial-bridge>), and

**Whereas,** ANC 6D opposed a substantially smaller and less distracting digital display when it was proposed at Van Ness Elementary: in June 2016, ANC 6D submitted comments on the school’s Public Space Occupancy Permit Request (DDOT Tracking #125075) stating that an LED sign would only be appropriate if it was “fixed, such that it does not scroll, flash, or rotate among multiple messages;” was dimmed after school hours and turned off at 8pm, and would be “further adjusted if it creates a nuisance for neighbors and hazard for drivers.” and

**Whereas,** viewsheds to the Capitol are important community assets and would be disturbed by the proposed digital displays, and

**Whereas,** the Zoning Commission order for the ballpark (ZC 06-22) discusses the importance of Capitol viewsheds along South Capitol Street and from the ballpark in paragraphs 35-37 and 42, and

**Whereas,** the Zoning Commission order (ZC 06-22) states that the “most significant external signage will be a naming rights sign on the Potomac Avenue elevation...the lettering proposed will be 17 feet tall” (paragraph 43) and the proposed digital displays are far more significant in size and visibility, and

**Whereas,** ANC 6D has long cautioned against digital displays of the type proposed by the Nationals: on June 26, 2006, Commissioner Andy Litsky testified before the Zoning Commission on behalf of ANC 6D and said “although the supplemental application states that any naming rights signage as well as exterior signage visible from the stadium will be designed so as not to cause glare or otherwise impair the vision or distract drivers passing the stadium, there is another concern. Plain and simple, the stadium is located on

South Capitol Street, our grand entrance to the Nation's Capital. ANC 6D is greatly concerned that stadium signage may overwhelm what would otherwise be a world class view of the Capitol Dome from the South....Wouldn't it be a shame for one of the great symbols of our democracy to be visually overwhelmed by a neon advertising sign?" (06-22, exhibit 52), and

**Whereas**, concerns about light pollution, viewsheds, and distraction to drivers and others along streets and waterways are the same whether the proposed signs are neon or LED and whether they are for stadium naming rights or other purposes, and

**Whereas**, creating a vibrant entertainment district is a valid goal but must be balanced with the needs of those not merely visiting the neighborhood, and

**Whereas**, people's choices about where to spend their leisure time and money is determined by many factors, with the presence of large video displays likely a minimal or even a negative factor,

**Therefore, be it resolved that:** ANC 6D opposes the Nationals' plan to install video signage in, on, and around Nationals Park and requests that the District not allow the Nationals to proceed with their proposal.

Sincerely,

Andy Litsky  
Chairman, ANC 6D  
Southwest, Navy Yard & Buzzard Point