

TESTIMONY OF MARTY AZOLA
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
BALTIMORE CITY
2/13/2024

MY NAME IS MARTY AZOLA, AND OUR FAMILY HAS BEEN SUCCESSFULLY DEVELOPING AND RESTORING HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN BALTIMORE AND MARYLAND FOR OVER 50 YEARS. I SPEAK FROM EXPERIENCE.

MOST CITIES WOULD KILL TO HAVE A DOWNTOWN PUBLIC WATERFRONT PARK LIKE HARBORPLACE. I RECALL THE TENS OF THOUSANDS WHO TURNED OUT WITH ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT AT THE ORIGINAL DEDICATION IN 1980. THAT SENTIMENT IS STILL ALIVE TODAY.

HERE ARE A FEW PERTINENT FACTS TO SUPPORT THE RESTORATION OF HARBORPLACE, RATHER THAN ITS DEMOLITION AND PRIVITIZATION:

- **BALTIMORE CITY'S POPULATION CONTINUES TO DECREASE, AND ALONG WITH IT THE DEMAND FOR HOUSING - PLENTY AVAILABLE**
- **COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE IS IN TROUBLE - DEVALUATION, VACANCIES, POTENTIAL LOAN DEFAULTS - IT'S A BAD TIME FOR SPECULATIVE DEVELOPMENT**
- **SEVERAL NEARBY VACANT SITES DOWNTOWN MAY BE AVAILABLE AND ZONED FOR NEW APARTMENT CONSTRUCTION - REMEMBER THE SOUTHERN HOTEL, THE MORRIS MECHANIC THEATER AND OTHERS?**
- **HARBORPLACE MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR LISTING IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES IN JUST 6 SHORT YEARS - DON'T MISS THAT OPPORTUNITY**
- **AND HERE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE.....WHAT WE ALLOW TO BE DEVELOPED WILL STILL BE STANDING LONG AFTER THE DEVELOPER IS GONE (DRIVE UP YORK ROAD NORTH OF TOWSON SOMETIME). YOU OWE ALL OF BALTIMORE'S CITIZENS AN EXTREMELY CAREFUL AND WELL REASONED DECISION.....HARBORPLACE IS NO PLACE TO ERR.**

PLEASE DENY THE PETITION TO ALLOW PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT OF HARBORPLACE. RESTORE AND ENHANCE WHT'S ALREADY THERE.

MOST RESPECTFULLY, MARTY AZOLA