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Stephen Staudigl, National Capital Planning Commission
stephen@ncpc.gov or 202.482.7279

Mekdy Alemayehu, DC Office of Planning
Mekdy.Alemayehu2@dc.gov or 202.442.4161

Christopher Kelly, Armed Forces Retirement Home
christopher.kelly@afrh.gov or 202.541.7550

Memorandum of Understanding Signed for Armed Forces Retirement Home Redevelopment *Document Allows for Private Development on 80-Acre Retirement Home Parcel*

Washington, DC— On July 28, 2020, representatives from the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), DC Office of Planning (DCOP), and the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that identifies the process for redevelopment of an underutilized 80-acre parcel of land (Zone A) on the AFRH campus by a private developer.

The document outlines the shared review and development process for Zone A and allows the project to move forward. The MOU recognizes the respective interests of NCPC and the District of Columbia in the planning of this important site and ensures a single, clear set of land-use regulations and building code standards. The AFRH Master Plan, after significant public input and comment, was approved in 2008, amended in 2018.

The MOU also provides the agencies and the public opportunities for comment and input. Under the terms of the MOU, DCOP will recommend zoning consistent with the AFRH Master Plan and the District of Columbia's Comprehensive Plan, which will serve as guides for the DC Zoning Commission in zoning the AFRH site. NCPC will review any future amendments to the campus' master plan and all projects outside of Zone A in accordance with the National Capital Planning Act. The MOU replaces one signed in 2007.

Signing the MOU were Marcel Acosta, NCPC Executive Director; Andrew Trueblood, DCOP Director; and James M. Branham, AFRH Chief Operating Officer.

“The completion of this Memorandum of Understanding is a result of District and federal agencies’ shared goal for high-quality development that respects the historic campus and benefits the adjacent community,” said NCPC Executive Director Marcel Acosta. “It outlines a clear and predictable review process for the developer and review authorities.”

“This MOU establishes a shared understanding of the review and development process for a key site in the District in alignment with the Mayor's Comprehensive Plan proposals,” said DCOP Director Andrew Trueblood. “Zoning for this site, paired with ongoing planning for a coordinated vision for the broader North Capitol Crossroads area, will help us achieve citywide policy priorities for mixed-income housing production, expanding economic development opportunities, and true multi-modal mobility.”

The Armed Forces Retirement Home's 272-acre campus in the District includes more than 100 buildings and ancillary structures, many historic, and provides residences and related services for approximately 600 eligible retired and former members of the United States Armed Forces. The home, dating back to 1851, is the oldest and only federally funded retirement home for retired members of the military.

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AFRH operates on a trust fund and receives some appropriations funding from Congress to sustain operations and support investments that improve the quality of life and overall health care needs of the residents. The Chief Operating Officer of AFRH determined that leasing underutilized land on the campus' southeastern corner would provide steady revenue and a long-term income stream to help fund capital investments and operations. AFRH will exercise its authorities under Title 24 of United States Code to lease non-excess property under terms that promote the purpose and financial stability of the retirement home and directly benefit its residents.

"We are excited to take this next step forward in bringing this long-anticipated project to fruition," said AFRH Chief Operating Officer James M. Branham. "More than helping the Home financially, the development will provide many new amenities that our residents and neighbors will be able to enjoy, as well as expand housing, jobs, and revenues throughout our community."

In 2019, AFRH provisionally selected the team of Madison Marquette and Urban Atlantic to be the master developer for the site. Consistent with the 2018 Master Plan, its proposal includes approximately 4.3 million square feet of new development and adaptive reuse of historic buildings, as well as more than 20 acres of publicly-accessible green space. AFRH is currently working on updating the Master Plan to address minor variances in the selected developer's proposed development plan, and is expecting to submit it to NCPD for review and approval this fall. AFRH anticipates completing the zoning process outlined in the MOU and negotiations with the selected development team on a long-term ground lease in 2021.

The National Capital Planning Commission is the federal government's central planning agency in Washington, DC and surrounding counties of Maryland and Virginia. The Commission provides overall guidance for federal land and buildings in the region. It also reviews the design of federal projects and memorials, oversees long-range planning for future development, and monitors capital investment by federal agencies.

The Office of Planning (DCOP) is tasked with planning for the long-term growth of the District of Columbia, to help ensure it reflects the values of an inclusive and vibrant city. DCOP helps the District work toward a positive future in which all District residents can thrive, regardless of income, race, age, or background. DCOP guides development in the District of Columbia's distinctive neighborhoods by engaging stakeholders and residents, performing research and analysis, serving as the steward of our historic resources, and publishing various planning documents, including the Comprehensive Plan.

The Armed Forces Retirement Home is the nation's oldest continuously operating retirement community for enlisted military personnel. The AFRH currently can accommodate more than 1,000 veterans between its Washington, DC, and Gulfport, Mississippi, campuses.

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