



SOUTHEAST

community development corporation

3700 Eastern Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21224

410-342-3231 • 410-342-1719 fax

23 January, 2007

Mr. Connie A. Brown
Director
Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks
Room 142
3001 East Drive
Baltimore, Maryland 21217

Dear Mr. Brown:

I write on behalf of the Southeast Community Development Corporation to express our support for the initiative being led by residents of the Unit South Durham Homestead Houses.

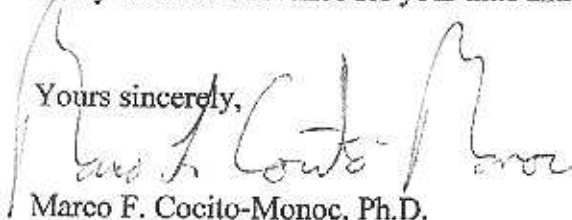
Some thirty years ago, the city made a promise to those few brave souls who agreed to purchase and rehabilitate the homes on the unit block of South Durham Street that they would enjoy the benefits of off-street parking and of a small urban pocket park for as long as they maintained the plot in question. Over the years, these individuals and those who have succeeded them have upheld their portion of the bargain with enviable fidelity. I have driven through this alley and have noted the obvious effort that these property owners have lavished on their communal area. It is a model alley located in the midst of a city that could certainly benefit from similar resident-led initiatives. Rather than punishing these pioneering city investors with the possible redevelopment of their land, the Southeast CDC believes that the city should trumpet their accomplishments as an example for the rest of us and tangibly reward them by vowing to keep this space in its current form for many years to come (and, preferably, in perpetuity).

As the owners of the large former St. Michael Boys School - located directly behind this alley on 10 S. Wolfe Street - the Southeast CDC has a direct stake in the future of this block. It is our conviction that this neighborhood has remained viable - even during the height of urban disinvestment - primarily because homeowners like those on the unit block of South Durham Street labored so very hard to save and to improve one tiny parcel one square inch at a time. Their long-term commitment has finally made this neighborhood attractive to outside investors who appreciate the quality of life that they are inheriting. Let us not jeopardize the future of this great community by weakening the foundations upon which all future investment depends - the confidence and good will of neighbors who create the environment for a better quality of life.

We encourage the city, and your department in particular, to do everything in its power to extend the present use of this pocket park as far into the future as possible. If I can be of any assistance to you, I hope you will not hesitate to contact me at 410-342-3234 (x 33).

Many thanks in advance for your time and kindness.

Yours sincerely,



Marco F. Cocito-Monoc, Ph.D.
President & CEO
Southeast Community Development Corporation
3700 Eastern Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21224

cc: Senator Barbara Mikulski
Councilman Jim Kraft
Ken Piaskowski