

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Historic Preservation Review Board



Public Roundtable on
PR23-0163, the “Historic Preservation Review Board
Linda Greene Confirmation Resolution of 2019”

Testimony of
Linda Greene

Nominee for reappointment to the Historic Preservation Review Board

Before the
Committee of the Whole
Council of the District of Columbia
The Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairperson

John A. Wilson Building
Room 120
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Good Morning, Chairman Mendelson and other distinguished Councilmembers.

I am Linda Mercado Greene, a 47-year resident of the District of Columbia, residing in Historic Anacostia for the past 19 ½ years. I am the President and CEO of LMG Holdings, Inc., a DSLBD CBE company, which is a Public Relations/Public Affairs firm, and the Owner and CEO of BCG Holdings, Inc. t/a Anacostia Organics, also a DSLBD CBE company, and is the first licensed medical marijuana dispensary East of the River located at 2022 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE, 100% minority woman owned with 100% DC resident employees. I am also the Host of the “Cannabis Conversations Podcast with Linda Mercado Greene” on DC Radio, 96.3HD4.

It is with extreme honor to submit my testimony to you today for reappointment to the Historic Preservation Review Board to serve another three-year term. This reappointment provides me the opportunity to continue to contribute to preserving the rich and diverse history of our great city, protecting our culture, historical edifices and landmarks, as well as ensuring, as a progressive city, accept new concepts to be incorporated within a historical context.

During my 47 years living in DC, I have resided in wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8. Each one of these neighborhoods has its own beautiful identity and personality which has provided me a very unique insight into the impact of their architectural designs on everyday Washingtonians and visitors alike. I truly enjoy living in Historic Anacostia and meeting many of the tourists from around the world visiting the Frederick Douglass Estate as I sit on my front porch or in my yard. They ask me about the history of the neighborhood, how long have I lived here, and other places they should visit. My neighbors are incredible. We are a very close tight-knit community.

Through the years, I have been actively involved within the international, national, and local sectors of Washington, DC in politics, as a volunteer, advocate, philanthropist, fundraiser, event planner, and now in the medicinal cannabis industry. It has been a privilege to actively serve on numerous nonprofit and business boards, locally and nationally. Currently, I am serving on the Boards of the Anacostia Coordinating Council, the Minority Cannabis Business Association, the Anacostia BID, and as the Chair of the DC Medical Cannabis Trade Association.

One of the highest honors in my career was serving as Chief of Staff to the late Mayor for Life, Marion Barry, when he was reelected to the Council in 2004. I remained in that capacity for 18 months. During this tenure, I received an outstanding education in the local legislative process to include negotiations, consensus building, and loyalty, from the best of the best, Marion Barry and his colleagues. Even though I have always loved this city, my entire perspective changed increasing my admiration and dedication to the District of Columbia.

When I left as Marion’s Chief of Staff, I was hired as Senior Vice President of Community and Government Affairs by MacFarlane Partners based in San Francisco, an institutional commercial real estate investment firm, to open their Washington, DC office. I had been working closely with Marion on a potential soccer stadium at Poplar Point for DC United, as well as helping him identify a new owner of the team. We convinced Victor MacFarlane to buy DC United,

becoming the first African-American owner of a professional soccer team in the United States. The task of making the soccer stadium a reality become one of my primary tasks and my real introduction into commercial real estate.

These two positions, most directly, contributed to laying the foundation for me to serve as a competent, enthusiastic, dedicated, and committed reappointed member of the Historic Preservation Review Board. Both required me to patiently listen to the needs of the communities, while striking a delicate balance to help support progressive ideas while embracing the historical and environmental significant concerns. Additionally, both required me to accept individuals and various organization's passions.... sometimes through verbal and/or communication, and sometimes demonstrative (protests) mechanisms. One of my strongest assets is my ability to unify, listening to all sides to construct an acceptable median. These skills, along with my strong passion for community engagement, complements my wonderful colleague serving on this board.

Under the leadership of our incredible Chair, Marnique Heath, I am looking forward to making suggestions through her to the HPRB staff which I feel will be beneficial to all DC residents and the Office of Planning. One, HPRB hearings need to be in the communities on a non-weekday, or held on a non-weekday, for hearings of projects that affect wards 7 and 8 to allow the residents the right to hear the cases, see the presentations, and to provide their comments. These residents cannot afford to take off from work to testify at a hearing. We, the city, should accommodate their schedules so they can be active and contributing residents in their neighborhoods. Two, I am hopeful HPRB will have community engagement forums to for educational and inclusiveness purposes in all eight wards. We must remember everyone does not have access to a computer, the internet, or the skills to operate one or to even read. Third, I am hopeful HPRB will become bilingual to make the process inclusive for all residents which engages new members of our community, teaches them our history, and allows them to bring their resources, skills, and knowledge to further our rich history and culture. Finally, the HPRB staff is superb, accessible, knowledgeable, accommodating, and very professional. They are always willing to educate us, explain the historical context of projects to us, as well keeping the Board well-informed. My strong recommendation is to increase diversity/minority representation on the Staff. I am always about balance.

My heartfelt and humbled thank you is extended to Mayor Bowser for her reappointment of me to serve another three years as a citizen member on the Historic Preservation Review Board. I am grateful to Chairman Mendelson for scheduling this confirmation hearing and to all the Councilmembers who have attended today. I look forward to continue being a productive conservator of our most prized possessions and culture in our city, throughout our city.