

Testimony – DC Council – 11/16/11 11:00 – Luis Alfonso-Rosello

Good Morning Chairman Brown, members of the DC Council. My name is Luis Alfonso and I am here to show my support for officially naming the Southwest Duck Pond to reflect what everyone in the neighborhood already calls it. I want to highlight why I feel that this matter is important.

When I moved to Southwest more than 5 years ago, 4th St SW had not yet been opened up, and there was a long strip of green in the form of three parks and adjacent church grounds running from the Southwest Duck Pond until the library. Once the mall which lay where 4th St SW now currently lies closed, there was no reason to cross the green areas. The Southwest Duck Pond was dark and littered, the fountains worked sporadically and it was empty more often than not. The park felt abandoned, a space in between places, but not a place in itself.

I became involved in the park clean up through a happy coincidence. I usually shop at the redeveloped Safeway on 4th St SW, and enjoy walking down the newly opened 4th Street and down the refurbished tree-lined walkway on the south side of Westminster Church. This pleasant path leads directly into the Southwest Duck Pond. I was surprised one day to see a group of Neighbors with trash bags and brooms cleaning up the park. Since Southwest has a limited amount of green space where you can take small children, and being an expecting father, I immediately wanted to help reclaim this special place, particularly as I found out more about its historic value and significance.

In just a year I have seen how a few people can turn around a space and turn it into a special place where people want to be. As the park has become cleaner, I have seen people just walking through picking up trash. People find it an attractive place and want to keep it clean. As the fountains have been fixed and the ducks have returned, people have begun to take their children to go see the ducks. The Southwest Duck Pond has quickly cemented its identity as a place where people like to visit and congregate. It is only right that it has a name that reflects this.

Finally, I want to thank you for taking the time to consider and approve this motion.

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