

#SaveOurPlaza

October 22, 2016 Email letter from Ward One Councilmember Brianne Nadeau to Suntrust Bank and Gretchen Pfaehler, Chair of the DC Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) seeking to protect the Suntrust Plaza.

From: "Nadeau, Brianne K. (Council)" <BNadeau@DCCOUNCIL.US>
Subject: RE: SunTrust- Adams Morgan
Date: October 25, 2016 at 5:19:55 PM EDT
To: "Daniel.Simons@SunTrust.com" <Daniel.Simons@SunTrust.com>
Cc: "Jackson, Tania (Council)" <tjackson@DCCOUNCIL.US>, "Ted Guthrie (tedguthrie3@gmail.com)" <tedguthrie3@gmail.com>, Vikram Surya Chiruvolu <vikram.chiruvolu@gmail.com>, paul zuckerberg <paul.zuckerberg@gmail.com>, "denis james (denisjames@verizon.net)" <denisjames@verizon.net>, "Pfaehler, Gretchen (DCBC)" <gretchen.pfaehler@dc.gov>

Dear Mr. Simons:

Thank you for taking the time to reply to my inquiries. While I understand that your reluctance to do so, I'd like to take the time to enumerate the reasons why SunTrust should insert itself in the current development process afoot at 18th Streets and Columbia Road, NW.

I have seen the letter that was sent to you, the letter that was written many decades ago by Perpetual Bank, a bank that no longer exists. I know that you are asserting your right, as a private property owner, to sell the lot in question and allowing its development without worry, because the lot in question does not include a recorded public use easement. This despite the fact that the original bank on your site did in fact grant a public use on its private land, after working with the Adams Morgan neighborhood, and my predecessor Frank Smith, Jr. who was then an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner.

In exchange for an opportunity to come into the community and set up shop, Perpetual agreed to build the plaza whose use would include not only the city's first farmers market, but also holiday decorations and staging for public concerts. Ideally located at the heart of Adams Morgan, the plaza has been used continuously since it was built. It's important to note that the community welcomed Perpetual in with a set of understandings and agreements: the plaza would be built, it would be a neighborhood bank, and it would write loans to the actual people who lived in the community, making a concerted effort in the nascent Community Reinvestment Act days to empower minorities and poor people, who had been shut out of banking.

Since that original agreement, Perpetual has ceased to exist. Adams Morgan has undergone marked change. The community is no longer a marginalized one, in need of special banking considerations—Adams Morgan is neighborhood where the housing costs have skyrocketed and a place where many developers are happy to build new housing. Although many of the faces have

changed, the plaza has remained in constant use. The farmers market continues to operate, and it continues to be a gathering place. What has wavered, it seems, is the bank's commitment to community. Perpetual became Crestar which became SunTrust. Each iteration has maintained the agreement for the market. Each iteration has maintained its agreement to allow community events and access. Somehow, in the selling process, this commitment has fallen by the wayside.

Throughout the process of decision making on this parcel I have stood aside, since the Council does not have standing at HPRB. I convened the ANC, the neighborhood civic association and the development team for several conversations in an effort to reach an agreement about the project and the public use of space. They were unable to reach agreement, and the neighborhood's most closely elected body has reached a clear decision about the development—a decision we should all respect.

However, the reason we are in this position as a community, is that SunTrust has failed to preserve publicly available space in its sale of the property. **SunTrust still has the opportunity to insist that whomever purchases its property respect the community uses that have remained in place on this site for 40 years. I write to you urging you to do so.**

As the project is currently designed it leaves out the public use that has been a crucial aspect of this space; an affirmation of the community sentiment about this space could come from you. I urge you to keep in mind your legacy as a corporate citizen of this community.

Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau, Ward 1