

## Wharf Park Planning Moves Forward

BY WILLIAM RICH

Landscape architects charged with designing the planned waterfront park at The Wharf, a nearly \$2 billion redevelopment of the Southwest Waterfront, came to the October 24 Southwest Neighborhood Assembly meeting and presented their initial concept. Warren Byrd from Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects gave the presentation to the community. The initial concept design was the result of the charrette process held over the past couple of months with 33 community members that was convened by Hoffman-Madison Waterfront, and attended by representatives from Byrd Woltz, as well as Lee and Associates, Inc., the other landscape architectural firm involved with the park design. During the charrette process, the participants walked through the proposed park site, a 4.2 acre parcel located at the southern end of the Southwest Waterfront by the Harbor Patrol pier that currently serves as a parking lot for the Odyssey and Spirit cruise boats. The group discussed which elements of a park were most important for the community and then went over two alternatives for the park based on the priorities established earlier in the process.

The concept design resulted in a park similar in shape to a fan, a departure from the circular or rectangular parks found in other areas of the city. An informal lawn area will cover the northeastern corner of the park with a pergola wrapping along the edge and an interactive water feature. This area will be raised higher in order to afford a better view down towards the Washington Channel and Potomac River beyond. Gardens will be planted near the 50-year old willow oaks that frame the northern and eastern border of the park. Play mounds will be provided near the informal lawn and curv-



The initial concept drawing for the waterfront park calls for a design resembling a fan with spaces for a variety of uses. Rendering: Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects and Lee and Associates, Inc



A "red carpet" of tile will lead customers from the front entrance of the new Z-Burger at Waterfront Station to the service counter. Angel wings will hang from the ceiling. Rendering: Peter Tabibian

ing paths created throughout the park. An element of the park the developers have requested through the Planned Unit Development process is a pavilion, where some food and beverage service, as well as storage for park-related

Channel. One of the areas where charrette participants agreed was the park should provide a variety of color as the seasons change, so tree plantings will be diverse. A total of 26 parking spaces have to be maintained for guests of the townhouses proposed at Pier 4 and the Harbor Patrol as well as a traffic circle that can be used for emergencies. Most of the land to the south of the traffic circle is owned by the National Park Service (NPS), but Hoffman-Madison Waterfront wants to work with NPS to rehabilitate the area leading down to the Titanic Memorial with lawn terraces and a rain garden.

Over the next several months, the landscape architects will refine the park's design and another charrette will be convened to obtain more input as the process moves forward. Construction of the park will occur during the first phase of development at The Wharf, which is scheduled to get underway by the end of 2012.

furnishings will be located. The pavilion will be designed to be less intrusive on the landscape for nearby residents at Harbor Square that have views of the park, with the possibility of the pavilion being embedded in the hillside since the access road (another

necessary portion of the park) will be at a lower grade than the informal lawn. Rain gardens will be interspersed throughout to help retain rainwater runoff before entering the Washington

### Waterfront Station Update

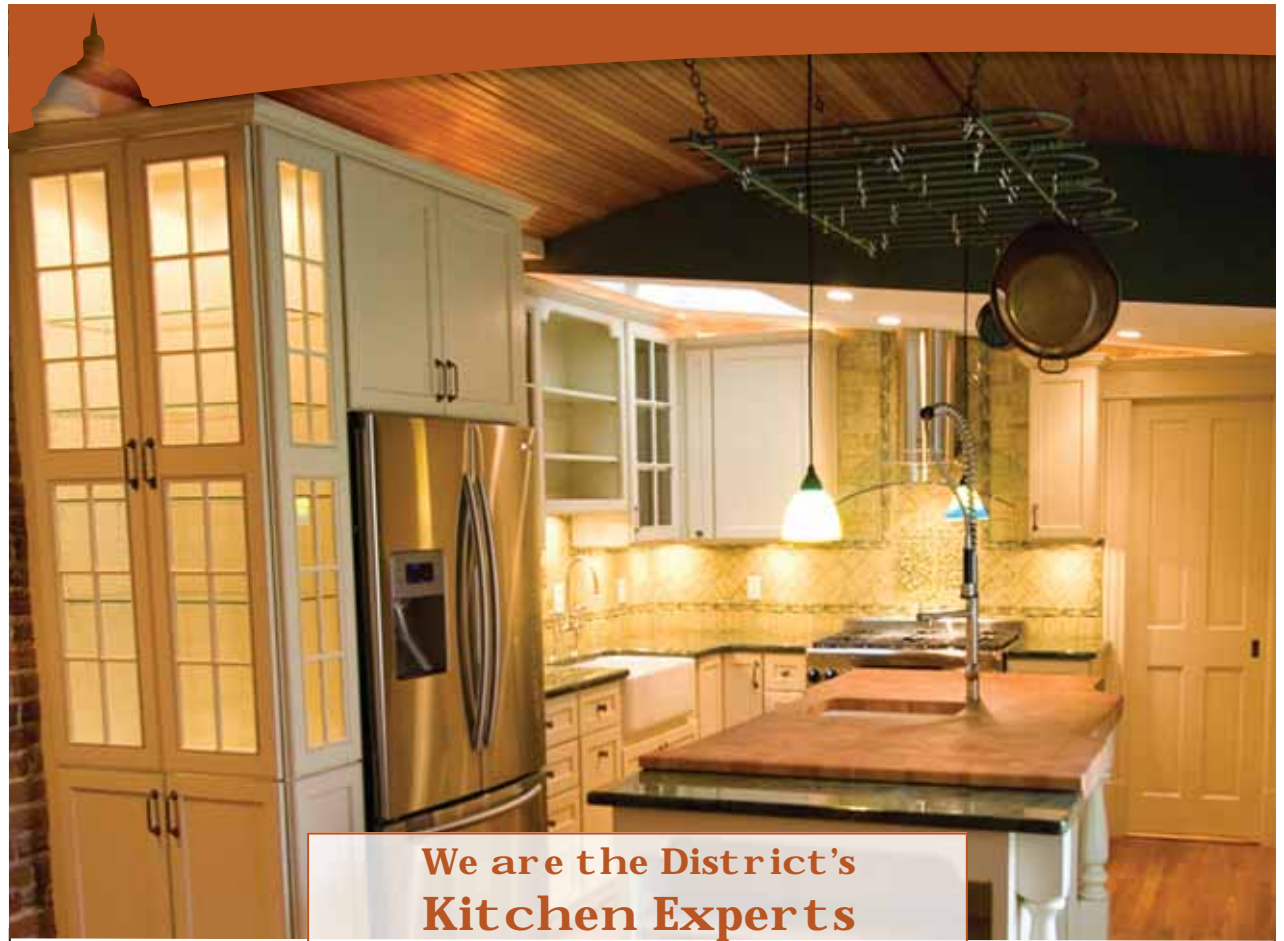
Progress is being made towards opening a third restaurant at Waterfront Station, the new mixed-use development at the Waterfront Metro and de facto town center of Southwest. Peter Tabibian aims to open Z-Burger, his third one in the District, by the end of the year after several delays pushed back the grand opening. The burger joint will join Station 4 and Subway at Waterfront Station.

In addition to Z-Burger restaurants in Tenleytown and Glover Park, Tabibian recently opened one in the Baltimore suburbs and will soon open two more - in Columbia Heights and Arlington. Tabibian is a jack of all trades when it comes to Z-Burger. He designed the interior space of the Waterfront Station restaurant, as well as developed the

menu. The main colors used in the restaurant will be red, yellow, grey and white. A “red carpet” of tile will lead customers from the entrance to the service counter – the right side will be where orders are placed and the left side will be the pick-up area. During a recent tour of the still-under-construction build-out, Tabibian mentioned that he designed the space so customers will be able to see their food getting prepared behind the counter as they wait for their order. An artistic display of angel wings will be hung from the ceiling in the middle of the restaurant and a variety of seating areas will be scattered throughout, including curved benches, bar stools, and more intimate spaces. Besides indoor seating, there will be approximately 40 seats outside. Z-Burger serves burgers, cheesesteaks, fries, onion rings, malts and shakes.

Waterfront Station opened in 2010 at the corner of 4th Street, SW and M Street, SW and was developed by Waterfront Associates, a group comprised of Vornado Realty Trust, Forest City Washington, and The Kaempfer Company. A 54,100 square-foot urban lifestyle Safeway, CVS, and Waterfront Cleaners round out the other retailers currently open, along with two fully leased office buildings to District government agencies (the completed office buildings were sold to USAA Real Estate in May 2011 for \$356 million). TD Bank has signed a lease to occupy the 1101 4th Street, SW building while three retail spaces remain to be leased. Renovations will soon be underway at the former Environmental Protection Agency towers (purchased by Urban Atlantic for \$20 million in March 2011) adjacent to the new office buildings, which will be repurposed as residential with brand new glass exteriors. Future phases call for 2-3 more office buildings and 1-2 more residential buildings, along with ground-floor retail.

*Will Rich is a blogger at Southwest... The Little Quadrant that Could (www.southwestquadrant.blogspot.com) ★*



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