

OFFICIAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Alder Carmen Rodriguez, Chair, Community Development Committee; President Walker-Myers

FROM: Alder Mandy Martinelli, Ward 8

DATE: February 16, 2026

RE: Formal Technical and Fiscal Due Diligence Requirements for Ball Island (LM-2026-0007)

Dear Chair Rodriguez,

As the Alder of Ward 8, where Ball Island is located, I am formally submitting my technical and fiscal concerns through you as Chair of the Community Development Committee. While I share the goal of remediating this long-standing environmental burden, I cannot support moving this item out of committee based on the current unknown financials and significant gaps in information.

I am requesting written clarification on the following items from the City Engineer, City Attorney, and Budget Director:

1. The \$25 million figure currently being discussed by the administration is has been presented as a park construction *estimate*. However, redeveloping coal plants like the Potomac River station involves total budgets exceeding \$100 million once environmental liabilities are included. I am requesting a formal breakdown of who is responsible for the approximately \$50 million difference between the "park budget" and the total projected remediation cost. Specifically, who pays for the 15 to 25 million dollars required to upgrade the cleanup from an "Industrial" factory standard to a "Residential" playground standard?
2. Tearing down a 1929 power plant filled with pcbs, asbestos, lead and the multitude of other unknown contaminates is a high-risk operation typically estimated between 10 and 15 million dollars. United Illuminating (UI) has noted in 2025/2026 legal proceedings that their current obligations do not include full demolition. Does the \$25 million budget include the cost of the wrecking ball and hazardous waste disposal? If it does not, the City is asking this Board to acquire a property it cannot afford to remove.
3. The current owners, Haven River Properties and Paramount View Millennium, have neglected this site for years. I am requesting the exact dollar amount they currently owe the City in back taxes and anti-blight fines. Under the current 2025 ordinances, these fines total \$1,000/day. I am requesting a legal explanation for why we are using eminent domain—which requires the City to pay the owners—instead of a foreclosure action that allows us to take the land for the debt they already owe our taxpayers.
4. The May 2021 Supplemental Remedial Investigation admits that soil testing directly under the main boilers and foundation mat was never completed due to "*unsafe conditions*." Without knowing the current levels of contamination, the City cannot reliably project remediation costs. If the City acquires the property before this "hidden" soil is tested, our City—not UI—may become responsible for any newly discovered toxins found during demolition. I request a plan for how this "discovery risk" will be mitigated.

5. In 11 days, the state transitions to the new Release-Based Cleanup Regulations (RBCR) under Chapter 445b. These new laws provide the City with significantly more power to force polluters to pay for newly discovered releases on a strict timeline. I am requesting a formal legal explanation for how this state law might aid us in this process.

My constituents deserve a park that is safe and a budget that is honest. I formally request that this item remain with the Community Development Committee until these technical and fiscal risks are resolved in writing.

Best regards,

Alder Martinelli, Ward 8