

DATE: 1/21/11

TO: RICHARD NERO
BZA
202 727 6072

FROM: YASMIN ROMERO-CASTILLO
202 486 6677

RE: BZA APPEAL
#18152

ENJOINING AS APPELLANT

2011 JAN 21 PM 4:09

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 18152

EXHIBIT NO. 27

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 18152
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The 3145 Mount Pleasant Street Tenants' Association

Former Deauville Apartments

Future Monsignor Romero Apartments

The apartment building at 3145 Mount Pleasant Street was an original historic building before it burned to the ground in March of 2008.

Standing adjacent to other original apartments along Mount Pleasant Street and adjacent to the historic Meridian Hill Baptist Church and less than two hundred feet from the original Carnegie library, our building boasted almost 100 units and was home to a diverse group of families, friends, and neighbors.

My name is Yasmin Romero-Castillo and I have been President of the 3145 Mount Pleasant Street Tenants' Association for eight years.

This affidavit serves as notice of concern to be conveyed to DC commissions, boards, panels, and courts that the safety of future 3145 Mount Pleasant Street Apartments (Monsignor Romero) shall not be put at risk again by overcrowded development along this troubled residential and business corridor.

This affidavit also serves as notice that Chris Otten, local organizer with the Ward One Library Coalition, has been a helpful to the residents of the 3145 Mount Pleasant Street in working with us to demonstrate alerts to DC leadership about the concerns regarding this project. We appreciate his help as our civic partner.

The 3145 Mount Pleasant Street Tenants' Association must alert City leadership and the public to the fact that DC Public Library officials have proposed library expansion plans for the Mount Pleasant Library which will hinder emergency response time and access to the rear of our building and to those around us. This does not bode well for our future given what has happened in our past.

The Deauville Apartment building was totally destroyed in a five alarm fire in the late evening of March 12, 2008, displacing more than 200 people. Three years later only the burned shell remains - supported by an iron framing structure. Tragically, the multiple explosions and super-hot and rigorous fire jumped from our building to also destroy the historic Meridian Hill Baptist Church. The cost of this devastation is in the many millions of dollars and the smoke from this tragic fire closed the Mount Pleasant Library for cleaning.

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I won't soon forget that horrid evening. I was coming home from a local meeting and saw all of the lights and heard sirens. After realizing the building was on fire, my main focus was to help my tenants' escape and find a warm place to stay. We took the elderly and young to Haydee's restaurant. Other businesses opened up their doors to our frightened tenants — Don Juan's, the Mount Pleasant auto repair shop, and others. The Mayor and Councilmember helped our tenants find shelter at local hotels.

Since that dreadful March night in 2008, my role has been to keep the 3145 Mount Pleasant Street family somewhat connected and housed locally in anticipation of returning to our new building. After experiencing a fire of such rage, our tenants would like to see a library construction plan which expands services while simultaneously promoting emergency access to the rear of our building and of those around us.

We desire the chance to help our DC Fire Department readily get to people and buildings in distress with emergency equipment, including vehicles, more quickly and in a safer manner than what our brave emergency personnel will have to face if the library is built per the proposed plans.

The library stands at the apex, or gateway, to a residential and business corridor with tall buildings, many of them four-stories and taller. The sides and back of the library opens up into an area known by DCFD as a "trouble spot" for its difficulty in navigation, accessibility, and poor hydrant service.

For example, in November of 2010, a neighbor fell to his death, one other person died from serious burns, an entire family seriously burned with life-threatening injuries, and numerous residents injured in a fire in the building just behind ours named the Sarbin Towers, located at 3132 16th Street.

We have also been informed that on Christmas Day 2010, a fire occurred on the top floor of the Park Marconi, which is located just next to the library and less than 100 feet from our building. According to witnesses, DCFD had trouble finding adequate hydrant service increasing emergency response time.

Library expansion is needed and welcomed, and we commend the District of Columbia Library Board for its vision. However, we strongly believe and have continuously urged that the renovation and expansion be done responsibly.

The proposed construction plans call for adding a rear expansion that extends all the way to the rear lot line, plus constructing a massive and very long accessibility ramp on the Lamont Street side of the library. Both of these project components needlessly block a critical emergency access point to behind the library and adjacent apartments.

Library expansion is needed and welcomed, and we appreciate the District of Columbia's Library Board for its desire to grow Ward One Library services. However, we strongly regret the lack of collaboration with the community on this very important project. We have continuously urged that the renovation and expansion be done responsibly.

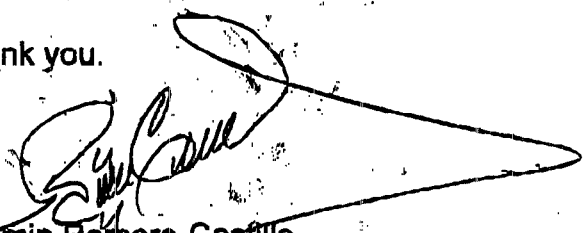
The fact of the matter is the proposed library construction plans endanger the lives of almost one-thousand residents who live along this troubled corridor and most unfortunately directly risks the work between our association and the prominent National Housing Trust to bring back affordable housing to where the Deauville once stood.

Opening access up along this central Mount Pleasant residential and business corridor to emergency personnel must be made the priority over out-of-context internal library planning decisions.

We are seeking help to rectify these plans as we want to prevent any additional senseless deaths, injuries, loss of homes and property from occurring because of the failure to act responsibly and now.

The 3145 Mount Pleasant Street Tenants Association asks that City leadership seeks this project be stopped until a more reasonable plan can be deemed safe for our apartment, our neighbors, and Mount Pleasant.

Thank you.



Yasmin Romero-Castillo

President, The 3145 Mount Pleasant Street Tenants' Association
Mount Pleasant ANC Commissioner 1D-01 (2011-2012)
President, CCM de SEEM (Salvedoreños en el Mundo)

**Affidavit of Yasmin Romero-Castillo, President of the 3145
Mount Pleasant Street Tenants' Association**

My name is Yasmin Romero-Castillo, I am of legal age, and currently reside at

3354 MOUNT PLEASANT STREET #9 WDC 20010

Affidavit Deed

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The proposed plans call for a three-story expansion off the back of the original library building, extending out all the way to the rear property lot line.

The proposed expansion will block emergency access from Lamont Street to the rear of the library and adjacent Mount Pleasant apartment buildings and businesses.

The proposed expansion will also block light and air and will reduce the quality of life for surrounding residents living in the apartments.

There has been no meaningful analysis of how the proposed library expansion will affect the ability of emergency personnel in any emergency situation to rescue people and property of those in the surrounding area.

Mount Pleasant Street burned to the ground in a five-alarm fire just three years ago. DCFD could not access the rear of our building very easily and in time. The fire spread from the back of our building and also destroyed the historic Meridian Hill Baptist Church, which sat just behind 3145 Mount Pleasant Street.

Most recently there have been two additional fires (Fall and Winter 2010) that included loss of life and badly injuring several people, including children and destroying more property.

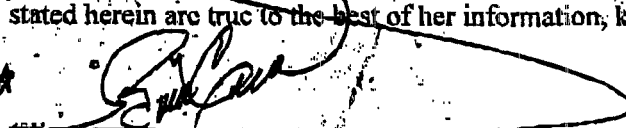
This corridor is known to the DC Fire Department as a "trouble spot" in terms of the inability of emergency personnel to navigate easily and the lack of adequate hydrant service.

Residents of the future 3145 Mount Pleasant Street believe the proposed library expansion plans heighten the problem of emergency access and fear for their property and lives and believe the plans risk the work of our association in establishing future affordable rental units where the Deauville Apartments once stood.

attached exhibit for narrative of the concerns.

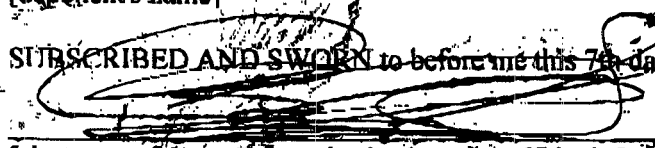
Washington, DC:

Yasmin Romero-Castillo, being first duly sworn on oath according to law, deposes and says that she has read the foregoing AFFIDAVIT OF the 3145 Mount Pleasant Street Tenants' Association, by her subscribed, that the matters stated herein are true to the best of her information, knowledge and belief.


[deponent's signature]

YASMIN ROMERO-CASTILLO
[deponent's name]

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 7th day of January, 2011.


[signature of the person authorized to take affidavits]

Notary Public
[title of the person authorized to take affidavits]

My commission expires 12-01-2012

PARTY STATUS REQUEST FORM

Before completing this form, please review the instructions on the reverse side.

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(Please see reverse side for more information about this distinction.)

NAME: Last

First

Middle I.

ROMERO-CASTILLO

YASMIN

ADDRESS: Street

(Current)

Apt. # (if any)

City

State

Zip Code

3354 MOUNT PLEASANT ST #9 WASHINGTON DC 20010

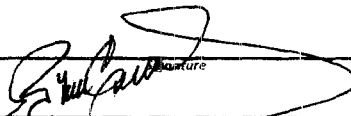
Phone No.

Fax No.

E-Mail

202 486 6677

I, hereby request to appear and participate as a party.



Date

01/21/11

Will you appear as a(n)



Proponent of appeal



Opponent

Will you appear through legal counsel?



Yes



No

If yes, please enter the name and address of such legal counsel.

NAME: Last

First

Middle I.

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia

ADDRESS: Street

CASE NO.

18152 Ste. # (if any)

City

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(If you require additional space, please attach an additional sheet.)

1). How will the property owned or occupied by such person, or in which the person has an interest be affected by the action requested of the Board?

FIRE SAFETY RISK; ADVERSE AFFECT ON AIR AND LIGHT
REDUCTION IN EMERGENCY PERSONNEL ACCESS

2). What legal interest does the person have in the property? (i.e. owner, tenant, trustee, or mortgagee)

PRESIDENT OF 3145 MOUNT PLEASANT STREET TENANTS' ASSOC.

3). What is the distance between the person's property and the property that is the subject of the appeal or application before the Board? (Preferably no farther than 200ft.)

LESS THAN 200 FEET; WE CAN SEE LIBRARY FROM REAR

4). What are the environmental, economic or social impacts that are likely to affect the person and/or the person's property if the action requested of the Board is approved or denied?

IF THE BOARD DENIES APPEAL DC PUBLIC LIBRARY WILL
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STIFLING EMERGENCY ACCESS TO RESIDENTS affidavit

5). Describe any other relevant matters that demonstrate how the person will likely be affected or aggrieved if the action requested of the Board is approved or denied.

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6). Explain how the person's interest will be more significantly, distinctively, or uniquely affected in character or kind by the proposed zoning action than that of other person's in the general public.

OUR FUTURE APARTMENT BUILDING WILL BE AT RISK
OF ANOTHER DEVASTATING FIRE BECAUSE THE *see
LIBRARY PLANS BLOCK EMERGENCY ACCESS TO OUR affidavit
BUILDING.

18152

2011 JUN 24 PM 6:35

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NAME: Last

First

Middle I.

ROMERO-CASTILLO

YASMIN

ADDRESS: Street

Apt. # (if any)

City

State

Zip Code

3354 MOUNT PLEASANT ST #9 WASHINGTON DC 20010

Phone No.

Fax No.

E-Mail

202 486 6677

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Date
01/21/11

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Proponent



Opponent

Will you appear through legal counsel?



Yes



No

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Washington, DC:

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[deponent's signature]

[deponent's name]

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 7th day of January, 2011

[signature of the person authorized to take affidavits]

[title of the person authorized to take affidavits]

My commission expires

12-31-2012



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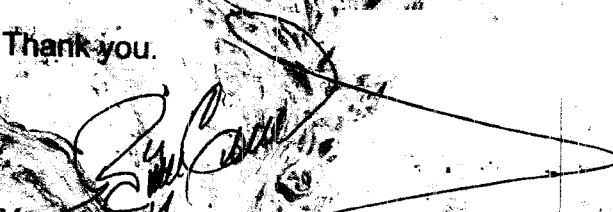
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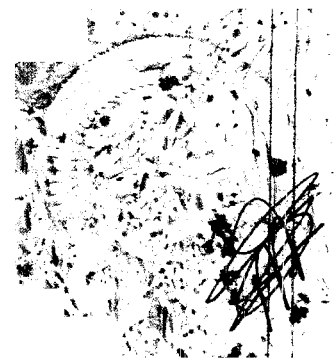
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