

To: bzasubmissions@dc.gov 727-6311
#18503 and 18505 Case Name : Application of Keystar Spring Place LLC

My husband Tony and I, 32 year residents of Takoma, were instrumental in developing the Takoma Small Area Plan including the recommendations for transportation improvements.

We are writing to you now regarding the Department of Transportation Report which we feel is trying to impose unfair, excessive and unjustified stipulations on the current applicant whose project will be increasing the amount of affordable housing stock in the city. We understand it is not the role of the BZA to address policy issues such as affordable housing, but feel it should be mentioned.

The Department of Transportation has long ignored the plan's recommendations regarding Chestnut Street and Spring Streets, not making any improvements or repairs over the years, nor requiring other developments to implement improvements in accessibility, and are now trying to have a small developer rectify the situation as a result of their inaction.

Parking:

Concerning DDOT's contention that the project would reduce parking availability to the residents of Chestnut Street: All residents of Chestnut Street have off street parking, moreover several of them are operating illegal parking lots on their properties. The current excess of parked vehicles is due to the ongoing car repair operations on the property in question and adjacent businesses.

Pedestrian Access:

Now that the last and least desirable landlocked parcel on Spring Street is in the process of acquiring permits for development, the Department is suddenly concerned about the fact that no ADA compliant route exists to connect pedestrians to Blair Road or Cedar Street. And is requiring the applicant to bear the costs in both money and time to obtain said easements and develop design and engineering documents.

In regard to providing a pedestrian short cut to Cedar Street; DDOT did not act to acquire easements from either WMATA or from the Cedar Condo developer when earlier projects were developed. Nor did the department attempt themselves to make any improvements over the years when the much larger Gables Apartments were constructed.

As a result of this, DDOT is requesting concessions from Keystar; requiring that they build an ADA compliant path on the property that is owned by Cedar Crossing Condo. I am appalled that the Department would try and impose this on a small developer who is trying to do the right thing by ridding the neighborhood of noxious uses, putting in affordable housing adjacent to a metro, minimizing car parking and making provisions for bikes and zip cars.

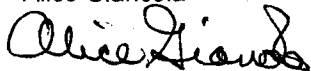
DDOT identifies this route as a "desire line". I could identify several "desire lines" across other people's property to make my and other neighbor's routes shorter.

Chestnut Street provides an existing pedestrian route of less than a half block from Spring Street to Blair. If DDOT had improved this route on Chestnut Street in a timely manner we would not be here today. ADA provisions should have already been implemented on Chestnut Street by DDOT for the current residents. This would include curb and gutter to improve storm water management on this street.

I, and several of my friends (among them current residents of Cedar Crossing Condos) have attended the public meetings on this issue and at no time did residents call for this to be done as a condition of approving the development.

To sum up- DDOT, Cedar Crossings Condo and the Gables projects have received a pass on any costs associated with either a bike or pedestrian pathway and in our view DDOT is ultimately responsible for the current predicament and should bear fiscal responsibility to resolve the situation. If DDOT wants to pursue a link to Cedar Street from Spring Street it should be a pedestrian pathway which it is their responsibility to construct and should not burden the developer with this.

Alice Giancola



Anthony Giancola



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