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2013 OCT 29 PM 5:20

1426 Rhode Island Avenue Condominium Association

To Chairperson Lloyd and Members of the Board:

On behalf of the 1426 Rhode Island Condominium Association, we write in support of the application of the Helix Hotel seeking a zoning adjustment in connection with their anticipated renovation of the hotel. As the neighbors immediately adjacent to the Hotel, we are the individuals most likely to be affected by the expansion, and write to offer our support for the application.

Different members of our association support the variance for different reasons, and several will write separately to express their support. However, we are united – unanimously – as a group in supporting the anticipated renovation. Although no one relishes the idea of a lengthy renovation occurring next door, we have decided to support the project because of the willingness the Helix has shown to incorporate our input into their plans and because we believe in the long term the renovations will ultimately draw crowds that are less disruptive to our homes.

Our experience is that currently the clients of the Helix hotel tend to be younger persons who are attracted to the hotel's niche as a "rock and roll" hotel. Often on weekends the sidewalks are crowded until the early morning hours with persons drinking, smoking, and otherwise enjoying an elevated level of noise. We believe the renovations—and the higher price point the renovated hotel will command—will result in an older clientele that will be more sensitive to us as residents.

We understand that certain neighbors who object to the renovation have raised the fact that the Helix has agreed to repair retaining wall between our property and the hotel. We understand such individuals have implied that those repairs "bought" our support. That is not correct. First, the repair of the wall is a necessity for any renovation and we believe the hotel would have needed to make the repair without regard to our support. Second, our support is based on the overall commitment the Helix has shown to soliciting and implementing our viewpoints about how they can minimize the impact on the renovation. Were it not for the fact that the Helix Hotel has consistently demonstrated that commitment working with us to minimize the inconvenience of every aspect of the project, we would not support the renovation even if they promised to guild our homes in gold.

We have already had multiple meetings with the hotel about design details, renovation hours, and other aspects of the renovation. We would also note that many of the neighbors who are now objecting to the project did not even attend these meetings, although they were invited. We understand that people who have not had the opportunity to work through the issues with the hotel might oppose the renovation, and we obviously respect any neighbor who chooses to oppose the project. But as the most immediately impacted residents, and as the individuals who have worked most closely with the hotel, we believe our support should carry additional weight.

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia

CASE NO.

EXHIBIT NO.

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Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.18648
EXHIBIT NO.31

We believe the Helix Hotel has set a standard in how businesses should work with residents when requesting such variances, and we hope that their efforts are recognized by the Board with a vote in support of their request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Stewart', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Beth Stewart

On behalf of the 1426 Rhode Island Avenue
Condo Association