



Harrison Suarez
Compass Coffee
2346 Massachusetts Ave NW
Washington, DC 20008

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Office of Zoning
441 4th Street
Washington, D.C. 20001

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing today in support of Compass Coffee's application for zoning relief in the matter of 1535 7th Street NW, Washington, DC, 20001. This letter will provide details on Compass Coffee's positive interactions with the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) thus far and the support we have received. For the record, ANC-6E is our regulatory body.

Compass Coffee's first meeting with ANC-6E came in September of 2013. Our meeting was with Alex Padro, Vice Chairman.

During the meeting, my business partner and I explained our background as natives of Washington, D.C., our experience as best friends and infantry officers in the Marine Corps, and how we had chronicled our love of coffee in a book called *Perfect Coffee at Home*. We also explained our vision for a new kind of coffee company in Shaw, a first tier roastery and café that would serve coffee, tea, and fresh baked goods of the highest quality, and act as a neighborhood gathering place and cornerstone of the community. Mr. Padro expressed his enthusiastic support for the idea, and we promised to keep in touch.

A few weeks after that, Compass Coffee had a conference call with Kevin Chapple, the ANC-6E representative whose jurisdiction covers our building location. We explained our vision and how we hoped to create a positive space for the community, and also that we would be turning a distressed and dilapidated laundromat into a world-class roastery and café. Mr. Chapple expressed his enthusiastic support for our initiative.

In early December, we had another meeting with Mr. Padro to refine some of the details of renovation. We showed him initial blueprints for the café and a three-dimensional model of what we were planning. This being our first business, when Mr. Padro asked us if we needed any zoning relief for the number of seats we proposed (approximately 50), we mistakenly said we did not. Our building had been zoned as C-2-A, our vision was for a café of a size comparable to many other coffee shops in the city (approximately 1,400 square feet within a 3,600 square foot roastery), and given the distressed condition of the building, we felt that our vision for a coffee roastery and café would be a welcome improvement.

Shortly thereafter, we met with the office of Councilman Tommy Wells (Ward 6), in whose ward Compass Coffee's location will fall. They were familiar with the run-down laundromat we would be renovating and its reputation as a blighted part of the neighborhood. His staff expressed enthusiastic support for our idea and noted that it would be a strong, positive improvement. They also informed us that the District Government had classified the area as a Great Streets Corridor in order to stimulate business and support capital improvement.

With the support of community leadership and our can-do attitude, my business partner and I were optimistic about Compass Coffee's prospects when we submitted for permits on December 20th, 2013. Unfortunately, as you are aware by now, things have not gone smoothly.

I must admit, when I received news that Compass Coffee had been zoned as a prepared foods shop, and, as a result, would be allowed only 18 seats, I was shocked. The limitation is a poor use of our large café, it works against the prospects of our small business, and most importantly, it undermines the vision we have of creating a gathering place and cornerstone of the community. It is for these reasons I am writing to request your support for our zoning relief application.

In the weeks since receiving news of this zoning limitation, we have been in communication with Mr. Padro of the ANC, the office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, and the office of Councilman Jack Evans (Ward 2). They all expressed verbal support for our application and promised to look into the matter. They are confident that it will be approved. We will appear before the ANC in March to formally request its support, and in the meantime, our architects are preparing our written application for relief.

As our business depends on support from the community at large, we have been in regular contact with the local ANC chair and committee; ensuring they are kept aware of our intention to bring our vision for a unique take on the coffee roaster and café concept. We will continue to have discussions and involve the ANC, other civic groups and the office of planning as we see this through. We will also in effect invite participation from our immediate neighbors as warranted by this board.

We have begun and continue to have a dialogue with adjacent property owners, who are aware of our project. For those that we have not been in contact with, we shall do so in no less than the 14 days prior to the scheduled public hearing.

In closing, I would say there's no question we made a mistake in applying as a restaurant. The DC Code clearly states cafés—no matter how large—are prepared food shops limited to eighteen seats. But I would just humbly ask that you help us out in any way you can to turn Compass Coffee into a reality and to expedite the process of gaining zoning relief. It's our first business, much of the money we're using to finance it comes from what we saved from our deployment to Afghanistan, and we're trying to do something positive for the community.

If there are any further questions, please send me an email
harrison@compasscoffee.com, or give me a call on my cell phone, 301-520-2261.
I'm available any time.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Harrison Suarez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Harrison Suarez
Manager
Compass Coffee