

Park View United Neighborhood Coalition
623 Otis PI NW
Washington, DC 20010
October 8, 2014

Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA)
Re: Hearing on Application Number 18847

Dear Board Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Park View United Neighborhood Coalition (Park View UNC), a non-profit civic association operating in the northern Park View and southern Petworth. The property at 3619 Georgia Avenue NW is within our membership boundaries and development of the parcel has a direct impact on our members, particularly those living immediately adjacent to the property on the 700 block of Princeton PI NW.

On Wednesday, October 1, 2014, during a regularly scheduled meeting, members of the Park View UNC voted unanimously to oppose the variance being sought by developers to avoid creating the 14 parking spaces that would normally be required for the construction of a new 27 unit building. Our members feel that creating 27 new residential units while providing zero parking spaces will cause substantial detriment to the immediate community by placing additional strain on already limited street parking, and that the developer's proposed strategies are insufficient to provide long term mitigation or offset of the detriment to the public good.

Street parking on the blocks nearest the site is already strained by existing uses within the neighborhood. The church across the street from the proposed development has no designated parking and its congregation includes many individuals from throughout the greater DC metropolitan area who drive to attend services. There is also another, smaller church immediately to the south of the property. During the summer, Park View Park, at the other end of the block, hosts a popular basketball tournament that also draws spectators from throughout the greater DC area. This tournament, which includes both adult and youth competitions on alternating nights, runs every weeknight between June and early August. None of these existing neighborhood amenities have parking lots, meaning that visitors who drive to these activities rely on street parking. This places a heavy demand on parking at the current demand levels, elderly residents within the neighborhood sometimes struggle to find parking within reasonable walking distance of their homes.

The increasing housing density within the community will further increase the demand for parking. In addition to the continued development of residential buildings along Georgia Ave, many single family homes within the neighborhood are being converted into multi-unit buildings. The greater density of households means an increase in both residents and visitors, and in a city that constantly attracts residents from throughout the country, many visitors drive in

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from out of town to see residents. The increased density and visitor traffic are welcome, but efforts must be taken to accommodate new and old residents and their guests.

The addition of 27 residential units without the requisite 14 parking spaces will create a hardship for the community that will persist for decades, but the mitigation strategies that the developer proposed prior to our Oct. meeting will last for a few years at best, and will not fully offset the harm caused if the variance is granted¹. At community meetings the developer offered to consider providing building residents with Capital Bike Share memberships for three years to encourage the use of bicycles. The developer also proposed designating two parking spaces in front of the building for car sharing services, and excluding the building from the residential parking permit program. All of these proposed solutions would provide only negligible benefit. The nearby Capital Bike Share station is already heavily used and usually empty during commuting hours, so the residents will not be able to rely on the service even for the short duration of three years that was proposed. The car share spaces cannot be guaranteed by the developer, as it is the car sharing service that decides where these spaces will be located. The service may choose not to add more, as there are already two such spaces one block south, on Otis Pl. and Georgia Ave. We also note that the addition of two more spaces in close proximity to the existing spaces is unlikely to provide significant benefit. Finally, it is not clear how the developer could stop future residents, who would have valid Ward 1 addresses, from receiving Ward 1 parking stickers under the Ward 1 Enhanced Residential Parking Program (DC code §50-2552).

The developer also suggested a willingness to add additional affordable housing units to the project. While this would not address the specific harm caused by adding so many residential units without providing any additional parking, it would provide some benefit to the public good. The number suggested by the developer, however, one or two additional units, is not sufficient to provide adequate benefit to sufficiently offset the detriment to the community.

The detriment to the public good caused by granting the requested variance for this particular parcel would cause significant harm to the residents of this neighborhood and the proposed mitigation is woefully inadequate to alleviate that harm, therefore the Park View UNC asks the BZA reject this variance request.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Marcus Hedrick
President, United Neighborhood Coalition

¹ Our community meeting discussing the developer's mitigation plan occurred on October 1st. While the developer subsequently presented a revised mitigation plan to Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1A on October 8th, our membership did not have time to meet again to review the amended proposal prior to the BZA hearing date. Therefore this letter does not address the October 8th revisions.