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April 29, 2015 Wednesday

BZA Case Number 18991

Re. Appeal for 1521 Varnum Street, NW

Appellant John Stokes, owner and resident of 1519 Varnum Street, NW

To the Zoning Board of Adjustment

I live at 4213 16th Street NW between Upshur and Varnum 1521 Varnum Street, is 5 houses from my house This house is also at the end of my alleyway

My house, as well as four houses between my house and 1521 Varnum Street, are zoned R-1-B 1521 Varnum Street is the first R-4 zoned lot closest to me

We have only single-family residential housing in this neighborhood Not one flat Not one multi-unit building Not one conversion Not one apartment house Very few to no rental units Nothing but single-family houses, with families that own and live in them.

The residential single family attached row house located at 1521 Varnum Street, NW, has been permitted to allow an apartment building to be built Mr Matthew Le Grant, DCRA Zoning Administrator (ZA), has approved the construction of a 3-story, 7-unit building Each unit is two bedrooms/2.5 bath This equates to a 21 toilet, 28 sink, 14 bathtub, 7 dishwashers, 7 garbage disposal, 4 parking space apartment building with balconies, double roof top decks, and 14 garbage and recycling cans All in a house that has been a single family home for nearly 100 years

This building will tower over the neighborhood at four stories, and be visible from 16th Street, NW, a street which has no apartment buildings from Shepherd Street, NW to Military Road, NW. In addition (pun intended) a **wholly new additional building** would be constructed and added onto the converted structure

In Mr LeGrant's administrative decision, he writes of the following

- The ZA speaks to the granting of relief to the regulations due to the **"...uniqueness of this property compared to surrounding properties..."** Indeed the uniqueness of this proposed development would destroy the character of the neighborhood
- The ZA also states, **"The primary purpose of the R-4 District shall be the stabilization of remaining one-family dwellings."**

Mr. LeGrant and BZA Commissioners, how is this zoning decision congruent with our neighborhood?

The proposed apartment building not only exceeds the allowable and acceptable size for a lot of this size, for which a deviation was granted, but the scale and size of this building exceeds the allowable size of an apartment building in the R-4 Residential District. The building is not in compliance with other applicable zoning requirements as mentioned, and it is therefore not in keeping with the purpose of the applicable zone district or in the best interests of the neighborhood.

The statement by the ZA, that the proposed seven unit apartment building meets all of the requirements in the R-4 Residential District does not bear credence.

Most importantly, this proposed apartment building is in direct conflict directly with the Office of Planning's Comprehensive Plan.

BZA Case number 18991 is an example of a developer receiving every exception possible in order to overstretch a "matter of right" which is already not in congruence with our neighborhood. This case will set a precedence which will **ruin our neighborhood**.

I am furious at the DCRA and BZA decisions made – all in favor of Potomac-based developers at the expenses of DC residents. I am only one of many neighbors who is furious.

I thank you for paying careful attention to Mr. Stokes' case and attachments, and to making a decision which is fair and correct for Mr. Stokes, our neighborhood, for our families and children, and for all of the residents of the District of Columbia.

Sincerely,



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