

Dear BZA Commissioners,

Below, you will find a copy of the letter which was sent to all ANC 4C commissioners in anticipation of their review of requests for lot and parking variance by Rooney Properties, LLC, for the property at 3701 New Hampshire Ave, NW. A similar letter was sent to ANC 1A. Residents in the area are deeply concerned about more unaffordable housing coming up in the area, the loss of an iconic mural for working-class Washingtonians, and an influx of traffic with construction.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of residents' demands and concerns.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Udu-gama

Dear ANC Commissioner:

We are writing concerning the construction of new apartments at the former Sweet Mango Café located across the street from the Petworth Metro Station at 3701 New Hampshire Avenue. We understand that on October 14th, ANC 4C will be voting on whether to give community support to developers Rooney Properties, LLC's request for variances for parking and lot coverage in the construction of the new apartment building.

To many residents like us, in our neighborhood and the District, Chuck Brown represents the music and the vitality that African-Americans have brought to the region for centuries. The mural painted by Charles Jean-Pierre and students of McFarland Middle School is a striking homage to not just Brown himself, but to working class people of the District of Columbia and metro region.

We realize that development must not exclude working class people and people of color and that Petworth and the surrounding areas have seen the negative impact that development has had on the fabric of these existing communities. We understand that often times, affordable housing is based on an Area Median Income that is wildly different from the average income of Black, Latino and poor families and unfairly excludes them from their right to housing.

We'd like you to condition your support of development of the Sweet Mango Café into apartments, and the developer's request for zoning variances, on the following requirements:

1. That the mural of Chuck Brown be replicated in its entirety, in the same or larger dimensions, on the exterior face of the building in a location that would be visible from New Hampshire Avenue or Georgia Avenue. The mural should be recreated by the artist and, if possible, local students, with monetary compensation for said recreation coming from the developers.
2. That the portion of units that are to be designated as affordable be allocated for residents who earn 30% or less of the Area Median Income.
3. That the developer hire at least 51% local residents, from Wards 1 and 4, to work on construction of the new building.
4. That national franchises be excluded from renting commercial and retail space in the new building, in order to promote local businesses and stimulate the local economy.

We expect that these commitments from the developer in exchange for zoning variances will be petitioned for in your letter of support and be committed to by the developer in writing.

We are grateful to your attention and your commitment to keeping our Petworth a diverse and vibrant area of Washington, DC. We look forward to working with you and maintaining an open dialogue. If you would like to discuss this prior to October 14th, please contact Jasper Jordan at jasperjordan@hotmail.com to arrange a meeting.

Submitted on 11/11/2015 by:

Nicholas Udu-gama

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