

From: **Kevin A. Montgomery** <kmont05@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Dec 8, 2015 at 9:13 PM
Subject: St. Thomas' Building Project
To: jevans@dccouncil.us
Cc: dcoz@dc.gov, Carol Coonrod <csoonrod@gmail.com>

Councilman Evans,

On Monday night this week, I was at the DCCA meeting to hear what you might have to say about the proposed variance for the building project at St. Thomas' Parish. The strength of your opposition was shocking, and your description of the design and the effort to get it passed as "ludicrous" was deeply hurtful. Unfortunately, I was unable to stay till the end, or else I would have spoken to you in person.

This parish has been my church home since 2008, almost the whole time I've lived in the DC area, and I love it with all my heart. However, the building we have now simply does not fit our current (and growing) needs. As someone who's been a Sunday school teacher, committee chair, and now a member of the vestry, I know first hand how limited we are in the space we have. One thing that has excited me about the project is the fact that we'll be able to provide more spaces not just for our own needs but also for the larger community. It excites me to think about the new possibilities the building would open up for engaging with outside groups that just aren't possible now.

I was also involved in some of the early stages of the design process as one of a group of "parish ambassadors" who met regularly to help discern the best way forward with a new building. Never have we intended this as some sort of money grab, despite what some in the neighborhood might say. Every step of the way, we have tried to listen to our neighbors and to work with them to deal with their concerns.

As I said above, it was deeply hurtful to hear you disparage this project so strongly and to imply that we don't care anything about the neighborhood. St. Thomas' has been there for over a century, and we hope to be there for at least another. This new building is essential to our being able to continue as an active presence in Dupont Circle.

Sincerely,
Kevin Montgomery