

Mr. Jack Evans
Council of the District of Columbia

Dear Councilmember Evans:

I am writing in response to reports from a neighborhood meeting in Dupont Circle yesterday that you spoke out in opposition to the zoning variance sought by St. Thomas' Parish through our partner in development, Cass Riegler, for our new church building. This letter is to ask you to reconsider.

St. Thomas' Parish has been serving the city of Washington, DC, and our local residential neighborhood since even before the fountain was built at Dupont Circle. Presidents have worshiped with us; Eleanor Roosevelt preached from our pulpit. As the demographics and culture of Dupont Circle have repeatedly shifted, St. Thomas' Parish has been a steady, constructive, and courageous presence that has remained as businesses and neighbors have come and gone over the years. St. Thomas' welcomed the urban pioneers of the 1970s and then responded heroically to support the growing LGBT community through some of its most difficult years. After our original structure was burned by arsonists, we built a park on its site that has welcomed the entire Dupont Circle neighborhood for more than a generation.

Our opportunity to rebuild after more than 40 years is an affirmation of our continued commitment to Dupont Circle and the larger city of Washington. But we are not creating a historical monument to the past. We are building a home to serve the currently changing demographics of Dupont Circle – young single Washingtonians of increasingly varied backgrounds, the influx of young couples with infants and children, retiring seniors attracted to urban living. And we are building to serve the future of the city that we love as you do.

Dupont Circle will remain a living neighborhood only insofar as we tend to its future, not just its past. We believe it is in the best interests of our neighborhood and our city for you to support the survival of an institution like St. Thomas' that has been and continues to be totally invested in the future of our city. A church like ours – progressive, creative, full of young professionals who themselves are investing in the future of Dupont Circle – is a great bet for those who are proud of where we've been, but even more optimistic about where we can go together.

We ask you to help us move this project to the finish line. Please support our request for a zoning variance to build on a few percentage points more of the total area of our lot. It's a small concession to make possible the completion of such an important project. Please help us.

Sincerely,

Wayne Whitson Floyd
Parish Administrator, St. Thomas' Parish