

Robert Bruce Sheavly, LICSW, DCSW

1700 17th Street, NW Apt. 205 Washington, DC 20009 Tel 202 252 4900 Bob@DCpsychotherapy.com

Board of Zoning Adjustment Government of the District of Columbia

Washington DC
Sunday, December 13, 2015

Dear Members of the Board:

RE: Case #19133, St. Thomas' Episcopal Parish

I am writing to urge that you grant the zoning variance for St. Thomas' Episcopal Parish.

I have been a resident of the District of Columbia since 1970 and a long time member of St. Thomas.

The requested variance is small--only 6.7%. *The historic church actually occupied a slightly greater percentage of the lot that which is being requested by the variance.* The church is therefore NOT now requesting anything new by way of the variance, merely needing to utilize the footprint of the prior church in fulfillment of ministry!

In your decision making, please consider the long history of service St. Thomas has made not just to its members but to the fabric of our city.

The examples of such service are beyond enumeration. I would like to highlight just one: At the height of the AIDS crisis, St. Thomas was at the forefront of providing psychosocial-spiritual support to those in need who were dying of AIDS and who were not served by established agencies. I personally remember men ostracized by their families because of the stigma associated with AIDS who would have died alone, no one at their side, had it not been for the ministry of St. Thomas' Parish. Moreover several of these men were NOT men of faith, NOR even members of the parish! They were served by the parish simply because it was the "right thing" to do.

The core issue is the proposed space is *essential* to the ongoing ministry of the parish. Churches are some of the most enduring of institutions to the fabric of the city which contribute to the quality of life not only to their members but to all citizens who are in need.

PLEASE do the "right thing" and consider the greater good when making your difficult decision.

Sincerely,



Robert Sheavly, LICSW, DCSW

Social Worker and Psychotherapist