

The Downtown Cluster of Congregations

1313 New York Avenue, N.W. ■ Washington, D.C. 20005 ■ (202) 347-7015 ■ Fax (202) 347- 4630

Dec. 15, 2015

Chairperson Marnique Heath & Members
DC Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

BZA Case #19133 - St Thomas Episcopal Church

Dear Chairperson Heath & Members,

I wish to express my strong support for the variance request that is before you.

As background, I am the Executive Director of the Downtown Cluster of Congregations, for over 30 years, of which St. Thomas Episcopal Church is a member. I and the Downtown Cluster of Congregations have long been advocates for an **inclusive, mixed use downtown - one that both accommodates and helps all members of the community to meet their goals and potential.**

I believe the case before you is in fact not a difficult one. The submission of the applicant is straightforward as to the validity and grounds for the request. The request is for a lot occupancy of **86.7% instead of 80%** As variance requests go, this is surely of a significantly less substantive nature than many variances that have been proposed to this Board and other land use bodies over the decades that I have followed such matters. When combined with the facts that the variance **helps achieve the historic integration of the project with its surrounding neighbors and the project's overall density will be significantly below the maximum**, the request seems to be even more than appropriate - indeed beneficial not just to the applicant but the community as a whole.

The proposed project is built for 2016 and beyond, yet pays so much respect to the church's roots dating back 120 years at this location through the historical contributing nature of the Church's Parish Hall. Yet given the modern realities of how building / worship uscs have changed - from access issues to technology, to modern engineering systems to mixed uses - some accommodation is reasonable to achieve goals of present day houses of worship. Houses of Worship today in many ways serve as 7 day a week community centers - helping to meet the spiritual needs of not just its members but the needs of the surrounding communities - locally, regionally, and nationally given this is the nation's capital city.

Let me say as someone who has worked with and visited this Church often in the past over 30 years - it embodies much of what member congregations have sought to do - be inclusive, meet **civil right goals**, offer aid to the needy, and yet be centers and sanctuaries of spiritual healing and worship. I have attended

2016 DEC 14 PM 2:46

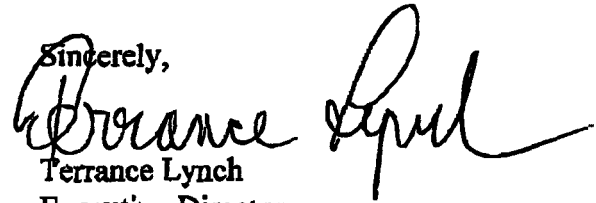
Board of Zoning Adjustment
CASE NO. 19133
Exhibit No. 22

ANC meetings at this Church, known their care of the homeless, and their outreach to those with HIV/AIDS and their participation to achieve fully equality for all.

This very modest variance request will allow the church to continue to be the inclusive model houses of worship in Washington DC seek to be - successfully serving its members and the broader community.

I urge your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terrance Lynch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Terrance Lynch
Executive Director