

Carol S. Coonrod
1621 T Street, NW, # 306
Washington, DC 20009

December 8, 2015

Dear Councilman Evans,

I am a parishioner at St. Thomas' Church at 1772 Church Street, here in Dupont Circle. I moved to Washington, DC 3 ½ years ago and searched for quite a while before I found my new church home.

I think it important that you know that there are many of us associated with the church who have anticipated the rebuilding our church after the tragic fire 40+ years ago. We are eager to have a fully-functioning building for our weekly services plus adequate space for a number of other faith groups and AA groups to meet. It is our privilege to provide meeting space for more than 100 people each week who are not members of our church.

We never imagined that after making our open space available to the neighborhood for some 40+ years as a dog-walking area and green space, that some of our neighbors would treat us with such ill-will and disrespect during the process of securing approvals for our new building.

Change is challenging for all of us, no matter the scope or size of it. I can appreciate neighbors' not wanting to lose "their" park area at Church Street and 18th, and I know that construction causes upheaval and is messy. Over the past years, the church has been through a series of discernment exercises to determine what church structure would meet our needs now and into the future. We've secured the approval of the HPRB and the ANC and now, as we approach the final step in the approvals process, the neighbors have suddenly taken issue with the 8.67% variance that we are requesting in the size of the building mass relative to the plot size.

We've made countless (and costly) changes to the basic design of the church building as well as the condominium in response to neighbor input.

As one of your constituents, I hope on further review that you will agree that this process has produced a good design that is in keeping with our neighborhood and meets the needs of the church.

Sincerely,

Carol S. Coonrod
Parishioner, St. Thomas' Church