

Adam Scott Graham
401 Warfield Drive
Landover, MD 20785

Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Board of Zoning Adjustments
441 4th Street NW Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

Chairpersons Heath and Hill, and Board of Zoning Adjustments:

I wish to express my support, and ask for your support, for the rebuilding of St. Thomas Parish (Episcopal) at 1772 Church Street, NW DC.

A home to Presidents, a trailblazer in civil and equal rights, a spiritual place of worship where people are called to be the face of God, was burned down in 1970 so that others might stand up. I'd like to point out, if I may, that the church continues to stand up for the community in which it serves by hosting events such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, financially supports and gives learning opportunities to High School Students regularly in worship, and is even home to a budding Korean Presbyterian Church. St Thomas' Parish in many ways has its doors open to the community. Indeed, St Thomas' has an active interest in the community; participating in the DC Pride Parade, and 17th Street Festival each year.

Neighbors of St. Thomas' Parish have completely overlooked what an anchor it has been for years. My heart cries out for them that only think of what the physical building would do to their line of sight and not of how vital the church has been to the community and those around us. An article was published by the "Neighbors of St Thomas" on their Facebook page. The article was very interesting in that it asked a very important question, "What happens to an aging church building when the community doesn't support it?" The answer is simple: The church can't keep up with building repair costs and it begins to crumble around them. Most churches in this state have simply decided to abandon their building and merge with another. What then does that mean to the community? That means vital free programming that saves lives (even if we take the spiritual nature of worship services out) such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, civil and equal rights involvement, support of our future generation, and the dedication to increasing the quality of life in that community is now dead. I'm proud to say that St. Thomas' has instead vowed to keep its doors open to the public and build a new building that can adequately house such organizations, and continue to serve the community of Dupont Circle. Time and time again, it has taken a servant-leadership approach, putting the community first.

It is now time after years of putting the community at the forefront of our hearts, minds, and actions, that we need the support of the community, Council Members, ANC2B, and BZA, so that St Thomas' Parish can continue to actively participate in the best interest for the community and its worship life in the Episcopal Church, USA. Yes, St. Thomas' Parish desires to sell land to a developer - its not a "get rich quick" scheme, its so that the church can build a house of worship, a house of community, a house of equal treatment for all, a house of health and wellness initiatives, a house dedicated to touching lives and loving all as examples of Christ our Lord. This has been the forefront of St. Thomas' Parish. Indeed, it needs to sell land to a developer, the condos need to rise, so that it can continue to actively serve the community.

Please, I ask for your support in rebuilding St. Thomas' Parish.

Adam Scott Graham
240.338.4755

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.19133
EXHIBIT NO.45