

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Mai-Trang Dang <choofly@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 7, 2018 4:27 PM
To: DCOZ - BZA Submissions (DCOZ)
Subject: Comments in opposition to BZA Case 19377: The Boundary Companies and The Missionary Society

Dear Board Members,

I write (again) to make the BZA aware about how the development proposed by The Boundary Companies and The Missionary will adversely affect my family's use of our home, our enjoyment of our neighborhood, and our daily commutes. For the reasons below, I oppose the plan and urge you to reject the current application.

a) Greatly increased pedestrian, bike, and vehicular traffic, as well as reduced storm water drainage area

The area immediately surrounding the proposed plan has increased in housing density at a rapid pace in the last few years. The recent construction and the opening of the school adjacent to the site has already strained the parking and traffic (including foot and bike traffic) problems. The immediate neighborhood streets are still struggling to absorb the existing housing density, in addition to the very busy pass-through traffic. During peak traffic hours, it can take quite a long time to exit the neighborhood, either onto Franklin or Monroe streets. The nearby charter school is not yet fully occupied, so traffic will worsen over the next few years as the roster fills up. The plan to construct 60 densely packed homes in the middle of an already very dense few blocks will make the traffic and noise worse and reduce our ability to enjoy our homes for years.

And although the plan does not currently provide for vehicular through-traffic on private Chancellor's Row streets, DDOT has indicated that it wants to connect 4th and 7th Streets through these streets by amending the existing easements. We oppose such use of our private streets, which were not designed for heavy traffic and that we maintain using private funding through the Chancellor's Row homeowners' association. I urge the BZA to prevent both developers and DDOT from connecting 4th and 7th streets and from increasing the easements currently in place.

Finally, as I noted in my previous letter in opposition, the storm water drainage system in this immediate neighborhood is already taxed beyond capacity. The storm drain on 4th street floods during heavy rains and more development and dense housing will inevitably lead to more strain on that system. I submit that we need more research, planning, and specific details on how the developer will address the decreased drainage brought on by the new homes before constructing them.

b) No protection and preservation of "Special Trees" pursuant to the "Tree Canopy Protection Amendment Act of 2016"

The plan also fails to require the long-term preservation of heritage trees. The protection of these trees is of great importance to the immediate neighborhood and to the city as a whole. They mitigate the heat island effect in the city, reducing energy use, improve air quality, reduce water pollution, and dampen the noise in the surrounding area. Most importantly, they add to the beauty of DC. Trees are among the most important monuments in DC; DC's greenery sets this city apart from the rest.

Barbara Deutsch's testimony directly contradicts what the developer has promised about how the construction will affect the heritage trees on the site. Given the significant amount of regrading and underground work included in the plan and practical experience with construction, the tree survival rate proffered by the applicant

is unrealistic. Tree root structures extend 2-3 times the size of a tree's crown, and the plan as shown does not limit construction enough to protect the existing trees. When questioned by the BZA members, the representative from Casey Trees admitted that they are not fully aware of the underground construction planned for the site. And Casey Trees itself [notes on its website](#) that construction is a major cause of mature tree decline and death. Because mature trees are precious and historical living monuments essential to DC, the BZA should require that the applicant structure the project to protect the long-term survival of 100% of the heritage trees and to protect more trees overall. Before the testimony of Casey trees can be relevant to the proposed plan, the applicant needs to provide Casey Trees with a full explanation of the significant regrading, utility line construction, and storm water management work that they intend to perform so that Casey Trees can provide a meaningful analysis. Pending that provision, Casey Trees's testimony should be set aside.

c) Developer's lack of cooperation with the surrounding community

As I emphasized in my earlier message to the BZA, the applicant has made little effort to cooperate with the surrounding neighbors, including (as we now know) the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. Most of the purported "meetings" that the developer stated it had with the community were one-sided presentations of the developer's slide shows. This lack of any discussion has resulted in a plan involving no input from the community, and therefore strongly opposed by it. The lack of community input is made abundantly clear by the letter recently submitted by the Conference of Catholic Bishops opposing the developer's plan to take down fencing adjacent to their property and further strain the storm water drainage system on 4th street.

I urge the BZA to reject the current proposal and require the developer to submit a new application containing plans that address the concerns of the neighborhood, Chancellor's Row and the surrounding Edgewood and Brookland neighbors. At the very least, the plans should be required to reduce grading and filling, study and resolve traffic and parking issues, study and resolve storm water drainage issues, and reduce the total number of housing units to 30 or below.

Regards,
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