

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Byron Caswell <byron.caswell@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 8, 2018 11:59 AM
To: DCOZ - BZA Submissions (DCOZ)
Subject: Comments in opposition to BZA Case 19377: The Boundary Companies and The Missionary Society

My name is Byron Caswell, and I live at 596 Regent PI NE, Washington DC 20017. I am writing to you today to urge the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) to reject the proposal from Boundary Company in BZA Case 19377: The Boundary Companies and The Missionary Society regarding the development of the Paulists' property in the Brookland / Edgewood districts. I'd like to highlight some macro-level factors that give me pause as a neighbor to the proposed development, and highlight how this current proposal will adversely impact the surrounding community and point out how these are all directly attributable to poor planning and poor processes on the behalf of the developers, and thus could be easily reconcilable with proper execution.

First, Boundary Co.'s engagement with the surrounding community has been abortive at best. The engagement with the adjacent community has been frustrating, marred by threats of legal action by the developer toward members of the surrounding community, and has had numerous false starts, retreats, and retractions. The Conference of Catholic Bishops (also adjacent to the site) mentioned to the CR community that the development team first contacted them last Friday. For a plan that requires tearing up the easement negotiated in good faith between the Conference of Catholic Bishops and Paulists as part of the 2008 Chancellors Row development planning, I fail to see how any claim that Boundary could make of effectively engaging with the community can hold water.

Second, impacts to the surrounding transportation infrastructure, wastewater infrastructure, and environment are poorly addressed in the proposed plan. I have concerns regarding the applicant's proposed abandonment of the current surface stormwater detention basin located in the northwestern corner of the Paulist property, to which a large portion of stormwater from Chancellor's Row as well as stormwater from the United Conference of Catholic Bishops (also adjacent to the Paulists property) is directed. During large and even moderate storm events, this basin is full to capacity under current conditions, with most of the proposed development area covered with trees and grass which allows for natural infiltration and low runoff rates. I am concerned that once this site is full developed there will be significantly more impervious coverage and no surface location to direct stormwater, forcing the developers to utilize underground stormwater chambers that are squeezed in under the primary circulator road for the site – which will provide the sole site access for not just the residential units but also the 700-800 students in the combined schools and the proposed Paulist building. The concern being that if anything happens to these underground chambers and repairs are needed they will need to dig them up, seriously impacting, if not completely blocking, the site traffic and potentially impinging on traffic to the adjacent United Conference of Catholic Bishops driveway during the repair process.

More importantly I am concerned about what will happen to Chancellor's Row's stormwater in the event of a failure and any related repairs of the Boundary home stormwater system, as it would compound the risky decision of the Zoning Commission ten years ago when approving Chancellor's Row to not force EYA to fully manage stormwater on their own property. In this case, our neighborhood would be left to the mercy of an adjacent property owner with which we have no influence to protect our property from flooding, and by approving this set of plans there will be no natural relief of the land itself to handle the runoff. I would also like to point out that the city just spent millions of dollars in fixing flooding issues in the communities to the south of us along Rhode Island and therefore it seems like poor planning to radically increase the amount of impervious surface and shoving the related stormwater underground in a contrived way, rather than addressing it on the surface and encouraging natural infiltration.

The multiple systemic issues highlighted during the hearing testimony along with the factors mentioned here should illustrate that there are significant weaknesses in the Boundary Company's proposal. I am not against development of this parcel, as I'd personally love new neighbors and to expand the vibrant Edgewood and Brookland communities. I ask

that the BZA reject this plan in its current incarnation and send that the back to the drawing board to figure out how to appropriately handle stormwater, transportation infrastructure, and markedly improve their community engagement.

Thank you,
Byron Caswell
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