

Comments in opposition to BZA Case 19377: The Boundary Companies and The Missionary Society

Dear Members of the Board:

I am writing in opposition to the proposed new townhome development (BZA Case 19377: The Boundary Companies and The Missionary Society). This proposed development is poorly conceived and would have lasting negative impacts on the surrounding Edgewood community.

In particular, the uncoordinated and piecemeal approach to repurposing the Paulist site has already caused significant conflict in the community, as evidenced by many of the comments submitted in response to this application. The Paulist Fathers, the developers and various DC agencies—including DDOT, Office of Planning and the DC Public Charter School Board—have been making decisions without proper planning or coordination. This has resulted in a dysfunctional process that is failing local residents, families at the two schools, and—if the application is granted by the BZA—the future residents of the proposed townhomes. As residents and taxpayers all of us deserve better—which is why I am urging the Board to reject the application.

Many of the problems highlighted in comments from Lee Montessori parents and Chancellor's Row residents were utterly predictable and were, in fact, raised repeatedly by local residents, including myself, when Boundary and leaders of the two charter schools first presented their joint plans to the local community. At the time, we were assured that any issues related to school traffic flow, parking, loss of green space, tree preservation, etc. would be adequately addressed. However, the record and testimony compiled by BZA in response to this application sadly and resoundingly speaks for itself and demonstrates that these past assurances were hollow. There is no reason to expect that the results going forward would be any different if the project were allowed to proceed.

The entangling easements between the Paulist Fathers, Chancellor's Row, Building Hope and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops are still poorly understood and the full, long-term impact on private property owners and other stakeholders remains unknown. The cumulative impact of these and other issues would leave the various stakeholders—the school communities, Chancellors Row, the future residents of the proposed townhomes and the greater Edgewood community—in a state of constant conflict over traffic and other issues. The project's many inherent conflicts are already severely undermining any sense of community, and allowing the development to proceed would further exacerbate these challenges, to the detriment of all those affected.

In additional, as other commenters have documented extensively, basic questions, including regarding storm water maintenance and tree preservation, have not been adequately addressed.

The entire proposal is conceptually flawed, has been poorly planned and executed to date, and major elements are still being cobbled together on the fly—creating a great likelihood of continued poor outcomes. For all these reasons the proposal should be rejected.

Sincerely,

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