

By email to: bzasubmissions@dc.gov
District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 200S
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Response of the St. Paul's College Neighbors for Thoughtful Development on Case 19377, The Boundary Companies and The Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle (the "Applicant") – Special Exception and Variance Application for 3015 4th Street N.E.

Dear Members of the Board:

St. Paul's College Neighbors for Thoughtful Development (the "Party") would like to express its deep appreciation for being given the opportunity to provide draft findings of fact to the BZA regarding the above referenced case. Unfortunately, due to lack of resources the Party was unable to develop our own findings of fact and recommended draft order. However, we did wish to share some general views with you as you consider the application during your meeting on July 11th. While we appreciate the efforts of the Applicant to address some of the numerous concerns raised throughout the public hearing process, which have the real potential to negatively impact adjacent property owners and affect the use and enjoyment of their homes if the variances are approved, the Party is of the opinion that a number of the issues (including, but not limited to, the project density, location and clustering of IZ units, building and construction setbacks to adjacent homes, and insufficient parking and traffic planning that will likely impact the Lee Montessori and Washington Leadership Academy charter schools and U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and in turn Chancellor's Row residents and the surrounding community), were either glossed over¹ or inadequately addressed by the Applicant during the hearing and in their post-hearing submissions. In short, the Party does not believe the Applicant has sufficiently addressed these issues either in their final plan design or in their draft findings and order and ask that you consider the full body of evidence in the record when rendering your decision and drafting the official BZA order.

¹ The notion that the 50' setback to the northern most row of Chancellor's Row homes, which are currently occupied, is adequate and not unlike any other proposed "in-fill" development is disingenuous at best. In reality when our community was developed construction occurred behind occupied rows, not in front of them. Further, while a 50' setback may be equal to a distance across a typical street, these homes are not separated from the development by a street, alley, or other right-of-way and earth work to accomplish the construction of the homes will be 10' or less from the front doors. In short we are unaware of any other development in the city where homeowners would be subjected to this level of construction right outside their front doors.

Additionally, while the schools are as-of-right and the Applicant claims there is adequate parking per the D.C. zoning code, real world evidence shows the parking lot is already full to capacity on most days and with the schools' expressed intent through their charters to double in size over the next 2-3 years we question this assertion that there will be adequate parking and have real concerns that if not addressed now through proper planning and design the proposed development will eliminate the ability to correct this issue in the future, and as a result both Chancellor's Row residents and the homeowners in the new development will be negatively impacted.

With respect to the building setback issue, in reviewing and considering the final plans and supporting materials prepared by the Applicant and submitted to the BZA on June 28th, and shared with the Party electronically on June 29th, one issue that was not addressed during the hearing process by the Applicant or flagged by Office of Planning staff is the fact that the proposed units located at the top of Regent Place, adjacent to the proposed gated entrance to the charter school property, are fronting on a private road that the proposed homes will not have right of access to or use of and we question what the material impact will have on Chancellor's Row, which is solely responsible for the cost of the maintenance, repair, and insurance for this road. We are unclear how the District of Columbia typically handles this type of situation (or if this is a unique precedential scenario) and do not understand how this would function in practice, and ask that the Board address this issue when rendering your decision.

Again we thank you for your service to the city and consideration of all the facts presented by the public when rendering your decision and for the opportunity to express our views throughout the process. Please let us know if you need any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Anderson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Anderson

Representative of St. Paul's College Neighbors for Thoughtful Development

Cc: Jeffery Utz, Esq.