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Government of the District of Columbia
Board of Zoning Adjustment
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Washington, DC 20001
202-727-6311

BZA Application No. 19450

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter to inform you of my strong opposition against allowing the construction of a homeless facility in the RA-1 Zone at premises 3320 Idaho Avenue NW (Square 1818, Lot 849). While I recognize the need for homeless shelters, it is unjust to make the residents of McLean Gardens bear the brunt for the rest of the city. I do not think this is the right location when the city has other locations that are better suited. As a property owner, landlord and taxpayer, I am extremely appalled at the lack of consideration being shown for my neighborhood's economy, quality of life and safety, which will be directly threatened by the development of this shelter.

It is a well-known fact that no one wants to live near a homeless shelter. The erection of this temporary shelter will undoubtedly result in a decline in property values for owners and loss of rental income for landlords. Studies have shown that affordable permanent housing is a much better alternative for a neighborhood's economy than temporary homeless shelters. Unlike a homeless facility, new, reasonably priced housing units would attract people who will pay taxes, send their kids to local schools, shop at local stores and, in general, stay in the neighborhood and strengthen its very foundation. The same money that is being used to build this homeless shelter could be utilized to build units of permanent low to middle income housing, which would maximize tax payer dollars and be a much better alternative to combatting our homeless problem.

The proposed temporary facility will negatively affect the viability of the Cleveland Park neighborhood and surrounding community. The neighborhood retailers certainly do not want to see this shelter built in our community. It does not help business to have homeless men and women loitering in front of stores, soliciting money and generally making people reluctant to enter nearby establishments. As I mentioned above, it makes much more sense to build housing that will be a magnet for new, permanent residents who will shop locally, thus fortifying the neighborhood's economy.

I have spoken to many of the neighborhood's business owners, local retailers and residents. We are all deeply concerned that this proposed development will threaten our community's quality of life. Let's be honest, due to mental illnesses and drug addictions, certain homeless are a threat to the public safety, especially if the shelter isn't properly supervised and these men and women are free to roam the streets. There are also several schools near the proposed 3320 Idaho Avenue location and any businessperson who is also a parent certainly would not want their children

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District of Columbia
CASE NO. 19450
EXHIBIT NO. 155

walking home past an institution that houses the mentally unstable. As for those homeless who can and are able to function as productive members of society let's move them into permanent housing instead of temporary shelters. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Mason

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