

Frederick Hill, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441-4th Street, NW, Suite 2105
Washington, DC 20001

February 20, 2017

Dear Chairman Hill,

I live at 3808 Woodley Rd NW in Ward 3 and write to you regarding my deep concerns for the pending zoning variance request for the Ward 3 Homeless Shelter on Idaho Avenue NW. (Case #19450)

The office of zoning and rules are in place to protect residents and the process for planning in the City. A special exception is needed to allow 185 residents plus staff on this site. In order to qualify for this exception, the city must consider whether a smaller shelter would meet the policy goals of the City and whether there are reasonable alternative sites. I urge you to **reduce the number of units from 50 to a number that would ensure no adverse effect on the neighborhood and adequate parking (studies show no more than 25 residents, roughly 7 units would achieve this) and require the architects to find more creative solutions to their current six-story design** (with roof mounted mechanical systems that bring the structure height to a seven story equivalent. There are better ways to accommodate the shelter requirements that do not involve a looming building with as many zoning variances. I also respectfully urge the City to conduct a bona fide search for alternate sites. The Idaho Ave. site was selected in a hasty fashion without any comparative analysis of other sites. It is now apparent that the Idaho site just does not work and we deserve to find out if there are other sites that would be better for the affected neighborhoods and the homeless.

Neighborhood zoning is in place to protect the amenities for residents as well, including the public schools. As you may know, the renovations for John Eaton Elementary School (located mere blocks from the proposed shelter) were pushed back to 2022 and will be the last school renovated in Ward 3 and yet is the only school in boundary for the up to 55 children we are now told will be at the shelter.

For a school that is already over capacity (**building capacity is 405 and we have a current enrollment of 483 students**), how are we (or any one school in any ward) to accommodate additional students on a rotating basis? This is not a good educational model for the students *or* teachers. Already, we at Eaton are using a multi-purpose room as both gymnasium and cafeteria; this impacts both Physical Education class time due to lunch schedules as well as instructional class time as even hallways are used as flexible break-out teaching spaces. There are not enough bathrooms for the Pre-K, Kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms and the bathrooms that are functional are not upgraded.

The proximity and excellence of Eaton to the Idaho Avenue proposed site will far outweigh the travel required for families to transport children to their home school. The data currently used stating that most children will attend their home school is based on the current DC General model with no higher performing school in the neighborhood and is flawed.

As Ward 3 resident and parent of 2 current John Eaton students, with one more entering PK in the Fall, I want to express my deep concerns about the planning process for the Shelter, the zoning variances requested and its impact on John Eaton Elementary school. The lack of transparency, speed of legislation and inaccurate facts about the school is deeply concerning. **I urge you to adhere to the zoning restrictions in place in order to guarantee the rights of the neighborhood citizens and not approve any variance requests proposed for the Ward 3 homeless shelter on Idaho Ave NW.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen E. Shepherd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K" and "S".

Karen E. Shepherd
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Washington, DC 20016
keshepherd@me.com

Cc: Nancy MacWood (Chair, ANC3c)
ANC 3c members: all@anc3c.org