

Re: Case # 19450

**STATEMENT IN OPPOSITION TO PETITION
FOR VARIANCE[S] AND SPECIAL EXCEPTION[S]**

My name is Michael Dickman. I own and reside at Apartment D-508 at 3541 39th Street N.W., Washington, DC 20016, within 200 feet from the property for which the applicant seeks {a} variance{s} and [a] special exception{s} in this case.

I have attended every public meeting at Washington Hebrew, St. Columba and the District 2 Station concerning the shelter proposed to be located at that Station beginning with the May 2016 meeting the Thursday evening before Memorial Day through the February 21, 2017 meeting.

I **oppose** the Application in the subject case for {a} variance{s} and [a] special exception{s} for the reasons set forth below.

I
**THE APPLICANT HAS DEMONSTRATED NO REASON FOR
LOCATING THE SHELTER AT THE DISTRICT 2 STATION**

The reason District of Columbia (the District) officials gave at the May, 2016 meeting was that the District 2 location was owned by the City and locating the shelter there was the most economical option.

Information adduced at the February 22, 2017 meeting, however, disclosed that the estimated cost of the shelter at District 2 is 30 million dollars or \$600,000.00 per dormitory style unit without kitchens or private bathrooms. As the District could have and still may be able to purchase the **shovel ready** site at Edmonds Street N W for less than four million dollars, the cost savings claim has proved to be without substance.

As the cost advantage of the District 2 site disappeared, the District's rationale for locating the shelter at District 2 became "It's the Law."

At the February 21st meeting, a District staff member said that an exhaustive search had been made for appropriate sites and the District 2 station was the winner. When a local resident inquired as to the existence of a written record of such a search, the District's representatives fell back on "It's the law." In short, the District's reason for locating the shelter at District 2 is "... because we say so."

II

LOCATING THE SHELTER AT DISTRICT 2 WOULD REQUIRE MOTHERS TO SPEND TOO MUCH TIME TAKING CHILDREN TO AND FROM SCHOOL.

The residents of the shelter are expected to be mothers with small children. To counter the argument that children from the shelter would numerically overwhelm the already overcrowded John Eaton School, Council Member Cheh has stated that experience dictates that mothers will opt to have their children remain at the schools they attended before entering the shelter.

The District's program for shelter residents will provide all sorts of life training instruction. If the mothers have to spend a good part of the day going across town taking their children to and from school, they will not have time to work jobs and take the classes integral to the shelter program. The lack of a nearby Metro station will increase the residents' travel time and expose the children to the elements as they wait for buses.

Supporters of the District 2 location for the shelter have cited the numerous Wisconsin Avenue bus routes in support of locating the shelter there. Since Metro buses will be used to take the children to and from school and the mothers to and from jobs, the benefits of these routes to the residents are more illusory than real.

The residents are unlikely to use the northbound buses to Chevy Chase. The 37 bus will be out of service long before the shelter is built. The 31 bus as do all the south bound buses goes through Georgetown, not a likely destination for the residents, and winds up in Foggy Bottom also not a likely destination. Similarly, the 33 Bus passes through the Washington of Class A office buildings and winds up at the Federal Triangle, other unlikely destinations.

The 30 S and 30 N routes will take the mothers to likely locations of the children's former schools, but only after a very long ride through the heaviest traffic in the City.

In sum, the Wisconsin Avenue bus lines provide slight if any advantage to locating the shelter at D2

III

THE EFFECT OF THE SHELTER ON POLICE COMMUNICATIONS IS NOT KNOWN.

It is unknown (to the public at least) what effect, if any, a six story shelter will have on radio communications to the District 2 station from police cars south of the

station. Any interference with such radio traffic, however, will drastically affect public safety.

IV

THE DISTRICT HAS REFUSED TO PROVIDED INFORMATION AS TO WHAT RESIDENCES WILL HAVE THEIR VIEWS OF THE CATHEDRAL BLOCKED BY THE SHELTER

Many apartments at McLean gardens enjoy views of the National Cathedral. Mr. McNamara, the District's architect for the proposed shelter twice agreed to my request to provide information as to what apartments, if any, would have their views of the Cathedral blocked by the shelter. The District's attorney in this case, however, has indicated that such information will not be forthcoming and none has been.

Residents of McLean Gardens cannot complain about the loss of their magnificent views because they lack the ability to chart any such blockage, a facility at the District's disposal. So much for the District's claimed cooperation with the residents.

V

THE HELICOPTER PAD ON THE ROOF OF THE POLICE STATION WILL BE RENDERED LARGELY USELESS BY THE SHELTER

There is a helicopter pad on District 2's roof. At the north end of the roof are communications antennas.

To obtain lift at takeoff, helicopters move forward into the wind. They cannot, of course, move forward toward the antennas. As much of Washington's weather comes from the south, a six story building directly south of District 2 may make the pad unusable for takeoff. It is uncertain when if ever the pad will be needed, but if it is needed, that need will be critical. If District planners thought otherwise, there would be no pad on District 2's roof.

VI

LOCAL RESIDENTS' OPPORTUNITIES FOR GARDENING AND TENNIS WILL BE DIMINISHED BY THE PROPOSED SHELTER

Some months ago, I learned that a place or places on the waiting list for plots in the Newark Street Community Garden were available. I seized the opportunity to get on the list, but learned last week that some of the plots will be unavailable for gardening

during construction of the shelter. As a result of the District's plans for the Garden, my chances of ever having a Garden plot may be back at square one.

Also, I learned of the charms of Mclean Gardens when I had a tennis ladder match many years ago at the Newark Street courts. I have been looking forward to playing there this Spring, but it appears that the District has other plans for the courts during the construction of the shelter.

The District's plans for the garden and the tennis courts will reduce amenities my neighbors and I have come to anticipate and enjoy.

VII
REQUEST TO THE BOARD

I respectfully request the Board to view with favor my above concerns



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