

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: John Wilmeth <jwonward@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, February 06, 2017 10:21 PM
To: Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ); Cevasco, Jenna (EOM)
Subject: Please deny the Zoning Exception for the Idaho Avenue shelter

Dear Zoning Commissioners,

My name is John Wilmeth. I have lived in McLean Gardens for 21 years and in the District for 40 years. I truly appreciate our wonderful community and am thankful for the opportunity to live here.

I am writing to ask you DENY the zoning exception that the city is seeking to build a homeless shelter on the site of the Idaho Avenue police station. While I am not opposed to homeless shelters in Ward 3, granting this exception would be detrimental to the interests of the surrounding neighborhood, the 2nd District police, and the homeless themselves. The proposed shelter is simply too large with too many people in a bad location. It is important to remember that this is not a short-term building; it would be in the neighborhood for decades.

The problems with the proposed structure have been well documented.

- * The structure is about twice as high as permitted by current zoning (despite the architect's picture showing trees taller than the 6-story building.)
- * The structure will house 40 times as the number of permitted residents which among other problems will make the existing parking shortage worse.
- * The structure will make existing traffic congestion worse especially considering the pending housing and retail stores that will be located at 3900 Wisconsin Avenue and the upcoming expansion of the Sidwell Friends schools.
- * The number of potential additional students in the structure will add to the current overcrowding at John Eaton. It is interesting that the city is asking for a massive zoning exception for the building, but refuses to waive a rule that would allow the shelter residents to attend different neighborhood elementary schools.

It is undisputed that the Idaho Avenue site was selected by Phil Mendelson with Mary Cheh's consent without community input or feedback and without consideration of alternative sites in Ward 3. These actions and the subsequent refusal of Mendelson to discuss the shelter at a public meeting over the last 7 months speaks volumes. It is telling that there were 2 or 3 ANC meetings on the Newark Street Dog Park, which has minimal impact on the community, and none on the proposed shelter until after the city presented their "final" plan.

With the dismissive attitude of the city and the Council members towards the issues raised by the community, why would anyone expect that the inevitable problems caused by the shelter to be resolved? City officials can talk all they want about their new regulations, but I have friends who live near DC General and have walked to soccer games at nearby RFK Stadium, and to this day, the city has not resolved problems with the surrounding community.

In summary, the proposed shelter was poorly planned by the city without resident feedback and greatly exceeds zoning standards for the area. For the sake of our wonderful community, please reject this massive zoning variance.

Finally, if letters have an impact, I hope you will give greater weight to residents live nearby like I do.

Thank you.

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