

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Elbert Ventura <elbertventura@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2017 8:56 PM
To: Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ); Cevasco, Jenna (EOM); ATD DCOZ
Subject: BZA Application No. 19450

Dear Board of Zoning Adjustment,

I am a resident of McLean Gardens, and I am writing to express my disapproval of the plan to construct a new homeless shelter at the police station on Idaho Avenue.

When the plans for the shelter were first announced, I was initially supportive, even enthusiastic. The plan to shut down DC General and distribute the temporary homeless population across the different wards seemed to me a sound one, and the plans that were at the time floated for the shelter in our district seemed sustainable and well thought out.

Even after it was announced that the building that was being constructed would be much taller, and the population to be housed much bigger, than initially reported, I was still cautiously supportive. I was a little taken aback by the fact that the number of families to be housed increased substantially, and was concerned by what seemed to me inadequate responses to community questions about how it might affect John Eaton Elementary School. Nonetheless, I continued to support the project, with some misgivings.

However, in light of the 11th-hour changes to the plans that have recently been revealed, I have come to the conclusion that the homeless shelter project has not been thought through enough. The recent changes announced -- adding a new level to the garage, higher costs, demolishing the tennis courts and part of the garden, creating a driveway right by the playground my kids go to -- have dimmed my confidence in the project. Moreover, the fact that the city has seemed completely unresponsive to legitimate community concerns have only underscored the sense that the city is acting in an undemocratic fashion -- and has helped turn this supporter into an opponent of the shelter project.

I urge the city to reconsider this project. There is a strong whiff of bait and switch here -- I was led to believe that the homeless shelter project would be one thing, but now it is quite another. **I supported the homeless shelter plans as initially presented to the community. In its current form -- and in light of the city's inept handling of the planning stages -- I am now an opponent of this project.**

Sincerely,
Elbert Ventura
3541 39th Street NW, #A505