

## Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

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**From:** Steven Sampath <scsampath@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 12, 2017 8:52 PM  
**To:** Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)  
**Cc:** Cevasco, Jenna (EOM); ATD DCOZ; all@anc3c.org  
**Subject:** Requesting that BZA Application No. 19450 be denied

As resident owners living two blocks away from the 2D police station, in McLean Gardens, we are requesting that BZA Application No. 19450 for 3320 Idaho Avenue, NW, be denied. Last spring, we were as shocked as many of our neighbors by the total surprise, and complete lack of formal advance notice or consultation with our community on the Idaho Avenue 2D MPD station site proposal for a 38- (and now 50-unit) Ward 3 short stay shelter. Like most, we learned of the final decision just a few days prior to the council vote approving this site, and have felt that the absence of consultations including detailed, evidence-based cost and impact studies on the site, in comparison with multiple candidate locations prior to the site decision, alone, warrants a pause and rethink on this process moving forward.

The city's own Department of General Services (DGS) had previously determined the Idaho Ave. site unsuitable due to the co-location of the proposed development with the 2D station. This fact should have warranted very detailed impact and cost studies. Since the site decision was made, however, not only has the size of the planned development been increased (from 38 to 50 units), but also, very late (just the past weeks) last minute additions to the plan now add millions more dollars to the overall cost, and would destroy the popular tennis courts and much of the community gardens for a minimum of 18 months during construction.

We oppose approval of variances and exceptions to allow the project to proceed, because the overall intent of the existing RA-1 zone is being stretched too far. Shoe horning this high rise development into a parking lot entrance of a police station, and then requiring a massive, compensatory multi-deck parking garage to replace the lost parking at the police station, creates a cascade of new complications and costs. Thus, it is high time to reevaluate this site and compare it rigorously to other options. Additionally, the most recent last minute additions, in our view, warrant a delay in any BZA decision, in order to allow further comment by those city residents newly affected by the loss of the community gardens and tennis courts, who may have been unaware or unconcerned with the proposed development prior to those additions.

While this debate has, in our view very superficially, been framed by some as a simple NIMBY vs YIMBY battle, the central question moving forward needs to be one of selecting the best possible site rather than racing to meet an artificial deadline. Rigorous analysis, transparency and accountability must all be provided before major decisions and site selections are made. This is needed before, not after, an expensive, permanent fixture to a neighborhood is rushed through, because once a structure is built and millions spent, it is too late. Failures in accountability and planning were what contributed to the deterioration of DC General into what is now widely acknowledged to be a failure, and we simply can't afford to make the same mistakes again. Consideration of other sites, as well as thinking in terms of multiple, smaller sites throughout each Ward-- say, one in each ANC, should also be considered as alternative solutions that would provide the most humane departure from the institutional style of DC General.

Absent detailed, objectively critiqued studies and comparative analysis of multiple sites, based on suitability and costs, and proper consultations with the closest affected residents prior to approving ground to be broken, a project of this scale and expense should not be allowed to proceed.

Regards,  
Steven Sampath and Ying Fu, Rodman St. NW, McLean Gardens

Board of Zoning Adjustment  
District of Columbia  
CASE NO. 19450  
EXHIBIT NO. 86

