

February 27, 2017

Mr. Frederick Hill, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th St NW, Suite 210S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: BZA Application No. 19452

Dear Mr. Hill,

I am a resident of Ward 5, ANC SMD 5B03. I am directly affected by the proposed shelter at 1700 Rhode Island Ave.

In spite of the fact that there was NO input from our community on this proposal, the city seems to have hired an architectural firm and drawn up a plan for a shelter, which violates virtually all of our zoning laws.

I have attended numerous meetings where the architecture firm has presented their proposal. At each one, they repeatedly call the site "problematic". I agree. They callously refused to listen to any suggestions or objections to their design. They were very smug about their presumption that they would automatically receive a "pass" on any zoning variances they might request.

Our ANC representative for 5B03 held a meeting the night before submitting his proposal to the full ANC 5B meeting for a vote. The overwhelming response at this meeting was a strong, firm NO to any of the zoning variances being proposed. At least 90% of the people there were adamantly opposed. It was a packed room.

The following night, on 2/22/2017, ANC Makembe submitted each zoning variance individually to the full 5B board. (He had a zoning lawyer with him who clearly was coaching him on how to work the system.) The Chairperson took a vote of those in attendance from 5B03 - for or against the proposals. Only one person voted for them. Every other resident voted against them.

The ANC 5B was adamantly opposed to all of these zoning variances. It was the first time in a very long time that I felt democracy was working.

The existing building on the site is eligible for historic designation. It was the first police station in the area. It is quite beautiful. I would like to see it remain intact and find a useful purpose in our Rhode Island Avenue Great Main Street program.

I live across the street from a new, well touted "affordable housing for seniors" apartment building (2 blocks from the proposed shelter). It houses 25 seniors. When the building opened, 11 homeless people became residents. The City did not inform the community that in fact 1/2 of the building would be dedicated to the homeless population.

When our community first learned of the proposed shelter at 1700 RI Ave., it was proposed as possibly housing 25 families. With each successive meeting I attended that number grew and grew until it is now proposed to house 46 families. The architecture firm said that that was the most that they could squeeze into the space.

The scale of the proposed shelter at 1700 RI Ave. is completely disproportionate with the surrounding neighborhood. None of us signed up for this.

No loading dock, not enough area for children to play, no parking, no offset from other properties. 69 plus feet tall? It's ridiculous at first glance and atrocious that it's even being proffered.

I oppose the application, and I oppose any variances.

I fully support the opposition in this application, and I ask that you consider my opposition in any future application that does not preserve this building within existing zoning requirements and within the Comprehensive Plan the city promised us they would follow (and require others to follow).

Thank you for your consideration and mindful attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Theresa E. Perkins

Home Address: 1514 Girard St., NE
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