

## Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

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**From:** Randy Keesler <RKeesler@uscceb.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 28, 2017 3:03 PM  
**To:** DCOZ - BZA Submissions (DCOZ)  
**Subject:** Re: BZA Application No. 19452

Attn: Frederick Hill, Chairman  
Board of Zoning Adjustment  
441 4th St NW, Suite 210S  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: BZA Application No. 19452

Dear Chairperson Hill,

I reside at 1527 Otis Street NE and have so for the past 22 years. I am writing this letter to offer my full support for the proposed family shelter at 1700 Rhode Island Avenue, N.E I have been appalled at the loss of affordable housing in the District of Columbia over the past decade during which we have lost over 50% of our affordable housing stock in our city. It should not come as a surprise then that this has resulted in an increase in the homeless population. I applaud the Mayor's efforts to develop scatted site homeless shelters in all of the DC's Wards and in particular support the effort in WARD 5. I understand that the District seeks to construct a six-story shelter as an addition to the existing building that was previously a police substation and that as a result the District will have to obtain relief from the BZA for building height, FAR, lot occupancy, rear yard, court width, loading, and parking. The District has done a positive job of providing information, holding community meetings, and explaining the process needed to operate an emergency shelter at this location. The Ward 5 shelter must be able to accommodate 46 units for homeless families,. I have heard that some Brooklanders are concerned with the height and parking, but I believe the project is in harmony with its surroundings, and I do not believe this project will tend to adversely affect the neighboring properties. Without the proposed shelter at Ward 5, which supports a needed public objective, the District will not be able to meet its goal of closing D.C. General, and we will continue to lack housing for our homeless population. This so called shelter for the homeless will when built be indistinguishable as a "shelter". In fact it should not be called one. It is affordable housing and those who reside there, once in their units, will no longer be homeless. This building has the added advantage of being accessible to transportation. This is a crucial asset for those seeking to rebuild their lives and as a way of accessing job, training and educational opportunities. This is the right spot for this building to house – previously homeless people.

Board of Zoning Adjustment  
District of Columbia  
CASE NO.19452  
EXHIBIT NO.125

Sincerely, Warren R, Keesler

The long and short of it is the homeless shelter being proposed to be located in Ward 5 on Rhode Island Ave is running into some headwinds. The process leading up to the first shelter was not transparent and Mayor Bowser has caught heat for trying to push these shelters through. The reality this new location is on Rhode Island Ave because of height ( 6 stories) and because various people think WARD 5 is a dumping ground for shelters. The reality is this is NOT a shelter but a transitional housing alternative. Basically an apartment building. It just so happens that homeless women will live there. I might add they will no longer be homeless once housed in this brand new building. It is close to public transportation – Metro and buses – both challenges for the homeless. In a city which has allowed 50% of its low income housing stock to be lost in the past decade perhaps giving the homeless some priority justifies bending the rules in their favor.