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February 28, 2017

APPLICATION No. 19450 - My opposition to the requested variances and special exception requests by DGS for the family homeless center on Idaho Street.

To the Attention of the Board of Zoning Adjustment:

I have been living in McLean Gardens since 1996 and have heavily invested my lifesavings in this beautiful area because of its safety, green gardens and richness in community amenities such as the Newark Street Community Gardens where I have been tending to my assigned plot for many years. I am an avid tennis player and enjoy going to the dog park, which took years to have it approved and developed. I enjoy the company of small children at play in the recently restored adjacent playground, which cost over a million dollars.

I own property within the 200 feet radius so I received the BZA letter of January 5, 2017 re. the BZA Application No. 19450. Hence, I respectfully believe that my Statement should carry **greater weight** than the myriad of so called support letters the BZA has been receiving from non vested residents that are located far beyond this radius and have been pushing the homeless shelter outside their area disguising themselves as against 'NIMBY' (not in my back yard), when they are, in fact, the ones who are at any cost promoting this development away from their homes even at the unconscionable taxpayer cost many times over the original plans and a very poorly designed construction that ignores the basic necessities for a family to live in a safe and dignified way, such as the lack of private bathrooms for families with children and no kitchen and the constant presence of 24/7 police operations.

I oppose the construction of this emergency homeless shelter at the Idaho Avenue location because:

- 1) Smaller locations at a fraction of cost can be refurbished for this purpose (another site was originally identified for \$2.5 million vs. the now proposed \$18.7 million);
- 2) The police does not need to be disrupted by having to move its cars to other locations during construction over 8-18 months;
- 3) The Department of Human Services should not interfere with the parking belonging to the police nor its building. In fact, the Police Station is so old that priority should be given to rebuilding an entirely new police station to address its over stretched capacity to serve the security needs of Washington DC which have dramatically changed in the last 50 years. Having a second city building in the same zone will stifle the renovation or expansion of the police station in the future.
- 4) The Newark Street Community Garden and tennis courts are what make McLean Gardens its image. Defacing and removing even part of it to accommodate police cars that should not be moved in the first place from their original parking lot will completely destroy the

landscape of this part of the city and go against the very reason why people have invested in living in this area.

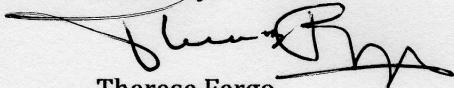
- 5) Destroying the community gardens, displacing gardeners and other community beneficiaries, polluting this area with a huge construction footprint that will also impact the safety of gardeners, dog owners and walkers, animals (including the safe passage of wildlife), small children because of construction machinery and police cars, is unacceptable. It is also unacceptable that about \$2 million will be thrown away to do so when these funds could be used for affordable housing in far safer and more environmentally friendly locations.

The City has repeatedly steamrolled its plans, ignoring deadlines and deciding at will what to do by only cosmetically engaging with the community. At each community engagement, the City-hired architectural firm was repeatedly challenged with questions about drawings being inconsistent with the actual property, deceptive tactics such as by showing that the building's height would not be an issue since it will be on a slanted hill. Furthermore, to date, there have only been half hazard studies about traffic impact, where traffic was never addressed and parking assessment was done based on one day observations only, very poorly presented environmental impact with no study about rat infestations, further deforestation of the already depleted trees from Idaho Avenue, drainage and water based issues.

I urge the BZA to place great weight on the letters and statements of the residents living within the 200 feet radius and not on those who are conveniently disguising their compassion because they do not want to have anything to do with homeless people in their own backyard.

I also want to state that as a humanitarian for over two decades of my professional career, I am extremely sensitive in addressing how to reduce homelessness. This construction is ill located and very poorly planned. It exceeds all boundaries and depletes taxpayer money where it could be put to far better use for long term affordable housing.

Sincerely,



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