



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 5B
1920 Irving Street NE, Washington, DC 20018
Website: anc5B.org

OFFICERS

February 28, 2017

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DC Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Members of the Board of Zoning Adjustment:

As a resident of ANC 5B, I do not support the proposed emergency family shelter at 1700 Rhode Island Avenue, NE. While I support the goal of the city of Washington, DC to provide housing for the homeless and, more specifically, of placing 50 homeless families in Ward 5, I oppose the current shelter design plans for 1700 Rhode Island Avenue NE, and, therefore, the BZA Application No. 19452.

COMMISSIONERS

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5B03 Henri Madembe
5B04 Rayseen Woodland
5B05 John J. Feeley, Jr.

The former Metropolitan Police Department Youth Division station at 1700 Rhode Island Avenue, NE, is too small for the proposed 50 family unit facility. Consequently, the proposed, multi-family emergency shelter requires major additions to accommodate 50 families. The current plans require that the existing building be landmarked and incorporated into a much larger structure. This will require an addition at least twice as large as the current building. This leads me to conclude that the proposed site is inappropriate. The historically significant building at 1700 Rhode Island Avenue, NE was not designed as a residence or a dormitory. Its conversion into a large, multi-family living complex requires an inordinate amount of additional building and reconstruction. The proposed project needs either a larger, city-owned, landmarkable building or an unoccupied, city-owned site in an R-5 zoned neighborhood.

Another consideration which alarms us is the necessity of a long list of variances which would make this site suitable for the current project. The proposed shelter requires the following variances from the existing zoning code:

- Variance for height and floor area ratio

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Variance for lot occupancy

- Variance for increased parking
- Variance for lack of a loading facility
- Up zoning from R-2 to R-5

Both the city and development community have approached Brookland over the last decade as a residential neighborhood in need of up-zoning. If what makes it desirable as a place for families is its residential nature, characterized by detached, single family homes, the zoning which preserves those residential characteristics should be guarded. Yet another project which requires up-zoning threatens the current residential character of Brookland. Either a smaller shelter or one built on a different site, in an R-5 zoned area, would be more appropriate.

We have received 238 signatures by Ward 5 residents concerning this project, in opposition to this application for zoning relief. The petition in opposition to this project, signed by over 200 residents lived in the Commission area of 5B.

Therefore, I recommend that the Board of Zoning Adjustment deny BZA Application No. 19452, 1700 Rhode Island Avenue, NE.

Yours truly,

Yours truly,

Ursula Higgins, 5B02
Chair, 5B

Gayle Hall Carley, 5B01
Vice Chair, 5B