

June 14, 2006

Carol J. Mitten, Chairman
DC Office of Zoning
One Judiciary Square
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 2105
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Chairman Mitten:

This is to inform you that Janet Lynn (Jaynie) Simmons was duly empowered by a unanimous vote of the Tilden Court Condominium Unit Owners Association Board of Directors at the board meeting on June 13, 2006 to represent the association at the DC Zoning Commission hearing scheduled for June 22, 2006 (and any other dates that the hearing might be continued) concerning Case 05-26.

This hearing specifically deals with the proposal by Clark Realty Capital to build a six story, forty-nine condominium building on the vacant lot at 2950 Tilden Street, NW.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Shimmons
President
Tilden Court Condominium Unit Owners Association

ZONING COMMISSION
CASE No. 05-26
ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
EXHIBIT No. 135
CASE NO. 05-26
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THE NORTHWEST CURRENT

ANC votes to support Babe's plan

By ARI NATTER
Current Staff Writer

The American University Park, Friendship Heights and Tenleytown advisory neighborhood commission voted unanimously last night to support scaled-back construction plans for a proposed 42-unit condominium building on the site of Babe's Billiards on Wisconsin Avenue.

Commissioner Chapman Todd noted the approval came only after extensive meetings and negotiations between the developer and neighbors of the site who had initially opposed the building's size and scope.

"We felt that given the amount of work that had gone into the working with the community on this, it's as good a fit as is going to be for that space," Todd said in an interview after the meeting.

Initial plans for the project at 4600 Wisconsin Ave. by JBG Partners LLC called for a building 40 percent larger than the plan developers presented to the community at a Sept. 9 meeting.

Current plans for the building call for a planned-unit development five stories and 65 feet high, which could be built under current zoning. A previous point of contention had been a plan to request a change in the site's zoning.

See **Babe's**/Page 14

CHIPPING AWAY



Bill Petros/The Current
Eight-year-old Noah Rowe uses a hammer and chisel to practice his stone sculpting during Saturday's annual fall open house at the Washington National Cathedral.

Tilden Street project brings early concern

By ELIZABETH WIENER
Current Staff Writer

Clark Realty Capital's plan to develop a shallow lot on Tilden Street just east of Connecticut Avenue is causing some jitters among neighbors who remember their losing battle against a nine-story apartment building Clark built four years ago on an adjacent lot, just to the south and overlooking Rock Creek Park.

Clark officials say they are still "exploring development options" for the Tilden Street site. Current plans include "a kind of boutique-

type" residential development, in three modules at ground level and an undetermined number of floors above, said project manager Nicole Forrest.

"We're very open to discussion," Forrest said. "We obviously don't want to build something the community doesn't want. If the community is set against anything that's economically feasible," Clark might put the lot up for sale, she said.

Advisory neighborhood commissioner Stephen Dennis will host a meeting at 7:30 p.m. See **Clark**/Page 31

Aqueduct hears earful on monofill proposal

By ELIZABETH WIENER
Current Staff Writer

Washington Aqueduct officials announced late last night that creating an 80-foot mound of sediment near the Dalecarlia Wastewater Treatment Plant will not be the "preferred alternative" for disposing of solids from their water treatment process.

They also agreed to extend until Nov. 15 the deadline for the public to suggest other options.

But neither announcement, made at a crowded meeting at Sibley

Memorial Hospital, satisfied critics who are angry about the choice of options, the lack of notice to affected residents and the federal requirement to remove "residuals" that collect when the area's water is treated.

At the noisy meeting, more than a hundred residents from Palisades and Spring Valley, as well as Westmoreland Hills and Brookmont in Montgomery County, seemed unhappy about virtually every aspect of the federally mandated project to keep water treatment solids out of the Potomac River.

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District sticks with baseball in new plan

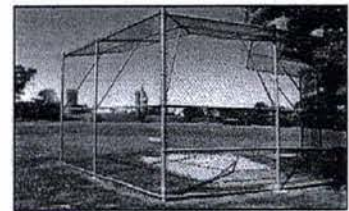
By CHRIS KAIN
Current Staff Writer

The D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation has unveiled a revised plan for playing fields in Fort Reno Park, adjusting the layout to assure a pathway at the northern edge of the overlapping baseball and soccer fields.

The department presented the plans last week to the Tenleytown, North Cleveland Park and Forest Hills advisory neighborhood commission, which had asked in June for a new layout that would replace the proposed 90-foot baseball diamond with a 60-foot softball diamond.

Instead, the new plan — presented in conceptual form at the commission's Sept. 20 meeting — trims 15 feet from the outfield, resulting in a 310-foot depth. The soccer field, located on a diagonal just beyond the baseball infield, would be 180 feet wide and 300 feet long.

The design leaves a 15-foot gap adjacent to a fence separating the field area from the Fort Reno reservoir. The commission had called for the clear-



Bill Petros/The Current

Supporters hope to replace Fort Reno Park's deteriorated fields with new, regulation spaces.

ance to accommodate a planned heritage trail celebrating the area's history as a Civil War military installation.

The proposal still includes a youth soccer field to the north. Architects shifted its location southward, avoiding the need for a retaining wall along

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TOUR

From Page 5

commission. "I'm certainly in favor of research that helps prevent cancer. I understand the importance of it."

Gates did express concern that the Northwest area has increasingly become the choice of the Metropolitan Police Department for these types of large events. She said the department's Special Operations Division, which permits the use of city streets for the events, has cited the threat of terrorism as a reason for moving them away from city landmarks when

possible.

Georgetown's advisory neighborhood commission chair Tom Birch said, "We are comfortable with the route they have chosen." Fellow commissioner Bill Starrels agreed, adding that the route will not have a major impact on Georgetown.

The Palisades-Spring Valley commissioners will discuss the bike ride during their Oct. 6 meeting.

Last year, the Tour of Hope raised \$1.3 million for cancer research, a particularly personal issue for Armstrong, who recovered from advanced testicular cancer and went on to win a record six-straight Tour de France titles.

The Tour of Hope team — those riding from coast to coast — is comprised of 20 individuals who have been touched by cancer, according to organizers. They include survivors, family members, caregivers and researchers.

"The inspirational stories of our incredibly determined tour team members will undoubtedly motivate people across the country," Peter Dolan, Bristol-Myers Squibb's chief executive officer and chairman, said in a statement.

Registration to join the Tour of Hope on its Washington segment can be completed through Oct. 1 on the event's Web site. About 900 people have signed up so far.

WATERGATE

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Meanwhile, an official with Monument Realty said the company completed the purchase of the hotel in August and is moving forward with alterations to convert it to luxury cooperative apartments.

Asheel Shah, of Monument, said he is already consulting with city preservation staffers on several "minor" alterations to the exterior of the hotel: canopies; new windows "for the entire complex, replaced in kind"; a few new ground-level and roof terraces to serve individual units; and "some minor pop-ups for access" to the roof terraces.

"Even though it's not a landmark, you're treating it as one," commented Boasberg. "That's wise."

The thick and amply illustrated landmark application was submitted in February in the midst of a battle over Monument's plan to buy the tony hotel and convert it to either condominium units or a cooperative building. Residents who prized the hotel, with its meeting spaces, health club and restaurant, failed to persuade the D.C. Zoning Commission to halt the conversion but pressed on with the landmark bid.

Kerry Stowell, a 20-year resident of Watergate East, offered a brief but colorful presentation about Watergate's "innovative Modernist design," produced by a distinguished Italian architect, Luigi Moretti, who used computers to help flesh out curvilinear shapes of the six interconnected buildings.

Along with the political scandal that made Watergate a household word, Stowell argued Watergate deserves landmark status because it was the city's first privately financed planned-unit development, representing "an important step to stem flight from the city by creating a mixed-use 'town within the city.'"

Only two Watergate South residents, Dorothy and Charles Olsen, rose to oppose the application. "We object to the idea of using historic designation to control what an owner does with a project," Dorothy Olsen said. "And we do not think a bungled political robbery" merits landmark status, she added. "I'd hope people would be ashamed, not proud."

Her husband, Charles Olsen, said the couple had previously lived in a truly historic house in Foggy Bottom. "George Washington stopped there for a drink," he noted, scoffing at the idea that the 1960s era Watergate could be considered "historic."

But Tim Dennée, an architectural historian who reviewed the application for the board, gave an eloquent defense of the Watergate nomination.

Dennée said he "almost took for granted" the significance of the

Watergate scandal in the city and nation's history, leading to the downfall of a president, a shift in political power in Congress, a raft of legislation, "not to mention the whole way Watergate has worked into our folk culture."

"The whole complex is self-evidently an important visual landmark, very much a clear break" in terms of both architecture and planning," Dennée continued. The six curved buildings "turn a wall to the rest of the city," ignoring the regular



Bill Petros/The Current

Residents are pushing for historic designation of the Watergate complex, which would not affect planned conversion of the hotel into cooperative apartments.

street grid but also embracing the waterfront, which was at the time largely industrial and forbidding. "Whether you love it or hate it, it's clearly innovative," Dennée said.

Still, board members said they needed more information and more justification to landmark a building less than 50 years old. D.C. historic preservation law does not set an age requirement, but a national landmark must be at least 50 years old unless the building is deemed to be of exceptional importance.

"It meets our test, but we want more information on the planning, the history of how it was built," said member Ronnie McGhee.

Member Anne Lewis said the preservation board takes landmark nominations very seriously. "In a sense, it's beatification. It makes it difficult to tear this building down or modify it," Lewis said. "That's not to say we have to like it. But granting immortality to a planning implementation mechanism" — the planned-unit development process — seems a stretch, she said.

Lewis also said the landmark nomination did not provide enough information on Moretti, the architect. "I felt I would have to Google him myself," she said.

Boasberg said someone had sent him "Google information" on Moretti, but it was all in Italian. "It would be helpful if we had it in English," he said.

"Nobody [on the board is] objecting," the board chair concluded. "This is obviously a significant development." But he said the board also needs more information on Watergate's seven acres of open space, much altered over the years, before granting landmark protection to fountains and other landscape elements.

Emily Eig, an architectural historian who helped prepare the landmark application, said the additional documentation is readily available. "Our goal is next month," Eig said.

CLARK

From Page 1

Monday at Howard University Law School to discuss the tentative proposal.

"I look forward to an evening of discussion as we explore the possibilities for the future of this site," Forrest said in an e-mail.

Architect Suman Sorg is working on designs for what would be a planned-unit development on the 35,000-square-foot lot and — if the community is supportive — Clark hopes to submit its application to the city in early November, Forrest said. Zoning attorney Phil Feola will represent the company, she said.

"We want something that's appropriate in scale, with lots of articulation and green space," Forrest said. Noting there are town houses across Tilden Street and a nine-story building looming behind, she said, "we're trying to find a way to bridge that, to come up with something very tailored to this site."

The now-vacant lot on the south side of Tilden is currently zoned for low-density residential development and would accommodate roughly eight semidetached town houses, Dennis said. One preliminary sketch shared by Clark showed a new building containing 40 to 60 units and topping out at nine stories, Dennis said.

The city's Comprehensive Plan indicates the lot is suitable for high-density housing, and that has sent shivers through some in the community.

The D.C. Office of Planning has not yet weighed in officially, but it is generally encouraging development near Metrolink stations as part of the mayor's goal to attract new residents. Clark's parcel is within walking distance of both the Cleveland Park and Van Ness Metro stations.

Ellen McCarthy, deputy planning director, said she has not seen the version of the project shown to Dennis and "can't really comment on the plan."

But McCarthy noted that "although zoning on the site is R-2-B, or low-density residential, that is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, which calls for high-density residential."

That high-density designation has been in every version of the plan since 1984, McCarthy said.

Clark officials are treading gingerly, clearly hoping to avoid the bitter controversy that shadowed construction of the nine-story building at 3883 Connecticut Ave.

Forrest has met with advisory commissioner Dennis twice already, and he calls her "a bright, ideal spokesperson for something that will be controversial." Still, he worries that the proposed building will block more views from his landmarked building at 3901 Connecticut Ave., where many residents lost spectacular views of the park when Clark constructed the building at 3883.

But his primary concern, Dennis said, is that allowing development of large apartment buildings on the side streets off Connecticut Avenue will set "a very damaging precedent."

"Connecticut Avenue was designed as a great boulevard, with apartment houses fronting it. But the

side streets are [low-density] residential," he said.

Dennis has begun speaking to neighbors about the new Clark plan. "They want something compatible to be built on the site. But I haven't spoken to anybody who thinks this is a good idea," the advisory neighborhood commissioner said.

Susan Gillespie, who lives directly across Tilden Street from Clark's lot, said she had been "looking forward to construction of town houses" there, "to block the view of 3883," which now looms over the site. "But we never expected a high-rise apartment," which she fears could set a precedent for high-rise buildings on the side streets off Connecticut Avenue, Gillespie said.

More development will only worsen traffic and parking problems on Tilden and neighboring streets,

"Connecticut Avenue was designed as a great boulevard, with apartment houses fronting it. But the side streets are [low-density] residential."

— Neighborhood commissioner Stephen Dennis

she said, even though Clark intends to include underground parking as part of the new package.

Development of the Tilden Street site raises issues that are different from those raised by 3883 Connecticut, which sits behind the older buildings on Connecticut Avenue and required no zoning change. Starting in 2000, when Clark first got building permits, that building caused a storm of controversy largely for environmental reasons.

The 3883 site abuts the Melvin Hazen branch of Rock Creek Park and includes a small "seep" or seasonal stream that feeds into Rock Creek.

Three D.C. Council members, the National Park Service and several environmental groups insisted a full environmental impact study should have been required, and they protested throughout the project's construction.

But the city ultimately refused to intervene, as did the Army Corps of Engineers. A court challenge was thrown out after the D.C. Court of Appeals ruled that the group of neighbors who brought the suit did not have proper "standing." But some of the hard feelings and rancor remain.

A few weeks ago, Monument Realty bought into the building at 3883. Monument recently erected a huge beige and yellow sign in front advertising the sale of luxury condominiums at what the company has renamed "The Connecticut."

Michael Darby of Monument said marketing of the vacant units has already begun, and all potential buyers will be told of "the possibility that the lot [to the north] will be developed."

But Darby said very few new windows at 3883 face north, limiting the impact of any new development by Clark. He predicted that residents in the area will fight against proposals for high or dense development. "Remember the last time?" he asked a reporter. "Weren't the people chained to trees?"