

**Thomas M. Smith
4601 Tilden Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016**

February 19, 2007

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2007 FEB 20 PM 2:43

Ms. Carol Mitten, Chair
Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia
One Judiciary Square
441 4th Street NW
Suite 210-S
Washington, D.C. 20001

**RE: Zoning Commission Case No. 05-42 – PUD and Zoning
Map Amendment Letter Of Support for the Sibley Hospital
Project**

Dear Ms. Mitten:

I am writing to express my support as ANC Commissioner 3D-02 for the PUD and Zoning Map Amendment application for the proposed construction by Sibley Hospital of a medical office building. I am writing this letter as an individual ANC Commissioner and I am not writing on behalf of or conveying the formal position of ANC 3D.

As a Commissioner who was just elected in November, 2006, I did not have the opportunity to participate in the deliberations last year by ANC 3D on the Sibley application. However, as a concerned resident of Spring Valley, I followed the debate closely and was disappointed that the ANC voted to oppose construction of the new building. My representative on the ANC did not vote to oppose Sibley's application to construct the new building, and I applauded her then and now on her decision.

I have been a resident of Spring Valley for nearly 30 years and I know very well – especially in recent years – the importance and value of Sibley and the hospital's services to our community. Sibley has always been a good neighbor. At a time when residents of the District struggle to obtain medical services in other parts of the city, we are privileged and fortunate to have a non-profit facility, like Sibley, located in our neighborhood and delivering high quality, patient-sensitive health care services. The medical building that has been proposed will offer services that will mean added benefits and greater convenience for residents, especially those that live in the surrounding neighborhoods.

The health care industry is under enormous financial pressures – pressures that are being experienced increasingly by hospitals, health care professionals, employers, and health care consumers, themselves. As a community, it is important for us to acknowledge these trends and do what we can to protect our own long-term interests in quality health care. To suggest that

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Sibley is somehow immune to these financial pressures is tantamount to burying your head in the sand. Sibley has argued that the new medical building will help to sustain and secure its financial situation so it can continue to offer valuable medical care and services to our community for many generations to come. We should commend Sibley for having the foresight to plan for its financial future, so that our future health care is safeguarded.

As I (and my friends and neighbors in the community) continue to age and am likely to need more medical care, myself, I want to be secure that this care is comprehensive and easily accessible. The new medical building will help to make that possible for me and many others.

When ANC 3D made its decision to oppose the Sibley application unless the hospital drastically downsized the project, the resolution was introduced without advance notice to the public or even an announcement that such a vote would be taken. Given the importance of the issue, the ANC should have held a special meeting and engaged in a public discussion on its proposed resolution even if the Commissioners had already taken up the general issue of Sibley's application at other meetings. This lack of public engagement on the specific resolution taken up by the ANC on Sibley is what prompted me to seek election to the ANC last fall.

Since ANC 3D took its vote last year on the proposed construction, Sibley Hospital has revised its plan and reduced the size of the proposed structure in an effort to demonstrate once again that it is sensitive to the range of views represented in the community. ANC 3D has never taken a formal position on this revised plan. Although Sibley made a presentation to the ANC in January, 2007, it was announced by the Commission chair at the time that the presentation was for "informational purposes only" and that no action by the new Commission that had just been sworn in and seated was expected. The current chair of the Commission, who has opposed Sibley's plan, has explained that no vote was taken on the Sibley modification at our January, 2007 meeting by saying: "I did not think it necessary or advisable to vote again." The chair also has rationalized this decision by shifting responsibility to Sibley saying that the hospital never asked the Commission to reconsider the revised plan for the proposed structure.

Based on a letter from the ANC Chair recently published in the Northwest Current, it is apparent that she simply does not think that new Commissioners elected in November are qualified to vote on the issue on the basis that we did not participate as ANC Commissioners in the public meetings on Sibley. As a new Commissioner – and as a concerned resident who has been active in numerous civic, political, and social organizations in the city over a 30-year span – I do not share that view. In fact, such paternalism, if not arrogance, seems more designed to frustrate residents and obscure the strong support for this project in my SMD and throughout other parts of ANC 3D.

The health care needs of our community are too important to keep silent or remain indifferent on this issue.

If the opportunity to vote on the revised plan had been presented, I would have voted to support the proposed Sibley construction. Along with many of my neighbors (and now constituents), our community's short- and long-term health care interests are ably served if Sibley continues to thrive. Adding a medical building for doctor's offices and other ancillary medical care services complements what Sibley now already offers the community.

I strongly urge you to vote in support of Sibley's application. Please feel free to contact me for additional information at (202) 364-7130.

Sincerely,



Thomas M. Smith
Commissioner, ANC 3D-02

cc: Jennifer Steingasser
D.C. Office of Planning
801 North Capitol Street NE
4th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20002

THOMAS M. SMITH & ASSOCIATES COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

FAX

TO: Ms. Carol Mitten

Organization: Zoning Commission

FAX #: 202-727-6072

DATE: 2-20-07

FROM: THOMAS SMITH

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THIS DOCUMENT CONSISTS OF 4 PAGES
(INCLUDING THE COVER SHEET)

COMMENTS:

RE: Letter In Support Of Sibley
APPLICATION FROM ANC COMMISSIONER 3D-02.

If you do not receive total number of pages sent or have problems with clarity of material received, please call (202) 364-7130. To fax to us, call (202) 363-4452.