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Stephen G. Callas
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November 14, 2007

The Honorable Anthony Hood
Chairman, D.C. Zoning Commission
1 Judiciary Square, N.W.
441 4th Street, N.W., 220 South
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Chairman Hood:

Enclosed is an article I wrote in The Current newspapers of November 14, 2007, "Revised Sibley Plan Merits City Approval."

As chairman of the D.C. Zoning Commission, will you please do me a favor and distribute the enclosed article to other commission members before a vote is taken on the Sibley plan?

As you can see, I support Sibley Hospital's revised plan: a five-story medical office building (instead of a seven-story structure), and office space for sixty-two doctors (instead of seventy-five doctors), as well as a parking garage.

I strongly urge that the D.C. Zoning Commission approve the hospital's revised plan, even though I also supported Sibley's original plan for a seven-story building to provide office space for seventy-five doctors.

I consider it very important to erect the medical office building and parking garage: for patients, doctors, the hospital, and for the community and nation's capital, who should receive the very best in medical attention and care.

Sincerely,



Stephen G. Callas

sgc

Encl. Article in The Current of Nov. 14, 2007

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 05-42

EXHIBIT NO. 216

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.05-42
EXHIBIT NO.216



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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But there are options. There are people who would be willing to take ownership of this house and raise the funds necessary to restore it to its original condition. I am one of these people. It pains me that a house like this sits vacant and deteriorating in a vibrant neighborhood.

My wife and I dream of raising a family in an urban environment where children are able to walk to school, to the park and to friends' houses. We are capable of raising a large sum of money for renovations, but not enough to buy a home in a family-friendly neighborhood like the Palisades. In fact, we are priced right out of the city.

As an architect, I also dream of owning a home with historic characteristics like those of the Jesse Baltimore House. Homes like this are just not built anymore. In addition, the attention to detail in assembly that Mr. Baltimore gave his own house is likely well beyond that given to homes built more recently.

The District does not seem to be terribly interested in turning a huge profit on this house. Why not sell it to someone in need of affordable housing who has the knowledge and desire to take on a massive renovation such as this? No doubt the tax revenue gained from a new owner taking possession of the house would be far more beneficial

to the District than would be the added expenditures required to actually maintain the site.

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Cleveland Park

Gorgeous park needs landscaped entrance

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Yet, at the entrance to the park, there is a boarded-up building on parkland that serves no public purpose whatsoever. Those who argue in favor of turning the house and the land to private ownership to "save the house" seek to advance their own narrow personal agenda over the public good.

We ask the mayor and Ward 3 Council member Mary Cheh to stay strong in their support of removing the house and creating a welcoming landscaped entrance.

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The original plan by the hospital called for a seven-story medical office building with office space for 75 doctors.

There were, however, honest

differences of opinion expressed by neighbors, with concerns ranging from the building's size to the expectation of increased traffic. The Zoning Commission is scheduled to meet on Nov. 19, when it may announce its decision on the application filed by the hospital.

At the Oct. 25 commission meeting, Jerry Price, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Sibley, offered a revised plan that reduced the office building to five stories and the number of leased offices from 75 to 62.

I think that Mr. Price's revisions were reasonable and practical, and hopefully they will be approved by the Zoning Commission. All those who participated at the Oct. 25 meeting — Mr. Price, the commissioners and various persons and organizations — deserve credit for their spirit of cooperation.

The Greek dramatist Monostikoi believed that good health is one of the "blessings of life." The Zoning Commission can help that precious blessing by approving the revised plan.

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