

5116 Rockwood Parkway
Washington, DC 20016
4 September 2006

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DC OFFICE OF ZONING

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05-42

Carol Mitten, Chair
District of Columbia Office of Zoning
Case #05-42 (Sibley Hospital)
441 4th Street, N.W., 2nd floor
Washington, DC, 20001
FAX: 202.727.6072

Dear Ms. Mitten:

I am writing to oppose the rezoning sought by Sibley to allow construction of a new eight-story Medical Office Building (MOB). My reason is based on the added motorcar traffic - "car trips per day" - that it will generate on Rockwood Parkway and Dalecarlia Parkway. My house on Rockwood Parkway is the seventh in from the intersection with Dalecarlia.

I assume that the proposed MOB is not housing Sibley staff during their hospital duties, and that it therefore is a "9-to-5" operation. The consequence of this assumption is that the increased traffic will occur during normal daylight business hours.

The basic figures that affect me, my wife, and our two daughters aged 4 and 9 are (I have been told):

400-460 more car trips per day on Loughborough Road, and
1250-1360 more car trips per day on Dalecarlia Parkway,

As you may know, Rockwood Parkway roughly parallels Loughborough; we estimate that 10-20% of what would otherwise be Loughborough traffic uses Rockwood Parkway instead, and in our experience this "Loughborough bypass" traffic pays little attention to Rockwood Parkway's 25 mph speed limit.. Thus the proposed MOB would likely generate an additional 40 to 90 car trips per day - an average of an additional car exceeding the speed limit every 6 to 12 minutes.

The consequences of added traffic on Dalecarlia are even more dire. The intersection with Rockwood Parkway is at Dalecarlia's lowest point in both directions. This, combined with Dalecarlia's posted speed limit of 40 mph, means that through traffic on Dalecarlia frequently gets to the intersection at 50 mph or more. Trying to turn onto Dalecarlia from our street is risky enough already - except in winter when the trees are leafless, there is very little visibility up the hill to the left towards Loughborough; similarly, the visibility up the hill to the right towards Westmoreland Circle is diminishing because of the extensive plantings that DC DPW has made in the median strip.

Adding 1250-1360 car trips per day on Dalecarlia works out to an average of an additional speeding car every 21 to 23 seconds. I think it is not too much to say that this level of traffic, and the speeds commonly used, change turning from our residential street onto Dalecarlia from risky to suicidal.

How many people do you suppose will have to be killed or maimed before DC belatedly installs a traffic signal?

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What is more, Dalecarlia is closed several times each year: the storm drains at the intersection with our street are so inadequate that Dalecarlia floods after only a moderately heavy rain or snow-and-thaw, and all traffic from the direction of Westmoreland Circle is diverted onto Rockwood Parkway. With the projected increased traffic we would accordingly see detoured cars speeding past our house every few seconds.

The proposed MOB is a bad idea. Sibley is a good hospital - but it is not a teaching hospital; the MOB cannot be justified in terms of facilities for education or research. It is a business venture pure and simple, designed to increase the revenues and profits of Sibley's parent holding company. This is not bad in and of itself, but it is being proposed without regard for the (in my opinion) unacceptable burden it will place on the city's locally inadequate and fragile infrastructure.

Infrastructure maintenance for ordinary zoned land use is the responsibility of the District and its citizens. But the city's taxpayers should not be responsible for upgrades to support a purely private profit-oriented enterprise. If the rezoning is granted, it must be the responsibility of the developer who stands to profit to provide the additional infrastructure: larger storm drains, added traffic lanes on Dalecarlia, and traffic signals, and these expenses should be a part of the developer's business plan.

Should the developer refuse to fund the additional infrastructure required to operate the facility safely, I urge that you deny the request for rezoning.

Sincerely,



Stephen Wolff

FAX COVER SHEET

Date: 6 Sep 2006

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From: Stephen Wolff 202.362.7110 (voice)

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