

RECEIVED

September 13, 2006

D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING

2006 SEP 15 AM 10: 5

Ms. Carol Mitten
Chair,
DC Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 210-S
Washington, DC 20001

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

RE: ZC Application No. 05-42
PUD and Zoning Map Amendment

CASE NO. 05-42
EXHIBIT NO. 70

Dear Chairman Mitten:

It has been a great benefit to have Sibley Hospital as a neighbor in the Palisades Community. We have both used the hospital, particular for our young children, and feel Sibley is an excellent small facility known for its extraordinary nursing care and expanding role in areas related to cancer diagnosis and treatment. The emergency room is well known to local families as "the place to go" for immediate care related to childhood injuries.

The case before the Zoning Commission is not about Sibley Hospital, but rather a proposed medical office building and parking facility. It is also our understanding that soon Sibley will return to the Zoning Commission or the BZA for permission to construct a new hospital and retain use of the current hospital building for staff office space. The new buildings and the parking facility will add considerable density to our residential area that is already used as a cut-through by many (non-D.C.) commuters via MacArthur Blvd. and Nebraska/Loughboro Road

This past June, the Palisades Citizens Association (PCA), much to my surprise voted to support the Sibley proposal before its Application to the Zoning Commission had been filed. In our view the PCA naively signed over a blank check to Sibley without knowing the total cost of the proposal to the community. The PCA's own Traffic Chair, in apparent conflict with PCA leadership, offered substantive data on potential impacts that the hospital's traffic consultant did not address; and, likened the new facility to existing facilities in the community, such as the Safeway and Palisades Library, and the level of traffic each of them brings into the community on a daily basis.

In conclusion our concerns are two: a substantial increase in traffic on neighborhood streets throughout the day (rather than at the street peak hours) and the further industrialization of a residential neighborhood. While we appreciate the zoning process which allows such expansion, we also believe the Commission must balance the needs of the hospital with the zoning regulations and its potential impacts on the community. The hospital's service area extends far beyond the District boundaries and only a small percentage of current patients are from the District of Columbia. The hospital is inviting

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 05-42
EXHIBIT NO. 70

community impacts, i.e., additional traffic, and asking the community to welcome them. BZA Orders have already required our neighborhood to absorb traffic from a large number of private schools and two universities as well as several new housing developments. At what point will the Zoning Commission and BZA realize that incremental increases in traffic add up?

It appears that the Barlow Building, Foxhall Square, Spring Valley Office Buildings and 5530 Wisconsin Avenue provide sufficient medical office space. The traffic generated by these medical office buildings is appropriate for Wisconsin, Massachusetts and New Mexico Avenues. They are located in zone districts designed to accommodate residential and commercial/residential mixed uses. Their impacts on these wide streets are known, however the Sibley site is surrounded by residential areas that are not designed to handle significant traffic volumes. These residential zones should be protected from commercial and industrial encroachment.

Having a small hospital facility in the community has been a convenience and a benefit that is not going to change. We want to stress that Sibley has been a good neighbor and we wish that relationship to continue. However, the proposed zoning change requested for a new medical office building and parking facility that will generate substantial traffic, impact the community negatively, and permit increased density that is not in keeping with the character of the neighborhood, should not be approved.

Our support for the current Sibley proposal is contingent upon a reduction in the size of the building and the number of vehicle trips being reduced. The Sibley Board needs to determine what size facility it really needs and how the traffic it generates will be mitigated before it proceeds to the Zoning Commission for approval.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Snape III', written over a horizontal line.

William Snape
Deborah Cunningham

5268 Watson Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20016
202-537-3458