

RECEIVED  
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING  
2008 JUL 11 AM 11:24

Damien Agostinelli  
3219 7<sup>th</sup> Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20017-1414  
O: 202-455-4781 x103

July 17, 2008

DC Office of Zoning  
441 4<sup>th</sup> St, NW  
Suite 200-S  
Washington, DC 20001  
202-727-6311

Re: Case number 07-27  
PUD Application for St Paul's College Property, EYA, Developer

To the Board of Zoning Adjustment:

My initial reaction to the St. Paul's Project is quite positive and I expect, in the grand scheme of things, it will be a great addition to the neighborhood, and the city at large. I support dense development, especially near mass transportation. I fully endorse making the city and our neighborhood pedestrian-friendly and I generally believe that more pedestrian traffic would improve street safety and promote a sense of community that would benefit all involved. As a neighbor who lives between this project and the upcoming one on CUA's South Campus, I am greatly impacted by both of these projects. I am concerned about the following issues:

- **Traffic:** the proposed traffic plan for this project does not adequately address the needs and safety of the nearby neighborhood and its residents;
- **Parking:** the parking plan for this project leaves many details open that will negatively impact the nearby neighborhood and its residents;
- **Surviving Construction:** noise, traffic, runoff, inadvertent debris scattering, construction vehicle and material delivery and parking, and worker/contractor parking have not been addressed;
- **Amenities Inadequate for PUD:** the proposed amenities do nothing to mitigate the direct impact of this project on its immediate neighbors;
- **Precedent for Future Development:** This is the first of many projects planned for this immediate area and residents want developers of this and future projects to be aware of the neighborhood's needs and expectations.

### **Traffic**

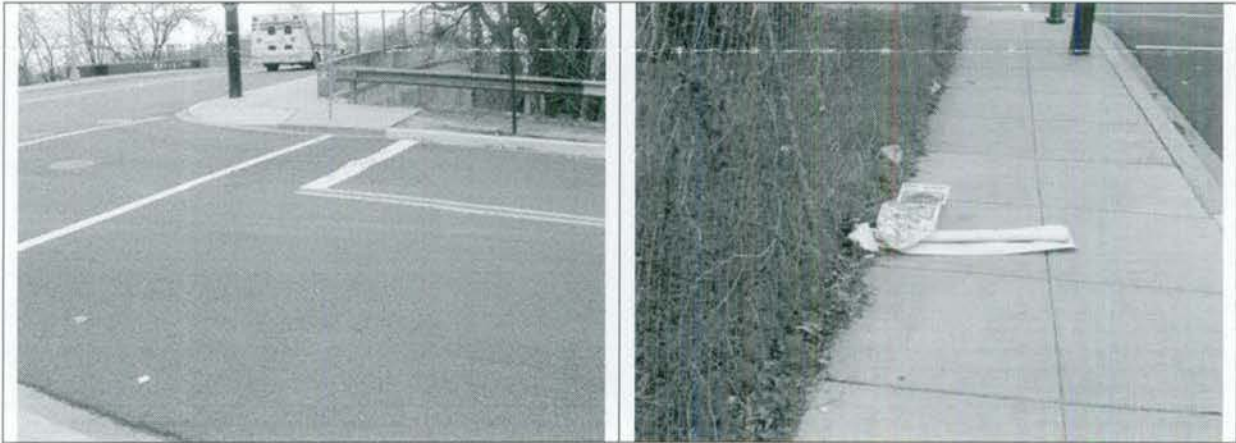
Our neighborhood is already under significant traffic pressure from commuters and others seeking easy parking near the Metro and/or near local charter schools. The additional traffic problems potentially would cancel out many of the hoped for benefits. As an example, a caution sign that informs motorists that pedestrians in the crosswalks have the right of way on Monroe Street at 8<sup>th</sup> Street was struck down the day after it was installed. Within two days it was struck so many times that it became mangled and damaged until it was barely recognized as a crumpled tangle of steel. This was caused by a parent driving

ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia

ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia  
CASE NO. 07-27  
EXHIBIT NO. 30

to take their children to one of the charter schools on 8<sup>th</sup> Street. DDOT and developers of area projects talk about traffic calming features, but we residents will have to live with them.

Pedestrians currently risk life and limb trying to cross 7<sup>th</sup> Street anywhere between Monroe and Franklin Streets – even at the intersection of 7<sup>th</sup> and Jackson where there currently is a four way stop sign. As a dog owner, I walk my dog all over the area as well as to and from my nearby office and we are very careful and still have barely escaped several incidents. I see mothers with children in tow struggling to cross supposedly residential streets during the morning and evening times. All this before they even get to Monroe or Franklin. Now add another 240-some additional households and I fear the community will be less pedestrian-friendly not more. Please note pictures of the intersection at Monroe and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets, and the crumpled cross walk sign.



The best option to deal with traffic flow from this project is to make use of 4<sup>th</sup> Street. If planned vehicular traffic is going to be minimal, as DDOT and the project developers maintain, then an entrance from 4<sup>th</sup> street should not be a problem and would be adequate to handle all vehicular traffic needs. Then there is no need to have access from the residential side of the project onto Jackson, Irving, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets. Local residents certainly welcome pedestrian and bicycle traffic, just not vehicular traffic.

### ***Parking***

The issue of parking is no less a problem. A casual walk down 7<sup>th</sup> Street to Monroe Street, and then to 8<sup>th</sup> Street and then south back up to the street under Franklin Street back to 7<sup>th</sup> demonstrates that parking around this area is at a premium. Also note the lack of proper signage. Soon after 8<sup>th</sup> Street was completely repaved and new signs were installed, I caught commuters taking the signs down that interfered with their desire to park in our neighborhood. Any and every sign indicating “no parking anytime”, “no parking for street cleaning” and/or “Ward 5 Residential Parking” became a target. Now, after a year, there are very few signs left. I’m sure parking enforcement in the area is much more difficult without signage. But even obvious violations like parking in crosswalks and blocking handicapped ramps on corners are persistent.

As an additional concern, the majority of legally parked cars in Residential Zones do have Ward 5 permits, but they are not from the immediate area. And while they might legally park in front of my house, it still prevents me from parking there. Residents in the immediate area are greatly concerned that if 240-some additional residents obtain Ward 5 Residential Permits, this would greatly increase the number of cars parking in front of my house for convenient access to the Metro. We want an

agreement that future residents of this and other developments have adequate parking on their respective projects and to ensure they will not need nor be eligible for Residential Parking Permits.

A great many residents are concerned this project does not provide for adequate parking on the project property. We understand the DC Office of Planning believes it does. Nevertheless, we insist on an agreement that residents of this project be deemed ineligible for Residential Parking Permits.

### ***Surviving Construction***

As a resident living on the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and Kearny Sts, I hear the construction activity from work on the addition to the Dominican House of Studies, whenever I have any windows open. This project has been operating over the last two years. Work on this project continues 6 days a week and begins daily before 6am. When the noise is especially loud, I can close my windows. But this project is more than 1,000 feet away and several years ago I invested in insulation, doors and windows. After this \$40,000 investment, I have the benefit of a well-sealed house. Most of my neighbors have not and a great many could not make this kind of investment. Even still, when the weather in Washington is great, having the windows open is one of the reasons I live here. To be denied this during the construction of this and other projects – for an estimated 10 year period – is not a hardship, it is a crime. And this is just the noise.

Construction traffic at the Dominican project has fortunately entered from Michigan Avenue at Monroe Street. But the current traffic plan for this project will have the construction traffic, as well as the eventual residential traffic, all going through the local neighborhood streets. I never even knew about the plans for the Dominicans to add another building, but since it was rarely intrusive, I never objected. But for the two-to-three year planned construction of this project, continuous truck and heavy construction equipment on our local residential streets is unacceptable, especially considering 4<sup>th</sup> Street is a more logical option.

The only major problem from the construction activities at the Dominican addition that I encountered has been the muddy runoff whenever it rains and the scattering of construction debris, also largely due to storms. In the winter, this runoff would freeze and make the west side of 7<sup>th</sup> Street impassible by pedestrians. When the temperature is above freezing, the runoff is so swift and deep this side of 7<sup>th</sup> Street is again difficult for pedestrians. It is difficult to tell in advance where problems will develop and it is very difficult to address them once they do. Let me reiterate, this was a fairly simple two-year project more than 1,000 feet away from me. Local residents are greatly concerned about the impact of the St. Paul's project, with four planned intrusions into our neighborhood for the three to five-year construction period. Each of these intrusions into the neighborhood will channel runoff and debris when storms develop. If allowed to be used for construction traffic, these intrusions will also channel mud and other debris from the construction traffic. Again, we residents maintain that 4<sup>th</sup> Street is a more logical option and it would affect no residents.

### ***Amenities Inadequate for PUD***

The point of the PUD process is to obtain the equivalent of a zoning variance by providing community benefits in exchange for permission to build beyond zoned limits. The current list of proposed benefits seems generous, but do they offset the impact this project will have on the local community? I maintain they do not. First of all, the 10% set aside for affordable housing, while not law, should be. It is the only significant amenity of any value and it does not address any impact this project will have on local residents. (As a side note, what is the proper way to set the total value of "community amenities")

expected of a development? Perhaps a tax assessment of the property that is to be sold is in order. Perhaps even an assessment of back taxes since the property was acquired, less penalties and interest, of course, would guide us to the appropriate amount.)

I would much rather see money put into benefits that would ameliorate the impact this project will have on local residents. For example, many of the local residents have not made insulating investments in their homes. These investments could be quite reasonable, would have many obvious benefits for heating and cooling, and would greatly shield residents from years of construction noise. An additional benefit would be for the developer to work with DDOT to make use of 4<sup>th</sup> Street rather than use local neighborhood streets for this project. This would address both the traffic and parking issues and would go very far toward gaining community support for this project's PUD request. Also, if additional parking is not required by the Office of Planning for on-site parking, then a binding agreement to never seek eligibility for RPP would also encourage the community to accept this project. Another idea might be for the developer to work with utilities to bury power local lines to make them less susceptible to damage and outages.

Rather than offer to improve a park, or take on other responsibilities of the DC Government, development projects should offer to minimize the impact of their project on existing taxpaying residents. Local governments too often look at the increase in the number of taxpayers a project like this will bring, and are willing to sacrifice the quality of life of existing taxpayers to subsidize the new ones. This attitude discounts my 20 years at this same address, fighting through the crack wars and helping my neighbors through the many bad economic times and the attending crime so the area is now desirable for development. That I and my neighbors chose to stay and fight through the worst of times is what has made it possible for this and other projects to be feasible. We could even argue that we residents deserve a percent of the project revenue since it was our sweat and tax dollars that sustained the area while these tax-free properties sat idle.

### ***Precedent for Future Development***

This immediate area has many development projects planned. This first one is critical as it will be the precedent for the many projects that follow. If we residents are not able to survive this one, then following projects will just pave right over us. Most of the projects in the immediate area are planned for land that currently is tax exempt. Shouldn't the imposition of this project's externalities on neighboring taxpayers be factored in? Shouldn't the wishes of many taxpayers carry at least the weight of one non-taxpayer? As the development steamroller gets moving, it is critical that citizens establish themselves as a formidable partner in the process.

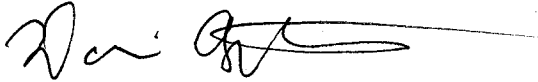
Most of the neighbors I have talked with support the project in concept. The biggest question is why has no effort been made to direct traffic to 4<sup>th</sup> Street? While I do not want to impose on the Paulists' view, I also do not want my and my neighbors' quality of life to be damaged from the construction traffic and later residential traffic and related supporting traffic (trash, deliveries, etc.).

### ***Conclusions***

For this specific project, I am concerned that any entrance other than to 4<sup>th</sup> Street will result in severe curtailment of our quality of life from increased vehicular and service related traffic. Further, without weather proofing, the noise, dust and debris from construction will be unbearable. Without a parking agreement, our limited parking will be overrun. And finally, as a precedent for the many future development projects, it is important that developers and the Office of Planning address early in the

planning process the many obvious issues residents will have. Ideally, the planning process would address these issues rather than require residents in this neighborhood to fight for what would be obvious concerns to be addressed in other quarters of the city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Damien Agostinelli', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Damien Agostinelli, 3219 7<sup>th</sup> Street, NE  
Lifelong DC Resident, longtime Brookland Resident, and  
business owner with Headquarters in Brookland

cc.

ANC 5C09: Silas Grant

ANC 5C10: Timothy Day