



Where DC Comes Together

November 24, 2008

Anthony J. Hood
Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 200/210S
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Chairman Hood:

Regarding Case No. 08-13 (Square 370, Lots 18, 21, 22, 24, 801-806, 830-839, 843, 845 and Alley to be Closed – Marriott International, Inc.):

Shaw Main Streets, the commercial revitalization and historic preservation nonprofit serving central Shaw's 7th and 9th Street commercial corridors, is pleased to support Marriott International's application for a Consolidated Planned Unit Development and map amendment to permit the construction of a new convention center headquarters hotel on the block bounded by Massachusetts Avenue, NW and 9th, 10th, and L Streets. We also support the applicant's request for approval of air space development for the subterranean portions of the project that will be located in public space under Massachusetts Avenue, L and 9th Streets, NW.

The Marriott Marquis hotel is an integral part of revitalization plans for Shaw's commercial district. Indeed, many small, independent businesses that have already opened in the neighborhood counted hotel guests among their target markets in their business plans. The fact that the hotel has not broken ground more than a year after it was originally scheduled to open is having a serious negative impact on these small businesses' profitability and viability.

The Marriott Marquis is one of the catalytic projects that Shaw Main Streets counted on when a vision for the Shaw Commercial District was developed over five years ago. Combined with CityMarket at O, Broadcast Center One, and Kelsey Gardens, the Marriott Marquis will bring increased foot traffic to Shaw's neighborhood businesses.

The Board of Directors of Shaw Main Streets and our executive director have met on several occasions with Marriott Vice President Norman Jenkins and legal counsel for Marriott. We are disappointed that despite numerous attempts to engage Marriott International to get them to develop a community amenities package to submit to the Zoning Commission with their PUD application, Marriott has declined to develop specific and detailed community amenities associated with this project. Every other major developer with projects in Shaw has worked with community stakeholders and nonprofits to identify programs and services benefiting the Shaw community that could be funded through contributions from the developer included in a Community Benefits Agreement.

Counsel for Marriott has indicated that the job training program incorporated into the legislation authorizing the hotel's construction, preservation of the individually landmarked American Federation of Labor Building, and landscaping associated with the hotel represent their PUD community amenities. Shaw Main Streets respectfully disagrees, believing that these costs are necessary project costs, do not mitigate the negative impacts on the community resulting from the project, and do not represent true community benefits for neighborhood residents. We ask that the Zoning Commission strongly urge Marriott International to negotiate in good faith with the community and create an amenities package appropriate for the magnitude of the Marriott Marquis project.

Thanking you for taking Shaw Main Streets' position on this case into account in your deliberations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Timothy C. Mack', with a long, sweeping underline.

Timothy C. Mack
Chair
Board of Directors