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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF ZONING

WOODLEY PARK
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 4852
Washington, D.C. 20008

February 11, 2009

Anthony Hood, Chair
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 Fourth Street, NW Room 200(S)

Re: Zoning Commission Case No. 08-15

Dear Chairman Hood:

The Woodley Park Community Association¹ supports the application of Friendship-Macomb SC Inc. to redevelop the area around Wisconsin Avenue and Newark Street. Many members of WPCA live within the area served by the neighborhood retail at this location and would benefit from the improvements that would result from approval of this application.

The benefits of the proposal are obvious. The neighborhood would get a large modern supermarket to replace the small, aging Giant. Surface parking would be removed. The existing bleak streetscape would be replaced by one with an attractive and potentially vibrant new design. Commercial properties would be replaced with a mixed-use development with a balance of residential, retail and other commercial uses. Affordable housing for both low- and moderate-income families would be made available.

The objections that have been voiced to the overall project are without merit. Wisconsin Avenue is wide enough comfortably to accommodate the height of the proposed buildings, as evidenced by the much taller buildings across the Avenue. The proposed 140-50 new residential units are not too many for this location, and other places in the city without immediate Metro access have even greater residential density. There is no reason to believe that the development would generate traffic that would overwhelm the nearby R-1-B neighborhoods or that the proposed 535 parking spaces are not sufficient. There may well be ways to improve the design of the project — should the North Parcel garage entrance be moved to from Newark to Idaho or can the supermarket loading entrance be better screened from nearby residences — but, on the whole, this project as proposed would significantly improve these two city blocks and the neighborhood overall.

WPCA, therefore, urges the Commission grant application, with two additions.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO.

08-15

EXHIBIT NO.

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¹ The Woodley Park Community Association is a citizens association, organized as a DC not-for-profit membership corporation. Its purpose is to maintain and advance the quality of life in the Woodley Park area.

First, the applicant is offering to make free parking available in the South Parcel garage under certain circumstances:

“The Applicant shall provide free parking for all customers and employees of the commercial portions of the project in the South Parcel parking garage.

“The Applicant shall make available 30 free parking spaces in the South Parcel parking garage as community parking for customers of retail and service establishments along Wisconsin Avenue and Macomb Street.”

Prehearing Statement Ex. D at 1. This is unnecessarily restrictive in two respects. First, it limits to 30 spaces the use by customers of businesses outside the PUD (such as those along Macomb Street). Second, there is no reason to exclude daytime parkers who are not visiting a business – *i.e.*, residents and their visitors.

Today, the two surface lots have 278 parking spaces. The proposed PUD would have 388 non-resident spaces in the South Parcel garage, an increase of almost 40%. The bigger Giant would certainly increase the demand for parking, but not by 40%. Therefore, the proposed new garage would have plenty of room to accommodate other neighborhood users.

Second, as part of the on-going zoning regulation review process, the Commission has been considering rule changes designed to enhance retail operations in the District. It took proposed action on these recommendations on December 8th. These ideas should be implemented in this project, in particular the ceiling height and adaptability provisions.

The WPCA Executive Committee also suggests that the Commission implement Comprehensive Plan Action T-3.2.D concerning unbundled parking at this location. The Comp Plan policy is to “find ways to ‘unbundle’ the cost of parking from residential units, allowing those purchasing or renting property to opt out of buying or renting parking spaces.” The Commissions should require such unbundling as a condition of granting this application.

Finally, in January, ANC 3C unanimously adopted a resolution urging the Commission to grant this application. The resolution included several changes that the ANC wanted included in any approval, some of which have already been accepted by the applicant. While the ANC’s proposals are generally reasonable, the WPCA Executive Committee is concerned about the proposal to prohibit the residents of the PUD from obtaining residential parking permits.² There might be special circumstances at this location that justify discriminating against these new neighbors in favor of the existing residents (although we are aware of none), but, as a general matter, we believe that such distinctions are unwarranted and unfair.

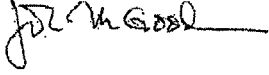
This proposal for this location is immeasurably better than the one that was put forward several years ago. This location was in need of improvement then and is even more in need now. The changes proposed in the PUD application are significant, and it is not surprising that some people

² “5. The Zoning Commission shall require the Applicant to take measures to restrict all residents in the PUD from obtaining Residential Parking Permits, or their equivalent, for parking on neighborhood streets.”

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are apprehensive of those changes. But these apprehensions should not delay the obvious benefits that this development can provide to the neighborhood.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John M. Goodman", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

John M. Goodman

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CO. OFFICE OF ZONING

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Date & Time: 2/12/2009 4:45:19 PM

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Please include this in the record in this proceeding.