

# 2AMYS

NEAPOLITAN PIZZERIA  
3715 MACOMB STREET  
N. W. D. C. 20016  
202 885 5700

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To: Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia

Case Number: 08-15

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ZONING COMMISSION  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

My name is Peter Pastan, and I am the owner of 2Amys at 3715 Macomb Street NW. The back of my restaurant borders on the south side of the Giant Property. After suffering along with the board through the first two hearings, I will be out of town for the third, and although I had hoped to speak with you in person, I have submitted this letter instead. I have eight years remaining on my current lease, and I am very concerned about the effect of a massive Bethesda-style development less than five feet from my restaurant.

There are two major issues that concern me the most. The first is parking. Since anyone can remember, the Giant parking lot has been available to all local businesses. It is a Cleveland Park tradition, as the signs posted by Giant themselves read "three hour parking for local businesses." On any given day, my restaurant is full of families—families with crying babies, wandering toddlers, tired parents, and indulgent grandparents. They come to eat pizza, and they park in the Giant parking lot. Employees from my restaurant park there. Employees from all local businesses park there. It's been that way since the days of frozen pizza and Jiffy Pop from the Zebra Lounge.

The new PUD proposal is to provide only 535 parking spaces. Many will be available for the 124 apartment units, loft apartments, and town homes. This leaves parking for the new Giant and 40,000 additional square feet of retail. There are currently 56 parking spaces in the Giant lot reserved for local businesses and 28 spaces

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for employee parking. One of the "amenities" listed by the developer is 30 spaces reserved for local businesses, but none for employees. I don't understand how a reduction of neighborhood parking can be seen as an amenity, much less a good idea. The only place left will be neighborhood street parking. The impact on the surrounding streets and on local businesses will be profound, and when this happens spending \$96,000 on a traffic study will be much too little too late. If a family with small kids and strollers and baby gear has to take a bus to get to 2Amys, it will find a new place to eat.

The Office of Planning's "concept" of willfully discouraging the minimum number of parking spaces in the new development as some bizarre form of traffic control is a daring one. Perhaps we can recommend concurrently closing the Idaho Street police station in hopes of reducing crime, or closing the library to "encourage" more at-home reading. The first questions I was asked when applying for an ABC license was what effect it would have on the neighborhood, on parking, and economic development. If I had replied that I would eliminate parking, destroy existing businesses, and lessen existing economic development, I would have been denied a license, yet this will be the effect of approving the PUD. Since one of the requirements of a PUD is that no adverse effects would be felt by existing businesses, I'm confused how the Office of Planning came to the conclusion it did. It conducted no study, it interviewed no existing local businesses, and it simply made the conclusion up. When I opened my restaurant I made an enormous cash investment. And I did so with the knowledge that no other restaurants would be allowed in the overlay district. If the developer is allowed to double the number of restaurants, and if these restaurants only draw patrons from the neighborhood as the Office of Planning states, my business will be negatively affected. If this is true, the PUD must be denied.

My second concern is the use of the narrow Macomb Street alley, which is on the property line of my restaurant. For the first few years of my lease, I attempted to get the alley paved. After countless phone calls to the D.O.T., someone finally came out to inspect. We were told that the alley was without proper drainage, had no storm sewer, and to pave it would adversely affect water drainage issues. Since Giant erected a brick wall, blocking the alley,

many years ago, the alley has essentially been abandoned by everybody except 2Amys. I have twice paved it to control a serious mud problem and use it for trash pickup and recycling. Our delivery entrance sides onto the alley. Now Giant wants the alley reopened to provide truck access for three new loading docks with the possibility of more than 100 truck deliveries per day. They will idle between the apartment building and my outdoor deck. The narrowness of the alley (less than 18 feet) won't allow two-way traffic. The impact on Macomb Street will be severe. The PUD has buffering requirements to restrict the impact of loading on local residents, and to that end there have been years of discussions on how to minimize the impact of the proposed Giant loading dock on the neighborhood. All of these measures are focused on a few town homes on Idaho Ave. The developers have suggested planting trees and constructing a tall dirt berm to protect the neighborhood and restricting truck traffic from exiting into the residential neighborhood. No provisions have been made to buffer the neighborhood from the Macomb alley loading docks, where the number of trucks from three docks will likelier be even higher than the planned Giant dock.

This is not downtown Washington. This is a quiet residential neighborhood. It is nice to think that a traffic management and loading zone plan will alleviate any problems, but at the end of the day, stores need their deliveries, and trucks show up when they show up. My restaurant receives between eight and fifteen deliveries per day, and we are a small business. Multiply this by ten or twelve, and there will be a constant line of trucks with no place to go. In addition, many people park illegally in the alley, essentially blocking it to truck traffic. They dash into the drycleaners or up to the consignment shop. Since the loading dock management plan has no control over these activities it could raise havoc with their truck management plan. D.O.T admitted at the last zoning meeting that it doesn't have the resources to do field work. If they spent a few hours sitting in my front window they would see how busy the alley is, and the problems involved.

No Giant representative has ever taken the time to contact me to discuss what their plans are or what we can do to work together, and when I raised concerns about truck traffic, what will become of neighborhood parking during construction, and how to minimize the

impact of major construction five feet from my dining room at the last ANC presentation, they smiled, underestimated by half the size of the additional commercial space, and told me not to worry because they had "a plan." I can't tell if the situation the neighborhood is dealing with is Kafka-esque or Orwellian.

Everyone in Cleveland Park wants a new Giant. What I don't understand is why the city bothers having zoning rules that we count on if they can be changed for no other reason than the profit of a large company at the expense of local small businesses. I employ more than sixty people at 2Amys, and I am responsible for their jobs and families. I urge the zoning board to deny the application for a PUD and a map amendment.

Peter Pastan  
2Amys