

Testimony of Nancy J. MacWood, ANC 3C09

D.C. Zoning Commission

Hearing on Map Amendment and Planned Unit Development, Case No. 08-15

April 6, 2009

Good evening. I am Nancy MacWood and I represent the portion of Cleveland Park to the east of the Macomb/Wisconsin commercial area as an ANC commissioner. I am also a member of the city's Rezoning Task Force and was a member of the Comprehensive Plan Task Force.

I voted for the ANC resolution that conditionally supported the Giant PUD for two reasons. One, the community has been frustrated by the deteriorating condition of the grocery store for a long time and almost without exception the residents want it improved. Two, there will be serious impacts on the neighborhood resulting from the requested zoning relief and the ANC resolution asks the Zoning Commission to address most of them.

All of the issues have repeatedly been discussed with the applicant and the Office of Planning and DDOT. As early as April 2007 a group of ANC commissioners, CPCA representatives and others met with DDOT to explain that Stop&Shop was working on a development plan for most of our commercial area and to request that it would be helpful to have DDOT's input. In March 2008 a similar group met with the Office of Planning to explain that we wanted to have a project that would not divide the neighborhood and we needed OP's help in achieving that goal. We asked OP to help us meet with DDOT again and that meeting occurred on May 8, 2008. At that point the specifics of parking and loading were not known, but issues related to the growing density of the project, the impact on traffic, and how the applicant would treat the overlay were discussed. Within a week the PUD application was filed.

A month later I met with OP staff and pointed out some deficiencies in the submission, including that there was no relief requested for parking even though there were fewer spaces than required. My intention as with the previous meetings was to ask the relevant government agencies to quickly address the problems and issues so that the applicant could respond in a timely manner and an improved application could move forward. The next meeting with DDOT and OP occurred on July 9, 2008 and the applicant was present. We discussed traffic routing because it made sense to know the circulation pattern for cars and trucks before discussing the need for mitigation. At that time, I raised that close inspection of the plans showed that none of the proposed South Block commercial or residential space connected to on-site loading docks and yet the applicant was asserting that they had more than the required amount of loading for the PUD. I asked that OP and DDOT require the applicant to provide required on-site loading. At the setdown hearing the Office of Planning mentioned the loading and parking issues and said they were either resolved or being resolved. These issues remain today.

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EXHIBIT No. 19A
District of Columbia
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Exhibit No. 19A

I have attached a May 2005 letter from the ANC to the Stop&Shop CEO. At that point I and others had been meeting with local Giant executives for over 4 years. The summer after the letter was sent, Tony Colavolpe, who you met briefly during the February hearing, came to Washington to meet with several ANC commissioners, the President of CPCA, and myself. He told us that Stop&Shop understood urban needs and constraints and he committed that he would work with us to improve the store. Some months later we learned that Stop&Shop wanted to redevelop both blocks and that StreetWorks had been hired to create a master plan. Our small group committed to be as helpful as we could in reacting to site planning and organizing community meetings.

As it became clear that responses to resident requests resulted in additional floors of housing and more program, some of us cautioned the applicant that they were overreaching and compromising potential community support. Some of us hoped that OP and DDOT would intervene to scale back the project when it became apparent that the applicant was leveraging a new grocery store against an amount of housing inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and with a package of zoning relief that would negatively impact residents on all sides of the project. After community meetings with OP and DDOT made that unlikely, I helped to organize a negotiation meeting held on January 23, 2009 with most of the opposing parties and the applicant. The StreetWorks representative agreed to take the list of issues and potential compromises back to Stop&Shop and respond quickly. But there was no response until the day after the February 23rd hearing when they emailed one party that they did not intend to negotiate.

The goal of having a project that could be universally supported by the neighbors was not achieved. But even more important this project had the potential to be an exemplary development in a high profile location in a high profile city. The ANC has listed some of the most serious potential impacts that should be addressed and I also hope that the Commission will examine what I believe is a significant imbalance between the zoning relief requested and the public benefits proffered.

	ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3C GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CATHEDRAL HEIGHTS • CLEVELAND PARK • MASSACHUSETTS AVE. HEIGHTS MCLEAN GARDENS • WOODLEY PARK
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May 6, 2005

Marc Smith
 President & CEO
 Stop and Shop Supermarket Companies Inc.
 1385 Hancock Street
 Quincy MA 02169

Dear Mr. Smith,

There has been an important development in the effort to renovate and expand the Giant Supermarket in the Cleveland Park neighborhood of Washington, DC. As you know, that store, which is located on a very prominent District corner, has been deteriorating even though it was scheduled for major expansion and renovation more than 5 years ago. The Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3C (ANC), which advises the District government on neighborhood matters, has made numerous attempts to persuade Giant representatives to begin the project. Residents, who have been loyal to Giant for many years, are frustrated and disillusioned and many are shopping elsewhere until this store improves.

Last fall the ANC hired an architect to study the proposed store area and to recommend architectural responses to the provisions in the Agreement among Giant, the District Office of Planning, and the Cleveland Park Citizens Association. The mandates in that Agreement are few; namely, Giant has to restore the original entrance on the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and maintain existing operable doors into the expanded part of the supermarket. The underlying reason for these provisions is to ensure a lively interplay between the urban neighborhood sidewalk and the store.

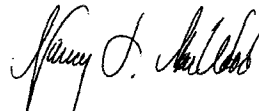
The architect addressed Giant's concerns for secure entrances/exits and over the 18" difference in floor height between the sidewalk and the store floor. By rotating the proposed Giant interior layout 90 degrees (back to the current organization of aisles and check-outs), he was able to accommodate all the proposed layout spaces, including checkout stations, and secure both a restored original entrance and the proposed entrance to the parking lot. He also presented a compact solution to the height issue and designed a simple, but energetic scheme for involving pedestrians in the life of the store. The ANC unveiled the designs to the community at our public meeting on April 25, 2005. The standing room only crowd was enthusiastic about the approach we presented and anxious to know whether our suggestions had motivated Giant to move this project forward. Subsequent newspaper coverage highlighted the support, which includes informal endorsements from the Office of Planning and the Cleveland Park Citizens Association, for the plans commissioned by the ANC.

I have scheduled a meeting with Barry Scher and David Patalita, who were not available to attend the ANC meeting or view the drawings prior to that meeting, for later this month. Since my interest is to represent the wishes of the community as aggressively as I can, I hope that you would be interested in seeing our concept as soon as possible. You are known as an innovator and while this Washington, D.C. store presents simple issues, I think you will appreciate the advantage of creating an interactive urban atmosphere in a supermarket so prominently located in an urban environment. This is not an experimental approach since another supermarket chain has already used this concept successfully and to much acclaim in another part of the city.

There has been considerable press coverage about the scaling back of Giant in this region. It is distressing to watch the much admired Cleveland Park neighborhood shopping area reduced to empty storefronts by Giant's premature termination of leases and subsequent abandonment of its announced plans to expand and renovate. This cannot be a situation that Stop & Shop wants to continue. There are no stalling tactics coming from the neighborhood. Quite the contrary, everyone wants to know what has happened to Giant and to the reliable neighborhood supermarket. Official comments are no longer persuasive and many patrons are turning to other grocery stores in the area, some of which have particular urban appeal. If there are architectural questions about how to adapt the standard interior layout to the openings presented by our store, the ANC plans offer alternatives. If there are corporate reasons for ignoring one of the most successful grocery stores in the District, then it is time to make those reasons public.

ANC 3C is committed to facilitating the rebirth of our neighborhood shopping area. I would like to meet with you to show you the plans developed by the ANC and to discuss how we can get this project moving. I can be reached either by email nmacwood@aol.com or by telephone 202-966-5333. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Nancy J. MacWood
Chair, ANC 3C

cc: David Maloney
George Idelson
Barry Scher