

Statement of Philip Olsson

2009 MAR 20 PM 2:13

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Mr. Chairman and Commissioners:

My name is Philip Olsson. I live at 3519 Lowell Street, and I will speak briefly about parking, and space for small businesses, and the need for dialogue..

1. In recent years, as restaurants have expanded along Wisconsin and Macomb, the ripple effect of their customer parking has become a tidal wave in my neighborhood. With 1500 feet of new commercial frontage extending north from Macomb, this tidal wave will become a tsunami, surging into McLean Gardens and back across Wisconsin Avenue onto 36th Street, Newark, Norton Place, Ordway, Macomb, and Lowell.

The PUD Regulations provide that the acceptability of a project's impact shall be measured by public benefits (2403.3), which are to be "significantly greater ... than would likely result from [matter of right] development" (2403.6). The expanded supermarket, which we all want, was originally proposed and could even today be built as a "matter of right," and therefore of itself it is not a "public benefit" which can justify the present PUD,

This project's neighborhood-changing parking impact will not be offset by any of the kind of significantly greater "public benefits", which are required by the PUD

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regulations. In fact, the benefits to the neighborhood are going backwards. The applicant's May 10, 2008 submission promised 396 parking spaces on the South Block "which will be available to customers and employees of the Giant and other retail establishments." The May application did not limit its parking offer to its own retail lessees. But this offer was reduced to a flat 30 spaces in applicant's October, 2008, submission. This Zoning Commission needs to prevent the parking tsunami which is threatened by this proposal.

2. A word about small businesses. Guaranteeing affordable space for merchants, such as Sullivan's toyshop and Luigi, the barber, should enjoy the same priority which you apply to guaranteeing affordable housing for people with moderate incomes. Shemali's Delicatessen and a well-established paint store were pushed out when the Applicant, a subsidiary of one of the world's largest retailing companies, took over the Murphy's space, The applicant now wants your written commitment to proceed with its PUD. You should insist that the applicant make its own upfront, written commitments to the neighborhood's much-loved small businesses. These merchants do not have global reach or internationally recognized brands. The applicant has made oral statements of its good intentions, and I am sure they are made in good faith. But its past treatment of other neighborhood small businesses shows that firm, upfront, written commitments are needed.

3. Dialogue: The Commission should jump start the dialogue which has never occurred. There was dialogue in 2002, when the Applicant signed an agreement with the

Office of Planning and the Cleveland Park Citizens Association to proceed with matter of right development. That agreement was not implemented, and during the next two years the applicant's parent company was substantially pre-occupied with settling matters raised by a U.S. regulatory agency. In 2005 ANC 3 wrote to Stop and Shop's CEO inquiring about the company's plans for the Wisconsin Avenue site and received an open and forthcoming reply. In 2006 a new plan was presented to the neighbors which included three stories of construction on the North Block. That plan was generally well-received. Since that time, the Applicant has continually expanded what it is seeking and has repeatedly refused to engage in meaningful dialogue about these expanding plans.

The Commission should direct the Applicant to provide written responses to the questions raised by neighbors, particularly the six points put forward by Mr. Pickman in his May 4, 2009 testimony. Once those responses are received, the Commission should direct the applicant and the neighbors to meet for serious discussions and to file a report with the Commission as to the issues which they have resolved and the issues which remain for your resolution.