

**Government of the District of Columbia
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3-D**

P.O. Box 40846
Palisades Station
Washington, D.C. 20016

2009 JUL 10 AM 11:04

July 8, 2009

By facsimile

The Honorable Anthony Hood Chairman, District of Columbia Zoning Commission

Suite 200/210S 441 4th Street NW
Washington DC 20001

**RE: Subject: Zoning Commission Case Number 08-21 (Athena Group, LLC:
Consolidated Review of a Planned Unit Development and Related Map Amendment
@ Square 1356)**

Dear Chairman Hood:

As you are well aware, ANC3D has worked diligently for many months with the developer, with the Zoning Commission, with interested community groups and with its own advisors – planning experts, architects and lawyers – all in an attempt to mold the above-referenced project into a proposal that will benefit the community and the District of Columbia. While there has been progress since the first proposal, ANC3D still cannot support this PUD as presented in the final amended application submitted on June 25, 2009.

In fact, when ANC3D held its properly noticed and regularly scheduled monthly meeting on Wednesday, July 1, 2009 at Sibley Memorial Hospital's Ernst Auditorium, with all Commissioners present at all times, the Commissioners voted 6 – 2 to oppose Athena's final submission.

It is the ANC's view that, through the proposed PUD, Athena is requesting significant variances that would create lasting negative impacts on the neighborhood. More specifically, ANC3D is troubled by the 16 four-story units in buildings 2A and B, 5, and 6A and B. Towering over the three-story 27-feet high Foxhall Mews townhouses to the East, the 6A and 6B buildings would cast a big shadow.

Most importantly, these new buildings would likely set a new standard for height in the lower MacArthur Boulevard area which presently contains 2 and 3 story older single family homes and garden apartments. Although these old buildings offer the bulk of the affordable housing in the neighborhood, many may be replaced with new construction in

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 08-21
EXHIBIT NO. 964 (ORIGINAL)

the next few years. The community's concern is that, naturally, the new developers will also want to be able to build four-story buildings, changing this community's character drastically and compromising the light, air, and open space that are so important to low-density residential neighborhoods. Therefore, "Canal Parc," as proposed, would have a negative effect on the present character and the future development of the area.

Similarly, ANC3D cannot endorse the construction of 34 units on this small, 2.78 acre site: At one time during the negotiation process, ANC offered to accept 32 units, but only if all buildings were limited to three stories. Athena refused that compromise offer. Thirty-four units is considerably more than the 18 units that could be built by right, according to the ANC's architect, and significantly more than even Athena's "by-right" calculation of 26 units. Thirty-four units would have a huge traffic and population impact in an area that is already struggling with congestion. The Rock Creek West Area Element of the Comprehensive Plan specifically mentions MacArthur Boulevard and Canal Road, along with Connecticut Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue, as streets with major traffic issues. The "Canal Parc" site is on MacArthur Boulevard, close to its intersection with Canal Road, which is exactly the wrong spot for dense development. Because the proposed development would be so crowded internally, the residents, their cars and those of their guests would spill out into the greater community.

The ANC is also troubled that the proposed development is so squeezed onto its parcel that the applicant proposes to remove mature trees in public space to accommodate the front "stoops" of townhouses on MacArthur Boulevard and that a 25-foot wetland buffer established in new developments elsewhere in the community (at 1801 and 2101 Foxhall Road) has not been allowed by the developer on this property. Other concerns include the fact that the affordable units are still not indistinguishable; the interior streets have no circulation plan; there is not enough green space for thirty-something families to enjoy – and most of what the applicant offers as offsetting amenities are benefits for the new development itself, not the greater community.

We respectfully request that, in making its decision on this application, the Zoning Commission give the ANC's advice the great weight to which the law says that it is entitled and either deny Athena's application for the Canal Parc PUD as currently designed or scale it back to be more appropriate for the neighborhood.

Sincerely,


Elizabeth B. Sandza

Chair, ANC3D

Cc: Phillip Feola

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P.O. Box 40846
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2009 JUL - 8 PM 2:10

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08-21
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