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Mary M. Cheh

Councilmember, Ward 3
Chair Pro Tempore
Chair, Committee on the Environment, Public Works, and Transportation

October 31, 2012

Anthony J. Hood, Chairman
Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia
441 Fourth Street, NW, Suite 200 South
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Case 10-23, Jemal's Babes, LLC, Consolidated PUD & Related Map Amendment

Dear Chairman Hood,

For the past seven years, the property at 4600 Wisconsin Avenue, NW has sat vacant. Positioned within a few blocks of the Metro, fourteen bus lines, and a Capital Bikeshare station—sited directly on Wisconsin Avenue—this spot has remained empty as the Tenleytown neighborhood attempts to reinvigorate itself. I write today to support the proposed development and to encourage the Zoning Commission to approve the application.

The consolidated PUD plans to bring approximately sixty apartments and over 17,000 square feet of retail to one of the primary commercial corridors in upper Northwest. Beyond the simple merits of smart development along the main corridors of the city, this project presents particular merit, reflected in the fact that it has been supported by the Office of Planning, the District Department of Transportation, and the affected ANC, which approved it unanimously. The proposed development will be compliant with LEED Gold standards, include significant streetscaping with improvements along the block on both sides of the street, and—perhaps most importantly—provide the funding necessary to underground power lines around the property. As Brandywine marks the first point on Wisconsin where the power lines come above ground, this move brings us one step closer to burying the lines along the entire corridor: a step crucial to improving service reliability throughout the city.

Although some have expressed concerns about the lack of parking, these concerns are ameliorated by the fact that the project is located in the heart of Tenleytown, with numerous transportation modes available (from the newly provided Zipcar space to Car2Go to Capital Bikeshare to nearby mass transit); the developer is providing transit subsidies and numerous amenities to encourage multi-modal transit; the residents will not be eligible for residential parking permits under their leases; and the units themselves will affirmatively be marketed to those without cars. But, more importantly, the project must be viewed in its totality, and the Commission should consider all of the benefits inuring to the tenants who occupy the site and the tremendous benefits conferred on the community. If there were a downside associated with parking—and, given the location and transit options available, I don't view there to be any—it is far, far outweighed by the positive effect this development will have on the community.

Regards,

Mary M. Cheh

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 10-23
EXHIBIT NO. 32
ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 10-32
EXHIBIT NO. 392