Stanton Park Neighborhood Association
P.O. Box 75085, National Capitol Station, Washington, D.C. 20013-5085

Chairperson
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 Fourth St., NW
Suite 210
Washington DC, 20001

January 4, 1999

OFFICE OF ZONING
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
'99 JAN -5 P12:02

Re: Case No: 16407

Dear Sirs,

The Stanton Park Neighborhood Association works to improve the quality of the neighborhood surrounding Stanton Park in Northeast Washington. MedLink Hospital is within the area we monitor, and we have reviewed applications by MedLink in the past. Regretfully, MedLink has been a source of problems for our neighborhood.

The most pertinent example concerns the long-closed underground garage. Condition 2 of the BZA approval of application #15542 in 1991 required that in exchange for being allowed to operate 130 nursing home beds, the hospital would open the underground garage and provide 176 parking spaces. Seven years have passed, and the hospital remains in violation of this condition. The underground garage is not open, and by their own admission at the December 14, 1998 ANC 6A meeting, they are currently providing only 132 parking spaces. The opening of this garage is an existing obligation that is at least seven years late.

Second, according to parishioners of St. James Church (which is located on the same block) there is a binding agreement that allowed closing off the alley between the hospital and the church. The hospital turned the area into a gated emergency room entrance, and in exchange the parishioners were to be allowed to park in the hospital's parking lots. Reverend Downing, Rector at St. James, has stated that MedLink's failure to open the underground garage has caused a parking problem. Further, MedLink has ticketed church-goers using the parking areas, and has not adequately maintained the property with regard to trash.

A third example of problems caused by MedLink Hospital is an abandoned, historic rowhouse that is being allowed to deteriorate in an obvious effort at demolition by neglect. Their application to have the structure demolished has been denied by the City as not compatible with the historic preservation ordinance. Nonetheless, MedLink has continued to pursue a policy of demolition by neglect.

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Given the history of problems with MedLink Hospital, the Land Use Committee of the Stanton Park Neighborhood Association questions whether any increase in the number of beds should be considered until such time as MedLink is in compliance with existing agreements and laws. MedLink has little credibility and cannot be trusted to do what they agree to do. Therefore, we request that this application be denied or postponed until such time as the underground parking garage is open and operating, Medlink complies with their agreement with St. James Church, and resolves the disposition of the above mentioned rowhouse in a manner consistent with local historic preservation laws.

Sincerely,

Drury Tallant, Chair
SPNA Land use Committee

cc: SPNA Secretary