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Government of the District of Columbia
Board of Zoning Adjustment
C/o Ms. Jerrily R. Kress, FAIA
Director, Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, N.W.
Suite 210-S
Washington, D.C. 20001

Subject: Rehearing of Capitol Hill Group Modification to Application Number 16407

Dear Ms. Kress,

On behalf of the Capitol Hill Coalition for Sensible Development (hereafter CHCSD), an ad hoc group of Capitol Hill Historic District citizens who are working to ensure that residential development in the neighborhood is sensible, I am writing to **request party status**. While we do not have strict boundaries, almost everyone in our coalition lives in the area near the Medlink medical complex that is owned by Capitol Hill Group and located on adjacent Squares 865 and 895. We are particularly concerned about the Medlink site, its future, and its impact on the surrounding community. As CHCSD Chairperson in agreement with other signatories below, and in accordance with 11 DCMR 3106, I am applying for party status for CHCSD in the matter referenced above coming before the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) on February 13, 2001.

Following the format in 3106.2, I am filing the following information about CHCSD:

(a) The person's name and address
Capitol Hill Coalition for Sensible Development, P.O. Box 15840, Washington, D.C. 20003

(b) A request to appear and participate as a party:
CHCSD, through its Chairperson, Nancy Simpson, (or another CHCSD officer or authorized CHCSD designee in the event of emergency or illness) requests to appear and participate as a party in the matter of Application 16407.

(c) Whether the person will appear as a proponent or opponent of the appeal or application:
At this time, CHCSD will oppose the modification to application 16407 and ask the BZA to reverse its approval of the modifications on June 7, 2000 that it signed into BZA Order 16407-A.

BZA
Case No. 16407
Exhibit No. 72

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16407
EXHIBIT NO.72

(d) Whether the person will appear through legal counsel and if so, the name and address:

CHCSD does not plan to appear through legal counsel.

(e) A written statement setting forth why the person should be granted party status, including reference to points 1 through 5:

(1) The requested zoning relief will affect ~*98%* of all CHCSD properties. They live in row houses, condos, coops, and a smaller number in apartments, in approximately 25 square blocks surrounding Capitol Hill Group's Medlink property located on Squares 865 and 895. (I live on Square 896, immediately south of Square 895.)

(2) Approximately 95% of CHCSD own their row houses, condos, or coops, and the remainder rent apartments. CHCSD has no information as to whether anyone in the group is a trustee or mortgagee. (I co-own a row house with my spouse.)

(3) Approximately 98% of CHCSD's properties will be affected and lie within a two square-block radius (25 square blocks) of the perimeter of the Capitol Hill Group's property that is subject to application 16407. The majority of these neighbors live within a one-block radius of the site and multiple properties are only 200 feet away or less. The Capitol Hill Group property is located on Square 865 in the 600 block of Massachusetts Avenue, N.E. bordered by Mass. Ave., 7th and C Streets; and on Square 895 in the 700 block of Massachusetts/Constitution Avenues, N.E. bordered by these two Avenues, 7th, 8th, and C Streets, N.E.

(4) If the zoning relief granted in June is not reversed, there will be environmental, economic, and social impacts on CHCSD persons and property. In the matter of reducing the offstreet parking requirements for the Medlink complex from 276 to 200 spaces, this potentially will exacerbate an existing parking problem in the area. As indicated in documents relating to the modification to 16407, a large impetus behind the request for this modification is the sale of lots on Square 865 for development, thereby decreasing offstreet parking capacity by about 100 spaces. Taken in a sea of isolation selling land for development is fine. However, the Medlink underground parking garage was not ready to fully open, in fact it has failed two zoning inspections since September 2000 and has been in violation of BZA orders to be fully open. St. James Church has parking access rights that Capitol Hill Group should honor without interruption. Furthermore, during Fall of 1999 Medlink had DPW reverse both sides of the 200 block of 7th Street from Zone-6 to 3-hour-only parking, equal to about 28 parking spaces. This indicated that Medlink needed more parking capacity six months prior to its request for modification to 16407. Now, only a few weeks before the 2-13-01 rehearing one side of 7th Street has been reversed back to Zone 6. There are other aspects that need to be nailed down in this situation. Taking into account a multitude of factors including Medlink violating BZA requirements, reducing the number of offstreet parking spaces for Medlink should not have been considered. CHCSD looks for the BZA to reverse its June decision and restore the previously required 276 offstreet spaces at this time.

To help define the current parking problem around Medlink, I attached to my 9-18-00 letter to Sheila Cross Reid an informal parking survey that our volunteers conducted on Sunday, August 13, between 10 and 11 PM on 58 blocks (segments, not square) around Medlink. There were a total of only 17 net legal available parking spaces. We are awaiting a DPW parking study of the area that CHCSD requested 9-7-00. Many neighbors have commented that parking around here has become extremely tight in the last few years -- it is echoed regularly in sidewalk chats and at neighborhood meetings and I have experienced the problem first hand. It poses a problem environmentally as people are having to circle around countless times to find a space blocks away from their home sometimes, thus adding to auto emissions in a dense urban environment. On neighbor complained to me that Medlink employees parked in front of her house in the 700 block of Massachusetts Avenue and threw litter out of the car. Economically, hunting for parking wastes time and gas for everyone; can harm small businesses in the area who have no offstreet parking options for customers; and it can diminish marketability of area housing units. Socially, a major concern particularly for women and the elderly, is the public safety risk in having to park far from your home in the evening when spaces are scarce. Capitol Hill may be a popular place to live now, but the first-hand personal assault stories and stats cannot be ignored.

(5) The zoning relief, if allowed to stand, will affect far more significantly the CHCSD (and non-CHCSD) neighbors in at least the two-block radius around Medlink than it will affect residents extending farther north beyond E Street, south beyond East Capitol Street, east beyond 10th and west beyond 5th Street. This is due of course to having the closest proximity to Medlink. Also, many of our houses have no offstreet parking. Unlike some District neighborhoods, the majority of our houses and lots are small and streets are tight. This characteristic provides little margin for error in calculating needed offstreet parking spaces.

I ask you to take into consideration that, on another neighborhood matter involving Medlink, CHCSD gathered about 1200 signatures, all within the Capitol Hill Historic District, petitioning Medlink to fulfill its BZA requirement to fully open its existing underground garage for Medlink staff and visitors.

I respectfully request that the BZA consider granting party status to the CHCSD. Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions.

Yours truly,

Nancy J. Simpson

Nancy J. Simpson
Chairperson
202-544-0732

Approved by

Avis Bohlen, Vice Chair

Jean Frane, Treasurer

Al Getz, Parking Committee