ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 8C
3125 MARTIN LUTHER KING AVENUE, S. E.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20032
(202) 562-1188 • FAX (202) 562-6038

July 25, 2000

Re: BZA Application No. 16583

Report of ANC 8C
on the
Application of East of the River Community Development Corporation

I'm Virginia Major, Chairperson of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 8C. The Commission at its April 5, 2000 Public Meeting voted unanimously to support a variance/special exception for the building of Plaza 8 at 522 & 524 Raleigh Street SE. There were four (4) members (the required quorum) of the seven (7) member Commission present and voting. Proper notice was provided to all commissioners and to the community by mailings, posting of notices and by personal contacts.

The residents, especially those living in close proximity, have been in discussion about this property for several years. They were concerned about the poor condition and lack of maintenance of the property by the absentee owner. It was such a major eye sore that the Director of the Dept. of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs posted the name and address of the owner on the building to try to get them to maintain the property. It still remained an eyesore until East of the River CDC, in its efforts to address the blighted properties in the community, purchased this property and engaged the community in dialogue as to what would be the best use. The community after a series of meets

BZA
Case No. 16583
Exhibit No. 33

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16583
EXHIBIT NO.33

recommended an office-type building with space for small businesses. They did not want an apartment/residential property. This property has never been successful as residential in the past 23 years I have lived in the community. The reason, I believe is due to the location.

The property is located at the end of Raleigh Street at Martin L.. King Avenue and is separated from the rest of the residential property by an alley. The back of the property abuts the lot in back of the gas station on Martin L. King Avenue and on the side opposite the alley it is about 3 to 4 feet from the other commercial property. So it is more connected to the commercial area than to the residential. Additionally, Martin L. King Avenue curves in this area, so two streets, Parkland and Raleigh, come out to the Avenue with only a short distance between the two. The gas station and three small shops and the apartment buildings follow the curve, with the apartments appearing to be partly on Martin L. King and partly on Raleigh. Raleigh Street widens in front of one of the building and gives the appearance that it is on King Avenue rather than Raleigh.

The community is waiting to see a change at this site and was very receptive and enthusiastic about the final plan presented to them at the April Public Meeting. They also voted at the meeting to support this project.

East of the River's Plan will be an asset to the Congress Heights Community. It will

1. Improving the appearance of the business area by unifying the business district along Martin L. King Avenue on both sides of Raleigh Street.
2. Clearly distinguish Raleigh Street on the west side of the alley as residential.
3. Provide much needed office space for East of the River to offer services to the community, and for other businesses to locate there. A few weeks ago, one of our needed services, funded by the city, moved out of the community because they said

they could not find affordable space to meet their requirements. If this office building were available, this needed service would have remained in the community.

On behalf of the ANC 8C community, we **support** this project and **recommend that the Board approve** the special exception/variance requested. The community at the public meeting also directed me to respectfully request, that the zoning process be expedited so this project can move as quickly as possible. Thank you for this opportunity and for your consideration of the Community's recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Major, Chairperson