ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3-C
GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

CATHEDRAL HEIGHTS - CLEVELAND PARK - MASSACHUSETTS AVE. HEIGHTS -
MCLEAN GARDENS - WOODLEY PARK

2737 Devonshire Place, N.W.
Washington, DC 20008
(202) 232-2232 Fax: 232-0667

Single Member District Commissioners: 01 - Cheryl Opacinch, 02 - Alan Blevins, 03 - Michael V. Molnar, 04 - Richard C. Bartel, 05 - Ann Hume Loikow, 06 - Jim Evans, 07 - Lyle Blanchard, 08 - Rosalyn P. Doggett, 09 - Ruthanne Miller

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
00 JUN 12 P 3:36

April 16, 2000

The Honorable Anthony Williams
Mayor
District of Columbia
441 4th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mayor Williams:

I write to request your assistance with a matter affecting our constituents in Ward 3. The Sikhs, who own a vacant lot in my Single Member District (3C-07), were issued a permit by the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) to build a temple without the community ever being notified or given the opportunity to comment. My neighbors and I only became aware of this project eight months after the permit was issued. There is a growing sense of outrage in the community. I ask that you suspend the permit so that the ANC and the community are given the opportunity to comment on this destabilizing project.

The building permit, B425220, was applied for in November 1996 and issued in July 1999. While I understand the churches are "matter of right" in an R-1 zoned district, the proposed structure on the lot at 3801 Massachusetts Ave., N.W. would cover almost the entire area. Moreover, the 27 proposed parking spaces are insufficient to accommodate the 270 parishioners who will be using this religious facility. Of greatest concern to my neighbors and I is the potential operation of a 24-hour soup kitchen. Apparently, one of the three major tenets of the Sikh religion is that all temples must provide free community kitchens for all visitors on a 24-hour basis (see the Sikh website at www.sikhs.org/gurdwara.htm). The potential detriment to the community is significant and the public should have been notified.

I intend to raise issues about the issuance of this permit at the next meeting of ANC 3C on Monday, April 24, 2000 and at the Ward 3 Democrats on Wednesday, April 26, 2000. I have enclosed a letter from my neighbor, Beth Sneiderman, to DCRA Director Lloyd Jordan. Beyond the concerns raised in her letter are my concerns about whether the project exceeds the restrictions on building height, lot occupancy, front and side yard setbacks, height of the spire, and the adverse impacts on noise, parking, and traffic. Moreover, if the project exceeds any of these restrictions, then why wasn't the project sent to the Board of Zoning Adjustment for a waiver. I ask that you have the Director of DCRA suspend the permit pending a thorough review to provide community comment and to ensure that the permit was not issued in error. If the permit was issued in error, it should be revoked.

In closing, the District needs to do a better job to ensure that affected communities receive timely noticie of all building projects that will have a significant impact before building permits are issued. I request that you ensure the attendance of DCRA representatives at the

BZA
Case No. 16604
Exhibit No. 5

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16604
EXHIBIT NO.5

above-referenced public meetings.

Thank you in advance for your assistance on this important matter. If you have any questions, please contact me at 364-9579.

Sincerely,

Lyle Blanchard
ANC Commissioner, 3C-07

Enclosure

cc: Councilmember Kathy Patterson
Councilmember Phil Mendelson
Lloyd Jordan
Armando Lourenco

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
BUILDING AND LAND REGULATION ADMINISTRATION

RECEIVED
MAY 21 2000

May 2, 2000

Mr. Lyle Blanchard
2737 Devonshire Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Lyle:

Your letter of April 16, 2000 to Mayor Williams was referred to me for response. As you know, Mr. Johnson, Director, Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA), agreed to have this project re-reviewed in detail, as he announced at the public meeting of April 27, 2000.

Fortunately, the applicant is cooperating in allowing the ANC to review and discuss the project before proceeding with construction. That will also allow DCRA to review the project to make sure the regulations are applied consistently with past practice and in conformity with the letter of the regulations. Upon a preliminary review of the documents on file, we have not detected any problem with the zoning review approval granted, but I want to reserve my findings until a more in-depth review is performed.

I hope that your ANC has received the regular mailed notices of the Building and Land Regulation Administration's permitting activities. Use of e-mail addresses for dissemination of that information is now being implemented also. This should prevent any surprises to the ANCs in the future.

Sincerely,

Armando M. Lourenco
Administrator

cc: Lloyd J. Jordan, Director

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May 17, 2000

Gajinder Singh
Sikh Cultural Society
8716 Seven Locks Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

Dear Mr. Singh:

I write again to request your attendance at the next public meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3C. The meeting will be held on Monday, May 22, 2000 at 7:30 p.m. in the community meeting room at the Second District Police headquarters, 3320 Idaho Avenue, N.W.

My neighbors and I continue to be concerned about the proposed construction of a temple at 3801 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. Enclosed is a copy of my second letter to the Mayor, which I gave to Lloyd Jordan last month at the meeting on April 26, 2000. Attached to that letter is a copy of ANC 3C's resolution on this issue.

Because my neighbors did not have an adequate opportunity to voice their concerns, your project is on the ANC's agenda as the last major issue of the evening. I expect that discussion of your project will begin at approximately 9:00 p.m. The structure of the meeting will be to first listen to the concerns of the neighbors, with remarks limited to three to five minutes per person, followed by a presentation by you or your representative. Thus, you will have heard the concerns raised and be prepared to respond to them.

Once again, your attendance at our meeting would go a long way toward answering some questions the community has about the construction, the operation of the temple, the timing of religious services, traffic, and parking. If this project moves forward, I recommend that the Sikh Cultural Society develop a dialogue with the neighborhood so that we better understand each other.

If you have any questions, please contact me at my office (202) 727-8270 or at home (202) 364-9579.

Sincerely,

Lyle Blanchard
ANC Commissioner, 3C-07
3124 38th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20016

Enclosure

ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3-C
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April 26, 2000

The Honorable Anthony Williams
Mayor
District of Columbia
441 4th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mayor Williams:

On behalf of ANC 3C, this letter supplements my letter to you of April 16, 2000. I write to inform you that Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 3C voted unanimously on Monday, April 24, 2000 to formally request the suspension of building permit # B425220. A copy of the resolution is enclosed. Your assistance on this issue would be greatly appreciated.

This permit was issued by the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) without the community ever being notified or given the opportunity to comment. The permit allows the construction of a large temple with a capacity of 270 people on a small site located at 3801 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. ANC 3C requests that you or the Director of DCRA suspend this permit so that the ANC and the community are given the opportunity to comment on this potentially destabilizing project.

The ANC should have received notice of the proposed action by DCRA as required under D.C. Code, sec. 1-261. Please suspend the permit, provide the required 30 days notice to the ANC, and allow the community an opportunity to comment.

Thank you in advance for your assistance. The ANC looks forward to your prompt action on this important matter. If you have any questions, please contact me at 364-9579.

Sincerely,

Lyle Blanchard
ANC Commissioner, 3C-07

Enclosure

cc: Councilmember Kathy Patterson
Councilmember Phil Mendelson
Lloyd Jordan
Armando Lourenco