Sarah Neimeyer and Joe Warren
129 3rd ST., NE
Washington, DC 20002

Decenber 10, 2001

Ms. Jerrily R. Kress, FAIA
Director
Government of the District of Columbia
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th St., NW, Suite 210-S
Washington, DC 20002

Re: Application Number 16619

Dear Ms. Kress:

We are writing today to urge the Board of Zoning to not approve the application of Romano Romani and Thomas D. Parry to receive a use variance for the property at 233 Constitution Avenue, Northeast.

As home owners who live across the street from the property in question, we are concerned that granting this variance will destroy the residential nature of our community. While this application on its face may seem fairly benign, the building has been and continues to be zoned R-4, and granting one variance will undoubtly be construed by other property owners as an opening in the long time commitment of the Zoning Board to guard our residential neighborhoods from commercial businesses. Indeed, the property owner on the corner of Third and Constitution routinely rents out their "home" for large parties – with bands that play late into the night – and will likely file a use variance if the current petition is granted.

Capitol Hill is a wonderful neighborhood to live in and raise a family. Since buying our house we have become friends with many of neighbors. While our neighborhood is within blocks of the Capitol, it is still a residential neighborhood, where we go for walks at night, take our kids to play at the neighborhood playground during the day, talk over the fence and at the front stoop, and know that in a pinch we can call on our neighbors for help. We do not believe that granting this variance will add value to our quality of life or our neighborhood. In fact quite the opposite, we feel that it substantially subtracts from those qualities that make this a good neighborhood.

The petitioner's business also has a negative impact on the apperance of the neighborhood. For instnace, one negative impact relates to parking. The petitioner has a driveway on Third Street that is sufficient to fit one car. A second car, however, is frequently jammed into the slot with the right side of the car parked on an eroded

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embankment. (See attached photo.) If the embankment is wet, which is frequently the case throughout much of the year, the car leaves tracks of red clay on the sidewalk and street as the driver backs out of the driveway. The eroded red-clay embankment has grown over time and is very unsightly.

We urge the Board of Zoning to find there is no need to grant a use variance. Capitol Hill already contains ample space for commercial businesses. Two blocks to the North of the property in question is a commercial corridor that runs from Union Station along Massachusetts Avenue Northeast to Stanton Park. In addition, there is sizable commercial corridor five blocks to the South along Pennsylvania. Both corridors include office buildings, restaurants, shops, and other commercial entities. Undoubtedly the petitioners could find office space to rent or purchase in either corridor. Alternatively, they could locate downtown, as several other lobbyists choose to do. We see no reasons why the Petitioners should be allowed to legitimize their business after ten years of illegal operation.

We hope that the Zoning Board will not grant this request for use variance for the property at 233 Constitution Avenue, Northeast.

Sincerely,

Sarah C. Neimeyer Joe Warren

Sarah Neimeyer and Joe Warren

