ORIGINAL

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

In the matter of

Application of the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, pursuant to Section 206 of the Foreign Missions Act and 11 DCMR the Zoning Regulations of the District of Columbia to locate a chancery in an R-1-A District at premises 2741 34th Street, N.W. (Square 2122, Lot 27)

Application Number 16620

00 SEP 18 P4:24

REQUEST FOR PARTY STATUS AND OPPOSITION OF
SCOTT BLAKE HARRIS AND BARBARA STRAUGHN HARRIS

Scott Blake Harris and Barbara Straughn Harris, residing at 3409 Fulton Street, N.W., hereby request to participate as parties in the above-noted proceeding. The Harris's wish to appear as an opponents of the application and to do so without counsel.

The Harrises are entitled to party status since they own and occupy residential property within a block of the proposed chancery at Square 2122, Lot 27. They own said property in fee simple and occupy it as their primary residence. The Harris's property will be affected by increased traffic – and parking difficulties – created by grant of the pending application. Moreover, they will be affected by any change in the residential character of he neighborhood.

The property, which is the subject of this proceeding, is located in a residential area, and – except for a brief period – was occupied as a private home. The area also has limited off-street parking, meaning that residents must often park their own automobiles on the street in front of their homes.

It is also a neighborhood adjacent to other chanceries, which are located in the diplomatic overlay district. These chanceries already produce more vehicular traffic than the neighborhood can easily accommodate. They also require more parking than they have available, spilling cars onto the local streets. Previous problems created by the chanceries led to the designation of a number of streets in the area—including Fulton Street, which is directly across from the property in question—as residential parking zones. This designation means that non-residents may only park during the day for a limited period of time. This has, however, not cured the parking problems caused by the existing chanceries.

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All of these problems become worse in the evening when these chanceries routinely hold social events to which numerous guests are invited. These chanceries have no provision whatsoever to handle parking for their guests. As a result, the local streets are swamped with traffic and by cars parking for chancery social events – often with "valets" tearing around the neighborhood.

Due to the timing of these events, guests and or valets are driving and parking on residential streets just as residents are returning home from work, or as they are returning home with their children from after school activities. All too often, residents of the area find that they cannot park anywhere near their homes just as they are returning for the evening—often burdened with small children and their accompanying paraphernalia. And, to add insult to injury, they must do so while dodging all the traffic.

The property in question here has the limited on-site parking one would expect in a private home. It has a two-car garage, with a slab concrete driveway. This means there will not be sufficient parking for its employees should they drive to work—and there will be no parking whatsoever for guests at social affairs.

The petitioner promises that its employees will be car-pooled, and that they will squeeze seven vehicles bumper-to-bumper on the driveway. But car-pooling can be easily abandoned, as can bumper-to-bumper parking whenever a driver is in a rush. The petitioner once claimed that the proposed chancery would house only ten employees. Only weeks later, at an ANC meeting, that number became fifteen. If the number of employees can change fifty percent in a couple of weeks, how long will the other promises last?

The zoning rules ought not be changed in any way that would exacerbate the parking or other vehicular traffic problems already besetting this residential neighborhood. Nor should they be changed in such a way as to alter the character of the neighborhood.

This is a neighborhood under stress whose character and livability could be easily destroyed. The request to locate a chancery in this R-1-A residential area ought to be denied. Alternatively, it ought to be granted only upon – at a minimum – the following conditions:

(1) Parking will be provided on the chancery property for all employees and others expected to work at ***or visit*** the chancery during the day;

(2) No social events should be permitted at the chancery whatsoever after 5:00 p.m.

(3) The number of employees shall be limited to ten; and

(4) No construction, other than a flagpole, that would be atypical for a residential property will be permitted (this includes, but is not limited to, satellite dishes, bright lights, and security fencing).

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott Blake Harris

Barbara Straughn Harris

Date: 17 September 2000