DAVID A. O'CONNOR
621 F Street NE
Washington, DC 20002
Tel: 202-546-5869

November 20, 2000

16648

BZA Chairman Robert Sockwell
441 4th St., NW
Second Floor
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Proposed BP/Amoco Site near 3rd and H Streets NE

Dear Chairman Sockwell:

As a homeowner and taxpayer living near the proposed BP-Amoco site on H Street NE, I concur with the sentiments of many of my neighbors concerning the need for community involvement, input and approval of any development of the proposed site. As a gateway to H Street, the development and improvement of this site is a critical piece in the larger issue of redevelopment of the entire H Street corridor. The decisions we make now will have an enduring impact on the future redevelopment of this corridor, and there are two paths this redevelopment can take – the ugly suburbanization and commuter-oriented strip approach of huge gas stations and fast food joints that has effectively ruined New York Avenue NE, or the community revitalization that is taking place along Barracks Row and Eighth Street SE while preserving the historic architecture in the area.

The vast majority, if not the entirety, of the H Street community would clearly likely to see the development of H Street follow the Barracks Row/8th Street model, and not the New York Avenue model. I agree with this sentiment. Accordingly, I urge you to condition any approval of the BP-Amoco proposal by mandating the retention and/or reconstruction of the historical nature and facades along the important community properties located along the 300-400 block of H Street. Above all, any renovations of these sites should be sensitive to the historical rowhouse nature of the rest of the street. By way of comparison, one may look to the Exxon station at the corner of Mass Ave. and Second Streets NE as a possible prototype for the proposed BP-Amoco site on H Street NE.

In addition, the proposed site may need to be rethought in order to accommodate pedestrian traffic along H Street. Removing the mini-mart from behind the gas islands would open up new space in that part of the parcel and placing the store at the front of the parcel would certainly improve pedestrian access. Consideration should also be given to limiting the vehicle entrance point to

BZA
Case No. 16648
Exhibit No. 27

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16648
EXHIBIT NO.27

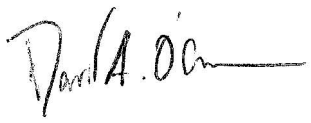
3rd Street and the exit point to H Street to minimize the speed of entering vehicles. Currently vehicles enter the site at high rates of speed from H Street, which presents a danger to pedestrians on the sidewalk.

Other issues have been raised by members of the community, all of which should be fully addressed before zoning approval is granted. These include: 1) a detailed analysis of the proposed closing of the alleyway behind the site, which could present severe safety hazards; 2) a light pollution analysis to determine whether the proposed array of solar panels (while themselves a noble and progressive effort on BP/Amoco's part) will be a disturbance to neighbors at night; 3) an analysis of whether, with a larger station, there will be a resultant increase in traffic from tanker trucks and other vehicles at early morning and/or late evening hours, bringing with it an increase in the area's already-considerable noise pollution problem; 4) a consideration of BP/Amoco's proposed overall safety measures, including how the station will address panhandling, litter, drug activity and general crime issues at the site (currently these are all problems at the site, and the present management has done little, if anything, to address them); 5) a consideration of whether BP/Amoco will bind itself to founding and being an anchor member of a future H Street Business Improvement District ("BID"); and 6) a consideration of whether the company is willing to partner with other companies to bring meaningful, enriching businesses to the corridor, possibly a bookstore, clothing store, coffeeshop or copy center.

I believe all of these issues have been raised by the community not, as some might think, to block the development of the site, but rather to ensure that any development is conducted only after thorough input from the community and only when the community itself is satisfied that BP/Amoco will address the needs and desires of its future neighbors and give them the respect that they deserve.

Thank you for your consideration of my opinion.

Respectfully,



David A. O'Connor
621 F Street NE
Washington, DC 20002