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FR: Linda Graves Shaughness

16654

DATE: January 18, 2001

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2001 JAN 18 AM 11:48

RE: Sibley Hearing: Return of some of photos and materials?
How to get copy of transcript and final order?

Sheri:

Thank-you for explaining the process to us. Notwithstanding the final outcome, we feel our time was well spent in documenting Sibley violation of the expectation that projects granted variances are not supposed to have such negative impacts on adjacent residential property. While I appreciate that the Board has to function within some apparently rather narrow strictures, I do appreciate the intelligent and probing questions they asked,-- I feel that the Board "got" what we were trying to convey, and I hope they had the opportunity to take a good look at the photo documentation and explanations. And Mr. Hood's participation may yet serve the community well, since we have now offered him Exhibit A: Sibley Hospital as justification for why it is important to pass the kind of planning legislation that would really hold large institutions accountable to the public.

If you don't need the multiple copies of materials I provided yesterday, could I have some of them back? The color photos in particular were expensive to create, and I could use them for the next meeting/hearing.

Also, when will a transcript be available, and is it possible to review it and copy excerpts later?

May I have a copy of the final decision? Val had to leave to pick up a child, and I was past the point of exhaustion, physical and emotional, having been up all the night before preparing materials. Are the Sibley letterhead mitigation measures incorporated?

Does the Board always work that hard– straight through lunch– I was impressed by their dedication. And you obviously give them a lot of staff expertise.

Thanks again,
Linda Graves Shaughness

Linda Graves Shaughness
5236 Loughboro Rd NW, DC 20016
202/586-2266 direct daytime
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attached: NW Current artech on the hearing (waited for more news coming) (s)

BZA
Case No. 16654
Exhibit No. 29

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16654
EXHIBIT NO.29

Zoning board approves Sibley oncology center

THE CURRENT

2 WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2001

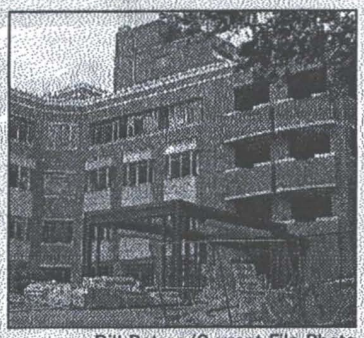
By ELIZABETH WIENER
Current Staff Writer

The Board of Zoning Adjustment Tuesday approved a new radiation and oncology center at Sibley Memorial Hospital, dismissing nearby neighbors' complaints that recent hospital construction has disrupted the neighborhood and hurt property values on Loughboro Road.

The new center at the rear of the hospital will replace a cramped and outmoded basement facility, adding state-of the art equipment and more space to protect patient privacy, hospital officials said. It will serve about 70 patients a day seeking consultation, testing, radiation and other cancer treatment, most of them on an out-patient basis.

One former Sibley patient, Mary Abate, gave passionate testimony about the need. Abate recently finished radiation therapy for breast cancer. She praised the hospital staff, but nearly cried describing the daily ordeal of traipsing down to the basement, waiting in line for a "teeny" dressing room and then sitting with other patients draped only in a hospital gown waiting for treatment. "I felt my dignity taken away from me having treatment under these conditions," she told the board.

But closer neighbors are still upset by previous expansion projects, an assisted-care facility and skilled-nursing center, that were approved by the zoning board on condition they would not adversely affect the community.



Bill Petros/Current File Photo

Neighbors asked for the zoning board to consider problems caused by construction of the skilled nursing center.

Val Mann, who bought a house directly opposite Sibley in 1980, said his view then — a small parking lot hidden by a double row of pines — was "in retrospect, bucolic."

Now he faces "an industrial setting, glaring lights, a stretch of pavement that a good pilot could land on," he angrily told the board.

Linda Shaughness, another Loughboro Road resident, said neighbors are still pressing Sibley to tone down the institutional lighting and construction disruption that

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SIBLEY

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came with the assisted-care and skilled-nursing additions, as well as bus traffic. "There's a really serious impact from Phase 1 and Phase 2. Now you're going to approve Phase 3 on the hope they will do better?"

Shaughness displayed statistics that indicated that the 18 homes in the block facing Sibley lost an average 6.5 percent in assessed value from 1998 to 2000. That happened during and after construction of the first two additions, she said, and at a time real estate values boomed in most parts of Upper Northwest.

Sibley officials noted that most complaints concern the previous projects, and they said they are working with a neighborhood committee to buffer parking lots, lower lighting and perhaps reroute Metrobuses off Loughboro, but only if someone else pays to upgrade Little Falls Road.

Chair Robert Sockwell said the zoning board could consider only the new addition. And that, he told Shaughness, "will be invisible to you. You may not even see the cranes."

To complete the project, Sibley still needs to purchase land from the Army Corps of Engineers, which owns the site where a sliver of the cancer facility will be built. Hospital officials said plans could change once Sibley obtains the larger parcel. Final construction will require review by the National Capital Planning Commission. ← Feb. 1

Sibley chief operating officer Jerry Price said he expects the District's health planning agency to approve the additional medical facilities after a hearing this week.

The Spring Valley and Wesley Heights advisory neighborhood commission voted last month to support the oncology center project with conditions originally proposed by the Palisades Citizens Association and accepted by Sibley.

They included the provision of adequate parking for patients at the center and a requirement that all construction traffic use Dalecarlia Parkway and Little Falls Road.