Testimony for the Public Hearing for
Case Number 16729
114-124 Wayne Place SE

Recd 7.17.01

My name is Virginia Major, Commissioner for Single Member District 8C-07. 114-124 Wayne Place is within my SMD. Thus, I am here today to provide information on concerns expressed by residents that live in 8C-07.

On May 24, 2001, a SMD Meeting was held after residents in the SMD were notified by a flyer with information on the project provided (see attachment 1). A special effort was made to provide notices to apartment owners and residents on Wayne Place and on 1st Street, SE. The Project Representative was invited as well as other commissioners; the Project representative, however, was not able to attend. The meeting was held at the Oxon Run Manor on Wayne Place and Mississippi Avenue, SE. Twenty two residents were in attendance. While no vote was taken in favor or in opposition of this project, the following is presented for consideration by the Board of Zoning Adjustment.

First, I would like to mention that the DC Department of Housing and Community Development provided pre-development funds for acquisition and demolition of the property and to construct residential units to offer as rental housing for low- and moderate- income elderly persons who are capable of independent living. (See attachment 2.)

Second, My understanding is funding is being requested from the Housing Finance Agency to construct residential units for low-income residents. Since tax dollars will be used in construction this facility, I feel every effort should be made to ensure that it will serve present and future needs of the community and is following the current trend in building tax-subsidized facilities. The trend in our community, I believe, is to replace low-income housing with mix-use properties.

The concerns expressed by residents were as follows:

Low-Income Housing

Building units strictly limited to low-income seniors would probably provide an isolated community due to the topography of the street, the surrounding properties, and the current activity in the surrounding area. Public transportation would not be readily available without walking up or down Wayne Place. For those who have cars, with limited parking spaces provided, they would also be parking on the street.

Topography and possible effects

The project is located at the top of the hill with elevation of about 140 to 160 ft. Some of the buildings on both sides of the street have problems with cracks in the foundation and along outside walls. The building on the lowest part of the subject property has cracks in the foundations and as high as the third floor outside wall. While topography may not be the reason for these cracks, we know that Southeast has many buildings with problems due to the way they were place on hilly area.

Surrounding Building

BZA
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Exhibit No. 36

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EXHIBIT NO.36

All buildings on Wayne Place are apartment buildings owned by various owners. In addition to the subject property, one other is vacant. Vacant apartment buildings on Halley Place can also be seen from Wayne Place. 1st Street at Wayne has apartment buildings on both sides of the Street. The parking lot for the Delwin Own Apartments on 1st abuts the proposed project. This parking lot is not well maintained; abandoned cars and bulk trash can be observed often. On the opposite side of 1st are apartment buildings that are used for transitional housing for families, and individuals with various social, economic and health needs. Also on this side of 1st is a public building that house the APRA Drug Treatment Program and the Congress Heights Health Clinic. Wilmington Place also has three-story apartment buildings and a few single family homes. The entire area is known to have problems with open-air and other drug markets. This area would greatly benefit from a comprehensive review of the use of the land, type of buildings and the needs of the community. ~~Perhaps~~ This ~~is~~ not in the purview of the Board of Zoning Adjustment, but perhaps the Office of Planning, with the city funding sources for this project, could be requested to include this entire area for review before new construction starts.

In considering the variances requested, I hope that if the height/stories are approved that the building will be place an adequate distance form the street, I hope also that the topography of Wayne Place and the fact that many hilly areas in Southeast have soil problems, will be factoring into the decisions about lot occupancy requirement and the other variances requested.