COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001

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SHARON AMBROSE
Councilmember-Ward 6

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December 17, 2001

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis
Chairperson
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW, Room 210
Washington, DC 20001

Re: BZA Application No. 16809; 719-735 6th Street, N.W. (the "Property")
AvalonBay Communities, Inc.

Dear Mr. Griffis:

I am writing in support of the above-referenced application of AvalonBay Communities, Inc. for variances from the roof structure set back, retail and residential recreation space requirements of the Zoning Regulations.

It has been a long, sought-after objective of the District of Columbia to encourage an atmosphere of "Living Downtown," a vision that was expressed approximately 20 years ago by the Mayor's Downtown Committee. The Downtown Element of the Comprehensive Plan embodies this objective by recognizing that "a significant residential community is necessary to a vital Downtown." The Comprehensive Plan further provides for a concentration of "substantial housing" in the Chinatown area of Downtown. Both the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Regulations establish policies to encourage the construction of major new residential developments, including the encouragement of residential use as a component of mixed-use projects extending through the Chinatown area.

AvalonBay proposes to construct a mixed-use development containing 5,833 square feet of ground floor retail, 132 apartment units, and a below-grade parking facility containing 78 spaces at the Property. This proposed development, known as "Gallery II", is the second phase of a two-phase development proposed by AvalonBay in Square 486, which is located in Chinatown. The first phase, know as "Gallery I", is currently under construction and is located at 770 5th Street, N.W. Gallery I will be comprised of 203 apartment units, 8,600 square feet of ground floor retail and three levels of underground parking containing approximately 150 spaces. Gallery I will also provide 7,000 square feet of residential recreation space, which will be made available to both the residents of Gallery I and Gallery II.

The Downtown area surrounding the Property has seen significant growth with the development of the MCI Arena and related retail. AvalonBay's proposed development, along with its

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BZA

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development at Gallery II, will expand upon this growth by bringing an additional 316 upscale apartment units and additional ground floor retail to the Downtown area. As such, AvalonBay's proposed development will further the District's goal of creating a "Living Downtown." The proposed development also furthers the goals of creating mixed-use development, including substantial new residential development in the Chinatown area of Downtown.

It is apparent from the documents submitted in support of the application that AvalonBay has made extensive efforts to comply with the Zoning Regulations within the limitations presented by the shallowness of the Property. Because of the shallowness of the Property, area variances are required from the roof structure setback, retail and residential recreation space provisions of the Regulations. These variances can be granted without substantially impairing the intent and purpose of the zone plan. Similarly, the granting of the variances will not have an adverse impact on the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed development will generate greater pedestrian activity Downtown and the residents of the proposed development will benefit from the abundant public recreation opportunities in the immediate surrounding area.

Given the significant benefit the proposed development will have on the furtherance of the goals of the Comprehensive and Zone Plans, I urge the Board to approve the required variances.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this application.

Sincerely,

Sharon Ambrose

Sharon Ambrose
Councilmember Ward-6