COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

November 25, 2002

Mr. Jeffery Griffins
Chairman, Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 Fourth Street, NW Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

Ref: BZA Case No. 16938

Dear Chairman Griffins:

As the Councilmember from Ward 5, where many of the members of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge reside, I support maintaining their parking lot site at Lot 827, Square 333, which is located at 1902 Vermont Avenue, Northwest. The zoning relief sought by the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Washington, D.C. under the above captioned case number is reasonable. The proximity of the lot is crucial for the use of the membership of the lodge, many of whom are senior citizens, who are elderly or disabled and in need of easily accessible and identifiable parking.

I understand that lodge members serve as consultants, tutors, monitors readers and guides as needed at a school near the lodge. I would not like to create a situation where our seniors must compete with club-goers and members of the me-first generation, for parking spaces when attending functions at the Lodge, or performing much-needed community services such as these.

The request for the special exception that the Grand Lodge is seeking is a common sense approach to the neighborhood's "on street" parking problem. The Shaw neighborhood is in the midst of a major and most welcomed economic and cultural reawakening. The flow of vehicular traffic into the area has made parking increasingly scarce. I support the organization's ardent belief that new business ventures such as restaurants, bars and retail stores can only help to strengthen the community. At the same time business interests should not be preferred over the interests of civic groups, especially not groups of such stature and staying power that have helped build the community from the ground up as well as sustain the Shaw community during its pre-renaissance period. It is clear that the

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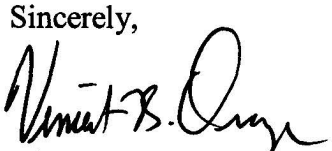
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Grand Lodge has a genuine need for the continued use of their parking lot. I also believe that their security measures for the lot, when not in use will aid the Shaw neighborhood's need for additional surveillance personnel.

I ask the Board of Zoning Adjustment to consider all the available evidence. The "Masons" have been an integral part of the Shaw community since 1848 and have been at their current location since 1929. They have demonstrated an altruistic nature in all of their community endeavors. As a civic organization, their aspirations have consistently been in line with the best interests of, and in tune with the pulse of the communities they serve. I ask that you grant the Grand Lodge the exception it has enjoyed since 1974 so that they will be able to continue the invaluable services that they provide for the community and the city as a whole.

Thank you for considering these facts, as I have, and I hope you will use your best judgment to grant the request of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Washington, DC to continue their exemption from zoning regulations such that they can maintain a parking lot for their members.

Sincerely,



Vincent B. Orange, Sr.
Ward 5 Councilmember