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August 5, 2003

The Honorable Council Member Jack Evans
Council of the District of Columbia
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 106
Washington, D.C. 20004

D.C. ... 2003 AUG -6 PM 3:2...

Re: BZA Case No. 17035
915 Rhode Island Avenue, NW Washington, D.C. 20001
Howard University Hospital's Conversion of a Former Medical Building to an 11-unit Apartment Building

Dear Council Member Evans:

On July 25, 2003 a letter was submitted under your signature to Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman of the District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustments. You rescinded your support for the project and urged Howard University Hospital to enter negotiations with immediately impacted residents and institutions to address community concerns. Our reply is as follows:

In a scheduled meeting, on December 2, 2002, Edward M. Johnson & Associates (EMJ), on behalf of our client Howard University Hospital (HUH), presented concept design drawings illustrating the proposed conversion of 915 Rhode Island Avenue, a former medical building, into a 11-unit apartment building, to the French Street Neighbors Association (FSNA). At that time the following concerns were expressed:

1. Will 915 Rhode Island Avenue, NW be occupied by Howard University Hospital staff only?

2. What is HUH leasing policy for the apartments in the event a hospital staff member stops working for the Hospital? The FSNA requested HUH to commit to leasing to HUH employees only.

3. What is the policy for building maintenance and security? The FSNA requested HUH to commit to providing ongoing maintenance of the property.

4. The new site design accommodates 5 parking spaces. The FSNA requested HUH to commit to leasing apartments to potential tenants with a total of not more than 5 cars for all tenants occupying the building. FSNA wanted HUH's view on this restriction?

BZA
Case No. 17035
Exhibit No. 43

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17035
EXHIBIT NO. 43

5. Mr. Alexander Padro, Commissioner ANC 2C01 restated at the 12/02/02 meeting his former 11/18/02 request for Howard University Hospital to clean the landscaped area adjacent to the entrance and alley to eliminate weeds and rodents.

HUH responded to the FSNA in a January 23, 2003 letter and followed with removal of the debris and weeds from the property (See attached January 23, 2003 letter). No other contact was initiated by the FSNA until the French Street Neighbors Association submitted a letter on July 25, 2003 to the DC Board of Zoning Adjustment expressing their opposition to the conversion of 915 Rhode Island Avenue into a 11-unit apartment building. This letter focuses on two issues, (1) potential use of the building as a dormitory and (2) parking. However, the letter does address the Hospitals' efforts to comply with a December 2002 request posed by the FSNA. (See attached HUH July 29, 2003 letter response).

1. Additionally, the Howard University Hospital May 15, 2003 BZA Application, accompanied by all supplemental information supporting the zoning relief, confirms Howard University Hospital's legal commitment to convert the building and maintain the structure as a 11-unit apartment building. Further, the construction documents filed for a DC Consumer and Regulatory Affairs building permit approval, also supports an 11-unit apartment building. It should be brought to your attention that Dormitories are allowed as a matter of right in the R-4 Zone. Therefore, the FSNA request that HUH not use the building as a dormitory is not relevant to the BZA Application and intended use.

2. Five apartments are permitted as a matter of right. The variance is requested to allow the building to be reconfigured for 11 apartment units. Approximately, $1,000,000 is being invested by HUH to improve the currently boarded building. HUH satisfies the DC Zoning Regulations parking requirements for the use and size of the building. DC Zoning Regulations require *four* spaces on site and HUH has provided *five* parking spaces on site for residents. On street parking is also available adjacent to the site. Because parking is a concern for the neighborhood, we have pursued other means of providing parking for the residents in the building. On January 15, 2003 EMJ contacted Ms. Carter, Vice Principal of Shaw Junior High School to inform her of the proposed conversion of 915 Rhode Island Avenue and to discuss parking issues. However, we were unable to obtain additional parking from the school for 915 residents as requested.

3. As previously stated, HUH also removed weeds and debris as requested by the FSNA and Mr. Alexander Padro, ANC 2C01 Commissioner. In addition, the windows on the ground and first floor have been boarded up to prevent entry into the building as requested by the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA administrators.

4. HUH received support from the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA, the adjacent neighbor and the DC Office of Planning. It is unfortunate that the ANC 2C members have internal issues. But the fact remains, the ANC 2C voted on December 4, 2002 in support of the project as shown in attached December 10, 2002 letter from ANC 2C Chairman, Commissioner Leroy Thorpe.

5. The July 25, 2003 FSNA letter states that the building is on the block immediately south of a residential block, the 900 block of R Street, N.W. However, the building is located two blocks south of French Street, on Rhode Island Avenue and is bordered by Shaw Junior High School to the north, open space on the west and the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA to the east. The configuration of Square 364 is very unique and not typical of an R-4 Zone use. Located on Square 364, there exists only four buildings, with four individual designations, none of which are row houses, the primary R-4 Zone land use. The configuration of Square 364, and associated land uses, location of the four abutting streets also serves as buffers for Square 364. With 915 Rhode Island Avenue's new use and location on the square, separated by three existing building and four streets, the proposed new building use does not appear to pose any direct affect on residents of the French Street Neighbors. In addition, conversion of the unoccupied medical building into a 11-unit apartment building adheres to the DC Office of Planning's Comprehensive Plan for adaptive reuse of existing structures cited in the DC Planning Report in support of the project. The project also responds to the new policy of the District Government to encourage and support housing projects located near metro stops. HUH's project is two short blocks from the Metro stop at 7th & R Streets, NW.

Additionally, during the July 29, 2003 BZA Hearing, there was no objection to the conversion of the building into an 11-unit apartment building. Only one community person was present and in opposition, Mr. Alexander Padro, who raised concerns about the use of the building as a dormitory and a request for more parking. The reversal of your support position for the conversion of 915 Rhode Island Avenue into an eleven-unit apartment building was based upon inaccurate information. Our BZA Application and documentation substantially support the reasonableness of the requested change in building use. We trust that after review of this letter and the attached supporting documents you will determine that HUH has addressed the community's concerns and new DC housing policy, while enhancing the quality of life along the Rhode island Corridor. Therefore, on behalf of Howard University Hospital, we request that you reconsider your reversal of support for the conversion of 915 Rhode Island Avenue into a 11-unit apartment building. We look forward to a favorable response. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Mr. Edward M. Johnson, AIA
President

cc: Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman DC Board of Zoning Adjustments
Mr. Sherman P. McCoy, CEO Howard University Hospital
Mr. Barry Booker, Administrative Director, Facilities Management HUH

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2C
Shaw/ Terrell Recreation Center
First & Pierce St NW
Washington, DC 20001

December 10, 2002

Mr. Edward M. Johnson
President
Edward M. Johnson & Associates, P.C.
3612 Twelfth Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20017

Re: 915 Rhode Island Avenue, NW
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. Johnson:

This letter is to inform you of the outcome of a vote within ANC 2C's public meeting on December 4, 2002. In our meeting, that evening, held at the New Covenant Evangelistic Center, 1418 New Jersey Avenue, NW, ANC 2C voted 3-2 to approve the conversion of the empty medical building at 915 Rhode Island Avenue, NW, owned by Howard University Hospital, into an eleven units apartment building.

Good luck with the project.

Respectfully,

Commissioner Leroy Thorpe
Chairman

HUH
HOWARD
UNIVERSITY
HOSPITAL

2041 Georgia Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20060

202/865-6100
202/745-3731 fax

January 23, 2003

Mr. Mark Pietrykoski
Co-President
French Street Neighborhood Association
1712 9th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: 915 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Mr. Pietrykoski:

The following is our response to the French Street Neighborhood Association concerns and requests made at the December 2, 2002 community meeting:

- The weeds and debris have been removed from around the building. In addition the windows on the ground and first floor have been boarded up to prevent entry into the building.

- Leases will be granted to and the building will be occupied by Howard University Hospital on going staff members. However, based upon future circumstances leases may be granted to individuals outside the University.

- Because Howard University Hospital is investing approximately $1,000,000.00 in the construction of the building, Hospital officials will be closely monitoring the upkeep of the building. In addition, the building will also be monitored by the University police.

- Parking is a serious concern for Howard University Hospital. Although the Hospital satisfies the DC Zoning parking requirements, Hospital officials will continue to pursue other means of providing parking for the residents in the building.

The concerns voiced at the December 2, 2002 community meeting have been addressed. Therefore, we are requesting the French Street Neighborhood Association's support for the conversion of 915 Rhode Island Avenue from a medical building to an apartment building. Thank you for your support.

Respectfully,

Barry K. Booker
Administrative Director, Facilities Management

cc: Sherman P. McCoy, CEO
Debra D. Carey, COO
Ikeazo Okwumabua, Project Manager