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October 21, 2003

D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2003 OCT 22 PM 3:52

District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th St. N.W., #210 South
Washington, DC 20001

Re: BZA Case No. 17043, Square 895 Lot 76

Dear Sir or Madam:

I have lived for 30 years one block from Capitol Hill Hospital, now known as MedLink. The Zoning Administrator made a big mistake in his March decisions (as part of issuing Certificates of Occupancy #51289 and #51290) setting the number of on-site parking spaces MedLink must provide. An appeal is pending, so that you will have the opportunity to reverse that error, and I am adding my voice to the many you will hear from the community (ANCs, Restoration Society, Stanton Park Neighborhood group, etc.) in strong support of that appeal.

The Zoning Administrator was completely incorrect in approving the MedLink proposal to go down to a new low of only 85 parking spaces. You know that in consideration of the hundreds of beds and employees there, you have in the past required between 176 (in 1991) and 276 (in 1999) parking spaces. The owners tried to weasel out of the larger 1999 requirement but it remained. The operation is no smaller now (reported by the owners last September at 160 patients/residents and over 300 staff), so there is no new reason to depart downwards. You should require the owners to follow your own orders and provide at least the 176 spaces in their own garage.

The reason is obvious. Any reduction in required on-site parking leads to the spill-over of staff, patient and visitor parking onto nearby residential streets—like the 300 block of 7th Street, N.E., where I live. Residential Parking restrictions are only enforced sporadically and not at all on weekends or at night, so hospital users inevitably take neighborhood parking. Parking is already scarce. Are you aware of two existing sources of increased pressure on on-street parking in this immediate area? A new multiunit building has just opened in the 300 block of 8th Street, N.E. And huge new houses have gone up on the former hospital parking lots in square 865, the 200 block of 7th St. N.E. (When MedLink sold that property the action unlawfully reduced the parking available by 100; but it was allowed by the Zoning Administrator only because, at that time, the MedLink owners planned to sell the whole complex—which hasn't happened as they're in bankruptcy.) The new townhouses have garages but rich people's multiple cars add to street parking shortages.

This extreme pressure on parking, all within two blocks of my house, is not welcome. In the last two months I have on five different occasions at night or on weekends had to park blocks away. Do any of the members of the Board enjoy walking blocks at night in winter to reach their own house?

The Zoning Administrator's action to reduce the off-street parking requirements at MedLink will just make this situation worse.

You should also review the new Certificates of Occupancy, as they were sought for no clear reasons and were issued without review by your group or the community. New favors (in the form of reduced off-street

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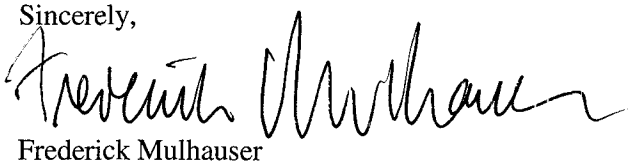
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parking) especially should not be granted to an owner with a history of disobeying earlier parking requirements you established. Check your records; doesn't that history count for anything with you? (The Zoning Administrator in 2000 found the MedLink owners let their underground garage deteriorate so most of the spaces were unusable.)

The Zoning Administrator's approval is worrisome to the neighborhood for another, longer-range, reason. If the MedLink facility is allowed now to provide fewer on-site parking spaces for patients, staff, and visitors to its medical/nursing operations, then some existing parking spaces are "free." Those no longer dedicated by law to MedLink become available to satisfy new parking requirements if part of the plot is redeveloped for residential uses—as discussed for many years already. Yet a large new residential project would in fact generate parking demands far beyond what the remaining on-site spaces could meet, hence producing further spillover onto neighborhood streets. Unrealistically lowered on-site parking requirements should not be a free gift to a purchaser/developer who would eventually impose huge new burdens on the neighborhood.

But most immediately, since there is no change in the actual operations of MedLink, there should be no change in the previous parking requirements. It follows that the Zoning Administrator's incorrect action making such a change should be overturned.

Sincerely,



Frederick Mulhauser