Zivic & Hurdle
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Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 210
Washington DC 20001

RE: 915 Gallatin Street
DC Fire & EMS Department
Burden of Variance Request

Dear Madam/Sir:

As a result of recent unexpected federal funding, the DC Fire & EMS Department was able to augment its fleet of fire fighting and life support equipment. Unfortunately this sudden influx of equipment has presented a storage problem and it is the desire of the Fire Department to develop a city owned site and construct a facility to be used for the storage of this ready rescue equipment. This is not a fire station however it is in essence an operational extension of Engine Company #24 for the storage and retrieval of ready reserve equipment on an infrequent basis. The equipment kept here will be used to temporarily replace other fire fighting and life safety apparatus around the city that has temporarily been removed from service for maintenance and repair. This equipment will also support additional shifts of firefighters in the event of an emergency such as 9-11.

Currently the District of Columbia owns the vacant lot at 915 Gallatin Street adjacent Engine Company #24, indicated as SG-3002, Lot 64, as recorded in Book 186, Page 7.

The existing vacant lot is Zoned R-3, which does not allow this "Municipal Use". In reviewing the DC Municipal Regulations we cannot find any zoning district that will allow "Municipal Use " by right and we assume a *special exception* is not applicable in this case.

Due to the uniqueness of this property including its proposed function, and lack of Municipal Use zoning options, the District of Columbia Fire & EMS Department is seeking both an **area variance** and a **use variance** for this site to accommodate the proposed Ready Rescue Facility.

After reviewing the provisions of the Zoning Regulations regarding this site as they relate to this request we are submitting a detailed statement explaining how the application meets the specific tests in the Zoning Regulations for a variance (both area and use).

BZA
Case No. 17058
Exhibit No. 7

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17058
EXHIBIT NO. 7

1. UNIQUE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPERTY

Property Description

Currently the property in question is minimally developed; the entire lot area is covered with asphalt pavement and is provided with an eight-foot high chain link fence at the entire perimeter. The overall dimensions of this rectangular site are 100 feet wide along Gallatin Street by 165 feet deep and three public alleys define the remaining sides of this site. The topography gradually slopes down from the northeast corner to the southwest corner about five feet overall. Surrounding the site on the north, and east are residential row houses. To the south are apartments and a Verison building. Directly to the west is DC Engine Company #24.

The property is of a peculiar configuration for an R-3 Use. By code, a typical lot width is limited to 20 feet. Within the 100-foot width along Gallatin Street this will allow for a maximum of five lots twenty feet wide by 165 feet deep, which is exceptionally long and narrow. Optimally the size and configuration of the property could allow for eight building lots twenty feet wide by one hundred feet deep. However to accommodate this configuration the new row houses would either have to face west or east, looking at either the rear of Engine Company #24 or the rear yards of the existing row houses, neither a desirable option.

R-3 Zoning Districts allows for a maximum of 40% of the lot occupancy. By limiting the development of this property to 40% lot occupancy the DC Fire & EMS Department will not be able to accommodate the entire ready reserve fleet.

Potential Soil Problems

An initial search of environmental records has revealed that underground storage tanks have been recorded in the general area of this property. However the records did not list any databases for the target property. Recent soil boring operations did not provide any indication (smells from borings) that soil contamination existed. More detailed studies will need to be conducted to conclusively determine whether contaminated sols exist.

Practical Difficulties

The DC government currently owns this property and has limited resources in purchasing other properties. The limited staffing requirements can easily be handled by personnel currently assigned to Engine Company #24 located directly across the public alley.

Other options are available to the fire department. For instance the subject property may be incorporated into the Engine Company #24 parcel by eliminating the public access to the alley. The incorporation of this property would allow the site to meet the required open areas and set backs for R-3. This option is not attractive to the fire department since it would take a year to close one of the public alleys and ultimately denying its use to the

public. During this one-year process the fire and life safety apparatus would need to be stored unprotected.

2. THE APPLICATION WILL NOT BE OF SUBSTANTIAL DETRIMENT TO THE PUBLIC GOOD – IE. TRAFFIC, NOISE, LIGHTING, ETC.

Traffic

The Ready Rescue Facility will require minimal personnel to maintain its operation. Only one office is provided and the parking will be provided in the adjacent Engine Company #24. No maintenance of the vehicles will be conducted within this facility. As a result the traffic generation will be all but imperceptible.

This is not a fire station; therefore ready rescue equipment will only be located or removed from the storage area when the needed to replace equipment rendered out of commission at another fire station or required to respond to an extraordinary emergency such as 9-11 when additional shifts where called in an needed additional fire fighting and life safety apparatus.

Noise

The apparatus stored here will only be used on an infrequent basis. Noise generation will only occur from the typical engine noises on an infrequent basis, emergency sirens will be required only in the most extraordinary of circumstances.

There is minimum heating and ventilating equipment required to maintain this facility. No air conditioning units are required and therefore noise from mechanical equipment will not be generated.

Lighting

The facility will require security lighting at the perimeter, however this will be designed to focus the lighting directly on the building and will not spill over into the adjacent properties. Parking lot lighting will not be required.

Building Height

Although the peak of the mezzanine roof is 44 foot above finish grade, the ceiling of the mezzanine level is under the 40-foot maximum height requirement. The proposed ready rescue facility's typical height around most of the perimeter is less than 24 foot.

3. THE APPLICATION WILL NOT BE INCONSISTENT WITH THE GENERAL INTENT AND PURPOSE OF THE ZONING REGULATIONS AND MAP.

When reviewing the Zoning Regulations and Map we don't believe the proposed use of this site will be inconstant with the general purpose of the Zoning Regulations and Map.

The subject property is adjacent to Engine Company #24, a municipal use serving the immediate community and located directly on a commercial strip. The Ready Rescue Facility is an ancillary extension of that station by the fact that many of the operational duties of the proposed facility will be assigned to Engine Company #24 due to its close proximity. R-3 zoning adjacent to a municipal use is not without precedence, in fact the current zoning for the site positions R-3 adjacent to a municipal use.

Positive Aspects of Proposed Project

From the earliest planning stages of the project, the Fire Department was sensitive to the residential neighbors and was interested in blending into the community without any negative impact.

Engine Company #24 built around 1995 contributes significantly to the overall appearance of the immediate neighborhood. With that in mind the architectural design of the Ready Rescue Facility has been developed to closely relate to Engine Company #24. Also a conscious effort was made to provide an attractive building appearance on all sides of the building for the benefit of the adjacent row houses. As indicated above special consideration has been given to building lighting and appearance.

The introduction of this facility will also provide a visual and acoustic barrier to the rear of Engine Company #24.

Non-conformance items

Item	Allowed	Proposed
• Zoning District	R-3 allowed	Municipal Use proposed
• Lot Coverage,	40% allowed	92% proposed
• Min. Depth, Rear Yard	20 feet required	9.4 feet proposed

In our opinion many there are many zoning considerations that will be enhanced by the introduction of this facility versus an allowable R-3 use. They include the following;

- Less traffic generation,
- No more noise generation that an R-3 use (possibly less)
- Overall lower building mass on the site
- Positive contribution to the security of the general public

In our opinion after weighing all the issues regarding this application we believe that this proposed use would undoubtedly provide a substantial benefit to the local neighborhood as well as to the entire DC community without being a detriment.

Respectfully

Richard E. Hurdle AIA
ZIVIC & HURDLE ARCHITECTS, PC
(Agent for owner)