Dear Chairman Griffis:

Re: Meridian International Center Application #17070

We have learned that Meridian International Center wishes to develop the property known as square 2567, lot 850, currently used as a surface parking lot, with luxury condominium units. In this regard, Meridian International Center is requesting a modification of Order 5802, which stipulates that the parking spaces are required parking, and that the lot is to be used exclusively for that purpose. Meridian International Center is now proposing to relocate the existing 38 parking spaces to an underground garage.

However, we are of the view that the proposed relocation of the parking spaces in itself, but also in conjunction with the proposed development, will aggravate an already tight parking situation. There are a number of reasons:

First, we believe that the order in its existing form was drafted not just to ensure off-street parking for Meridian International Center, but to ensure the availability of easily accessible parking for visitors to Meridian International Center who typically are not familiar with the neighborhood. Parking in an underground garage is significantly more cumbersome than on a surface parking lot, and especially at night many people do not like to use garages. Both factors increase the likelihood that visitors to Meridian International Center will be more likely to park on the neighborhood streets as opposed to the underground garage.

Second, the proposed development on the lot is for 1- and 2-bedroom luxury condominiums (prices of $ 700,000 were mentioned). Residents of such units own at least one car, and thus it needs to be ensured that there is sufficient parking for any new residences to be built, in addition to the relocated Meridian spaces.

Third, residents of upscale residences are typically visited by guests who drive, resulting in additional increase in demand for parking.

Other long-term effects on the neighborhood from the proposed modification of Order 5802 will be increased traffic back-ups, and increased exposure to car exhaust fumes. Parking in an underground garage as opposed to parking on a surface lot is much more likely to cause increased back-ups and traffic jams when visitors to Meridian International Center events arrive. Typically all participants of an event arrive at about the same time, and entry into a multi-level parking garage is more time-consuming than parking on a surface lot. It therefore will be essential to have an attendant for the parking garage to ensure smooth entry. Increased exposure to

BZA
Case No. 17070
Exhibit No. 30

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17070
EXHIBIT NO. 30

exhaust will result both from backed-up traffic, and the necessary venting of the underground garage.

Moreover, there are transitional issues during the construction phase of such a large building. In particular, Meridian International Center needs to ensure that the 38 parking spaces of the parking lot are replaced by alternate off-street parking in sufficiently close proximity to Meridian International Center. The removal of street-side parking during the construction phase should also be as limited as possible.

We recognize, that Meridian International Center and the anticipated developers Crescent Place, LLC have worked with neighborhood residents to find conditions that would ameliorate some of the impact of the proposed development. In this context two Memoranda of Understandings were drawn up. In light of the agreements that have been reached, we are willing to support the requested modification of order 5802 if the following conditions are also met:

1) All understanding and agreements of the Memorandum of Understanding between Meridian International Center and Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1C are incorporated into the Board of Zoning Adjustment's order.

2) The construction on square 2567, lot 850 includes a three-level below ground parking garage providing at least 89 parking spaces (of which 39 are designated for the use by Meridian International Center) for no more than 30 condominium units, and this requirement is incorporated into the Board of Zoning Adjustment's order.

3) The Board of Zoning Adjustment order contains a condition, that during construction only those parking spaces located on the west side of 17th Street that abut the lot 850 on square 2567 can be removed from public use for an extended period of time if and when required by the construction activity. The aforementioned parking spaces located on the west side of 17th Street that abut the lot 850 on square 2567 will be restored and returned to public use upon completion of the construction activity, and will remain available for public use.

4) The Board of Zoning Adjustment order contains a condition, that venting of exhaust fumes from the underground garage will be designed and located in such a manner that the exhaust fumes do not pose a health risk or nuisance to neighbors, in all weather conditions.

Christiane Roehler