Akwaaba DC Bed & Breakfast

Thank you for allowing me to address you this evening.

1. Introduction of Monique Greenwood
- Native Washingtonian educated in D.C. public schools; graduate of Howard U.
- My family and husband's family all in D.C.
- Decided a few years ago to move back to D.C. because we love the city and wanted to be closer to our family, especially my Mom, whose health is failing
- For past two decades, lived in NY, building a successful career in magazine publishing. Left my job three years ago as Editor of Essence to write books and fully pursue my passion of innkeeping

2. B&B Experience
- Nearly nine years ago, opened a B&B out of our Brooklyn home called Akwaaba Mansion. The critically acclaimed B&B featured in numerous magazines and on TV, including HGTV's Restore America, The John Walsh talk show, Time Magazine, Victorian Homes and countless others.
- The B&B has been at the center of the revitalization of an entire community. Developed the block down the street from the B&B and opened a restaurant and a coffee house, while creating commercial spaces for a bookstore, hair salon, barber shop and antique store.
- Were extremely involved in our Brooklyn community; on the boards for the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, the Tourism Council and the leading Community Development Corporation.

3. Opening D.C. B&B
- After writing my book, "Having What Matters," three years ago, my husband and I decided to leave or jobs and relocate to D.C. We started looking for a home to live in and operate a B&B from as we had done in New York.
- We fell in love with 1708 16th St., not only because it's a beautiful building, but also because it was an existing B&B, called The Brenton, that had been successfully operating for 13 years. We purchased it in February 2003.
- The property has a C of O as a nine-room rooming and boarding house, which 13 years ago was acceptable for a B&B. After renovating the home, went to the Zoning Office to transfer ownership of the B&B into my name. I was informed that I needed to obtain a B&B license. I was told that as a historical property, I could operate a six-room B&B as a matter of right. Later told that I would have to go before the BZA to get a special exception for the six rooms, and a second exception for an additional two rooms, so we can operate a total of eight rooms. We immediately got a

BZA
Case No. 17196
Exhibit No. 33

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17194
EXHIBIT NO. 33

matter-of-right license to operate two rooms and have been doing so since February 2004.

- I come to you now, asking that you support our application to operate an eight-room B&B, and here's why I strongly believe it's the right action.

*We are decent, civic-minded neighbors who only want to promote what's good for the neighborhood.

*We are preservationists who have improved the property, and we believe it's important to maintain historical properties, and would therefore not like to chop it up as a rooming house or condominiums.

*We are actually looking to decrease the usage of the property from a nine-room rooming house to an upscale, eight-room bed and breakfast.

*The Brenton operated for 13 years as a nine-room bed and breakfast with no adverse effect on the community. The same would be true with us now operating an eight-room B&B in the same location.

*Having the B&B would not contribute to any noise nuisance. We will NOT host ANY events. Truck deliveries, catering equipment, large groups of people, parking nightmares, are not an issue.

*In fact, when it comes to parking for our overnight guests, we have four parking spaces behind our house. They often go unused, because most of our out-of-town guests cab in from the airport and use public transportation during their stay.

*Our two immediate neighbors on both sides of our property, who would be the ones to be directly effected by our presence, are both in support of our application and have written letters to the chair of this body stating as much.

*Finally, our bed and breakfast has a literary theme that celebrates authors like Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Walter Mosley and others, with rooms named after them and the full collection of their books available to the guests. We intend to market heavily toward book clubs, which generally has from eight to twelve members, which is one of the reasons we need the eight rooms. In addition, we call one of our rooms a writer's retreat, and we make it available at no cost for up to two weeks for any author looking to finish a book.

*We have gone through much to get to this point--we sold our Brooklyn home and our coffeehouse, and exhausted our savings, to purchase, renovate and furnish Akwaaba D.C. We have been the victim of confusion and incompetence on the part of the D.C. government. And we have had difficulty making ends meet while waiting for this zoning issue to be resolved. Trying, yes. But this has been my lifelong dream. I pray it won't be a dream deferred.