Government of the District of Columbia
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3-D
P.O. Box 40846
Palisades Station
Washington, D.C. 20016

October 8, 2004

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis
Chair
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 210 S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: BZA #17234
Engine Company #29
DC Fire and EMS Department

Dear Chairman Griffis:

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D held its regularly scheduled monthly meeting on Wednesday June 2, 2004, at Sibley Memorial Hospital's Ernst Auditorium, with a quorum (4) present at all times. The Commission voted 7-0-0 to support the request of the District of Columbia Fire and EMS Department for area and setback variances to allow for necessary upgrades and improvements to Engine Co.# 29 located at 4811 MacArthur Boulevard, NW.

Deputy Fire Chief Thomas Herlihy and Captain Bruce Faust presented the department's request citing needed upgrades that would add an ambulance bay on the southwest corner of the building and facilities for female EMS personnel at Engine Co. #29. Additional personnel parking would also be provided at the rear of the firehouse. Mr. Bruce Zivic, architect for the project, explained that Engine Co. #29 was constructed in 1925 before current zoning regulations were in place. The firehouse, situated on the lot line it shares with The Lab School of Washington at 4759 Reservoir Road, NW, would require a side yard variance to complete the proposed upgrades and would result in 43 percent lot occupancy.

The Commission unanimously supported the application of the DC Fire & EMS Department for the following reasons:

1. The proposed addition would not impact surrounding properties. Granting relief from the side yard setback and area variance requirements would not impact The Lab School of Washington. A row of evergreens and a wetland form a natural buffer between the firehouse and school parking lot;

2. The proposed addition would be consistent with the design intent of the original construction which has been granted landmark status and the expansion will allow the

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department to meet current and future program needs;

3. Modernization of the building would provide overall upgrades to present facilities, including electrical, mechanical and communications systems, and much needed separate facilities for male and female personnel; and

4. The addition of a resident EMS unit would increase the efficiency of fire and emergency medical rescue in the Palisades area which is presently served by ambulances housed at 22nd and M Streets NW, or Connecticut Avenue, NW.

The Commission would encourage the DC Fire and EMS Department to seek an easement from PEPCO to provide a permanent right of way across the property it owns on the northeast side of the firehouse. This would provide an additional means of access from Whitehaven Parkway for fire and EMS personnel at Engine Co. #29; and, for construction vehicles and equipment to more easily access the site rather than sharing the narrow MacArthur Boulevard entrance during the renovation period.

Therefore, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D asks that the Board of Zoning Adjustment give its 7-0-0 vote to support the application of the DC Fire & EMS Department for area and setback variances under §§3104.1 and 2101.1 of Title 11 the great weight to which it is entitled under District of Columbia law.

Sincerely,

Alma H. Gates

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Chair