Raymond and Laura Saba
202-437-7839 (Raymond's cell)
202-437-5857 (Laura's cell)

Current Address
7528 Morningside Drive, NW
Washington, DC 20012

Future Address
2224 R Street, NW
Washington, DC 20008

December 27, 2004

H. E. Leonard Ngaithe
Ambassador of the Republic of Kenya
2249 R St., NW
Washington, DC 20008

Your Excellency,

We are writing to you concerning your letter dated November 22, 2004 to Jerrily R Kreiss, Director of the DC Board of Zoning Adjustment, which comments on our application to operate a 10-room bed and breakfast in our new home at 2224 R Street, NW. Our application requests the Board of Zoning Adjustment to allow an increase in the permitted number of rooms for a Bed and Breakfast in an historic area. We are permitted six rooms as a matter of right. We are requesting an increase in the number of rooms to ten. In your letter, you object to our application based on security concerns.

On Thursday, December 23, my husband Raymond and I had the pleasure of meeting with James Wakiaga and Peris Murage of your staff to introduce ourselves and to discuss our proposed bed and breakfast accommodation at 2224 R Street. We asked for the meeting in order to understand your concerns regarding the security of your embassy. We are very appreciative of the gracious welcome we received.

My husband and I have been co-owners and operating partners of the Woodley Park Guest House, located at 2647 Woodley Road, NW, since April 2000. The Woodley Park accommodation receives guests from all over the world. Our guests tend to be sophisticated travelers who prefer an intimate, home-like accommodation and the opportunity it affords to meet other travelers, rather than an impersonal hotel. Many come back repeatedly, preferring to stay with us whenever they are in Washington, DC. Most of our guests are involved in government, non-profit, teaching and medical professions. Many are involved in various aspects of international development and public health. A large number are the friends and family members of neighbors.

We have always treated the Guest House as our private home, although we do not live there, and we are very concerned about the security and wellbeing of our guests and of

BZA
Case No. 17260
Exhibit No. 30

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17260
EXHIBIT NO. 30

our property. We have well-established, tested procedures for dealing with all aspects of physical and personal security. First and foremost among our security measures is the presence of owners in the Guest House. Owners are in the house on a daily basis, hosting breakfast, meeting guests, reviewing reservations, and answering any questions our staff may have. Of equal importance from a security point of view is our knowledge of who is in the house and why they are there. We know the name of every guest in every room and we try to meet every guest personally.

When we purchased the Woodley Park Guest House, the building was in a terrible state of disrepair and had a long history of neglect and poor management. Our neighbors were, understandably, concerned about us as new owners. I am very pleased to report that in the four years we have operated the Guest House, we have gained the trust of the entire neighborhood. We have never had a complaint of any kind from our neighbors.

I would like to summarize some of the points we made during our meeting with Mr. Wakiaga and Ms. Murage, which I hope will satisfy any remaining concerns regarding a potential security threat to your embassy.

1) A bed and breakfast (B&B) is not a hotel. A hotel is an anonymous, laissez-faire type of accommodation. Anyone using the internet can make a hotel reservation online, arrive at the front desk with the confirmation number, and occupy a room. Owners are almost always absent, and the managers and staff are not concerned about who occupies the rooms or what is goes on in the rooms, as long as the activity does not bother other guests and the bill is paid.

2) A B&B is the antithesis of a hotel. A B&B is the personal residence of the owners, and as such, is an intimate, closely-managed accommodation. The guest is, literally, staying in the owners' home.

3) When we have completed the renovation of 2224 R Street, the house will be our personal residence. Raymond and I will be your neighbors and we will be accessible to you at all times.

4) Our security and comfort and the security and comfort of our guests, as well as the security of our home and property, are of major concern to us. In the four years that we have managed the Woodley Park Guest House, we have established excellent procedures for dealing with these issues. We will implement all of these procedures at R Street.

a) Reservations - It is not possible to make an online reservation to stay at our Guest House, and it will not be possible to make and online reservation to stay in our new home/B&B. A potential guest may make a reservation inquiry over the internet, but they may not make a reservation over the internet.

b) Guests - There are no anonymous guests at our Guest House, nor will there be any anonymous guests at our new home/B&B. We personally contact, by email or phone, each person who makes a reservation inquiry. Before we confirm a reservation, we want to get to know the guest. We take the opportunity to explain our services, policies and rules, and to ask why the guest is coming to Washington DC and how they heard about our B&B. If we are not comfortable with the answers we receive, i.e., if the potential guest seems evasive, incoherent or dishonest, we do not take the reservation.

c) Owners/Hosts - Raymond and I are very visible and attentive owners/hosts. We make a tremendous effort to get to know each one of our guests personally. We are aware of their reasons for being in DC and of their daily activities.

d) Services – The only services we offer to our guests are rooms and breakfast. We do not and will not have a restaurant or a liquor license. We do not and will not host special events that would open our home/B&B to unknown persons.

e) Rules of the House - The rules of our Guest House are very strict. We are quiet people, and guests understand that our Guest House is a quiet, home-like accommodation.

- All guests must have reservations.
- We do not accept walk-ins.
- Unregistered guests are not allowed in the rooms.
- We are not a cash business.
- Guests must have a valid credit card to reserve a room.
- Guests must present a valid credit card and identification to check-in.

f) Access - Access to our house will be restricted. As our personal residence, the house will be locked. Registered guests will have keys.

g) Special Events - We do not and will not host special events of any type where unknown persons could enter the house under the guise of attending an event.

h) Daily Housekeeping – Cleanliness is a hallmark of our Guest House and will also be a hallmark of our new home/B&B. Guest rooms are cleaned every day. It is not possible for a guest to occupy a room and refuse admittance to our housekeeping staff. Our housekeepers are very well trained and any suspicious activity in a room is reported immediately to the owners.

Mr. Wakiaga requested an additional security procedure which we are glad to adopt. We will record the documentation type/number used to verify the guest's identity at check-in. The country name and passport number of international guests will be recorded. The driver's license number and the name of the state issuing the license will be recorded for US guests.

We hope that we have satisfied your concerns about the security of the embassy. If there is any further information you would like, or any further discussion that you feel would be helpful, we are available at your convenience. If you are indeed satisfied, we request that you write a brief letter to the Director of the Board of Zoning Adjustment withdrawing your objection. As the date of our hearing is January 4, 2005, we would be very grateful if the letter could be written before that date and a copy given to us to introduce at the hearing.

As we mentioned to Mr. Wakiaga and Ms. Murage, we invite you and your staff to visit the Woodley Park Guest House at your earliest convenience. We also invite you to view our website, www.woodleyparkguesthouse.com, and to read our Guest Reviews. The reviews will give you a very accurate picture of the type of accommodation we operate.

We sincerely hope that you will feel comfortable recommending the Guest House to any guests of the embassy who would enjoy a home-like accommodation. We also hope that you will visit our new home when the renovation is complete and that the embassy will send many guests to stay with us.

Once again, we thank you for the gracious welcome we received at the embassy and we look forward to being good neighbors and valued friends.

Warmly,

Laura and Raymond Saba
Owners
2224 R Street, NW