Advisory Neighborhood Commission 7D

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District of Columbia Government

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April 13, 2005

Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia Government
441 4th Street, NW, Suite #210S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Request for postponement of April 19th hearing on Application No. 17304 of WMATA concerning 4500 Benning Road, NE

Dear Chairman Griffis:

This letter requests a postponement of the hearing scheduled for April 19, 2005, at 1:00 pm, on Application No. 17304 of WMATA concerning 4500 Benning Road, NE, for construction of an office building. We request the postponement for the following reasons:

- the community has not been adequately notified regarding the proposed facility, especially with regard to the impact of security, parking, or increased traffic volume;
- our residents have not been properly enabled to participate in the review process, given the safety issues with the proximity of two elementary schools and a significant population of seniors who have already been victims of crimes of opportunity who may fear their security being compromised with this facility, with its anticipated increase in foot traffic of 500 persons a day – and our experience with the clinic on Division and Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue with clients nodding and loitering and making that area less safe and desirable;
- the Zoning documents were sent February 18, 2005 to 4555 Dix Street, to the home of former ANC 7D Chair Christine Tolson, addressed to ANC 7D Chair;
- Ms. Tolson failed to:
  - redirect the materials addressed to the ANC 7D chair to then (effective January 2, 2005) Chair Dorothy Douglas;
  - mention the Zoning communication to Ms. Douglas despite several conversations between them between February 18 and April 12;
  - share them with either current chair Dorothy Douglas or her other fellow commissioners to ensure that they were fully informed;
- Ms. Tolson, after missing the March 8th Community meeting, and both the February and March Executive Committee meetings, showed up at the April 12, 2005 regular ANC 7D community meeting with a letter of support she had typed on plain paper, and tried to pressure the commissioners into approving and signing it on the spot, citing "time pressures" and the 7-day deadline of the April 19th hearing;

ANC 7D, Michele Tingling-Clemmons, Executive Administrator/Coordinator
4614 Central Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20019; mirico5@aol.com; 202.397.2277
2005-2006 – Dorothy Y. Douglas, Chair; Sharita C. Slayton, Vice-Chair; Michael D. Creasey, Treasurer; Adrian Hasty, Secretary;
Raymon Murchison, Veronica Raglin, Christine Tolson, Commissioners

BZA
Case No. 17304
Exhibit No. 29

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17304
EXHIBIT NO. 29

- in the same vein, Ms. T[illegible]on's assertions that she had "poll[illegible]nformally residents of her Single Member District 7D05 at the nearby Denny's are highly suspect (as questioned by some of her constituents at last night's meeting), given her actions and failure to inform her fellow commissioners after receiving documents from the Board of Zoning – further, the "poll" was unscientific, statistically unreliable and, given the importance of this project, an unacceptable substitute for a public meeting;
- homeowners living outside of the 200 feet limit of the Benning Road Metro station for notice from Zoning, knew nothing about the proposed facility until the signs were posted at the station last week;
- we are concerned that the communities served by the two elementary schools within 3 blocks of the proposed facility have not been made aware or their concerns solicited.

We are most concerned that: adequate notice of the broadest segment of the affected community has not taken place; that the appropriate steps be taken to ensure that the present leadership of ANC 7D is adequately informed, and the concerns of the community we represent addressed. Ms. Tolson's role in failing to properly pass on or share official documents with the Commission appears to have been deliberate, and has contaminated this process, the trust required and increased our and the community's existing suspicions and concerns regarding this project. We are aware, after last night's meeting and presentation from CSOSA, that discussions on this project have been underway for a while; however, we were not made privy to the process. We do not accept this as a done deal and hereby reaffirm our request for a postponement of the above-cited hearing to enable us to ensure that the time needed is invested to thoroughly alert the community, assess its support or non-support and determine the advisability of the facility.

We recognize this will take time, but our experience with the Division Avenue clinic has shown us that it is better to address the hard questions up front than to remediate them after the fact.

On behalf of the community and Advisory Neighborhood Commission 7D, I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Y. Douglas, Chair
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 7D

cc: Vincent C. Gray, Councilmember, Ward 7
ANC 7D Commissioners Sharita C. Slayton, Michael D. Creasey, Adrian Hasty, Raymon Murchison, Veronica Raglin, Christine M. Tolson
Gottlieb Simon, OANC
Paul Quander, CSOSA