Takoma D.C. Neighborhood Association

(formerly Plan Takoma) *PO Box 60159, Washington, D.C. 20039*

June 27, 2005

Geoffrey H. Griffis, Chairman
District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 210 - South
Washington, D.C. 20001

SENT BY FAX TO: 727-6072

2005 JUN 28 AM 8:22

RE: Case No. 17349 Application for Special Exception (Applicant: Michael Taylor)

Dear Mr. Griffis:

The Takoma D.C. Neighborhood Association (formerly Plan Takoma) has 254 members. Our meetings, community service projects, and social events are open to everyone who lives or works in the neighborhood. We hold regular membership meetings; produce a monthly neighborhood newsletter; support the Takoma D.C. Orange Hats, the Takoma D.C. Caring Network, and Takoma D.C. Memorial Park; and work closely with the other volunteer organizations in our area, including Friends of Takoma Recreation Center and the Coolidge Senior High School PTSA. Our organization grew out of a Neighbors, Inc., committee working on planning for the Takoma Metro in the early 1970s, and, since its incorporation in 1979, has participated fully in all the major planning and historic preservation initiatives in the community, including development of the Takoma Central District Plan.

Our Board of Directors opposes the application for a special exception to allow a rear addition to an existing single-family detached dwelling under section 223, not meeting the lot occupancy, side yard, and nonconforming structure provisions requirements in the R-1-B District at premises 6919 6th Street, N.W. (Square 3191, Lots 19 and 811). We specifically object to this applicant's effort to use the Board of Zoning Adjustment's special exception process to re-write the history of the illegal construction, misrepresentations in permit applications and architectural drawings, and violations of zoning and Historic Preservation Review Board requirements at 6919 6th Street, N.W.

Last September – over nine months ago, the applicant attempted to persuade the Historic Preservation Review Board that the fact that the three-story addition towering over the neighbors of 6919 6th Street differed significantly from the approved architectural drawings was an accident due to his inexperience. However, the HPRB pointed out that the applicant had received an earlier HPRB stop work order on a project in the Mt. Pleasant historic district for similar misrepresentations and for carrying out illegal alterations to a property. The HPRB refused to remove the stop work order at 6919 6th Street, and instructed the applicant to work with the neighbors of the property to develop an alternate proposal addressing their concerns and the issues of illegal construction. The applicant made no effort to work with the neighbors and, flouting the HPRB's instructions, has applied to the BZA for a retroactive special exception to clean up the numerous violations that have taken place.

BZA
Case No. 17349
Exhibit No. 27

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17349
EXHIBIT NO. 27

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The Board of Directors of the Takoma D.C. Neighborhood Association asks the Board of Zoning Adjustment to conclude that the addition already built at 6919 6th Street does not meet the applicable criteria in D.C. Municipal Regulations for special exceptions, which are listed below, and to deny the application for a special exception in this case:

a) The light and air available to neighboring properties shall not be unduly affected;
b) The privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties shall not be unduly compromised;
c) The addition, together with the original building, as viewed from the street, alley, and other public way, shall not substantially visually intrude upon the character, scale, and pattern of houses along the subject street frontage; and
d) In demonstrating compliance with paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) the applicant shall use plans, photographs or elevation drawings to represent the relationship of the proposed addition to adjacent buildings and views from public right of ways.

In addition, we also ask the Board of Zoning Adjustment to clearly deny this application because it was not sought until after illegal construction was halted by a stop-work order from District government. We ask the BZA to use strong language to discourage others from gambling that if they get caught building in violation of their permits -- like this applicant was -- the BZA will exempt them from the very regulations supporting the orders that stop their illegal activities.

The Board of Directors of the Takoma D.C. Neighborhood Association joins Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4-B, Councilmember Adrian Fenty, more than 30 neighbors of 6919 6th Street, NW, and Historic Takoma, Inc., to urge the BZA to support the historic integrity of our community -- and all neighborhoods in the District of Columbia -- by denying this request for a special exception to rewrite the history of the illegal construction at 6919 6th Street, N.W.

Sincerely,

Dodie Butler

Dodie Butler
President

cc: Adrian Fenty, Councilmember, Ward IV
Judi Jones, Chair, ANC 4-B
Sabrina Baron, President, Historic Takoma, Inc.

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