TESTIMONY
OF
ABDULLAH AL-SULEIMANI, FIRST SECRETARY
EMBASSY OF THE SULTANATE OF OMAN
TO THE
FOREIGN MISSIONS BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
ON
OCTOBER 11, 2005

Good morning. My name is Abdullah Al-Suleimani, and I am the First Secretary of the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman here in Washington, D.C. I am in charge of finance and administration. My responsibilities include overseeing all approvals and construction of our new Embassy annex at 2535 Belmont Road, N. W. Our Ambassador, His Excellency Mohamed Al-Khousaiby, ended his 5-year posting here in Washington two weeks ago, and has returned home. Our new Ambassador will arrive at the end of this month. Our Deputy Chief of Mission, Mr. Al-Hinai, is the Chargé d'Affaires ad Interim. He sends his regrets that he cannot attend this important proceeding this morning due to an urgent matter that requires his attention.

First of all, I want to thank you on behalf of the Embassy of Oman for allowing us to present our Application to you this morning. This is an important project for our country and our Embassy. Our current facility is not large enough to accommodate our entire staff. We have leased office space in other locations for many years in order to house the offices of the Military Attaché and the Cultural Attaché. Most recently, they were located together at 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W. That lease has recently

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expired. The Military Attaché has moved into the Embassy on Belmont Road, and the Cultural Attaché is leasing office space in Vienna, Virginia. It has long been our intention to consolidate our entire Embassy in one location. In order to do so, we will need to build additional chancery space.

When we began this process several years ago, we hired an architect and other consultants with extensive experience in similar embassy projects. Our intentions from the beginning were to provide sufficient space for our needs both now and into the long-term future; to design a building with due consideration of the neighbors and the surrounding neighborhood; and to fully comply with all applicable laws and regulations. As our Ambassador told the neighbors who gathered at the Embassy in August for a detailed briefing about the project, we are mindful that we are located in a residential neighborhood, and we have always conducted ourselves in a manner that respects our neighbors.

As you have seen in our submission, we currently have twenty-three diplomats and staff at the Embassy, and there will be thirty diplomats and staff at the Embassy after completion of construction. Most of our business is conducted either off-site, or by telephone, or mail, or e-mail. We have very few visitors to the site. The new building will allow us to provide suitable accommodations for all of our staff. Presently, those of us who are located at the Embassy do not have sufficient space to adequately conduct our affairs.

Our consultants have met with or otherwise discussed the project with a number of local and federal officials and offices, to ensure that we are in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. I believe that we have designed a project that meets all of these goals, and I hope that you will agree.

In closing, I thank you again on behalf of our Embassy for the opportunity to appear before you this morning, and I will answer any questions that you may have.

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