A. MARIO CASTILLO
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October 11, 2005

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment of the District of Columbia
Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, NW - Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

Via: Fax/Postal Delivery Re: Application #17382, Embassy of Oman

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of my neighbors on Belmont Road, NW (copied below), I am writing to request that your Board postpone consideration of the above noted application until your next regularly scheduled meeting.

By way of background, former Ambassador Ali Al Khusaiby invited us (the immdediate Belmont Road neighbors) to his chancery in August to discuss his embassy's building plans. During that meeting, he stated that he welcomed our recommendations because he wanted the final product to enhance and protect the architectural richness of our neighborhood. Regrettably, there are several outstanding questions that we were not able to discuss fully with former Ambassador Mohammed Ali Al Khusaiby prior to his return to Oman a few weeks ago.

The embassy's proposed plans are ones that we would like to support if we are allowed to continue and conclude our dialogue with embassy officials on a few outstanding issues. They, as we, will be long-term residents on Belmont Road, therefore, we want to extend every consideration due them as neighbors.

I have included a copy of our October 9 letter to the embassy conveying our recommendations, that I believe to be reasonable, regarding their building plans. I respectfully request that our letter be made part of the formal hearing record. And, I request that final approval on this project be conditional on the mutual resolution of the outstanding issues.

Thanking you for your consideration of our request, I remain,

Sincerely,

A. Mario Castillo

Copied:

His Excellency John Bruton, Ambassador, European Union
Congressman Bart Gordon and Mrs. Gordon
Mr. Robert and Mrs. Leslie Gladstone
Mr. Chris Gladstone and Ms. Elise Rabekoff
Mr. Woods and Mrs. Susan Vest
Mr. Mario Castillo and Mr. David Hutchison

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17382
EXHIBIT NO. 39

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October 9, 2005

The Honorable Mahmood Khamis Mohamed Al Hinai
First Secretary
The Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman
2535 Belmont Road, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

Via: Fax and Postal Delivery

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We have received Christopher Collins's response to our August 8 and September 6, 2005 letters concerning the proposed renovation and expansion of the Omani embassy facility. We have also reviewed the plans that your former Ambassador Mohammed Ali Al Khusaiby was kind enough to send.

As your immediate neighbors (copied in this letter), we would like to support your project and to be constructive partners helping you to move forward with your plans. We are, however, concerned about minimizing the impact of the construction and expanded facilities on our residential neighborhood. Accordingly, we would be pleased to support the project if the following concerns can be addressed to our mutual satisfaction prior to the finalization of the "construction permit hearing process" and the commencement of construction:

1. Traffic and Parking. We are very concerned about traffic flow onto Belmont Road. Traffic presently gets dangerously congested at the Tracy Place/Belmont Road intersection, and this will only increase with increased staff at this location as well as cultural events in the new facility. As a result, we believe that it would be far more appropriate to use Waterside Drive as the primary entrance to and exit from your facility, particularly for employees and for special events. This would significantly ameliorate the impact of the new building on our neighborhood. Even if you were to maintain some vehicular entry from Belmont Road, we believe that Waterside Drive is a preferable entry-and-exit point, or even exit-only point with a one-way entry off Belmont Road, for your employees and your guests at events.

If it is not possible to use Waterside Drive as the primary vehicular entrance and exit, we would like to see a traffic management/calming plan designed to minimize the effect of additional traffic on the neighborhood. We are concerned about safety, since there are many young children in the surrounding houses, as well as about congestion and parking. These are critical issues for us, and we are confident that you can address them. Similarly, we believe that it would be appropriate to provide additional parking spaces on the embassy property to keep the currently bad parking situation from getting worse.

In addition, we would appreciate knowing more about the use of the new facility for events as opposed to day-to-day office use. How many events per year will there be? At what times of the

day? How many guests will attend these events? In the case of other residential neighborhoods that have accepted non-residential uses, we are aware of use agreements with the neighborhood on these points, and we believe that would be appropriate in this case as well.

2. Landscaping and Lighting. We would like to understand more fully the landscaping plans, the landscaping maintenance plans, and the exterior and interior lighting plans for the property. On exterior lighting, we are anxious that this respect the residential character of the neighborhood and not in any way be bright or commercial in appearance. Similarly, we hope that interior lighting that is visible from the exterior would not be ceiling-hung fluorescent light as opposed to incandescent down lights that are domestic in its quality, and that curtains rather than blinds would be used on exterior windows.

Regarding the landscaping both inside and outside the fence, we are sure that you intend landscaping that is appropriate for the area, but we have not yet seen complete plans. Moreover, we would like to be sure that the maintenance plan for your landscaping is sufficient to ensure compatibility with the well-tended surrounding gardens.

3. Architecture. We would like to understand the nature, purpose and materials for the projection at the top of the front (Belmont Road) and rear (Rock Creek Park) elevations of the building. These do not appear to be compatible with the existing building on the site, the surrounding homes, or the setting on Rock Creek Park.

4. Finials. The upside down painted pots on the fence bordering 2527 Belmont are not in keeping with the wonderful architecture of either property and are rapidly deteriorating. We would appreciate it if you replaced them with finials consistent with the front wall of your property.

In sum, while we have the specific concerns we have set forth in this letter, we would like to offer you our support once those concerns are addressed, as we are confident they will be. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues over the coming months and welcome an opportunity to meet with you, at a mutually convenient time, in order to discuss our recommendations with you.

Sincerely,

A. Mario Castillo

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Fax For: Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment of D.C.
Office of Zoning
414 4th Street, NW - Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

URGENT

Fax: 202-727-6072

From: Mario Castillo

Date: October 11, 2005

Pages Including Cover: 4

Message:

Please deliver to Mr. Griffis and appropriate staff.

Thank you.

Mario Castillo

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