



BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia

September 22, 2006

Mr. Clifford Moy, Secretary
DC Board of Zoning Adjustments
441 4th Street, NE, Suite 200 South
Washington, DC 20001

CASE NO. 17521
EXHIBIT NO. 26

Re: 601-645 H Street Ventures
BZA Case No. 17521

Dear Mr. Moy:

The Stanton Park Neighborhood Association (SPNA) represents the residents in the area bounded by Second Street, H Street, Tenth Street, and East Capitol in the Northeast sector of the District. This application, in its present form, is incomplete, does not comply with the Zoning Regulations, and should be postponed from the presently scheduled October 10th hearing agenda.

The application has failed to address §1325.4 of the H Street Overlay Zoning Regulations that requires:

Applicants shall demonstrate that projects requiring a special exception shall be consistent with the design intent of the design requirements, of § 1324 and the design guidelines of the H Street N.E. Strategic Development Plan [emphasis added].

Those Design Guidelines consist of 10 pages that address issues such as "common architectural vocabulary", "consistency in proportion, material and intent" ... "without disrupting consistency and streetscape," not unlike the historic preservation guidelines. The Applicant has discussed (in item F of Section II of the Application) only the signage guideline, which, in the context of this Application is not even relevant. A further example of noncompliance with the Guidelines is the question of materials: while required to be addressed by the Guidelines, but unaddressed in the application, the Applicant has stated that they have not yet determined the materials that will be used for the rear and sides of the building that will face the R-4 residences. The ANCs, community groups and neighbors cannot even attempt to proceed to hearing on October 10th without this kind of information.

This is the first time the Design Guidelines for H Street have been applied by the BZA, and SPNA respectfully suggests that this case should be specially set to allow a thorough consideration and careful application of those Guidelines, since this case will provide the precedent for application of those Guidelines to future projects on H Street. This is a mixed-use project, the majority of which is proposed to be residential. With residential design, we have to live with it for decades (most of the houses in the neighborhood are 90-120 years old) and so it needs to be good.

In addition to the application of those Design Guidelines, this case also involves at least one Variance and three Special Exceptions (two of which, ground floor retail height and curb cut, involve H Street-specific Design Requirements under §§1324.12 & 1325.1(c)). The Variance and Special

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Exceptions will be at issue and two of the Special Exceptions will require evaluation of H Street-specific considerations, which are additional reasons for the need to set this case for extra time for the hearing.

Further complicating this application is the fact that as recently as the ANC 6C meeting on September 13th, the Applicant stated that the design was under revision, and would be the basis of negotiations with nearby neighbors. That redesign has not yet been made available to neighbors, the ANCs, or community groups such as SPNA. SPNA and these other interested entities cannot participate in the presently scheduled October 10th hearing under these constraints.

Based on these considerations, SPNA recommends:

1. The Applicant be required to amend the application to reflect the proposal they plan to build and demonstrate that the proposed design is consistent with the Design Guidelines.
2. The currently scheduled hearing for October 10 be rescheduled to allow the amended application to be re-noticed.
3. The amended application be provided to the ANCs, and to community groups (6th and H Street NE Neighborhood Association, CHRS and SPNA) to allow meaningful participation in the rescheduled hearing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Monte Edwards", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Monte Edwards, Co-Chair
SPNA Land Use Committee

Cc: Esther Bushman, Esq., General Counsel to the Office of Zoning
Bill Sisolak, ANC 6C, Zoning Comm. Chair
Anthony Rivera, ANC 6C-06
Drew Ronnenberg, ANC 6A, Economic Dev. & Zoning Comm. Chair
Randy Kenna, 6th and H Street NE Neighborhood Assoc. President
Gary Peterson, Capitol Hill Restoration Society, Zoning Comm. Chair
Norman Glasgow, Esq., 601-645 H Street Ventures