

Linden Neighborhood Association

TESTIMONY OF THE LINDEN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION ON BZA CASE #17521

Having met with the Applicant and after hearing the Plan, the Linden Neighborhood Association (LNA) supports an application by 601-645 H Street Ventures, LLC, pursuant to 11 DCMR §§ 1325 & 3104 for a special exception to allow construction of a building in the H Street Overlay on a lot having more than 6000 square feet of land area. The Applicant also seeks special exception from the prohibition on driveways on H Street as well as a variance to the lot occupancy provisions of §772 and the residential recreation space requirements of §773.

The Applicant has proposed to build a nine story mixed-use building on the site. The building will replace the existing one story building and parking lot in the center of the site, connecting the existing office buildings on each side. The building will have approximately 487 total parking spaces for the retail, office, and residential uses.

The applicant is requesting multiple forms of relief for this building including: variance from §772 for lot occupancy, a variance from §773 for residential recreation space, special exception for new construction on a lot greater than 6,000 square feet, and a special exception from §1303.2 to allow a driveway on H Street, to allow construction of a new mixed-use building.

Our concerns were:

- (a) *The project is consistent with the design intent of the design requirements of §1324 and the design guidelines of the H Street N.E. Strategic Development Plan*

LNA believes that the project is generally consistent with the intent of the design requirements. The Applicant has met with us on the issues we had in regards to the H Street Plan and has been responsive in addressing and responding to concerns.

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- (b) Vehicular access and egress shall be located and designed so as to encourage safe and efficient pedestrian movement, minimize conflict with principal pedestrian ways, function efficiently, and create no dangerous or otherwise objectionable traffic conditions***

The layout shows a driveway for the residential parking off of H Street as prohibited under §1303.2 and requires relief under this section. The intent of the H Street Plan wrongly excludes parking access from H Street. The Linden Neighborhood Association has always been on record as supporting the access of new development having curb cuts along the main thoroughfare as opposed to being on side streets which takes away from the already challenged parking situations that most of us face here in Old City. The Linden Neighborhood Association supports and had suggested early on that the parking entrance be in the center of the block.

DDOT's resistance to this is another cited example that the idea and concept of a streetcar on H Street is a very bad idea, that while in concept looks attractive, the practicality of adding it will adversely affect the movement of traffic not only on H Street, but the smaller streets also. The impact of traffic on the western most end of H Street and the intensity of that flow affects our quality of life on the eastern most-end also.

- (c) Parking and traffic conditions associated with the operation of a proposed use shall not adversely affect adjacent or nearby residences***

Parking is one of the greatest challenges we have next to the crime that has been generated by the introduction of nightclubs on H Street. LNA has asked that the Project consider some type of parking for residents at night on the weekends/holidays and consider after-hours parking for night-time entertainment. We support the Office of Planning's recommendation that this project be approved.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.