

Before the
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
PUBLIC HEARING
APPLICATION OF DAKOTA SQUARE LLC
(FOR AN AREA VARIANCE RELATING TO
THE RIGGS ROAD SHOPPING CENTER, 300-320 RIGGS ROAD, NE)

MARCH 20, 2007

EVANNA POWELL

Good afternoon Commissioners, I thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding this area variance at the Riggs Road Shopping Center, 300-320 Riggs Road, N.E.

This area variance request is for construction of a mixed use, retail/residential building at the Riggs Road Shopping Center located at 300-320 Riggs Road, NE. The planned structure will be 4-stories tall. The retail space will occupy the first floor. The residential units will occupy the remaining three (3) floors and total 420 units. There will be 550 parking spaces, 210 for residential units and 340 for retail parking.

My primary concern center around the increased traffic that will be caused on Riggs Road by the additional cars from this development and other nearby existing and proposed developments.

The next-to-worse traffic scenario would be caused by the additional 420 vehicles from the Riggs Road Shopping Center site plus 2,187 additional vehicles from the other developments being added to the already-existing traffic fiasco on Riggs Road in the vicinity of Riggs Road and South Dakota Avenue. The 2,607 total vehicles would come from,

- 420 vehicles from the Riggs Road Shopping Center site, 300-320 Riggs Road, NE (420 residential units, 1 vehicle per unit);
- 200 vehicles from Dakota Apartments site 5545-5549 and 5553-5575 South Dakota Avenue, NE (200 residential units, 1 vehicle per unit);
- 200 vehicles from Dakota Apartments desired to be built on the Triangle at South Dakota & Riggs Road (200 residential units to equal the rumored total 400 units for the entire Dakota Apartments site);
- 380 vehicles from Fort Totten East site (380 residential units, 1 vehicle per unit);
- 380 vehicles from Fort Totten West site (380 residential units, assuming the West and East sites will be the same size, 1 vehicle per unit); and
- 1,027 vehicles from the Riggs Plaza/Cafritz site which site is one (1) block south of Riggs Road and one (1) block west of South Dakota Avenue and Kennedy Street, NE (1,027 residential units, 1 vehicle per unit).

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The worse traffic fiasco would come from development residents having two (2) or more vehicles. Is there a law that prevents the ownership of more than one (1) vehicle?

Omitted from the 2,607 vehicles associated with the new developments are the number of vehicles that would be associated with the apartments behind the Liquor Store at Chillum Road and Riggs Road rumored to be contemplating converting to condominiums and vehicles associated with the 340 retail parking spaces at the Shopping Center.

As of July 7, 2006, a traffic count done at the expense of the D.C. Department of Transportation, indicates the following:

At the Riggs Road and South Dakota Avenue intersection, approximately 8,000 and 10,000 vehicles passed respectively through the intersection during the AM and PM 3-hour periods. Approximately 3,000 and 4,000 vehicles passed respectively through the intersection during the 1-hour AM and PM peak-usage times.

More specifically, the number of vehicles using in intersection and times of day of passing through the intersection are as follows:

8,104 vehicles passed through the intersection during the three-hour AM period
6:30-9:30;
2,887 vehicles passed through the intersection during the AM peak time 7:15-8:15;
10,314 vehicles passed through the intersection during the three-hour PM period
4:00-7:00; and
3,599 vehicles passed through the intersection during the PM peak time 5:15-6:15.

At the Riggs Road and Chillum Road intersection, approximately 3,000 and 5,000 vehicles passed respectively through the intersection during the AM and PM 3-hour periods. Approximately 1,000 and 2,000 vehicles passed respectively through the intersection during the 1-hour AM and PM peak-usage times.

More specifically, the number of vehicles using the intersection and times of day of vehicles passing through the intersection are as follows:

3,297 vehicles passed through the intersection during the three-hour AM period
6:30-9:30;
1,170 vehicles passed through the intersection during the AM peak time 7:00-8:00;
4,827 vehicles passed through the intersection during the three-hour PM period
4:00-7:00; and
1,706 vehicles passed through the intersection during the PM peak time 5:15-6:15.

At the South Dakota Avenue and Exxon intersection, approximately 4,000 and 5,000 vehicles passed respectively through the intersection during the AM and PM 3-hour periods. Approximately 2,000 and 2000 vehicles passed respectively through the intersection during the 1-hour AM and PM peak-usage times.

More specifically, the number of vehicles using the intersection and times of day of passing through the intersection are as follows:

4,045 vehicles passed through the intersection during the three-hour AM period 6:00-9:00;
1,500 vehicles passed through the intersection during the AM peak time 7:15-8:15;
5,185 vehicles passed through the intersection during the three-hour PM period 4:00-7:00; and
1,873 vehicles passed through the intersection during the PM peak time 5:30-6:30.

In order to get a better idea of the total number of vehicles that will pass through the intersections mentioned above, add the 2,607 estimated vehicles that will be associated with the developments to the number of vehicles passing through the intersections mentioned previously.

My second concern relates to the impact the increased number of vehicles will have upon the quality of air in the Riggs Road/South Dakota Avenue area.

My third concern relates to the impact 420 new units at the Riggs Shopping Center site with its estimated 840 residents (estimated 2 per residential unit) plus 4,374 residents (estimated at 2 persons) for each of the remaining development residential units or a total of 5,214 residents, will have on our water and sewage system. Between October 2006 and January 2007, the water main on Riggs Road between the four hundred (400) block of Riggs Road and Oglethorpe and Riggs Road burst approximately three (3) times, sending water over cars and down Riggs Road.

My last concern relates to the manner in which the need for redesign of the Riggs Road and South Dakota Avenue intersection has been presented to the residents of the area.

Redesign of the Riggs Road and South Dakota Avenue intersection into a crossroad (where all cars will have to cross the intersection at the same place) is not for the benefit of the Riggs Road/South Dakota Avenue area residents or of other users of the intersection. The current design of the intersection with two (2) ramps (one (1) going down and one coming up South Dakota) with the traditional intersection (+) in the center, facilitates the movement of both vehicles in, and walkers near, the intersection.

Redesign of the Riggs Road and South Dakota Avenue intersection is more for the benefit of developer. The developer wants to acquire the Triangle land at the intersection, add that land to 5545-5575 South Dakota Avenue and expand his development from the 200 units proposed to be built at the 5545-5575 South Dakota Avenue site to the total 400 units he wants to build on the land inclusive of the Triangle land.

Redesign of the intersection into a crossroad as described above will neither promote the safety of walkers near the intersection nor facilitate the movement of the number of cars in the intersection.

I support development at the Riggs Shopping Center that is in conformity with the neighborhood, that is, development that consists of semidetached houses or townhouses, of brick construction, and of no more than 2 stories above ground.

I am of the opinion that structures described above plus the retail development proposed for the site can be located on the site in a manner that blends in a compatible manner with the surrounding neighborhood, including the housing. I am also of the opinion that blending in a compatible manner will also provide the developer with a reasonable profit under the existing real estate market.