

Board of Zoning Adjustment
Testimony in favor of EYA's Hillcrest Development
by Kathy Chamberlain *Kathy Chamberlain*

November 18, 2008

Thanks for this opportunity to testify on the proposal by EYA for Hillcrest single-family homes in the area of Gainesville St and Southern Ave., SE

I'm Kathy Chamberlain, 26-year Hillcrest resident, former ANC 7B commissioner and chair, currently a member of the Hillcrest Community Civic Association board and an active member of the neighborhood. I am testifying on my own behalf, not on behalf of any organization. But I believe that many Hillcrest residents feel as I do.

I have been following the issue of housing development in the area of Gainesville Street in Hillcrest for many years, beginning with a proposal around 2002 from a developer who approached ANC 7B about building cheap houses on the site. I chaired ANC 7B at the time, and we rejected the proposal outright. The developer did not pursue it. This was well before EYA entered the picture in 2006 with a proposal more in line with Hillcrest's high standards.

Some in the community opposed EYA's original proposal of 170 townhouses on the site, citing traffic concerns, too much density, and a desire to preserve green space. They said if the land was to be developed, they wanted fewer homes and they wanted single family detached homes. EYA is now proposing 54 single-family detached homes. They are preserving green space, and are no longer proposing the Southern Avenue cut-through. The new proposal fits with the Hillcrest neighborhood, being between Naylor Gardens, other single-family homes, and the Naylor Road Metro station.

We in Hillcrest value our trees and green space, and we are fortunate to have lower housing density than most DC neighborhoods. We value our national park land-- the portion of Fort Circle Park that runs through Hillcrest-- as well as other wooded undeveloped parcels. We value our lot sizes which are larger than most in DC.

Our preference for preserving green space over housing development is an indication of these values, so opposing additional housing where we now have green space is only natural. However, it is no longer realistic to believe that a 12-acre privately owned swath of land in a beautiful neighborhood in Washington D.C. , ¼ mile from a Metro station will remain undeveloped. It is time for us to face the reality that development will happen, and we need to make the best of it.

EYA is known for high-quality high-end residential development. They can build these homes "by right", needing only a BZA variance that will allow them to preserve open green space and situate the homes as close as possible to the Metro station. We Hillcrest residents should accept this proposal, support the required variance, and use the opportunity to work side by side with EYA to make this addition to Hillcrest the best that it can be.

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District of Columbia

CASE NO. 17837

EXHIBIT NO. 46

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