



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
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Mary M. Cheh

Councilmember, Ward 3
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Frederick Hill, Chairperson
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 210-S
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Chairperson Hill,

I write today about case number 19450 to support the application of the District Department of General Services regarding 3320 Idaho Avenue, NW.

All matters arise in a particular context, and this one is no different. The District has an urgent need to close the former DC General Hospital which now houses as many as 270 homeless families each night in completely unacceptable conditions. To that end, the Mayor put forth a plan to construct smaller facilities for 50 families. Experts indicate that these smaller facilities allow direct engagement, not estrangement, with residents and assure features and services that permit the residents to feel safe and dignified. At the same time the experts indicate that the smaller facilities must be large enough to achieve economies of scale and have the wrap around or readily available services as needed to move the homeless families to permanent housing. The optimum size has been identified as 50 units, which the current facility will be.

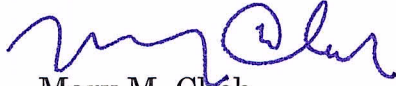
The Mayor identified four requirements for short term facilities located in each of the Wards: (1) roughly 30,000 square feet, (2) close to public transportation, (3) economically feasible, and (4) large enough and completed in time to help close DC General. In the opinion of the Council, though, the package of sites the Mayor first announced was too expensive to build and operate, and the Council looked for a new package of sites in all Wards in order to contain costs. In Ward 3 the 2D site met the four criteria and had the economic advantage of being already owned by the District. The new facility on the 2D site will include a new three level parking deck that will not only accommodate all of the police parking on the current property and parking for the housing facility, but will also include enough space to take approximately 60 cars off the street, a distinct benefit for the neighborhood.

Your decision here is, of course, based on zoning rules and regulations, but I want to offer a moral ground for allowing this facility to be built as the homeless experts

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deem most desirable: I believe the people of Ward 3 want to do their part to help residents, particularly children, who find themselves in these dire circumstances; that they want to welcome them to Ward 3; that they find it right and fitting that we do this as a community; and that once up and operating as envisioned, we will have nothing to fear and everything to celebrate.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mary M. Chéh', written in a cursive style.

Mary M. Chéh