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DAVID W. BROWN
SOLE PRACTITIONER

February 28, 2017

Sara Benjamin Bardin, Director
District of Columbia Office of Zoning
441 4th Street NW Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001


Re: ***Submission of Written Testimony***
BZA Case No. 19452 – Ward 5 Homeless Shelter Project
D.C. Department of General Services

Dear Director Bardin:

Several members of Citizens for Responsible Options (“CRO”) are listed in CRO’s Pre-Hearing Statement as witnesses who will testify. To expedite the hearing, these witnesses will summarize at the hearing their more detailed written testimony, as attached:

1. Testimony of David Forrest
2. Testimony of Dina Mukhamedzhonova
3. Testimony of Delores Silvey Wilkes
4. Testimony of Tad Czyzewski
5. Testimony of John Iskander
6. Testimony of Faraz Khan
7. Testimony of Joseph Cassidy
8. Testimony of Jeff Steen
9. Testimony of Tom Kirlin
10. Testimony of Carolyn Warren

Respectfully submitted,



David W. Brown

/enclosures (written testimony - 10)

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.19452
EXHIBIT NO.119

Sara Benjamin Bardin, Director
District of Columbia Office of Zoning
February 6, 2017
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AFFIDAVIT OF SERVICE

The Citizens for Responsible Options, by and through the undersigned counsel, this 28th day of February 2017, served the foregoing letter to the BZA submitting written testimony via email MMoldenhauer@washlaw.com, Meridith Moldenhauer, Esq., Griffin, Murphy, Moldenhauer & Wiggins, LLP, 1912 Sunderland Place, NW, Washington, DC 20036; mailed first class postage prepaid to the local ANC, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 5B, 1920 Irving Street, NE, Washington, DC 20018, and the DC Office of Planning, 1100 4th Street, SW, Suite 650 East, Washington, DC 20024.

Respectfully submitted,

KNOPF & BROWN

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401 E. Jefferson Street, Ste. 206
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Ph:301-545-6100 Email:brown@knopf-brown.com

February 28, 2017

Testimony of David R. Forrest

BZA Case Number 19452

I have been a resident of the neighborhood for seven years and live here with my wife, Dina, 70 feet from the site of the proposed facility. I am also the President of a neighborhood community organization, Citizens for Responsible Options, representing dozens of concerned neighbors who have banded together in protest because we were not informed of this site selection in advance and had no realistic opportunity for input. I have a doctorate degree in materials engineering from MIT, am a Registered Professional Engineer, and have 39 years of engineering practice experience in industry and government. I manage a portfolio of about \$75M in R&D program funding, so I well understand the program management of facility projects of this scale.

I'll start by noting that one very good friend and neighbor has already left the block in part because of this shelter project, another good friend is right now preparing to sell their home and leave because of this project, and two more friends and immediate neighbors are in the wings considering leaving. So anyone who tells you there will be no impact on the property values or on the very fabric of our community is not living our reality. This wouldn't be happening if the size of the building and the occupancy were proportional to the neighborhood (e.g, 25 people at the site). It's not about the resident population but the scale. I can tell you that folks I know have gone door to door gathering 287 signatures throughout ANC 5B03 and residents oppose this 10 to 1.

Height and Rear Yard Special Exceptions

The combination of height special exception and the rear yard special exception, if allowed, would permit a massive expanse of a building, squeezed in between a condominium and Police Station, enveloping half of the latter. The proposed 70 foot structure would be completely disproportionate in scale to the two story bungalows in the neighborhood. It would cast a shadow reaching to the end of the block in winter. It would be so tall that three houses away, our property would be in the shadow of this gargantuan building. We would lose all of our much-needed sun from late fall to early spring into the windows of our house and into our yard. This is particularly distressing to us because a new five story complex is being built within 20 feet to our east side and we are losing our morning sun to this—so the southern sun is all we have left and this project will take that away.

Our future neighbors who will be in the six condo units, who obviously aren't here yet, would have—instead of a bright cheery southern sun exposure—a massive and morally depressing 70 foot wall for their vista, filled with windows and people looking into

their living rooms and kitchens. They would be deprived not only of direct sunlight but also of open sky because the shelter would loom an additional 25 feet above the highest unit. The tiny bit of full shadow space for the shelter residents in between these buildings would be completely claustrophobic—not the happy relaxation space that the city would have you imagine. The height of the condos is 45 feet, not the 50 feet claimed by the Office of Planning, and so the height disadvantage of the condos to the shelter is even worse than the city would have you believe (45 feet to 70 feet = 25 foot disadvantage, or 56% higher).

Parking in the Neighborhood

The parking study is deeply flawed, failing to account for 9 new spots needed at 2909 17th St for the 6 condo units immediately adjacent to the proposed site, failing to account for 2 additional spots that will be needed at 2911 17th St after the foreclosure case is finished and the property is sold to a new family, failing to account for parking for 15 new parking spots that will be needed for 1715 Hamlin, failing to account for the parking needed for the 42 unit apartment coming to 2027 Rhode Island Ave, and failing to account for the 30 parking spots needed for the condo project across the street at 1515 Rhode Island Ave. The study was performed in the evening on one single day in December 2016 and did not analyze daytime parking when commuters and others are filling the parking spots in this area. The commuter parking is an ongoing problem regardless of the shelter issue. The study is completely insufficient. A study needs to be performed over a period of several weeks to establish typical patterns. There is no way that this neighborhood can support the parking spots for 150 residents, visitors for the 46 families, and 27 spaces of staff parking.

The parking study claims that the homeless have no cars, and that staff will use public transit. On February 21st at a neighborhood meeting at Woodridge Library, a formerly homeless individual who has lived with folks in this situation explained to us that many homeless do indeed have cars, and drive to areas where they congregate in the evening, contradicting the study's assertion. If it were true that the homeless and staff do not need parking, it begs the question of why the city is proposing to build a \$3M parking deck in Ward 3's shelter site for people who don't need parking. You can't have it both ways.

The suggestion in the study that some of this parking need for the staff will be accommodated by the Rideshare bicycles and public transit, especially in the heat of the summer or cold of the winter is complete nonsense. It was certainly not true of the much smaller number of police department employees who used to work at this

location: many drove to work and parked on the street. We greeted them every day, and they watched out for us.

Special Exception to Exceed Maximum Size by 6X

As Attorney Brown has argued, the use of the proposed facility is not as an *emergency* shelter to keep people safe from extreme weather conditions, but a *temporary* shelter with onsite services to transition residents to more stable, long term housing. An ordinary special exception for a temporary shelter would permit up to 25 residents. DGS's special exception request would translate to housing 146 residents at the facility or about six times the ordinary special exception. There are only about 25 people living on this block of 17th Street. The city asserts that this smaller housing facility will give the 146 residents the ability to integrate into the surrounding community of 25. Instead the increased activity will overwhelm our quiet little neighborhood overnight with people who are not invested in this neighborhood because they are only here temporarily, with a population that will be constantly changing. This will transform our block from a community to a way station.

On DGS numbers: DGS claims 2.5 people per homeless family x 46 units = 115 residents. However, 2.5 people per homeless family is NOT the actual value for DC General, it's higher. But the actual occupancy will be determined by the number of beds, which is 146, of which the city will seek to maximize their occupancy.

Loading Berth and Delivery Space Special Exception, Open Court Exception

DGS claims that only six deliveries per day are needed to this facility, mostly for food and passenger drop off. They assert that the food delivery can be accomplished using a delivery van for which a parking spot will be permanently reserved. The six delivery assertion seems to ignore the need for delivering other supplies that will be required to run the facility (such as periodic utility repair, office supplies, bathroom supplies, and cleaning supplies) and amazingly avoids the question of garbage removal or the multiple times per week that this will be required. In fact, there is no designated area for a garbage dumpster at all in the architectural plans. For a 200 person site, Waste Management's website recommends an 8 cubic yard dumpster measuring 6' wide x 5'6" deep x 6'8" high. It would need to be located at some spot on the property where it could easily be rolled out to the street for trash collection by a large truck with forklifts. Given the current design, the location of this garbage dumpster would necessarily consume space currently designated for other activities such as the "relaxation" area along the North wall or the small courtyard/children's play area on the South side of the complex. Therefore one of these areas would be degraded with trash and would be

necessarily smaller than stated by the Applicant, meaning the exception requested for Open Court space is more severe than stated. This further underscores the inadequate lot size for this project.

Hasty, Ill-Considered, and Eliminated as Too Small by City Professionals

In this request for all the special exceptions, DGS's underlying assertion is that the Police Station site is the last available parcel of land in Ward 5 where the facility could possibly go. That all available options were exhausted and this is all that's left. And if these special exceptions are not granted, there will be nowhere to place the rest of the families who cannot fit into the Police Station site. Nothing could be further from the truth.

- The city did not consider Fort Totten, where it continues to sell land for development
- It didn't consider McMillan Park where a major development project is planned
- It thought about 1300 Rhode Island Ave. NE where there is 84,000 square feet ready for sale right now but rejected as cost prohibitive; now maybe a good tradeoff compared to the escalated expenses of trying to contort 6 stories around the Police Station
- It didn't consider expanding the Virginia Williams center at 920 Rhode Island Ave.
- It did consider 326 R St NE but dismissed it—incorrectly asserting that it would be used to house MLK Library books (they're not using it for that at all. . . just for office space which could be elsewhere).

There are plenty of options that deserve a thoughtful and professional examination.

Instead we are told that "Ward 5 residents" identified this site (really it was one community organizer, Kevin Mullone, during a meeting in February 2016--as if this person were an expert on shelter facility siting requirements) as if that constituted an exhaustive search. Conversely City Council was advised by City Administrator Rashad Young (who is an expert) that the site was too small on 11 April 2016. DGS Director Christopher Weaver (also an expert) advised City Council that the site was too small on 11 April 2016.¹ The Mayor also was concerned and offered to have an expedited test fit performed² prior to the legislative vote on 31 May 2016 but this offer was ignored by City Council.

¹ <http://mayor.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/mayormb/publication/attachments/Response-to-Bill-21-620-CM-Mendelson-Letter%204-11-2016.pdf>

²

<http://dmhhs.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/mayormb/publication/attachments/Letter%20from%20the%20Mayor%20re%20Short%20Term%20Family%20Housing%20Plan%205.27.2016.pdf>

The Proposed Parking Spots Won't Work

The three parking spots plus delivery van spot as planned by the city for shelter staff and deliveries will not work as drawn in the architect's plans. In order not to hit the other cars or the support posts that would be next to the car pulling out into the alley, the exiting car needs to pull half way out of its spot first. (Photo 1) Then the driver needs to cut the wheel hard to try to make the turn. (Photo 2) However the alley is only 15 feet wide; this photo is of the same alley further north where my car is shown coming out of my back yard. (Photo 3) The Toyota Avalon, not an excessively large car, cannot make this turn without backing up multiple times. (Photo 4) Corner to corner, the length of the car is greater than 15 feet. (Photo 5) I was only able to get out by backing up several times into another part of my yard, but in practice at the shelter, another car or a post would be in the way.



Photo 1. In order not to hit the other cars that would be next to the car pulling out into the alley, the exiting car needs to pull half way out of its spot first.



Photo 2. The driver needs to cut the wheel hard to try to make the turn



Photo 3. This photo is of the same alley further North of the shelter site, where my car is shown coming out of my back yard.



Photo 4. The Toyota Avalon, not an excessively large car, cannot make this turn.



Photo 5. Corner to corner, the length of the car is greater than 15 feet. Car cannot complete the turn without backing up. This will be not even be possible for a larger delivery van.

Thus, the spots either have to be angled (in which case one of the spots is lost) or the parking spots need to extend back further into the property (in which case the size of the building must be reduced). A delivery van carrying food for 150-200 people would be significantly larger than the exemplar Toyota Avalon. It does not seem possible that this van would be able to park into the spot as designed. This further underscores the inadequacy of the site for this facility due to lack of a proper loading berth for necessary deliveries, and is an important reason to deny the requested special exception for the Loading Berth and Delivery Space.

Also the architect's parking spot design does not seem to allow for space needed for concrete bumpers to prevent cars from hitting and damaging the exterior walls. Adding the necessary protection would further limit the size of the building if implemented.

Testimony of Dina Mukhamedzhanova BZA Case Number 19452

Hi, I am Dina Mukhamedzhanova. I live in a single-family home located at 2913 17th street, which is 70 feet from the proposed project property line and 85 feet from the proposed massive building. The bulk of the proposed building is oriented in the direction of my house (North).

I would like to bring to attention a few issues related to:

1. Antenna tower and antenna equipment cabinet on site.
2. Erroneous or inconsistent statements in the applicant's prehearing statement and supporting documents.
3. My personal story

Antenna Tower and Antenna Equipment Cabinet on site

1. The antenna equipment cabinet on site is a large structure with the height of 2-3 floors. Please see the attached photo of it. All electro-mechanical parts of this cabinet, residing today on a special concrete platform, have to go to the new building roof. That adds another 8-10 feet to the already very high 70-foot building.

Because the site is extremely small for such occupancy, a lot of utilities equipment, which otherwise resides inside the building, would have to go to the roof, adding even more feet to the already overly high building.

2. The antenna tower base would be 4 feet from the proposed building. It is so close that the existing antenna array, which has a diameter of almost 16 feet, has to be lifted in order to erect the building. This leads to a situation in which 150 people, of whom roughly 90 are children, will live literally under the antenna array. Bringing so many people to such close proximity to the antenna triggers some 'Antenna Regulations' evaluation. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has to evaluate the environmental effects of radiofrequency (RF) radiation from FCC-regulated transmitters. According to Zoning rules (Subtitle C § 1301), the applicant should present the certification from FCC or FDA showing that electromagnetic and power emission will not exceed Maximum Permissible Exposure (MPE) limits. We are talking about public safety here, as the environment and children's health are at stake. The applicant had failed to submit such certification.

3. The existing antenna tower is part of the district's emergency communications network under section 212 (section 2520: Antenna, other than Commercial Broadcast Antenna).

Because antenna has EMERGENCY status, it should have a designated parking space and access area to antenna. There are plenty of parking spaces for antenna repairs trucks and the site has a designated access, with stairs, to the antenna tower.

Proposed project does not address the problem with parking and access area for the emergency antenna maintenance trucks.

The applicant failed to address these issue in their application.

Erroneous or inconsistent statements in Applicants prehearing statement and supporting documents

1. The OP report, in section ii, 'No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good,' states that "new building constructed to the property line (condo) is 50 feet and difference in cast shadows between that construction and proposed building is minor." First, the constructed building is only 40 feet high and difference in cast shadows is between 40 and 70 feet (in addition to these 40-to-70 feet, there's the very large, almost 10 feet high, antenna support equipment on roof) is not at all minor, and all properties on 17th blocks, including mine, will be affected by this much shadow.
2. Applicant prehearing statement references "New Hampshire Avenue." There is no New Hampshire Avenue nearby.
3. Statement that "numerous larger apartment houses, ranging from 4 to 5 ½ stories in height are located in Property's immediate vicinity" is not correct. There are no numerous 4-5 story buildings nearby, and none of them are higher than the permitted MU-4 50 feet.
4. When Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services introduced the program "Ending Homeless in the District. Plan to close DC General," it explicitly outlined a type of facility to be built in each of 8 Wards:
"six short-term family housing facilities, one apartment-style transitional housing facility for families, and one shelter specifically for single women."

Applicant's description of the Project should be 'short-term housing' and not 'emergency shelter'.

5. Applicant statement that "Accordingly, the program goals and objectives of the District of Columbia, including the Mayor's office and the D.C. Council, cannot be achieved by a facility of a smaller size" is not accurate.
Applicant states that DC General has 280 units. In actuality, it has 250-260 units. According to DHS statistics, the average stay in DC General is 9 months. Expected stay in replacement facility is up to 3 months. 3 months vs 9 months stay suggest that the city will not need so many units in the future and there is no need to build a humongous institution-like building for 150 residents and 27 employees on a small site. And there is no need to partly-demolish the historical 12th precinct building.

6. The applicant's statement "Due to this substantial separation of approximately 140 feet, the light and air available to those properties will not tend to be affected

adversely” is wrong. The distance between proposed building wall and the line of property is: 120 feet to 2915 17th St. property line, 85 feet to 2913 17 St. (my property and 70 feet from project property line) , 50 feet to 2911 17th St., 15 feet to 2909 17th St. (new condo). and 100 feet from the house across street.

7. The applicant’s statement “the bulk of the tallest portions of the Project are clustered on the east side of the Property, adjacent to the 15-foot alley” is also wrong. The bulk of the building, as is clearly seen from the mockup, is oriented towards North and my house.

8. There will be about 90 children (60% of the anticipated 150 residents) in the building, with about 40 toddlers. How dare the city claim that the facility will provide a safe playground on premises that can accommodate such a large number of children? Just visualize all those children, plus accompanying moms, trying to play at a ‘14 feet x 13 feet’ playground.

My personal Story

I few years ago I lost my son Sean after 15 years of battling his severe diabetics. He was only 33. I was devastating. I lost my both parents just after that and I lost my job. I was moved to Brookland 1.5 years ago from urban vibrant Adams Morgan because I wanted only two things that time in my life: a quiet residential place and my garden. Gardening heals me. We invested all our savings into garden and landscape because my husband told me that the most important thing is to be healed and happy again.

City is taking the quietness of my living and my garden from me.

It will be never quiet because it can not be quiet when you have 70 feet away institution-like facility with 150 residents+27 employee on a tiny place which needs to be fed and maiteaned. It will never be quiet because visitors are not allowed into building and the only place for them is hanging in 17th street just in front of my house. My garden will be always in shadow. In October, November, December January we will not have sun at all any time of day. In Feb, March– sun will be reduced significant. I can give a lot of care to plants but I can not give them sun. I need Sun too. City is practically forcing me to sale my house and move away. I will loose all my money I spent on gardening and landscape. As real estate agents told me that I will loose about 10% of my house value because of proposed project. My neighbor friend who would be also 200 footer just sold her house because as she told me’ it will never be quiet here again and it is too big massive house for such residential area”.

The most outrageous that, as we know from the public records: City did not spend any time on the site analysis and alternative site anylysis meet Program

requirement. City did not do even proper 'Fit test". As a result of such Council negligence City is now imposing ridiculously huge building resided on three times smaller than required by City specs(30,000 sqft) with a lot of constraints like Antenna and Albert Harris building(all his buildings are landmarked in DC) If they spend any time City could pick up a site much better meet the Program needs and much less impact on the surrounding All this project is a demonstration of City Power abuse and negligence. And I sincerely consider myself as a victim of such negligence.

Testimony of Frederick Silvey-Wilkes

BZA Case Number 19452

My name is Frederick Wilkes and I live at 2916 17th street across the street from the proposed temporary housing facility. I moved here in 2009 to spend my retirement with my wife Delores in her family home. I expected our golden years would be quiet and relaxing. This neighborhood is like a quiet gem in the midst of a bustling city.

I am disturbed that a residential community would be so radically transformed by the building of such a large structure for temporary purposes. I am concerned about great increases in both auto and foot traffic because my wife is blind and will be at great risk.

In addition it appears she will be deprived of precious sunlight especially during early morning hours. She has some light perception so sunlight is important to her.

I believe the influx of 150 to 200 people, many of them children, into such a small neighborhood will alter the fabric of life in the community. It will change from intimate and personal to anonymous and impersonal.

The question that needs to be considered is why disrupt a stable community for a temporary purpose?

I urge the board to deny this request which is before you today and to preserve the quality of life in this community.

February 27, 2017

Attn: Frederick Hill, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th St NW, Suite 201 S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: BZA case 19452

Dear Members of the Board of Zoning Adjustment,

My name is John Iskander. My home at 3304 20th St NE is about 3 blocks from 17th St. I have lived here since 2009. I bought a ramshackle house, and have, over the years, restored it and improved it to its original craftsman era appearance, so that it reflects the charm that this neighborhood was and is known for. I worked on the facade first, so as to help improve our street and our immediate neighborhood, and I did much of the facade work myself, out of love, and—frankly—out of the need to be frugal. I have invested a huge amount of care and love in the house, in the neighborhood, and in my neighbors, many of whom I know and the elders among whom I regularly assist.

I oppose your granting any of the variances and special exceptions that the city is requesting for the homeless shelter at 1700 Rhode Island Avenue. I oppose this for two main reasons.

First, we need much more help if this part of the city is ever to realize its potential. As the city itself as regularly noted, most specifically in the small area plan for this area entitled “Diamond of the District,” this is a neighborhood that needs great assistance if it is to become vibrant, and to provide high quality public services and life. On p. 4 of that document is the following:

The potential is significant for a mix of new, creative, locally-owned, “green” businesses fronting a vibrant streetscape. To achieve this, the plan recommends that new licenses for *storefront churches, check cash-ing services, addiction treatment facilities, half-way houses, and group residential facilities are extremely limited or prohibited* and that new apparel, organic, furnishings, pet stores, and many others are encouraged. (Emphasis mine)

Similarly, in the Small Area Plan for the upper north east, in policy UNE-2.5.4 in speaking of the RIA corridor (p. 24-27) we have the following policy guidance:

Strengthen the Rhode Island Avenue corridor from 13th to 24th Street NE as *a pedestrian-oriented mixed use district that better meets the needs of residents in the Brentwood, Brookland, Woodridge, and South Central neighborhoods.* Infill development that combines ground floor retail and upper-story office and/or housing should be encouraged. (Emphasis mine)

This shelter is in direct contravention of the plans that the city has rightly laid out for this area. That this will slow the development of RIA is certain, and this is a significant harm that the city is imposing on us, the tax-payer residents. Instead of turning the former MPD youth division building into a place of attraction and enlivenment on the street, which would benefit the neighborhood, they are building something that will be shut off, dead to the street, institutional. I am sure that I do not have to remind you that Jane Jacobs in her seminal work *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* makes the point that policing alone can never make a neighborhood safe, but that it is 'eyes on the street,' which do. Eyes on the street means businesses, places of communal life and interaction, not a gated institution that will remove that space from the life of the Avenue. The city makes this precise point in the planning document *Diamond of the District*, where Rhode Island Avenue's lack of safety is laid at the feet of its poor utilization.

The city has developed the Comprehensive plan and Small Area Plan after immense effort, thought, and input. It is clear that the City Council's decision to place the shelter at this specific location reflects none of these things, and was done in the interest of expediency. In the end, as citizens who try to make plans so as to successfully live in the District, the only thing we have to go on is the long term controlling plans that the city carefully constructs. Granting variances and exceptions willy nilly tears at the very fabric of the predictability that rule of law is predicated on.

Secondly, I oppose the shelter as proposed. At the very root of things is the fact that it is far too big as currently proposed. I have testified against the only other development that sought major height variance along Rhode Island Avenue, in the case of Mid-City Financial in BZA case 14-18. I submitted written testimony at the time (exhibit 38) and gave oral testimony as well at the hearing on May 7, 2015. In other words, my opposition to the overwhelming density and height of this proposed shelter is consistent with my own previous testimony, and not, as our former ANC commissioner Michael Morrison (who attended my testimony at the BZA) has falsely stated in his support of this proposed development, unique to this case.

The relevant passage of the zoning code is the following:

513.1(b)(6) The Board of Zoning Adjustment may approve a facility for more than twenty- five (25) persons, not including resident supervisors or staff and their families, only if the Board finds that the program goals and objectives of the District of Columbia cannot be achieved by a facility of a smaller size at the subject location and if there is no other reasonable alternative to meet the program needs of that area of the District.

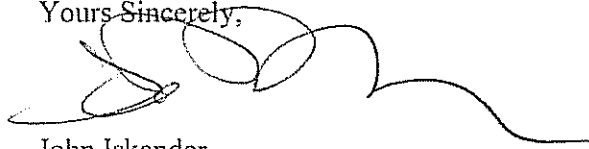
I support a shelter that abides by the strictures of this law.

The city's application for relief from this part of the code combines assertions and misstatements. They say in their pre-hearing statement that "a residential capacity of 50 units for the project is legislatively mandated by the D.C. Council," a statement that is refuted by the law itself, which stipulates *up to 50 units*, not a hard number. Moreover, they assert that the highest number of families possible is justified in the name of *efficiency*, presumably meaning cost-effectiveness. The law says nothing about efficiency, but rather focuses on creating more

humane spaces for the homeless. The testimony of Amber Harding, of the Georgetown Clinic on Homelessness on Feb 16, at the ANC 5B03 meeting, was that smaller units would be better for the homeless, and that 50 units was at the very high end of what could be acceptable. She said, and it is recorded for public review, that smaller shelters certainly would be better. (I agree and believe that not only should homeless shelters be smaller than 30, they should have a 1-10 ratio of social worker to client.) The city, therefore, is using a metric that is not in the law, that of efficiency, to justify breaking zoning, and is actually going against the spirit of the Homeward DC law, which is to find better ways to house the homeless.

Lastly, I again draw your attention to the letter of the law, which stipulates that this site shall be used to build *up to* 50 units. Anything up to 50 units will fulfill the objective of the law. Do not accept this alternate reading—these alternative facts—that says that you have to fit x number of units to fulfill the objective. All the other sites have specific numbers cited. Not this one. To obey the law then, one would build a shelter that does not require all these dramatic special exceptions, that would be in keeping with the character of the neighborhood, and that would be smaller and *more* humane than what is proposed. If the city does this, I assure you that most of the opposition will fade away, and the shelter will be welcomed. I ask that you deny their request and insist that they obey the Homeward DC law as written, not as broadly reinterpreted by the DGS lawyers, and that anything that is built at this site be done in accordance with zoning law and in line with the comprehensive plan of the city.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Iskander', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

John Iskander

Testimony of Tad Czyzewski

February, 27 2017

Frederick Hill, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW Suite 2108
Washington, DC 20001

BZA Application No. 19452

Dear Chairman Hill:

My name is Tad Czyzewski and I have lived at 3008 17th St NE for over 7 years. My house is within one block of, and line-of-sight to, the location of the proposed structure. I am in full support of the city's plan to make homeless in the District a rarity; however, I am not in support of the city's proposal for the 1700 Rhode Island Avenue project as it is designed.

I urge the board to reject the significant variances and special exceptions required to erect the facility as it is currently designed. The number of variances, and their magnitude, indicate the proposed structure is incongruent with the selected site. The relief requested for other locations (Ward 3 – Case No. 19450: 3 variances requested; Ward 6 – Case No. 19463: NO variances requested; Ward 7 – Case No. 19379: 1 variance requested) is nowhere close to what is being asked of Ward 5. The variances required for the Rhode Island Avenue property indicate the site's selection, and/or, the design is not appropriate to accommodate the city's program requirements.

Even the Commission on Fine Arts raised multiple concerns over the building's design and site selection in the February 16, 2017 meeting (CFA 16/FEB/17-7). The CFA commission members,

- *“commented that when sites are selected quickly, initial feasibility studies may reveal that specific building programs need to be adjusted, requiring more flexibility in following guidelines as the designs for new the multi-family housing projects are tested for real neighborhood sites”*
- *“advised that there may be a mismatch between the size of the program and the constraints of this small site”*
- *“suggested that there may need to be a reduction of units for this site”*
- *“observed that the proposed massing is too tall for its context, appears bulky, and overwhelms the historic Colonial Revival-style building”*

Contrary to the city's assertion in its prehearing statement (Section VI 513.1(b)(4) *“The facility shall not have an adverse impact on the neighborhood because of traffic, noise, operations, or the number of similar facilities in the area;”*), the building, as it is currently designed, will

impose an undue burden on the surrounding neighbors. This burden will manifest from several reasons. The reduction of parking spaces from the required 22 down to 4 is significant. The city states that a low number of residents own or operate a car: but what of the staff and visitors? They will park on the surrounding streets, compromising the ability of our elderly and impaired neighbors directly across the street to find parking in close proximity to their homes. The city also asserts that the locations of the exterior spaces are adequate as they will be buffered by landscaping and fencing. However, the variance to significantly reduce the external court and yard spaces will manifest in increased congregation in front of the building due the high number of occupants housed within the structure.

And finally, the height variance request (Subtitle G § 403.1) of close to 20' will create a structure grossly out of context with the surrounding homes. When a 44,000+ sq. ft. building is placed on the same block where the existing one-and-a-half and two-story homes' average living space is 1,700 sq. ft., any lay person can clearly deduct that this building will be incongruent with the streetscape of the surrounding neighborhood.

It is for these reasons that I respectfully urge the board to reject the variances as currently requested.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tad Czyzewski', written in a cursive style.

Tad Czyzewski

Testimony of Faraz Khan BZA Case Number 19452

I am Faraz H Khan; my business partner, Mr. Reza Damani, and I own the most severely impacted property at 2909 17th St NE, right next to the proposed building. We have developed dozens of properties in Washington, DC Metropolitan area in the last 15 years, including Mix use Buildings, Multifamily Condominium Buildings, Single dwelling houses, Row houses, and Commercial buildings.

The requested variance to go up an additional 19 feet and eliminate the 20' rear setback, if granted, will directly impact our, as a matter of by right, newly constructed Multifamily building by blocking all the sunlight to the courtyard, which was designed on the fact that there will never be any building in front of the courtyard because of the rear setback of 20' and height restriction of 50'.

The proposed design is already impacting an interested buyer who is reconsidering his offer to buy one of our units. The proposed towering structure will block the sunlight to all the living and dining rooms and kitchens of all the six units of the building; the lower units will be the most impacted ones.

Ward 5, Homeless Shelter—BZA Case No. 19452*Summary*

My name is Tom Kirlin. My wife and I have enjoyed Brookland for 35 years. We live 2 ½ blocks from the proposed emergency homeless shelter at 1700 Rhode Island Avenue, NE and own three rental houses two blocks from the site. In the 1970s I worked with neighborhood arts programs, in the '80s I helped DC youths find summer jobs and consulted with the American Institute of Architects and HUD on neighborhood revitalization. I've also advised federal agencies on public policy and governance issues.

I will testify that the Department of Housing and Community Development's FY 2016 Comprehensive Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) to HUD declares Ward 5 a "de facto social service district" and that building a shelter at this site would increase the city's risk of not complying with the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Further, DDOT traffic studies, a 2014 Rhode Island NE Streetscape Master Plan and an August 2015 Brookland "liveability" study all demonstrate that the proposed emergency shelter, if built, would have significant adverse pedestrian and vehicle impacts on nearby Ward 5 Brookland residents. Applicant's request for special exceptions should be denied.

Ward 5, Homeless Shelter—BZA Case No. 19452

Tom Kirlin, Citizen Witness, March 1, 20017

I. Applicant Ignores Requirement That DC Comply with the Fair Housing Act

Applicant's February 8, 2017 "Prehearing Statement" cites District of Columbia statutes, zoning rules and zoning exception opportunities. However, Applicant does not acknowledge or accommodate 24 CFR 91.520, the federal regulation that requires DC and other participating jurisdictions to submit, annually, a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (the FY 2016 CAPER) to HUD to comply with the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Compliance is required for DC to receive needed federal housing funds.

The FY2016 CAPER starkly asserted that:

"the severe concentration of community-based residential facilities in the Northeast quadrant ...[creates] a de facto service district which undermines the ability of community residents to achieve the goal of normalization and community integration." (p. 12, emphasis added).

BZA Rule 513.1(b)(4) seeks to prevent just such a social service district, arguing that new facilities should not be built if they would have:

"an adverse impact on the neighborhood because of... the number of similar facilities in the area."
BZA Rule 513.1(b)(4)

The Applicant argues that no other "emergency shelter" exists within 500 feet of the proposed shelter, which, technically, is correct, but, it can be argued, misses the intent of this BZA rule and certainly makes more difficult city compliance with 24 CFR 91.520. In fact, many similar facilities already exist in the immediate area. If the proposed shelter were built at 1700 Rhode Island Avenue, NE, it would be:

+ 550 feet from the 1545 Girard Street Apartments, advertised as 25 "affordable luxury apartments for seniors," but which houses "10 formerly chronically homeless individuals," who live

+ 205 feet from the Violet Project at 1515 Rhode Island Avenue NE, a 23 unit residence now under construction, which will include at least 3 low-income units, which is

+ 415 feet from the 1500 Franklin Street Veterans Administrations Community Resource and Referral Center, a "24/7 hub to combat homelessness among veterans," which is

+ 280 feet from the National Center for Children and Families at 1438 Rhode Island, a referral facility which serves "homeless families, victims of domestic violence, and children and adolescents," which is

+ 450 feet from Brookland Manor at 1331 Rhode Island Avenue, NE, a 20 acre, 19 building site with 535 low-income housing units, soon to be replaced by 1,760 residential units, including 200 senior plus 265 low-income housing units as developers set aside not 10%, but 20%, "affordable units."

+ Additional community-based residential facilities also exist within a four-block radius, including 1814 Hamlin, Pleasant Hill, House of Togetherness and Andrus House.

BZA should deny Applicant's request for special exception for failure to acknowledge adverse neighborhood impacts, in a "de facto service district" that already has "a number of similar facilities." It is imprudent for the Applicant to request special exceptions that will make more difficult annual city efforts to comply with the Fair Housing Act of 1968, as amended.

2. Applicant's Prehearing Statement and Traffic Study Do Not Meet BZA's Adverse Traffic Rule

BZA Rule 513.1(b)(b) further stipulates that:

"The [proposed] facility will not have an adverse impact on the neighborhood because of traffic, noise, [or] operations...."

Applicant's commissioned "Transportation Statement," dated January 13, 2017, and "Prehearing Statement," dated February 8, 2017, provide no evidence that the proposed facility would meet this BZA rule. Rather, both statements assert but do not document that: "The project will not have an adverse impact on the neighborhood, due to traffic, noise, and/or operations" (Prehearing Statement, p. 9). Unsupported by evidence, such assertions fail to meet an important BZA traffic impact requirement.

More specifically, Applicant and its Traffic Study authors:

- A. Present no DDOT data on vehicle volume, crashes or transportation plans, choosing instead to focus on bikes, bus schedules, parking signage and ride sharing.

+ Apparently spent a total of 7 hours in our neighborhood— 5:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m. —on one day, December 7, 2016, the 75th anniversary of Pearl Harbor. (Study, p. 13)

- B. Are principally concerned with off-site parking for staff, treating the shelter as an island

+ Do not discuss how parents, visitors, Metro Access Vans, school buses, , special needs vehicles, EMS vans and double-parking visitors and/or parents and relatives will navigate the narrow 17th Street, NE during morning and evening rush hours.

+ Do not discuss how Engine Company 15's fire trucks will navigate 17 Street NE or Rhode Island Avenue if the building is on fire, or how firefighters, from a 15' alley, would extend ladders up the side of a six-story building next to an electrified microwave tower.

- C. Ignore the adverse impact on local pedestrians of staff on-street parking

+ Neither document recognizes that half of the streets between 15th and 18th Streets, NE and Rhode Island Avenue and Hamlin Street, NE lack sidewalks (Transportation Study, Figure 4, page 8) or that the sidewalk along north side of the 1700 block of RIA is narrow, poorly lit and "hazardous" (RIA, Streetscape Master Plan, p. 27).

+ This means all pedestrians, whether staff, local residents or visitors, will be forced to walk in the street and risk being hit by passing vehicles.

+ Church-goers are similarly at risk. St. Paul's Baptist Church, located less than a block away at 1611 Brentwood Road, has fewer than 10 off-street parking places, while Church of the Redeemer Presbyterian Church, located two blocks away at 15th and Girard Street, NE has only 8 off-street parking spaces. On many Saturdays and Sundays, and before and after funerals and church functions, streets around the proposed shelter already are filled with parked vehicles and moving traffic. Adding 150 people and dozens of vehicles and delivery trucks to the area would increase pedestrian risks.

D. Fail to Mention DDOT's August 2015 Liveability Study of Brookland

+ This DDOT study *is* authoritative. Launched with 4,000 flyers, this study produced 3 major public meetings attended by 22 civic leaders and 111 residents and stakeholders who produced 8 project blogs and an online Wikimap, available 24/7. Key findings include the fact that:

+ More than 24,000 vehicles/day travel past the proposed shelter (p. 4-11)

+ A block away, 12,000+ vehicles turn or travel down Franklin Street, NE while Rhode Island traffic builds to 35,000 vehicles/day in front of the Metro station (p. 4-11)

+ Franklin Street, NE has 3 of the 10 most accident-prone intersections in this area (p. 4-13), including 38 accidents between 17th and 10th Street, NE from 2012-14.

+ As traffic increases and/or crashes occur, commuters turn off Rhode Island onto Girard Street, NE at the very front door of the proposed facility. The *Streetscape Master Plan* describes this intersection as a "wide, undefined view" (p. 19). A traffic study at this intersection and along Girard Street, NE is needed to protect current pedestrians, let alone any additional ones.

+ DDOT recommends a mast arm and HAWK light at 17th and Rhode Island to reduce pedestrian injuries and fatalities (p. 5-6)

+ DDOT prohibits trucks over 1.5 Tons from using Franklin Street NE (p. 4-15) but many do as they try to avoid the crash-prone intersection at Rhode Island and 12th Street, NE which produced 13 accidents from 2012-14, plus 6 more crashes in the two blocks between this intersection and the 15 crashes at 12th and Franklin (p. 4-13).

+ 77% of respondents cite traffic enforcement/calming (30% of survey total), walking (27% of survey) and biking environment (20% of survey) as "primary needs for improvement." (p.3-4)

Applicant's Traffic Statement and Prehearing Statement mention none of these traffic hazards to local residents, shelter occupants, delivery trucks, staff or visitors. This omission alone is a sufficiently glaring disregard for BZA Rule 513.1(b)(4) to deny Applicant's request for special exceptions.

3. **Conclusion:** Applicant fails to meet BZA's Rule 513.1(b)(4) regarding adverse affects of "traffic" and "similar facilities," and does not address the city's obligation to meet Fair Housing Act reporting requirements under 24 CFR 91.520. Request for special exemptions should be denied.

February 24, 2017
1414 Girard Street, NE
Washington, DC 20017

Frederick Hill, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW Suite 2108
Washington, DC 20001

BZA Application No. 19452

Dear Chairman Hill:

My wife and I have lived within 3 blocks of 1700 Rhode Island Avenue, NE for 35 years and own three rental properties within two blocks of the proposed Ward 5 shelter.

We agree with the city's decision to close D.C. General, both because of its current condition and because the District's homeless rate increased 34.2% between 2009 and 2016, "the highest rate of homelessness" among 32 major cities, according to the U.S. Conference of Mayors (*Washington Post*, 12/14/16). We believe Mayor Bowser presented a humane way forward: build 50-family facilities in all 8 Wards. Unfortunately, the City Council, with no nearby Ward 5 input, selected 1700 Rhode Island Avenue, NE, a former police station serving youth, after our Langdon Park neighbors rejected a shelter next to warehouses and city bus facilities.

From City Hall, 1700 Rhode Island Avenue may seem a rational choice: DC owns the land, Metro is a mile away, buses pass its front door, a library and park are a block away. But the proposed building would be 70' tall—twenty feet over MU-4 zoning regulations—has 3 of 22 needed parking spaces, and abuts an electrified cell tower. Now the City must appeal to your Board for significant "special exceptions" for this 150-bed 47,000 sq. ft. shelter. Exceptions are needed for height, lot occupancy, bed number, floor area ratio, parking, loading dock, and the facility's rear, side and courtyard widths.

I will be a witness at the March 1st hearing because I believe the battle over *this site* is more than a zoning battle and certainly not a rejection of DC's homeless families. I believe Case 19452 is a development fight, a Fair Housing fight, and a fight for Brookland's soul, much as in the 1960s-'70s when NE citizens created an "Emergency Committee on the Transportation Crisis" to stop a 6-lane freeway from I-495 to downtown DC.

But focusing now solely on BZA's concerns, I believe DGS's application may meet the requirements of U 513.1(b)(1) which prohibits other emergency shelter within 500 feet, but it fails to meet U 513.1(b)(4), which states that "[t]he facility shall not have an adverse impact on the neighborhood because of the **number of similar facilities in the area.**" (emphasis added).

Page 2

T. Kirlin Letter to Chairman F. Hill
BZA Case 19452

More specifically, the 1700 Rhode Island shelter, if built, would be:

550 feet from the 1545 Girard Street Apartments, NE, advertised as 25 “affordable luxury apartments for seniors,” but which houses “10 formerly chronically homeless individuals;” who will live

205 feet from the Violet Project at 1515 Rhode Island Avenue NE, a 23 unit residence now under construction, that includes at least 3 low-income units; which is

415 feet from the 1500 Franklin Street Veterans Administration Community Resource and Referral Center, a “24/7 hub to combat homelessness among veterans;” which is

280 feet from the National Center for Children and Families at 1438 Rhode Island, a referral facility which serves “homeless families, victims of domestic violence, and children and adolescents;” which is

450 feet from Brookland Manor at 1331 Rhode Island Avenue, NE, a 20 acre, 19 building site with 535 low-income housing units, soon to be replaced by 1,760 residential units, including 200 senior and 265 low-income housing units as its developers set aside not 10%, but 20% for “affordable units.”

Moreover, 1814 Hamlin, Pleasant Hill, House of Togetherness, Andrus House and other transition and senior assisted living facilities all are in a four-block radius of the proposed shelter.

The city’s own Department of Housing and Community Development recognizes the applicant’s possible violation of U 513.1(b)(4) when it states:

*“The **severe concentration** of community-based residential facilities in the Northeast quadrant ...[creates] a de facto [social] service district which undermines the ability of community residents to achieve the goal of normalization and community integration.”*
(FY 2016 CAPER, p.12, emphasis added).

I am concerned that the applicant not only violates an important BZA rule, but that by pursuing a shelter at this site, the city itself jeopardizes Federal funds for public housing.

Based on factual evidence, please reject the application’s failure to meet U 513.1(b)(4).

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Kirlin

Testimony of Joseph Cassidy BZA Case Number 19452

I am a 15 year resident of 5B03, a member of the DC Criminal Defense Bar, and currently employed as an Emergency Room nurse at the Washington Hospital Center. I will testify on the adverse impacts of each of the requested special exceptions (height, occupancy, parking etc) on those of us residing in SMD 5B03. Many more suitable and appropriate alternatives have been proposed by the concerned citizenry and arbitrarily dismissed.

I will also itemize a documented list of statements from the various principals in this saga, where they are quoted expressing hesitancy about the size and "fit" of the proposed shelter. Those parties will include Mayor Bowser (site is "constrained"); City Administrator, Rashad Young's 4/11/16 remarks ("Not big enough"); Former DGS Director, Christopher Weaver's 3/17/16 remark (RIA Police Station site is "Not large enough"); Kenyon McDuffie's 1/17/17 letter to Directors Gillis and Zeilinger requesting they expend all possible energies to reduce the size of the shelter "To make it more manageable", and finally concluding with some verbiage from the recent US Commission on Fine Arts decision remanding the City Architect's plan back to the drawing board as unacceptable on grounds of height among other reasons.

After enumerating those remarks, my comments will urge the BZA to recognize, as all the major principals in this case have, that the proposed plan is fatally flawed, at least in terms of its size, and consequently in all of the other areas that flow from that flawed design for which the City now seeks variances. I will point out to the BZA membership that they are now being asked to approve a plan whose principal proponents have all, at one time or another, acknowledged as a flawed plan. By their own admissions the City recognizes this plan is flawed and should not expect you, the BZA, to endorse it.

Lastly, I will explain that their denial of the requested variances will place them in the distinguished company of the many thoughtful and discrete city planners who authored both the 2014 DDOT RIA Streetscape Master Plan and the 2011 City-commissioned Diamond in the District Plan both of which map out discrete plans for the RIA corridor designed to make it an attractive destination for future commercial and residential mixed-use growth and development. Not only do these plans admonish against the further licensing of store-front churches, check-cashing stores, addiction treatment centers and group homes, they also identify as "One of the key assets of the corridor [being] its fabric of existing historic buildings" and specifically recognize the "Opportunity for the preservation of the Police Youth Station" (PYS). We believe the gargantuan sized shelter, as currently devised, will not only destroy the historical value of the PYS by amputating the rear one-third of the building, but this colossal structure also will clash architecturally with and devastate the surrounding 1920 style bungalow residential community. The elderly, longtime residents of the community will be forever deprived of sunlight and inundated with the traffic and parking morass which is certain to ensue. We urge you to deny the variances as currently requested and in so doing keep hope alive that this Diamond in the District shall remain a promising location for successful growth and development and not return to its diamond in the rough status that the current shelter plan augurs.

ATTN: Frederick Hill, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th St NW, Suite 210S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: BZA Application No. 19452

Dear Chairman Hill,

I live approximately 300 feet from the location of the proposed Ward 5 family homeless shelter planned for 1700 Rhode Island Avenue NE and I urge you to reject all of the variances and special exceptions required to construct this facility as it is currently designed. I am not completely opposed to the placement of a family homeless shelter at this location, but **I am absolutely opposed to the placement of THIS shelter as it is currently designed at this location.**

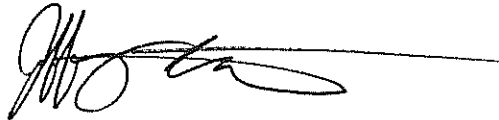
As a community representative on the advisory team tasked with community outreach for this facility, I have been heavily involved in the design and planning process. I have listened to the concerns of countless community members and relayed that information to City officials hoping that these concerns would be considered and incorporated into the design of this facility. I found this process to be very discouraging because the overwhelming response I received to many of these concerns was that they were either unjustified or that they were inactionable due to the constraints with the planned location of the facility. In fact, I would argue that there were attempts to suppress the involvement of the residents most impacted by the construction of this facility. During one advisory team meeting, I encouraged city officials to conduct separate outreach meetings with residents living in close proximity to the site and was told by the current ANC commissioner for SMD 5B03 that a separate meeting for these residents would only slow down the project. From that moment forward, it was apparent to me that the valid concerns of the residents most impacted by the construction of this facility were of little value to their elected officials and the City employees managing the implementation of this project. The minutes from this meeting are appended to this letter and the applicable conversation is highlighted.

Zoning regulations are in place to segregate uses that are thought to be incompatible, to prevent new development from interfering with existing uses, and to preserve the character of a community. Residents rely on these regulations to ensure development is moderated and that it is consistent with the "master plan" for an area. A seventy foot tall family homeless shelter housing 150 individuals that provides inadequate parking for those residents, employees and visitors is certainly incompatible with neighboring single-family homes and will certainly interfere with their use. This sort of unbridled development is also inconsistent with the character of this quiet residential community. If the shelter currently proposed is allowed to be constructed, it will adversely impact the neighboring homeowners and community as it is today and in the future. I purchased my home after a careful review of the zoning and the comprehensive plan for this area. This shelter as it is currently being proposed is not consistent with either the zoning regulations or the comprehensive plan for this area. The Board of Zoning Adjustments should insist that these guidelines are followed for all development, otherwise why should we go through all of the effort to create them in the first place? There are already days when it is not possible for me to find parking on the block where I live (see attached pictures) and that will only get worse if higher density development is allowed without adherence to zoning regulations. I am required to maintain the sidewalks in front of my home and ensure that tree boxes are landscaped and insist that I should be afforded the ability to park within a reasonable distance to these same sidewalks and tree boxes. I should not be forced to walk one, two, or even three blocks to get to and from my personal vehicle because of a poorly planned residential building.

Supportive community housing facilities already saturate the area around my home. A group home is located directly across the street from my home at 1610 Brentwood Road NE. Another facility housing ten chronically homeless individuals is located at the end of that street at 1545 Girard Street NE and yet another facility housing mentally ill individuals is located at 1815 Hamlin Street NE. All of these facilities are located within two blocks of my home and are visible from my front yard. Adding a fourth such facility within a two block radius of my home seems unnecessary and will only further hinder the ability of this community to reach some sense of normalization. If the overwhelming majority of my neighbors are transient, they have no real interest in the long-term goals and objectives of this community. While I am sympathetic to the needs of the homeless and fully support any initiative to support them, I simply will not accept that this tiny parcel of land at 1700 Rhode Island Ave NE is the appropriate location to place a 46 family homeless shelter. There are many other properties throughout Ward 5 and Washington, DC that would better support the needs of this program without harming the surrounding community supporting it. The requested variances and special exceptions are just further undermining the community's ability to normalize.

Again, I ask that the Board of Zoning Adjustment not approve the variances and special exceptions needed to construct this facility. The facility as it is currently proposed was not designed with the surrounding community in mind and will negatively impact the the residents living in close proximity. It is not consistent with the zoning regulations or the comprehensive plan for this area. The requirements of this program do not mandate a 46 family homeless shelter at 1700 Rhode Island Ave NE and a more suitable location can be identified. I have personally devoted countless hours of my time to help make the Homeward DC program successful, and I am more than willing to help city officials identify a more appropriate location that will contribute to the success of this program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Steen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeff Steen

1620 Hamlin Street NE
Washington, DC 20018



Department of Human Services
Office of the Director | 64 New York Avenue N.E., Suite 600 | Washington, DC 20002

Ward 5 Short-term Family Housing Advisory Team Meeting
Tuesday, November 15, 2016
Woodridge Library, Conference Room B
1801 Hamlin St NE, Washington, DC 20018
7 pm – 8:30pm

Ward 5 Advisory Team Members

Name	Inviting Organization	Affiliations	Attendance
Michael Morrison	ANC 5B	Commissioner 5B03 (site location); Advisory Team Co-Chair	Present
Ursula Higgins	ANC 5B	Chairperson ANC 5B; Commissioner 5B02	Not Present
Edward M. Johnson	ANC 5B	President, Edward M. Johnson & Associates, P.C. (Architects, Planners and Zoning Consultants)	Not Present
Kyle Todd	ANC 5B	Rhode Island Ave. Main St., Executive Director; Woodridge resident	Present
Henri Makembe	ANC 5B	Ward 5 Council on Education 3rd Vice President; 5B03 Commissioner-Elect	Present
Daniel Schramm	Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association	Acting President, Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association	Present
Sherri Morgan	Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association	Community Member	Present
Jeff Steen	Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association	Community Member	Present
Ronan Gulstone	Councilmember McDuffie's Office	Chief of Staff, Councilmember McDuffie's Office	Present
Amber Harding	Councilmember McDuffie's Office	Community Member, Staff Attorney, Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless	Present
Jamila Larson	DC Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH)	Executive Director and Co-Founder, Homeless Children's Playtime Project	Not Present
Fayette Vaughn-Lee	Metropolitan Police Department (MPD)	5D Community Outreach Coordinator	Present
Kristy Greenwalt	DC Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH)	Executive Director, DC Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH); Team Co-Chair	Present
Wanda Sherrod	Department of General Services (DGS)	Program Manager: Health and Human Services Cluster	Present

Additional Support Staff Present

Amoy McGhee	R. McGhee & Associates (Architects)	R. McGhee & Associates (Architects)
Raqueeb Albaari	R. McGhee & Associates (Architects)	R. McGhee & Associates (Architects)
Lionell Gains	Mayor's Office of Community Relations & Services (MOCRS)	Ward 5 Outreach & Services Specialist
Hakeem Rogers	Mayor's Office of Community Relations & Services (MOCRS)	Ward 5 Outreach & Services Specialist
Henry Miller	Department of General Services (DGS)	Project Manager, DGS
Kathy Haines	Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services (DMHHS)	Capital City Fellow

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions (5 minutes)
2. Introduction of Architects and Listening Session – DGS (65 minutes)
3. Outreach Strategy and Communications (15 minutes)
4. Summary of Next Steps & Adjourn (5 minutes)

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

- The meeting began at 7:15 pm.
- Introductions were made of the Advisory Team Members
 - Former Co-Chair Jay Melder accepted a new position in the Mayor's office. The new Administration Co-Chair for our Ward 5 Advisory Team is now Kristy Greenwalt, Executive Director of the DC Interagency Council on Homelessness.

2. Introduction of Architects and Listening Session – DGS

- Co-Chair Greenwalt invited the group to ask the architects any questions about the site. Community Representatives' Questions for the Architects (with responses from the architects, unless otherwise noted):
- **Are there any design restrictions due to historic preservation rules?**
According to research from a historic preservation consultant, the low-rise part of the existing building may need to be maintained. Part of the design will try to acknowledge the historic building and put a new, connecting structure next to it.
- **Should the new building match the historic building?**
Replicating historic buildings is rarely done. Sometimes old and new buildings are bridged using glass. The proposed design will need to pass several different review boards that ensure that it recognizes the existing building. The historic building would remain on the site. At 12,000 square feet, this building alone is not sufficient for the program, which needs 30,000 square feet. Remember this number is total square area, not the footprint area of the building base. The footprint of the historic building is roughly 3,000 square feet.
- **What is the current status of the design?**
We are working through the test fit now. The Department of Human Services asked for substantial changes regarding how people move through the building.
- **What does the current zoning allow?**
MU-4, allows up to 50 feet, which is roughly a 5-story structure.

- **Will there be an outdoor play area?**
Yes.
- **How will parking work?**
Wanda Sherrod's Response: These facilities do not require the same amount of parking as a typical residential building. Most of the families do not have cars and we do need parking for food delivery. The typical amount of spaces for a Short-term Family Housing site is 10-12. Ward 7 has no on-site parking, but the traffic study supported this finding.
Community Representative's Comment: Please ensure that delivery vehicles do not block the alley.

Community Representatives' Preferences

The following section provides the discussion questions asked and the Community Representatives responses.

- **What don't you like in design features?**
 - Fake stone (Rhode Island Row/metro stop)
 - Fake town home look (Rhode Island Row)
 - We are thrilled that the main historic building will be saved, but concerned that the new part might be too modern.
- **What do you like in design features?**
 - Real brick, real stone.
 - Girard Street Senior Citizen Development (a few blocks from the Woodridge Library, 16th and Girard Streets NE).
 - Monroe Street Market/Michigan Ave.
 - Home-like look, not an institutional facility look
 - Brookland has a lot of nice architecture, red brick homes
- **Do you want the building design to look quiet, or to be vibrant, like a beacon?**
 - Something that blends in, since Brookland is a neighborhood. Even one block away from Rhode Island Avenue has a suburban feel.
 - Perhaps this should be a quieter building, since the Woodridge Library is more of a beacon.
 - Many families there have experienced trauma; a calm retreat and a safe space would be a good vibe. Perhaps include gardening and something soothing for the residents.
 - Coordinate colors with the condos across the street.
 - Pay attention to landscaping on the side street. We have some quiet neighbors that enjoy gardening, and it would be great to bring in that same "home-like" feel.
 - *Architect's Comment: We're not envisioning a K Street style building. We're trying to make it "fit," and to be a significant building in the community. These buildings become catalysts.*
 - *Community Representative's Comment: It would be great to know what the overall design for Rhode Island Ave NE is going to look like. There are some new condos that are keeping the historic façade; perhaps coordinate with them to have some consistency. There is a new building going up across the street from the Ward 5 Short-term Family Housing site- perhaps coordinate with them.*
 - *Architect's Comment: We want to make sure that the building both fits the site and this urban area.*

- **Can you talk more about balancing these different ideas? Do you have any ideas on fencing?**
 - Residents near the site prefer to limit noise pollution, both from people gathering and vehicles.
 - Include designated smoking areas that are respectful to neighbors.
 - Bushes or trees could buffer noise and clean the air, especially on Rhode Island Avenue.
 - There is some difference in opinion as to whether the entrance should be situated on Rhode Island Avenue NE or on the side street. People close by don't want a lot of foot traffic on the street and would prefer to see foot traffic on the Rhode Island Ave NE side, not 17th Street.
 - Preference for natural fencing boundaries such as trees or bushes. Look at what is used in the neighborhood. Avoid metallic or "jail-like" materials such as chain-link. Perhaps a wooden fence or a combination wooden fence with vine. Something of regular height, not an 8 foot fence.
 - Green walls are popular. There is one on 12th Street NE. The more you can integrate plants, the better. It's attractive for neighbors, and for the people that live there – as long as it is maintained. Perhaps this could be a community service hours opportunity for high school students.
 - The development across the street will be incorporating lots of plants. Maybe coordinate with them.

The following section provides additional Community Representatives' feedback, organized by topic.

- **Historic "look" of the site**
 - Have it blend with nearby buildings.
 - I agree and disagree; I like that there is architectural diversity in Brookland - a bungalow next to a Texas-style house next to a brick house, and then a Spanish villa. There is also a great deal of architectural diversity on Hamlin Street from 12th to 18th. Some consistency is good, but not too much.
 - It bothers me that the Jackson Flats condos all look the same (12th street between Jackson and Lawrence Streets). The construction is fine, but the look is, "meh"; so are the ones at 12th and Otis.
 - Any design should be consistent with the current historic building – this is the primary feedback.
 - *Henry Miller's Response: It will be challenging, but the architects will try to make something that transitions well from the existing structure, and maintain a homey feel.*
- **Child safety**
 - Traffic on Rhode Island Avenue NE is a safety concern. Protect kids from running in the road, perhaps with a contained playground. The Summit on T Street NE is a good example of a housing development that has a contained courtyard.
 - The communications tower on the site uses a high voltage backup generator; if it must stay on the site, please ensure that it is safe for children.

Community Representative's General Site Questions and Recommendations

- **Can the city acquire the tire market next door? The current parcel looks small. There is an alley that separates this parcel from the Short-term family housing site. Consider the possibility of closing the alley since there is still a drivable alley from the back.**
 - *Co-Chair Greenwalt's Response: all sites needed to make our programming needs, but we can check and bring the answer back.*
- **Have you considered the use of roof space for green roofing or a courtyard? Some DC Public Charter Schools have playgrounds on the roofs.**
 - *Henry Miller's Response: We tend to avoid play space on the roof, considering safety. We prefer to put these on the ground.*
- **Will you be digging below grade?**
 - *Henry Miller's Response: Probably not. We will dig to accommodate an elevator and stairs down to the existing basement level, but it would be very expensive to put a basement under the new building.*
- **Will DGS maintain the building and exterior?**
 - *Henry Miller's Response: Yes.*
- **Do we know anything in terms of psychology and building design, especially for children who may have experienced trauma?**
 - *Henry Miller's Response: Yes, we consider textures, color, and lighting.*
 - *Co-Chair Greenwalt's Response: Control over your environment is extremely important.*
 - *Community Representative's Response: The Interagency Council on Homelessness held a design group last year. Some suggestions came from a domestic violence treatment group in Boston that uses choices for trauma-informed care.*
- **Are there any concerns about the program not working on this site?**
 - *Henry Miller's Response: The test fit, which is almost finished, assesses whether it meets the programmatic needs and it does. We believe this will be a successful site.*
 - *Community Representative's Response: Every site has trade-offs; part of our job is to talk about what we think when there are choices, such as a line of trees vs. a larger playground.*
- **It would be great to include some activities for the larger community. Maybe outdoor movies for both people living at the site and the neighborhood. This could make it an exciting.**
- **Who are we designing for? Older kids? Younger kids?**
 - *Co-Chair Greenwalt's Response: Most of the households are young parents; about 40% are under 24, with young children.*
 - *Henry Miller's Response: But we are designing for teens too; so there will be study space, computers, even in the play area there is a range of ages accommodated.*
 - *Community Representative's Comment: Might be beneficial to have teens playing basketball with others in the community.*
- **What would clients rate as their number one needs? Play space? Movie space?**
 - *Co-Chair Greenwalt's Response: Both past experience and customer feedback have informed our current programmatic design.*

- **Henry Miller's Response:** *We are also considering neighboring assets such as parks and playgrounds. We want community at the site, but there are tradeoffs.*

3. Outreach Strategy and Communications (15 minutes)

Co-Chair Greenwalt's Comments: We'd like to spend some time discussing outreach and how we can help you to share this information with your neighbors. Is there anything else you need from us? Anything we should consider in preparing for the public design meeting?

- No one knows what is going on. Jeff has done a good job of sending out information on neighborhood list serves. I created a Google form, and received some questions from neighbors.
- We find that people don't understand that family shelter is a 24-hour/day program; there are no long lines to get in.
- It would be great to see a presentation package with design options, similar to what was done for the original site.
- Many people don't know that this project coming. Those who do have very specific opinions.
 - **Co-Chair Greenwalt's Response:** *This advisory group is very helpful for just that reason. We will try to get as much information out to the community as possible and we will rely on you to help us do that*
- In the first meeting for the prior site, people were disappointed that they could only pick grass or fencing options. It would be great to have pictures at the next meeting.
- What is the healing methodology behind the program? Which studies, research, facts went into the program? We are still at a place where we can shape how the community views the shelter. We are missing out on time to educate the community about these issues, before the design is publicly available.
- Talk about the difference in the approach and services in a smaller setting, such as in the apartment-style models that already exist in the District, and how these compare to the DC General Family Shelter
- Perhaps focus on the programs and resources provided.
- The initial conversation should discuss the Homeward DC strategic plan to end homelessness.
- It would be better to engage the community when there is a building footprint to share
- ~~Will there be a separate meeting for those who live close to the site?~~
 - ~~I disagree, there should not be a separate meeting for close neighbors. Sometimes a small number of people can slow down a project that impacts many more.~~
 - Remember that there will be a good neighbor agreement; if you don't take close neighbors into consideration, there could be resistance to building operations later on.
- What does a typical day look like at the site? This would be helpful for neighbors to know.
 - **Co-Chair Greenwalt's Response:** *I will commit to identifying resources that would be important and helpful to share.*

- **Ronan Gulstone's Comments:** We should emphasize the facts of the project, such as how many units can fit in the existing structure. Talking about the Homeward DC plan in general is also beneficial. Most of the people that know the plan believe in it. Emphasize that smaller, family shelters already exist- we don't realize they are there because they are well functioning. Also, remember that a specific budget was passed for this plan and funds allocated for each site. The value of Rhode Island Ave. NE is going up, which may make it difficult to obtain additional capital funding.
 - **Community Representative's Response:** *A new site would also require a legislative change.*
 - **Community Representative's Response:** *It could be more expensive to build up and around the existing historic structure than to acquire the tire site next door.*

4. Summary of Next Steps & Adjourn (5 minutes)

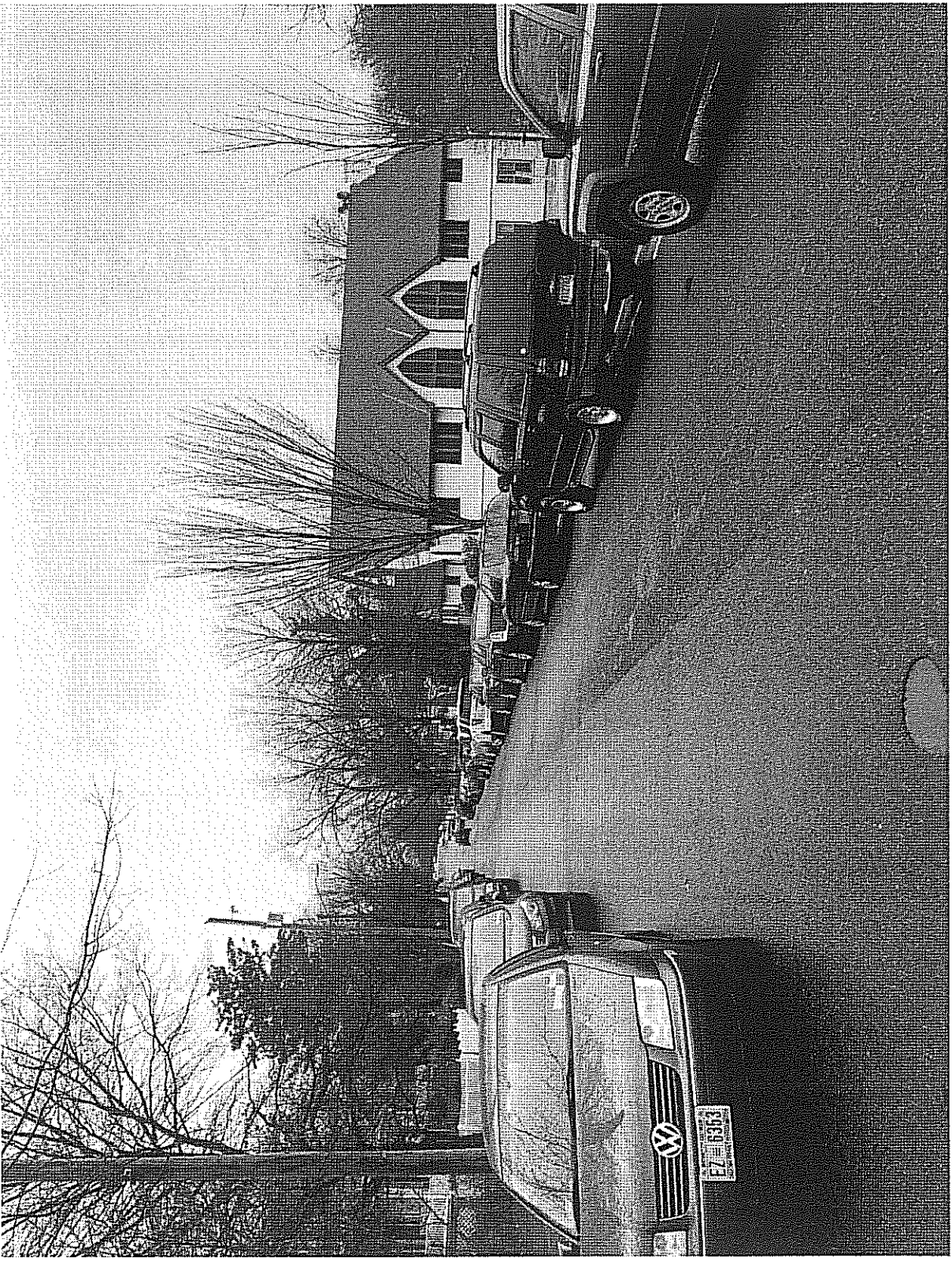
Co-Chair Greenwalt's Comments:

- We have a few reminders for the group. Please send any comments or changes to the notes from our last meeting by Friday so that we can post them on the website. Also, look at the Frequently Asked Questions that we distributed in hard copy form this evening and let us know if there are any more to add. We will also e-mail a copy to you. Please help us push the date out about the public design meeting on Monday, December 12, 2016. We are still working on a location but will send a "save the date." Thanks so much for participating, and remember that at our next Advisory Team meeting we will review and discuss the draft designs.

1600 Block of Hamlin Street NE at 11:23 AM on 12Feb2017



1600 Block of Irving Street NE at 11:40 AM on 12Feb2017



Testimony of Carolyn Warren BZA Case Number 19452

My name is Carolyn Warren. I live at 2904 17th St NE, which is directly across the street from the proposed short term family housing facility. I have lived here in the house which has been the Warren family home for 65 years, and where I raised my children. It was owned by my father in law, James Warren, who established the Washington Observer, the first black newspaper in Washington DC.

The front door of the short term family housing facility will be directly across from my house. I am very concerned about the huge increase in pedestrian traffic, vehicle traffic, and lack of parking for 200 people coming and going. It makes no sense for a small neighborhood like this. Many of the people who live here are elderly, handicapped, blind, with medical conditions and this is not the kind of activity that would be good for us.

I would support a plan to use the existing police station without any new construction or demolition or additions, to house a much smaller number of families but the current plan is much too big for the size of the lot and for the size of the neighborhood.

I am also worried about having so many children right on Rhode Island Ave., and our street in particular has seen more traffic, excessive speeding and more accidents since the police moved from the Youth Division. There would not be enough space here for the children to play and they will be exposed to fumes from the car painting shop and high density traffic next to their play area in the front of the building.

Please reject the special exceptions requested by DGS for this project.