

RE: BZA Case No. 19452, Comments in Opposition

Case Name: DC Department of General Services

Dear Chairperson Hill and Members of the Board of Zoning Adjustment,

I am a resident of Brookland and a constituent in Advisory Neighborhood Commission ANC 5B where the 1700 Rhode Island Avenue, N.E. homeless shelter is proposed to be located.

Though I am strongly in favor of closing DC General and in favor of establishing smaller temporary shelters, the 17th and Rhode Island Avenue site has been so poorly handled from the start that it makes it impossible for me to support it.

The fact that the BZA is having to entertain the possibility of at least seven Special Exceptions is testament to how ill-suited the site is for its intended purpose. We are essentially trying to force-fit a facility into a location it doesn't belong. As so many others are, I am depending on the BZA to give serious consideration to the height, zoning, and quality of life issues being raised by adjacent neighbors and to whether the Special Exceptions being sought are consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and Rhode Island Avenue Small Area Plan.

I am opposing this facility with a heavy heart. Homelessness is a serious problem in the District of Columbia and I believe we all have a responsibility in the solution. But, this is not the solution. Any strategy that depends on jamming people where they live, surprising them with after-the-fact site announcements, and ignoring valid concerns is not a strategy for long-term success. It's a strategy for ill-will, hard feelings and division. It's a strategy for failure and I believe it will make it harder in the future, not easier, to site and build the shelters many so desperately need.

It's not too late to follow an alternative approach and one that serves us better in the long-run.

Sincerely,

Caroline Petti, (202) 529-0953

Submitted on 3/1/2017 by:

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