

# NAYLOR DUPONT

## Advisory Neighborhood Commission 7B

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Frederick Hill  
Chairperson, Board of Zoning Adjustment  
Office of Zoning  
441 4<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 200/210-S  
Washington, DC 20001

**Re: BZA Application No 19651**

Dear Chairperson Hill,

At a duly notice regular meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 7B, with a quorum present, the ANC voted 4 to 0 to support BZA Application No 19651 at 2910 and 2916 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE.

The House of Ruth Inc. is a social services organization that serves women and their families who survive abuse and seek refuge in the form of housing, employment, and a range of other support services. Though the House of Ruth (HOR) operates over 11 homes for women and children throughout the District of Columbia, their proposed development of a new child development center, the Kid Space, is within the boundaries of ANC Single Member District (7B03) of Commissioner Maranda Ward in the R-1-B and R-3 Zones at premises 2910 and 2916 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE (Square 5546, Lots 800, 5, 6, 7, and 8).

As you know, the HOR filed an application seeking zone relief for this project or use that is not provided as a matter of right for the zoning district with your office on October 9, 2017 through the Interactive Zoning Information System (IZIS). Not only do they propose to replace their existing child development center with a new one but to also increase the number of children from 76 to 88, and the number of staff from 21 to 24. Their Executive Director, Sandra Jackson, and project architect from Stoiber + Associates, Kami Wilwol, presented this proposed project with visual sketches of the site plan and exterior rendering to the full ANC during our Thurs, Sept 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. This initial meeting was followed by a community meeting open to all ANC 7B03 constituents on October 2, 2017 at police substation 6 joined by Jeffrey Stoiber (President, Stoiber + Associates) and Gregory Beverly (HOR Accountant). They clarified the project funding sources and timeline and also shared an updated design sketch.

Commissioner Ward shared the written notes from the full ANC meeting and subsequent community meeting with the HOR and their architects that summarized the key design considerations and community benefits that constituents raised. These included:

Board of Zoning Adjustment  
District of Columbia  
CASE NO.19651  
EXHIBIT NO.39

**Design Considerations:** The ANC 7B asked that the architect reduce the use of multiple bold colors throughout the exterior, but instead consider streamlining its use to key features in the front of the building. The other suggestions included:

- **Attempt to salvage the design shared at the community meeting (rather than the version presented at the ANC meeting). This design presented a more sophisticated look that still preserved the integrity of the aim to create an inviting space for children:** The HOR clarified that the previous design was only shown as inspiration, not with the suggestion that this design was still feasible as it incorporated the two existing residential structures. Once it was determined they were not going to renovate the existing buildings, the new concept was developed. Additionally, the proposed windows are sized very similarly to the windows in the original scheme and proportioned to fit the scale and size of the building. The windows are large to provide ample daylight into the classroom and therapy spaces, as well as allowing for low sill heights for the children to be able to see outdoors – these were specific requests from the staff who work with these children on a daily basis. This explains why they have not preserved the smaller historic windows mirrored by residences on that block. They shared that they feel strongly that the building is appropriate to the use and function as a child development center and that it does not attempt to be a residential structure.
- **Consider one muted color for the fence:** HOR has reduced the amount and intensity of bold colors to a more muted palette, including changing the proposed color of the fence from red to blue.
- **We suggest salvaging what is of value among the existing trees and replacing the remaining weeds/bushes with new native species evergreen trees to neatly align the 29<sup>th</sup> and Pennsylvania Ave streets:** The HOR agrees that the perimeter of the site would benefit from better upkeep. Given that this is public space, they submitted a proposal to DDOT (who partly maintains these grounds) to propose new landscaping in proximity to the fencing in the play area- but recognizes this outcome is largely out of their control. They assured us of their goal to improve the appearance, which is why their new sketches include evergreen plantings around the perimeter, but this will be pending DDOT's approval of their proposed plan.

HOR and the Stoiber + Associates architects have been incredibly accessible and open to addressing as much of the design feedback from our constituents as possible, while simultaneously incorporating the requirements of their engineers.

**Community Benefit:** The HOR reminded us that once the Office of State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) confirms the number of children they can serve in the new building, they will share the designated slots for Ward 7 families. Additionally, we asked that they consider:

- **Offering a free meeting space for community meetings for Ward 7 residents:** The HOR agrees to offer the use of indoor space for community activities. They have also proposed to add a second gate to access the park from Pennsylvania Ave when the main entry gates to the Kid Space courtyard are locked.
- **Prioritize the hiring of Ward 7 contractors, companies, and residents during the construction project:** HOR is willing to work with the ANC 7B and community members on strategies to prioritize ward 7 hires during the contractor/construction phase of the project.
- **Consider a written community agreement with either the ANC 7b to sustain community engagement in the use/function of the space:** The HOR is willing to work with the ANC 7B on a specific written agreement.

According to the Zoning Regulations of the District of Columbia (Regulations), ANC 7B is an automatic party to the case and the Board gives “great weight” to our written report. Commissioner Ward plans to file our written report (Form 129) through the IZIS no later than seven days prior to the public hearing tentatively scheduled for early February 2018, which takes into account the outcomes of the public space committee meeting held in January 2018.

ANC 7B hereby authorizes Maranda Ward, as the ANC Commissioner for 7B03, to represent the ANC before the Board of Zoning Adjustment in this matter. Allow this letter to indicate the strong support of the ANC 7B for the proposed Kid Space by the House of Ruth given that their proposed child development center honors the historical aesthetic of our neighborhood and demonstrates their unwavering community benefit commitments to our constituents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "R. Marlin", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Robin Marlin  
Chair, ANC 7B