

November 7, 2018

To: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

Re: Letter of Opposition for Case No. 19751 (Application of MED Developers)

From: David Huebner

Dear Members of the Board of Zoning Adjustment:

I live at 2715 36th PL NW, which is approximately 50-100 steps to the proposed project by MED Developers and Guest Services for a CCRC/memory care facility at 2619-2623 Wisconsin Ave NW. I am writing in opposition to this project.

I moved my family into this neighborhood two years ago and purchased our home at a premium, understanding that this neighborhood was a quiet, residential community zoned for single family homes. I knew that the vacant lot near our new home was likely to be developed eventually, and I trusted that it would be developed in a manner consistent with the existing zoning agreement.

I also understand that sometimes developers request variances to existing zoning, and I am sensitive to the fact that many neighborhoods by default oppose all new development that might change the character of the neighborhood in any small way. Obviously, this is unrealistic, and reeks of a NIMBY attitude that probably doesn't serve the larger community well. So in this instance, I have tried to be objective. I watched the entire presentation the developers made to the neighborhood, and I have listened carefully to my neighbors' objections.

After reviewing this information, I simply cannot support the existing project. I know many neighbors have shared letters that articulately detail many, many legitimate concerns about the proposal. I will not take the time to repeat them here. However, the points that were most compelling to me as a resident of this neighborhood are:

1. The lots are zoned as single family homes. I'm sure that the lot's current owners are concerned that single family homes might hold less value, given their location directly on a busy street (Wisconsin). I am sympathetic to that concern, and I think certain very limited departures from the zoning agreement warrant consideration (e.g., tasteful, appropriately-scaled multi-family condominium units). However, the current proposal (i.e., an institutional facility) departs so dramatically from the original zoning, that it represents a significant violation of the agreement we other neighbors had with the city when investing in our own homes.

2. When the developers originally approached the neighborhood about the prospect of a facility there, they first suggested it would be a retirement community where people in the neighborhood could transition to living as they moved out of their homes. Because

that would bring benefit to the neighborhood, it might have warranted consideration for a variance if it had been thoughtfully designed with input from the community. But suddenly, the proposal changed to a much more institutional facility, and the community was only alerted to this important change just days before the ANC was to vote. Little explanation was offered for the change. Frankly, this leaves me skeptical about whether we can trust that the new proposed use will remain in place for long. Even if we take the developer at their word, the proposed facility offers little to the neighborhood. In contrast, the proposed project diminishes the quality of the neighborhood significantly in a variety of ways that other neighbors have certainly detailed in their letters.

3. Just some of the ways the proposed project diminishes the quality of the neighborhood include: (a) unrealistic plans for staff, visitor, and contractor parking, which will spill directly onto our streets, (b) a traffic routing plan that directs every delivery truck, emergency vehicle, visitor, and staff member directly through our quiet neighborhood, rather than utilizing a direct entrance off of Wisconsin Ave., and (c) the proposed building's enormous scale, relative to anything surrounding it in our neighborhood. My understanding is that at least some of these problems are meant to be safeguarded by the special criteria for planning a CCRC in Washington, DC, and that the proposed development does not meet several of those criteria.

4. Finally, I happen to be a licensed clinical psychologist here in DC, and I have expertise working with patients who have cognitive impairment. Numerous aspects of the proposed facility appear to be substandard with respect to best practices for caring for these patients. Again, this makes me worry about the developer's true intentions, and about the viability of this development to successfully serve the purpose stated in the application. Even if the developers' intentions are pure, I certainly would not want anyone I care about to be placed in a facility such as this.

I appreciate your consideration and hope you will oppose this application.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Huebner". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David Huebner
2715 36th PL NW
Washington, DC 20007