



Embassy of Hungary

**Public Hearing Testimony - FMBZA Case No. 19798
Dr. Zsolt Hetesy, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Hungary
September 12, 2018**

Good morning members of the Board. I am glad to represent the Hungarian Embassy and the Hungarian Government at this important event.

Ambassador László Szabó is sending his best regards. He is on the Pacific Coast with the Hungarian President János Áder at the Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco.

Coming back to this project we are excited to bring the premises of the Embassy and thereby the core diplomatic activities of Hungary from Shoemaker Street to Rhode Island Ave.

In a city where location is important, these new premises would enable us to join other embassies on Embassy Row, conduct our activities more effectively, bring more people to our events as it becomes the new house of Hungarian diplomacy, and culture.

Hungary is proud of the exquisite history of the Bell-Morton Mansion that once housed the inventor of the phone, a Vice President, Secretary of War, Secretary of State, and an Ambassador. We sincerely believe that the future use of this building for diplomatic purposes is a fitting role, and a natural continuation, given its history. The “new” activity will not create any disturbances or even any new situation in the vicinity, as the building was already used for office purposes and two of our neighbors will be the Australian and the Tunisian Embassies.

We are proud that the Embassy will be located in such a landmark building of Washington. It comes with responsibilities that we are ready to honor.

In order to assure that we have teamed up with KCCT Architects, EHT Tracerics, Inc., Wells + Associates, Holland & Knight LLP, Mega-Logistics Zrt. and other experts that have utmost experience with similar projects. Besides preservation efforts, we have even decided to restore some elements of the earlier design that have been altered by previous owners. This has been also acknowledged in the opinion of the Advisory Neighborhood Commission.

The building requires major renovation inside, this was one of the factors in the previous owners’ decision to sell. Having said that we are convinced that at the end of renovation this building will not only fulfill all requirements for a state of the art Embassy, but it will also reduce the ecological footprint of the premises, contributing to the efforts of the U.S. Capital in that regard. We will also add further green surface on the premises.

Since the regime change in 1989, Hungary has been a proud NATO ally and friend of the United States of America. Our diplomatic, defense and security cooperation as well as economic and cultural relationships are traditionally strong. As you have noticed the State Department has also acknowledged our forthcoming approach, and the spirit of cooperation, with which we have accommodated all security and logistical interests of the US Embassy in Budapest and elsewhere in our Country.

We respectfully request your guidance and support to bring this process to a successful conclusion, so we can celebrate our upcoming 30 year anniversary of our renewed relations in our fully functional new premises.