

October 9, 2018

Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: BZA Case No. 19823 Request for Party Status re Wisconsin Avenue Baptist Church - Sunrise Senior Living, 3920 Alton Place, NW

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing to request party status in this matter. Below are our responses to party Status Criteria on BZA Form 140.

1. How will the property owned by such person be affected by the action requested by the Board?

Our house shares a property line with proposed project on the Yuma St NW side. All vehicular traffic exiting the property will travel on a driveway that runs parallel to this property line, and then spill onto Yuma Street right next to our property. Moreover, the entrance to the proposed church will move from where it is now on Alton to Yuma, less than half a block from our property. Our property will be negatively affected as to neighborhood character, noise, traffic, parking, reduced sunlight, and possible structural damage from construction work in ways described below.

2. What legal interest does the person have in the property?

We own and live in our house at 3901 Yuma Street NW.

3. What is the distance between the person's property and the property that is the subject of the application before the Board?

Our property directly abuts the subject property and is also on Yuma St NW.

4. What are the environmental, economic or social impacts that are likely to affect the person and/or the person's property if the action requested by the Board is approved or denied?

The proposed structure would negatively impact us/our property in numerous ways.

The parties seeking zoning relief are doing so because the proposed project is a significant departure from the current structure and what is permitted under the zoning requirements. They are seeking to insert a large commercial enterprise into an area that is otherwise occupied by single-family homes by piggybacking onto the existing church's zoning allowances. Two floors of the Sunrise facility would be stacked on top of the designated church space. The relief sought by the applicants would create a building significantly out of character with the immediate neighborhood both in height and lot occupancy.

Sunrise seeks to put a large for-profit business into a residential neighborhood by teaming up with the church that currently owns the property. Under the proposal, Sunrise would occupy more than 85 percent of the building, which would occupy 57 percent of the lot. This would be significantly above the 40 percent allowed for commercial use.

Traffic and sound: Traffic in the neighborhood would increase significantly, contributing to greater noise. Yuma Street currently has moderate traffic with cars traveling between Tenley Circle and Reno Road and/or Connecticut Avenue. The proposed facility with more than one hundred residents, employees, deliveries, and visitors, church members and others will add significantly to the amount of traffic on Yuma. All of this new traffic to and from the proposed property would also add to the noise generated by the building itself.

Parking: Parking in front of our house may be significantly impacted by this proposal, especially in the evenings and on weekends. If the church holds community activities other than Sunday services, or is operating at full capacity, we anticipate that demand for parking could exceed the amount available underground and create significant burdens on street parking.

Potential structural damage: Our house was built in 1942, and the wall of our home is around 12 feet from the property line of the proposed project. Given the age of our home and our proximity to the subject property, our home would be susceptible to damage during the proposed construction work, especially of the foundation and underground garage. Many of the homes in the immediate neighborhood are more than 90 years old, and they too would be at risk for structural damage during construction.

Impact of noise, air pollution, and other factors during construction: As we share a property line with the proposed construction, which would occupy 57 percent of the lot, we anticipate being negatively impacted in terms of the noise, air pollution, and other disturbances generated by the construction.

5. Describe any other relevant factors that demonstrate how the person will likely be affected or aggrieved if the action requested of the Board is approved or denied.

The project is a clear break with the current use of 3920 Alton Place. As primarily a commercial business, the project is also a clear break with the use of immediately adjacent properties, which are either single-family homes or National Park Service land. If this project is approved, that approval can be used to justify allowing other commercial businesses to move into and expand on property currently zoned for single-family residential use, further changing the nature of the neighborhood. We moved into this neighborhood specifically because we were seeking out a residential area.

6. Explain how the person's interest will be more significantly, distinctly or uniquely affected in character or kind by the proposed actions than that of other persons in the general public.

The location of our home — less than 30 feet from the subject property's proposed driveway — means that we will be impacted more than the general public, should the project move forward as planned. In addition to the increased potential for damage to our home during construction, we are concerned that our quiet enjoyment of our property, and particularly its outdoor spaces, will be significantly impaired.

Our close proximity to the proposed Sunrise driveway will negatively affect the noise levels for our property in particular. This driveway would be 16.5 feet from the western edge of our property line, 20 feet from the outdoor patio we frequently use, and less than 30 feet from the wall of our home. This will expose us to the noise and pollution of a busy driveway of a large commercial facility, where commercial delivery trucks and cars will be revving their engines to drive up the ramp from the underground garage onto Yuma Street.

The proposed structure has a proposed height of 52 feet (66 feet at the "architectural embellishment" of the church) while surrounded on three sides by single-family homes, including ours. The proposed structure will be substantially taller than our adjacent single-family home, reducing our exposure to direct sunlight during the afternoon and evening.

The value of our property may decline should this large project go forward, as we will be the first home next to a large commercial property, as opposed to a home that is in the middle of a residential block. There may be times when the number of cars picking up/dropping off, idling, and driving by will cause the immediate neighborhood to take on a commercial, traffic-jammed feel, as opposed to a quiet, residential street.

We hereby designate Andrea Ferster to act as our counsel in this matter. She has the authority to bind us in this matter.

Sincerely,

Henry Hoyle and Laura Shen, 3901 Yuma Street NW, Washington, DC 20016