

Honorable Frederick L. Hill, Chairperson,
Honorable Anthony J. Hood, Chairperson, Zoning Commission
Honorable Lesyllee M. White
Honorable Lorna John
Honorable Carlton Hart, National Capital Planning Commission Designee
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: BZA Case No. 19823
Wisconsin Avenue Baptist Church - Sunrise Senior living, 3920 Alton Place, NW

LETTER IN OPPOSITION – Anne Cauman

Dear Chairperson Hill and Members of the Board:

I strongly oppose the proposed Sunrise/WABC project. My husband and I live on 38th Street, NW, between Alton Place and Yuma Street, NW, slightly over a block from the proposed project. We have lived here for almost 30 years and raised our son here. We hope to age in place here in our home. (I turn 72 this week).

This project is inappropriate for our neighborhood. It is JUST TOO BIG and it will bring a lot of noise and pollution to a quiet neighborhood of single-family homes,

Our neighborhood is zoned for single-family homes. There are single-family homes on 3 sides of the project and federal parkland on the 4th. This land which is owned by the National Park Service is part of the historic Fort Reno landmark. Just beyond the parkland, there are civil war era houses within 200 feet of the proposed project, making a huge project particularly inappropriate at this location.

Sunrise is trying to get around the single-family zoning requirement by asking for several variances. Sunrise will comprise nearly 90% of this project, but it is trying, in part, to justify its size by claiming it is owed the lot occupancy allowed to churches. As I understand it, this church has a tiny congregation with no need to expand which means that trying to shoehorn the Sunrise building into the church's space is not only ludicrous but also unnecessary for the church's needs.

The project is just too tall and too massive for this site. I am particularly concerned about the way the project destroys green space and intrudes upon nearby neighbors. I understand there is a courtyard in the middle of their building and they count that area as unoccupied in determining their lot occupancy. But even if that courtyard is absolutely gorgeous, it does nothing for the neighborhood and is an excuse for depriving neighbors of a buffer.

One of my single greatest concerns is the extension of the building right next to the property line shared with the parkland. There is a reason for the 8-foot setback required by the law. Taking away those 8 feet will not just affect the neighbors, it will affect every single person walking past that piece of PUBLIC park. My enjoyment of that piece of public greenery, of which we have way too little already (as well as the enjoyment of others), will be diminished by the building hulking on top of it, instead of providing additional green space as the intended setting for the park area.

I am further concerned by the pollution and noise which will be created on a continual basis by the many trucks servicing the facility, the shuttlebus which will be in regular use, and, given the nature of the facility, the likelihood of frequent ambulances and firetrucks. I particularly don't want noise in the middle of the night or early morning. (I think we may have been told that trucks won't operate before 7 a.m. Seven a.m. is not my idea of a reasonable time to operate a bus or a truck. I am retired and do not need to be up in time to go to work.) I am also very concerned about the trucks and the shuttlebus shattering my peace in the considerable time I spend in my yard.

This project is directly over the Red Line Tunnel for WMATA, which crosses diagonally under the lot. WMATA has many challenges already and does not need the problems created by Sunrise's pile driving. This project should not be built on this site.

Finally, and scariest, I understand this huge project is a block away from one of the main gas lines servicing the city. Our entire neighborhood could become an inferno if the gas line was interfered with during construction. We just saw in Massachusetts what can happen with a gas line problem in a residential area.

Please preserve our neighborhood by rejecting this huge project.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Anne Cauman
4405 38th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20016