

SUBJECT: Department of Transportation Response to BZA Case No. 19927

DATE: February 27, 2019

As a long time neighbor of 2800 Otis Street NE property, I am seeking clarification on the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) response to the application by the Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington, Inc. (the "Applicant"). I also wish to share my observations concerning the above mentioned property's impact on the ability of pedestrians to use nearby public walkways and Eastern Avenue. I have walked along the 3800 block of Eastern Avenue near Randolph Street almost daily for years.

It is my understanding that the Urban Forestry Division (UFD) is located within the District Department of Transportation (DDOT). The UFD is responsible for implementing the Tree Canopy Amendment Act of 2016 and other applicable regulations, which govern the removal of trees on private property in the District. Did the Applicant submit any materials concerning their plans to remove numerous trees to construct the solar array? Did the UFD review such materials and determine what impact the removal of the trees and the reduction of the tree canopy could have on the nearby streets and pedestrian walkways?

Based on presentations by the Applicant in December 2018 and January 2019, they are planning to removal several trees on the premises 2800 Otis Street, N.E. (Square PAR 167, Lots 67 and 68). Upon my request on February 18, 2019 the Applicant sent me a preliminary tree inventory dated January 28, 2019. The inventory indicated that almost 40 mature trees with circumferences of 44 inches or larger would be removed. The property also includes several "heritage trees" with circumferences larger than 100 inches. While the Applicant is proposing to plant 109 new trees, these new trees will likely have a circumference of a few inches. These new trees will not provide the benefits and protections of the numerous mature trees based upon software from the U.S. Forest Service.

The multi-acre property of the Applicant occupies a hill. The lowest point of the property is near Eastern Avenue. The removal of these mature trees from this hillside will increase the storm water runoff problems that currently flood the 3800 block of Eastern Avenue. The storm water runoff issues create unsafe conditions for pedestrian along a 200 feet segment of the Eastern Avenue sidewalk near Randolph Street. It is particularly dangerous during the colder months when ice forms over the sidewalk. This past winter the storm water froze and ice covered one of the lanes on Eastern Avenue for most of the block.

Does the DDOT consider the pedestrian walkway part of the District's transportation network? I hope to bring these issues to DDOT's attention as they evaluate the potential impact of the proposed project.

Sincerely,

Joyce Chandler

Jochandler2017@gmail.com

Submitted on 2/26/2019 by:
Joyce Chandler