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August 27, 2019

Honorable Frederick Hill
Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street Northwest, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

Subject: BZA Case No. 20108 (1238 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W.)

Dear Chairman Hill:

I am writing in support of the granting of a Special Exception for 1238 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W. regarding the rear yard setback.

My property is 3251 Prospect Street, which includes 43,000 square feet of retail space and a 127 space underground garage. I acquired the property in 1983 so I have 36 years of experience with the public alley and all aspects of our block of Prospect Street, N.W. including operation of restaurants and shops in retail space on the block.

Our block needs the proposed Eastbanc development at the corner of Prospect Street and Wisconsin Avenue.

Retail Space on Prospect Street

The Special Exception relates in a very important way to the viability of nearby retail space. The entire block of Prospect Street from Wisconsin Avenue to Potomac Street is zoned MU-4. Most of my 43,000 square feet of retail space faces that block of Prospect Street as does other retail space.

The only major pedestrian traffic relating to our block is found at the eastern end – people walking on Wisconsin Avenue. It is very important to attract some of the pedestrians down Prospect Street.

The proposed new two retail shops so near Wisconsin Avenue on Prospect Street will draw the public down Prospect Street and serve as a gateway to the rest of the retail space on the block. This is a very important role of the redevelopment of 1238 Wisconsin Avenue.

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I recently counted 13 vacant stores near our property. I currently have three ground floor retail spaces totaling 7,800 square feet that are vacant. We have generated very little interest from anyone to lease those spaces despite the rents being about one-third what they are on Wisconsin Avenue.

Georgetown needs quality redevelopment to attract retail tenants. The project will provide significant improvement to the Wisconsin Ave retail corridor and the Georgetown community.

Rear Yard Area that is Already Occupied by the Building

Of necessity the rear yard setback area needs to be occupied, as it is now, by the building in order to accomplish having retail spaces facing Prospect Street. That part of the existing building to contain two retail shops already occupies the rear yard almost exactly as the new structure would.

This filling of the rear yard area by the current building has no adverse impact on my property to the west (1.25 acres) nor on the use of the public alley. The plans to bring retail around the corner on Prospect Ave in this rear yard area would attract more pedestrians down Prospect Street.

The Public Alley

One aspect of the Special Exception is that it relates to the public alley that runs the full block from Prospect Street to N Street behind all the buildings facing Wisconsin Avenue. Those buildings abut the east side of the alley. My property, 3251 Prospect Street (and 3206/3220 N Street) abuts the west side of the alley for the entire distance between the two streets.

There is no difficulty using the public alley with 1238 Wisconsin Avenue abutting the alley as it does. The alley can accommodate large trash trucks and all other vehicles that use it. Very few vehicles actually use the alley daily.

Granting the requested Special Exception will have no adverse effect on the use of the public alley.

I believe the requested Special Exception should be granted.

Sincerely,



Robert R. Elliott