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From: mark.rosenman@verizon.net
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 11:56 AM
To: DCOZ - BZA Submissions (DCOZ)
Subject: BZA Case #20266, 3400 Connecticut Partners LLC
Attachments: MacklinParkingSign4Spaces.jpg; Screen Shot 2020-07-11 at 11.01.29 AM.png

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July 20, 2020

Mr. Frederick Hill
Chairman, Board of Zoning Adjustment
via bzasubmissions@dc.gov

Re: BZA Case #20266 3400 Connecticut Partners LLC

Dear Chairman Hill:

I am writing in regard to the application (#20266) of the Macklin developers (3400 Connecticut Partners LLC) to the Board of Zoning Adjustment requesting exemption from the requirement to provide the seventeen (17) parking spaces that are necessary to their plans under Zoning Regulations. This request is beyond the 50 percent waiver the project already has received because of its proximity to Metro. The request is scheduled to be heard on July 29, 2020.

I wish to make a number of points important to many of my Newark Street neighbors and to me.

First, parking is essential to us. As recognized by the developer in the posted advertisement (see attached photo) for rental of the extant retail space in this development, parking is really important and it is scarce – included is “4 PARKING SPACES” as one of just three descriptors of the available commercial space.

Parking is essential to businesses in the already-struggling Connecticut Avenue retail strip. A 2016 study by DMPED found that 86 percent of business respondents reported that “lack of parking” (see attached slide) was their biggest problem. That is twice the percentage that picked the next “biggest problem.”

The acknowledgement of parking scarcity was made by the developer’s traffic engineer, Erwin Andres, who on July 6th at an ANC3C Planning & Zoning meeting, said that “to be frank, there are no [street] parking spaces.”

That no-spaces condition will be compounded by a number of critical factors: if the requested waiver is granted, the developer’s plan will remove 15 spaces now available on site in a surface lot; DDOT’s already-approved “streetscape improvement” project will lose three or four spaces due to the Connecticut Avenue service lane reconfiguration; and then we have at least a temporary coronavirus-related loss of all 28 spaces in that service lane, which may well become permanent given the streetscape project and some of the District’s other practices.

Second, principal Phil Kang stated at a November public meeting when he presented his development plans — as heard by ANC3C Chairperson Nancy MacWood and as has even been memorialized in notes by the project’s advocates — that he “would add parking if that was necessary to make the project viable.”

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There are ways to include parking in the development's design, as evinced by the seller's Offering Memorandum when Mr. Kang bought the property. Alternately, a portion of the planned development could be scaled back and the existing 15-space parking lot maintained by minimizing or deleting the townhouses; as Mr. Kang explained at a public meeting, they were not part of his initial plan for the development.

Third, even with excellent mass transit available, as senior citizens, my wife and I (as so many of our neighbors) find a car necessary to our lives — but our house has no off-street parking. As I have searched for street parking spaces near our home following our infrequent (usually midday shopping) use of our car, I have documented that of Newark Street's 41 parking spaces between Connecticut Avenue and the first street west of it (Highland Place), about ¼ mile in the 2900 and 3000 blocks which include the proposed Macklin development, there often is no available spot. I would provide photographic evidence of this fact, but Mr. Andres' acknowledgement of the facts makes it unnecessary.

Sometimes even the driveways of homes that have them are partially blocked by inconsiderate parkers. Too frequently, parking on the commercial strip in the 3300/3400 block of Connecticut Avenue is unavailable or very difficult to find. Although there are sometimes spaces in the retail lot adjacent to Orange Theory, those are restricted for use by their patrons and those of the Comcast/xfinity store.

Not only does the proposed development plan add 35 new townhouse and apartment units to the 17 that already exist in the Macklin itself, as well as adding 2700 square feet of new retail to bring that total to about 16,000, but, as noted, the developers actually wish to remove the 15 existing retail parking spaces and dump those parkers onto public streets. This will create an extraordinary additional parking burden for Newark Street residents and those of nearby areas.

This is even more of a problem with the above-mentioned closure of the Connecticut Avenue service lane as part of the District's coronavirus response. That is an immediate loss of 28 parking spaces, with the strong possibility that the District may not reopen it given officials' recent pronouncements about accommodating outdoor restaurant seating and already-approved streetscape redesign of the service lane itself. With the developer's BZA request to waive the second 50 percent — the now required 17 parking spaces, the combined total would create a shortage of 45 spaces for businesses and residents in the area immediately adjacent to the proposed development.

If we credit expert speculation that a post-covid-19 world will see significantly increased use of private cars in preference to avoided public transit, the demand for parking will become all that much greater.

I urge the Board of Zoning Adjustment to oppose this request for an exemption from parking requirements. The Zoning Commission has already considered arguments for such developments within proximity to Metro and other transportation options and decided that a 50 percent waiver of parking requirements was appropriate. To request a 100 percent exemption in the face of all of these countervailing facts is an overreach that harms neighboring residents and businesses.

We have lived here for over 20 years, as have many of our neighbors, and the proposed development will cause radical disruption to our lives and may make it profoundly more difficult or impossible for us to continue to age in place.

In summary, the addition of 35 residential units (with many more than 35 new residents), plus their visitors and overnight guests, plus customers and staff from the development's two new retail spaces, absorbing the loss of the development's deleted 15 space lot, and the at least temporary - and possibly permanent - loss of 28 service lane spaces (three of four of which assuredly will never come back because of their loss to the already-approved streetscape improvement) combine so that the project overburdens an already no-spaces-available parking situation for residents and businesses.

The simple fact is that parking can be provided on-site, as shown in the Offering Memorandum and/or by cutting back some on the planned development. By trying to go beyond the Zoning Commission's considered requirements, the developer is asking neighboring residents and business to absorb the project's deleterious impacts so that he can

achieve the maximum return on his investment. As the Offering Memorandum outlined, significant returns can be achieved without the selfish imposition of neighborhood hardships.

Sincerely,
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